PAGE 6 **NATION** BJP claims LOP skipped PM's speech out of guilt

PAGE 7 **LAW & JUSTICE** SC orders 30% seats for women in Bar Councils

PAGE 10: MONEY India goes, India grounded



PAGE 12 GLOBAL Ukraine President visits London for peace talks



PIONEER IN SHORT

SENSEX FALLS OVER **600 POINTS**

Indian equity markets suffered major losses on Monday as investors lost ₹7.12 lakh crore in market value, with the BSE Sensex plunging 609.68 points (0.71 per cent) to close at 85,102.69. The Nifty50 also fell 226 points to 25,961. Analysts attributed the decline to profit-booking after two days of gains, continuous foreign institutional investor (FII) selling, and cautious sentiment ahead of the US Federal Reserve's rate decision. Key Sensex laggards included Bharat Electronics, Tata Steel, Bajaj Finance, Adani Ports, SBI, Asian Paints, Larsen & Toubro, and Bharti Airtel, while Tech Mahindra, HCL Technologies Reliance Industries, and HDFC Bank were among the few gainers Sectoral indices saw broad declines, led by services (-3.7 per cent), realty (-3.5 per cent), and capital goods (-2.83 per cent), with midcap and smallcap indices falling 1.73 per cent and 2.2 per cent respectively. The sustained weakness in the rupee and ongoing FII outflows heightened concerns over inflation, rising import costs, and global contributing to the bearish market sentiment. Trading saw 3,348

The ByStander

stocks decline.



JAISHANKAR MEETS EU TRADE COMMISSIONER

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar met European Union **Trade Commissioner Maros** Sefcovic in New Delhi on Monday to advance negotiations for the proposed India-EU free trade agreement (FTA). The discussions aim to finalise the long-awaited deal at the India-EU summit scheduled in New Delhi next week Jaishankar described the meeting as productive, while Sefcovic emphasized the importance of steady engagement to maintain momentum in trade and investment talks. The FTA is expected to strengthen bilateral ties and positively impact multiple sectors amid global trade disruptions triggered by Washington's tariff policies. Progress has been made on agricultural market access, alcoholic beverages, and rules of

CONGRESS SUSPENDS NAVJOT KAUR SIDHU

Punjab Congress on Monday suspended leader Navjot Kaur Sidhu from its primary membership following her controversial remark that "one who gives a suitcase of ₹500 crore becomes the chief minister." The suspension order was issued by Punjab Congress president Amrinder Singh Raja Warring. In response, Kaur Sidhu accused Warring of being "insensitive, irresponsible, morally dishonest, and corrupt" and refused to acknowledge his leadership. She also alleged that Congress candidate Karanbir Singh Burj paid ₹10 crore to party leaders for a ticket, a claim Burj denied, offering to swear in a gurdwara that no payment was made. Navjot Kaur Sidhu clarified her comments, saying they were twisted, emphasising that she and her husband, former Punjab Congress chief Navjot Singh Sidhu, never paid money for political positions.

PM targets Nehru legacy

Prime Minister Narendra Modi Monday accused Jawaharlal Nehru for partition and echoing Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Attacking independent India's first prime minister, PM Modi said, "Instead of firmly countering the baseless statements of the Muslim League and condemning them, Jawaharlal Nehru, the then Congress president, did not reaffirm his and the Congress party's commitment to Vande Mataram, but began questioning Vande Mataram itself... Under the pressure of appeasement politics, the Congress bent and agreed to break Vande Mataram to pieces. Therefore one day, it had to bend for the Partition of India," he said.

The PM was speaking at a Parliament debate on the 150th anniversary of Vande Matram.

Initiating the debate, the PM highlighted how Vande Mataram inspired the nation, energised the freedom struggle and became a symbol of national resolve which prompted Mahatma Gandhi to liken it to the national anthem. The PM said Muslim League leader Jinnah first stepped up his opposition to Vande Mataram on October 15, 1937, from Lucknow. Nehru



PM Narendra Modi speaking in the Lok Sabha during a discussion on the 150th anniversary of Vande Mataram during the Winter session of Parliament

wrote to Netaji Subhash to take out processions Vande Mataram. Chandra Bose five days later, sharing Jinnah's sentiments and observing that Vande Mataram's Anandmath background had the potential to irritate the Muslims", PM Modi said.

The PM said it was ironic that Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's Vande Mataram underwent a review of its worth in his home State of Bengal at the Kolkata session of the Congress Working Committee in 1937, leaving the country in a state of shock and prompting patriots controversies around

against the decision of the Congress.

As members of the Trinamool Congress protested the PM addressing Chatterjee as Bankim da, the PM took a dig at the party saying that the Congress outsourced its decision-making process. He asserted that the policies of the Congress and its allies have remained unchanged and they continued to resort to politics of appeasement and have attempted to create

The prime minister recalled that Mahatma Gandhi wrote in 1905 that Vande Mataram has become so popular that it has emerged as national anthem and wondered why injustice was meted out to it.

'If Vande Mataram was so popular, why was injustice meted out to it, why was it betrayed in the last century. What were those forces that were so powerful to overrule the wishes of Mahatma Gandhi on Vande Mataram,'

CONTINUED ON >> P4

Government turns heat on IndiGo

RAJESH KUMAR ■ New Delhi

The civil aviation minister on Monday informed the Parliament that the Government has initiated a probe into aviation disruptions caused by IndiGo and warned of action against the airline to set an example for other airlines. Union Civil Aviation Minister K Rammohan Naidu was replying to a question in the Rajya Sabha.

"We are doing an inquiry. We will take very, very strict action not only for this situation but also as an example,"

ON MONDAY, **INDIGO'S CRISIS ENTERED ITS EIGHTH** DAY, WITH 562 FLIGHTS CANCELLED **ACROSS AIRPORTS**

Naidu said adding that the dis-

ruption was a result of IndiGo

failing to manage its crew

and duty roster. On Monday, IndiGo's crisis entered its eighth day, with 562 flights cancelled across airports. The revised flight duty time

limitation (FDTL) was introduced after a high court order in April 2025. Of the 22 guidelines, 15 were implemented on July 1 and the remaining seven on Nov 1. The minister stressed that multiple consultations were held with all stakeholders, including IndiGo, and rules had to be followed without

"After thorough consultation and safety risk assessment, necessary variations and exemptions have been given beforehand," the minister said, adding that the crisis took place almost one whole month of operation in the new FDTL.

any compromise on safety.

IndiGo replies, DGCA action likely

RAJESH KUMAR New Delhi

IndiGo on Monday apologised for the nationwide aviation disruption caused by the carrier while seeking more time to respond to a show cause notice issued by the sector regulator. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) had given the airline, its CEO and COO time till 6pm Monday evening to respond to its notice issued on Saturday.

In its response, the airline has claimed it is "realistically not possible to pinpoint the exact cause(s)" in the timeline issued by the DGCA. It also noted that the regulator's manual allows a 15-day response time for show-cause notices.

The airline further claimed that the disruption was the result of compounding effect of multiple factors that came together in an unfortunate and unforeseeable confluence, "including minor technical glitches, schedule changes linked to the start of the winter as well as implementation of operation under the updated crew rostering rules (Flight Duty Time Limitation Phase II) which coincided in lesser or greater measure, as per the statement. IndiGo is "profusely apologetic" and

season, adverse weather conditions and

increased congestion in the aviation system

deeply regrets the inconvenience and hardship caused to customers," it said.

In a statement, the DGCA said it has received the airlines' response and it is in the process of examining the response, and enforcement action, as deemed appropriate, will be taken in due course. The two top executives of the airline were given until 6 pm on Monday to file replies to the notices.

Additionally, CEO Piter Elbers and COO Isidro Proqueras are likely to be summoned on Wednesday by the four-member probe panel set up by the DGCA as part of the investigations.

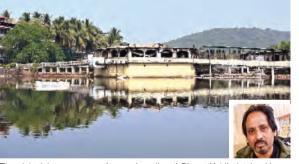
Nightclub owners fled after fire: Police

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

The owners of the Goa nightclub, where 25 people were killed in a fire on late Sunday night, have fled to Phuket, the Goa Police said on Monday. Earlier in the day, police teams from Goa and Delhi searched the north Delhi home of nightclub owners Gaurav and Saurabh Luthra, the two main accused in the tragedy.

After registering an FIR against them, a Look Out Circular was issued against them by December 7 by the Bureau of Intelligence (BOI) at the request of the Goa Police. The Bureau of Immigration at Mumbai was contacted, and it was found that both the accused had taken the 6E 1073 flight to Phuket at 5.30 am on December 7, immediately after the fire incident, which occurred around midnight, an officer of the Goa police said. He added the Goa Police had immediately dispatched a team to Delhi to conduct raids on the addresses of the accused Gaurav and Saurabh Luthra.

Investigators say the Luthras are wanted for questioning over suspected safety lapses, missing fire clear-



The nightclub seen across Arpora river. (Inset) Bharat Kohli, detained in connection the fire, who allegedly oversaw daily operations at the venue PTI

ances, and procedural violations linked to the club's operation. According to officials, the nightclub did not have a fire department NOC, and documents required for licence approvals were either incomplete or missing. Police believe these contributed to the tragedy. Early findings indicate that fire exits were inadequate and that the staff and customers had little time to escape once the flames broke out.

So far, Goa Police has arrested four senior managers of the club, chief general manager Rajiv Modak, general manager Vivek Singh, bar manager Rajiv Singhania, and gate manager Riyanshu Thakur.

All four are being questioned about operational violations on the night of the incident. Police have also detained Bharat Kohli, a resident of Sabzi Mandi in Delhi, who handled the club's day-to-day operations. His name surfaced during interrogation of one of the managers, and he will be taken to Goa for further questioning.

Police said more arrests are likely as they scrutinise the role of each member of the management team. Investigators are also checking CCTV footage, staff statements, and communication records to reconstruct events leading up to the fire.

CONTINUED ON >> P4

ED files case against **AAP** leader Satvendar Jain, others

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE New Delhi

The Enforecement Directorate (ED) on Monday filed prosecution complaint against 14 persons including a senior AAP leader in connection a corruption case. Former Delhi cabinet minister Satyendar Jain, who was the chairman of the Delhi Ial Board, has been implicated in a case involving awarding tenders related to Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs).

ED initiated a probe based on a case registered by the Anti-Corruption Branch of the Delhi Government against Euroteck Environmental Pvt Ltd. and others under various sections of the Indian Penal Code and the Prevention of Corruption Act, alleging a scam in DJB in the name of augmentation and upgradation of existing 10 STPs.

ASHOKE RAJ ■ New Delhi China on Monday announced online visa application for

Indians. The new system will be launched on December 22. The Chinese Ambassador to India, Xu Feihong shared the update on social media, noting that the digital platform will allow users to complete visa forms and upload

required documents directly

through the website.

The launch comes shortly after India fully restored its visa regime for Chinese tourists and business travellers. On November 26, the Ministry of External Affairs confirmed that visas in these categories are fully functionagain, ending five-year freeze imposed following the border tensions in

MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal stated that tourist visas for Chinese nationals – paused since the pandemic and subsequent border events - have resumed worldwide as of November 2025. Business visas had been reintroduced earlier and continue to be processed without restrictions

The reinstatement of visas is part of a series of peopleoriented confidence-build-



China adds online visas to thaw

travellers.

Analysts say the reopening

CHINA ALERT

Government of India has

issued an advisory urging

New Delhi: The

FILE PHOTO

ing steps agreed upon between New Delhi and Beijing this year. These include the restart of direct commercial flights in October 2025 and progress on reviving the Kailash Manasarovar Yatra, a pilgrimage route deeply significant to Indian

of travel channels is expected to boost tourism flows, trade activity, and person-toperson exchanges between the world's two most populous nations, providing a posIndian citizens to exercise "due discretion" when travelling to or transiting through China, following an incident in which an Indian national from Arunachal Pradesh was detained at Shanghai's Pudong Airport. The advisory comes more than two weeks after Chinese authorities allegedly refused to

acknowledge the woman's Indian passport during a transit stop on 21 November, resulting in her temporary detention. The case prompted strong concern in New Delhi. particularly over the treatment of Indian travellers holding valid documentation. CONTINUED ON >> P4

itive signal amid ongoing diplomatic complexities.

The Chinese Embassy's new online visa system is anticipated to support this momentum by offering a faster, more accessible application experience for travellers seeking to visit China.

STPs in Haridwar overflow years ahead, raising concerns for Ganga she added. Meanwhile,

ARUN KASHYAP Haridwar

Major Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) built in Haridwar to prevent contamination of the Ganga have started overflowing well before the design year. With the plants receiving more sewage than their capacity, locals are concerned about the holy river being contaminated in Haridwar. However, officials maintain that sewage water is released after treatment.

Information sought under the Right To Information (RTI) Act by local activist Disha Sharma revealed that there is one 14 MLD capacity and another 18 MLD capacity STP in the Sarai area of Haridwar. The 14 MLD plant receives 15-16 MLD sewage while the 18 MLD plant is receiving 20-21 MLD sewage for treatment.

The biggest STP is located in Jagjeetpur with 68 MLD capacity and this plant is receiving between 73 MLD and 75 MLD sewage. All the major STPs in this region are receiving more than their capacity for sewage, information received under the RTI

On being asked about this issue, the Uttarakhand Jal Sansthan maintenance branch (Ganga) executive engineer Harish Bansal said,



Representative photo

The Pioneer

"All the overflow from the Jagjeetpur and Sarai STPs is transferred to the Peyjal Nigam STP. Their officials will be able to tell the exact quantity," he said.

The Peyjal Nigam's construction and maintenance unit (Ganga), project manager Meenakshi Mittal said that upto 75 MLD sewage is being received at the 68 MLD plant. "However, we treat all the sewage and do not release any sewage into the Ganga without treatment,"

PIONEER PHOTO

observers point out that based on the RTI information, the design year of these plants is 2030-35, which means the STPs were engineered to remain functional and meet the intended treatment capacity and performance standards till these years. With the plants overflowing well before their design years, observers opined that an overloaded STP not only loses capacity but also increases the risk of contamination in the Ganga due to incomplete treatment of the sewage. The locals allege flaws in the designing and planning of these STPs.

Government notifies draft occupational safety rules

New Delhi

The Delhi Government has notified draft Delhi Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Rules, 2025, to ensure a safe working environment for workers employed in hazardous and accident-prone industrial activities.

The draft rules provide for the constitution of a 10member Delhi Occupational Safety and Health Advisory Board headed by the labour commissioner, and safety committees in establishments employing 250 or more workers.

The labour department has invited suggestions and objections on the draft rules, which will be considered by the Government after 45

The draft rules state that every employer of a factory and building or other construction work will annually conduct, free of cost, medical examination of from the commencement of every calendar year.

Every employer in the industry involving hazardous processes will arrange to conduct free-of-cost medical examination for every worker annually, within 30 days from the commencement of every calendar year, as mentioned in the draft

Additionally, no employee will be employed in any establishment unless he has been issued a letter of appointment. Under subsection (1), Section 10 and Section 11 of the draft rules, the employer or manager of an establishment will, as early as possible, send a notice to the labour department inspector cum facilitators, about the occurrence of any accident that results in the death of a worker or results in bodily injury likely to cause death.

The dangerous occurrence will include the burst-

every worker aged 45 years ing of any plant or pipeline form safety committees. The and above, within 120 days or equipment containing draft Delhi Occupational petroleum, steam, compressed air; collapse or failure of a crane, derrick, winch, hoist or other appliances, explosion due to explosives, fire, leakage or release of harmful toxic gases and such other inci-

> Under sub-section (2) of section 17 of the draft Rules, the Delhi government will constitute the "Delhi Occupational Safety and Health Advisory Board". The board members will include the chief inspector-cum-facilitator, labour department, member secretary, Delhi pollution control committee, director, Delhi health services, two representatives of employees and two members of the district crisis group having expertise in occupational safety and

> Establishments involving hazardous processes and employing 250 or more workers will mandatorily

draft Delhi Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Rules, 2025, was notified earlier this month. The draft rules also lay down working conditions stipulating daily and weekly working hours, wages and overtime payments.

The weekly working hours under clause (b) of subsection (1) of Section 25 for each worker will not be more than 48 hours. The periods of work of adult workers in an establishment each day, including intervals and spread-overs, will be fixed by the government through notification. Under Section 27, no

work overtime exceeding 144 hours in any quarter of a year. In calculating overtime on any day, a fraction of an hour between 15 and 30 minutes will be counted as 30 minutes, and in case of more than 30 minutes, it shall be rounded to an hour

worker will be allowed to

CM, ministers pay respects at Golden Temple

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE New Delhi

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta and her Cabinet ministers on Monday visited the Golden Temple in Amritsar to pay obeisance.

After paying obeisance, Rekha Gupta said she had come to offer 'shukrana' (thanks) following the successful organisation of Guru Tegh Bahadur's 350th martyrdom anniversary programme at the Red Fort in Delhi.

She was accompanied by ministers Parvesh Sahib Singh, Ashish Sood, Kapil Mishra, Ravindra Indraj and Manjinder Singh Sirsa. Gupta also cleaned utensils in the periphery of the Golden Temple along with Minister Sirsa.

The event witnessed the presence of thousands of devotees who offered their respects to Guru Sahib and participated in every programme, including Gurbani Kirtan and Sankirtan.

During her spiritual visit, the Chief Minister also paid her respects at the holy Durgiana Temple and the Valmiki Temple, offering

After bowing my head at Sri Harmandir Sahib, my mind found satisfaction. Waheguru Ji, may You keep Your hand of grace upon everyone

- REKHA GUPTA, CHIEF MINISTER

prayers for the nation's prosperity and the well-being of the people of Delhi.

Praying for continued blessing, the chief minister said in a social media post, "After bowing my head at Sri Harmandir Sahib, my mind found satisfaction. Waheguru Ji, may You keep Your hand of grace upon evervone." Sirsa wrote in a post, "Today, by visiting this sacred place, my mind found immense peace, and I also experienced the boundless presence and tranquillity of that 'Akal Purkh". Earlier, the chief minister

had described the "extraor-dinary success" of the

ALSO PAID HER RESPECTS AT THE **HOLY DURGIANA** TEMPLE AND THE VALMIKI TEMPLE

'*Gurmat Samagam*' at the Red Fort as the "grace of Guru Sahib, despite an atmosphere of fear caused by a terror incident just a day before the three-day event in November". She said more than six lakh devotees attended the religious events without any disruption.

During her spiritual journey, the Chief Minister also visited the famous Durgiana Temple, which resembles the Golden Temple in appearance. She performed traditional rituals and prayed for the nation's well-being. Thereafter, she paid respects at the Maharishi Valmiki Temple (Sri Ram Tirath Temple) and received blessings.

After reaching Shri Guru Ramdas International Airport, she was received by local BIP leaders led by district president Harvinder

Agency replaces old streetlights with advanced LEDs

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

In a major push to eliminate dark spots to improve safety across South Delhi, newly appointed agency of Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), Esmart Energy Solutions has replaced more than 70,000 LED streetlights with advance technology between October and November this year.

The company, which formally took charge of the operation and maintenance of streetlights in the region in September under an agreement with the MCD, has also

damaged during the

Saurabh Aggarwal, Business Head of Esmart Energy Solutions, said: "It is a matter of great satisfaction for us to serve the people of Delhi through this important partnership with the MCD. Our first aim is to ensure safety by removing every dark patch in the national Capital. Well-lit roads and public spaces are crucial for a Viksit Delhi and for the growth of the city's varied night life – from historic monuments to busy markets

During the recent festive

work on existing lights Chhath Puja, the company increased its workforce and worked round the clock to keep streets, parks, and resi-

dential colonies brightly lit. Esmart is going to replace all the existing street lights with new fittings within the next 3 years which will consume far less power than uniform light.

markets such as Greater that stay alive till late." Kailash-I and II, Saket, Malviya Nagar, Kalkaji, Kailash Colony, carried out large-scale repair season, including Diwali and Lajpat Nagar, and Green Park, across our lanes, parks and

traders say customers now feel far more secure walking to their cars or taking autos late in the evening. Evening walkers and joggers have returned in large numbers to parks and residential streets.

on an actual basis.

the older lamps while giving out stronger and more Consistent bright lighting is delivering a clear boost to the night economy while making roads safer for everyone. In

agents have extended their working hours. Underlining the marked improvement in civic infrastructure and public safety, Chaudhary Ramakant, E-Block RWA President, South Moti Bagh, said: "The MCD's extensive drive to install bright LED street lights has com-

pletely eliminated dark spots

Street-food vendors, late-

night eateries, and delivery

by-lanes. Maintenance teams are now highly efficient, faulty lamps are repaired within hours, and the public complaint redressal system has become remarkably quick and responsive."

Residents facing any problem with streetlights in the areas now handled by Esmart can report faults through a dedicated 24×7 helpline set up in coordination with the MCD. Complaints can be lodged on the toll-free number 1800-203-8500, by giving a missed call or sending a message on WhatsApp to +91 96505 57785, or by writing to southdelhi@esmartlight-

NDMC to make seven buildings disabled-friendly

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE New Delhi

From installing Braille signage to procuring 27 wheelchairs for differentlyabled people, the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) has taken up a project to make seven of its buildings, including the Talkatora Stadium and Akbar Bhawan,

cost of the project is pegged at Rs 1.86 crore which has been approved by the NDMC. "We have floated a

tender was floated earlier too but it did not attract bids. So we have floated the tender again. The successful bidder will have four months to complete the project," an official said.

Seven buildings will be covered under the project -- the Charak Palika Hospital, Talkatora Indoor Stadium, Aashirwaad Old Age Home,

phase of the project. More buildings will be made disabled-friendly in the next phase," the official said.

The project involves fixing

Braille signage for toilets, staircase, and wheelchair accessibility areas along with procuring 27 wheelchairs and as many evacuation chairs. "The evacuation chain

shall be designed for safely transferring patients up and down the stairs during fire emergencies at hospitals,'

CHANGE OF NAME

I, hitherto known as KM, Ritu Raj alias Ritu Raj km. alias Riturai Verma D/o Shvam Pal Singh W/o Vikash Verma R/o House 184, Sector 14, Near Jaipuria School, Vasundhra. Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh -201012 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Rituraj Verma.

PD(36199)A

I, Basavaraj, F/o- No.8378434H WO Sanjivakumar Sadashivanavar, R/o- Near Hanuman Temple, PO-Halagatti, TQ-Ramdurg, Dist-Belagavi, Karnataka- 591123, have changed my name from Basavaraj to Basavaraj Mallappa Sadashivannavar, vide affidavit dated 08/12/2025 before Notary

PD(36200)C I, Mala Ram, Father of No.16021111N Hav Rameshwar

Public Delhi.

Lal Gurjar, R/o- Vill & Post-Manaksar, Teh- Udaipurwati, Dist- Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan-333801, declare that in my Son's service record my name is wrongly recorded as Mala Ram Gurjar, whereas my correct name is Mala Ram, which may be amended accordingly.

PD(36201)C I, Susheela, Mother of No.16030003L Rfn Tejvir Singh, R/o-Vill-Dasoli, Post-Manchand, Teh-Khurja, Dist-Bulandshahr, U.P.- 203155, declare that in my Son's service record my name is wrongly recorded as Susheela Devi, whereas my correct

name is Susheela, which may

be amended accordingly. PD(36202)C

I, No.14647636A Hav Ram Prakash Gangwar, R/o-102 B, Than Singh, Behind Om Lawn Pilibhit, U.P.- 262001, have changed my daughter's name from Sanskiriti Gangwar to Sanskriti Gangwar, vide affidavit dated 08/12/2025 before SDM Delhi Cantt.

PD(36203)C

Ramachandra, No.8378453N NK/PO Umesh

before Notary Public Delhi.

I. JC-778805W Sub Patil Jitendra Rohidas, R/o- Vill-Sarve, Teh- Pachora, Dist-Jalgaon, Maharashtra- 424103, have changed my Son's name from Patil Shaurya to Patil Shaurya Jitendra, vide affidavit dated 08/12/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

I, Kh Leibeakeei, Mother of No.14837540N Hav Kh Soytojit Singha, R/o- Sribar Sara Leikai, Sibpur Pt I, Sibpur Pt II, Cachar, Assam, 788098, have changed my name from Kh Leibeakeei to Laibaklai Singha, vide affidavit dated 08/12/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

I, Sukumar Awatade, W/o-No.14663159N Hav/Atee Awtade Raju Kachor, R/o- Vill & PO- Wirwade Bk Tal, Mohol, Dist- Solapur, Maharashtra-413253, have changed my name from Sukumar Awatade to Sukumar Raju Awatade, affidavit 2552642471268500714330,

vide

Ramachandra Lamani, R/o-Vill- Kangrali Bk, Taluk & Dist-Belagavi, Karnataka- 590010, have changed my name from Ramachandra to Ramachandra Tukaram Lamani, affidavit dated 08/12/2025 before Notary Public Delhi. PD(36204)C

I. IC-778805W Sub Patil Jitendra Rohidas, R/o- Vill-Sarve, Teh- Pachora, Dist-Jalgaon, Maharashtra- 424103, have changed my Daughter's name from Manaswi to Patil Manaswi Jitendra, vide affidavit dated 08/12/2025

PD(36205)C No.14663159N Hav/Atee Awtade Raju Kachor, R/o-Vill & PO-Wirwade Bk Tal, Mohol, Dist- Solapur, Maharashtra-413253, have changed my son's name from Suyash Awatade to Suyash Raju Awatade, vide affidavit No. 2552642471268500714331, dated 31.10.2025 before Executive Magistrate, North Solapur, Maharashtra.

PD(36206)C

PD(36207)C PD(36208)C

dated 31.10.2025 before Executive Magistrate, North

Solapur, Maharashtra. PD(36209)C



NG OF THE BRANCH OFFICE AT GURUGRAM, HARYANA Capital India Home Loans Limited ("Company") that the Company opening a new branch at Gurugram, Haryana having address at Capital India Home Loans Limited, Unit no. 1111 , Eros Corporate Park, Sector 02, Tower K , IMT Manesar, Gurugram, Haryana

All concerned person/parties are hereby advised to take note of the aforesaid opening of the above said Branch. For any assistance, kindly contact the Company at +91 22 4503 6000 or refer to the website of the Company at www.capitalindiahomeloans.com.

PLACE: Gurugram, Haryana CAPITAL INDIA HOME LOANS LIMITED PUBLIC NOTICE

General Public is hereby informed that Plot No.23, measuring 299.87 Sq. Mtr., situated in Block-B, Pocket-3, at Sector-17, Dwarka, New Dehir, is under lawful and exclusive ownership of Shri Rajan Kumar, son of Shri S. N. Singh, Resident Of B-1/43 F/F F/S Dwarka Mor Metro, Sewak Park, New Dehir-1105F9. Through this Notice, the general public is hereby informed that if any person, individual, institution, or authority has any claim, objection, lien, mortgage, or encumbrance whatsoever on the above-mentioned property, they must notify the undersigned in writing. perty, they must notify the undersigned in writin ng with supporting documents, within 15 (fiftee avs from the date of this publication, at the addre

no claim is received within the stipulated period operty in any manner he likes

110014, Mob.9811583350 Email- kapilg.adv@gmail.com

Notice is hereby given that the Share Certificate(s) of the under mentioned Equity share of the Company have been lodged with transfer deed by the purchaser(s) of the said Equity Shares for transfer in their name(s) in accordance with SEBI Circular no. SEBI/HO/MIRSD/MIRSD-PoD/P/CIR/2025/97 dated 2nd July, 2025. (A special window made available for a period of six months from 7.7.2025 to 6.1.2026)

NOTICE FOR LOSS OF SHARES CERTIFICATES

11000 01 0100 0100 0100 1101 1111 1111 1111 1111 1111 1111 1111 1111								
SR.	FOLIO	NAME OF THE REGD	CERT NO.	DIST NO.	NO. OF	FV		
NO.	NO.	SHAREHOLDER			SHARE	(RS.)		
1.	9880	MESH CONSTRUCTIONS PVT LTD	77724-77735	7772301-7773500	1200	10		
2.	9881	JAINARAYAN HOTELS PVT LTD	77736-77747	7773501-7774700	1200	10		
3.	9882	ANOP REAL ESTATES PVT LTD	77748-77759	7774701-7775900	1200	10		
4.	9891	PIOUS TRADING PVT LTD	77814-77825	7781301-7782500	1200	10		

Any person(s) who has objection or claim in respect of above mentioned shares should lodge such claim(s) in writing supported with valid documents with Registrar & Transfer Agent, Alankit Assignments Ltd. (Unit : Jasch), Alankit House, 4E/2, Jhandewalan Extn., New Delhi-110055, Tel.-23541234, 42541234; Fax: 41543474 or Company within 15 days of publication of this Notice. Thereafter no claims will be entertained and the RTA or Company will proceed for registration in favour of lodger/purchaser.

JASCH INDUSTRIES LIMITED 43/5, Bahalgarh Road, Distt. Sonipat Haryana-131021



08-12-2025

PRAGATI POWER CORPORATION LIMITED (Govt. of NCT of Delhi Undertakings)
Corporate Identity No. (CIN)-IPGCL- U40103DL20001SGC111530
Corporate Identity No. (CIN)-IPFCL- U74899DL20001SCC109135
(ISO 9001-2008. 14001- 2007,18001-2007 Certified Stations)
ED(C&M), Pragati Power Station-1,1.P. Estate, Ring Road, New Delhi-110002.
TEL: 011-23370541, FAX NO. 011 23379164

Date: 04/11/2025 NIT No. 05/2025-26 TENDERING FOR ONLINE BIDDING Offers are invited in two parts system on e-tendering on the portal of Delhi Govt at http://govtprocure below items with tender closing time at 11.00 hrs. on bid submission dated: delhi.gov.in, for th T-Value (Rs.) Procurement of 72,5 KV sf6 circuit breakers
2025, IPGCL 275576 1
AMC contract for horticulture work/removal of wild vegetation/grass at GTPS.
2025, IPGCL 229475
Repair and re-fabrication of damaged portion of feed well plate and the replacement of all the damaged troughs with new fabricated troughs and hangers of clarifier at PPS-III, Bawana
2025, IPGCL 277243 KV sf6 circuit breakers 29,43,585,17 2025, IPGCL 277135 Grass/Vegetation removal and Antiweed spray in 400KV switch yard and in bay No 413 & 415 of DTL yard, main plant and BOP area at PPS-III 2025, IPGCL 276932 48,33,212.81 2025 IPGCL 276932 Flooring on roof of GT#1,GT#2 & Cooling Tower #2 at PPS-III, Bawana 2025 IPGCL 279523 Encasing the CW pipe line from main plant to BOP Area at GTPS 17 ARE of Machinerical Processing Street Stre 15,22,374,44 ARC of Mechanical MTC BOP for Aux, plant area of GTPS, for Two years 2025, IPGCL 279894 25,26,923.37 79,75.587.00 Operation of water treatment plans and boiler water analysis along with housekeeping in BOP area at GTPS for Two years 10. 2025 [PCCL 28013] Hing of 06 Nos. Finance Professional(CAPICWA) for finance department. corngendum/Refender 1. 2025. [PGCL 27440] 1

Note: 1) Tender Issue Date & EMD Details: Please visit IPGCL PPCL website (www.ipgel ppel.gov.in)
2) Bid Submission End Date & Bid Opening Date: As per IPGCL-PPCL website and Delhi Govt e-portal
3) No Corrigendum/addendum/modification for tender value up to Rs 50,00 Lacs will be advertised in newspaper and bidders ar
requested to regularly visit IPGCL-PPCL website as well as Delhi Government Eeprocurement site for getting themselves update DIP/Shabdarth/Classified/0359/25-26

Procurement and Retrofitting of 06 Nos of 420KV spring charged SF6 Circuit Breaker for 400KV Switchyard at PPS-III Plant Bawana

disabled-friendly. According to officials, the Palika Bhawan, Akbar Bhawan, Chanakya Bhawan and the Yashwant Place residential-cum-office complex. "These buildings have the official said.

Taiwan Film Festival 2025 to debut

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE New Delhi

The 2025 Taiwan Film Festival is set to return to the capital on 12-13 December at PVR Priya Cinema, Vasant Vihar, bringing a curated selection of contemporary Taiwanese

cinema to Indian audiences. Organised by Taiwan's Ministry of Culture and the Taipei Economic and Cultural Center (TECC) in India, this year's edition marks a landmark moment in cultural collaboration between the two countries.

The festival's highlight is the special screening of Demon Hunters, the firstever Taiwan-India co-produced feature film. Blending Taiwanese folklore with Indian storytelling elements, the film incorporates classic Bollywood-style dance sequences and serves as a cinematic bridge between the two cultures. The coproduction is being hailed as a significant step forward for bilateral cooperation in the arts and the broader creative sector.

The lineup also features

first Taiwan-India co-production 2025 Taiwan

films showcasing the diversity of the island's cinematic landscape. A Chip Odyssey, a documentary exploring the rise of semiconductor giant TSMC, offers a deep dive into Taiwan's pivotal role in global technology and the international supply chain. Meanwhile, Hunter Brothers, an Indigenous drama, examines themes of identity, tradition, and generational conflict within Taiwan's two additional Taiwanese Indigenous communities.

Film Festival in New Delhi Organisers say the festival aims to use cinematic storytelling to strengthen cultural ties and create new channels for exchange between filmmakers, producers, and institutions in Taiwan and India. Over the two-day event, audiences can look forward to an opening ceremony, film screenings, and post-screening discussions with visiting filmmakers and cultural representatives from both countries.

Delhi Assembly first in India to operationalise real-time digital audit monitoring portal: Speaker

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE New Delhi

2,38,03,800,00

Delhi Assembly speaker Vijendra Gupta on Monday said that the Delhi Assembly is the first assembly in India to operationalise a real-time digital audit monitoring portal for monitoring of audit paragraphs and action taken notes (ATNs).

Gupta observed that the adoption of the Audit Para Monitoring System (APMS) marks a significant step towards transparency, procedural discipline and a more accountable audit follow-up mechanism. "APMS is now fully opera-

tional within Government of the National Capital Territory of Delhi, and Delhi is arguably the first state assembly in the

country to implement such were discussed extensively. a comprehensive real-time audit monitoring portal," he added.

The Speaker held a meeting to assess the status of action taken on the reports of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India.

He expressed concern while examining the status on the portal, which showed that 142 audit paragraphs had been uploaded by various departments, while only 30 ATNs had been submitted. He noted that such pendency is unsatisfactory and stressed that timely and complete responses are essential for enabling the **Public Accounts Committee** to discharge its mandate effectively.

During the meeting, the challenges in audit follow-up It was noted that many replies uploaded by departments were not in the prescribed form and therefore could not be placed before the Public Accounts Committee, said an official statement.

Gupta stressed that incomplete or informal replies cannot be considered valid ATNs and must be returned for correction. He directed that departments must submit corrected and properly formatted notes within three weeks. APMS is a digital platform

developed by the Ministry of Finance Expenditure Department and conceptualised by the Controller General of Accounts, based on the Public Accounts Committee's guidelines.





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Four of a family die in Goa club fire

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi

The Goa nightclub fire that killed 25 people on Sunday has left a neighbourhood in Delhi's Karawal Nagar shattered after four members of one family, all part of the same vacation group, were confirmed dead. A fifth member, Bhavna Joshi, survived with injuries.

The victims, Vinod Kumar (43), Kamla Joshi (42), Anita Joshi (41) and Saroj Joshi (39), had left Delhi less than a week earlier for what was supposed to be a longawaited Goa holiday. Now, their home is filled with silence, stunned relatives and neighbours, and an elderly mother who still waits by the door, unaware that the goodbyes she said last week were the last ones.

For the four sisters, Bhavna, Kamla, Anita and Saroj, the trip was something they had been planning for months. With their children now older and a little more independent, the women finally felt they could take a short break together.



Family members gather as bodies are loaded for last rites after a nightclub fire in North Goa that killed 25 people and left several injured at Karawal

Vinod, Bhavna's husband and Kamla's brother-in-law, joined them so the group would feel safe and supported during the journey. They left their homes in

Karawal Nagar with excitement and bulging suitcases. The fire ripped through the Birch by Romeo Lane nightclub in Arpora in the early hours of Sunday.

Most of the victims were staffers, but the visiting Delhi group was among those trapped inside as thick smoke filled the enclosed

space. Police have said the club was operating without the necessary No Objection Certificate from the fire department and had allegedly ignored repeated notices to shut down. "I have lived next to this family for nearly 40 years. I cannot understand how four people from the same home died just because someone ignored safety rules," said Mahipal Singh Bhandari, a long-time neighbour. His voice trembles each time he repeats the

Teams from local police

number, four.

Another relative, Harish, said the fire has reignited conversations about safety failures in public spaces. "It's not just this club. Look at the Rajendra Nagar coaching centre incident; there were warnings there too. Crowded spaces must follow fire norms. Exits must be open. If a place is ordered shut, it shouldn't be running secretly at night," he said.

He believes accountability cannot stop at the club operators. "Governments must be held responsible too. You cannot look away when families lose everything. Five people left for a holiday. Four never came back." Inside the family home, relatives have formed quiet circles of grief. But the loudest silence hangs around the children.

Vinod and Bhavna's 11year-old son and 6-year-old daughter have been kept away from the steady flow of mourners. Neighbours say they have not been told the truth yet; they are being distracted, comforted, and kept busy. In another part of the house, Kamla's 18-year-old daughter and 14-year-old son have barely spoken since the news. Relatives say the teenagers kept calling their mother's phone on Sunday, hoping she would answer and tell them she was safe. They were waiting for her to return with souvenirs she had promised.

No one knows when, or how, the truth will be shared with Vinod's elderly mother. She still sits by the main door, asking whether the "injured" have been shifted to a better hospital. "She thinks they will walk in any moment," said a local resident. "No one has the courage to tell her."

As more details of the fire emerge, anger mixes with sorrow in the narrow lanes of Karawal Nagar. The neighbourhood has come together to cook for visitors. support the stunned families, and shield the children from what awaits them. As neighbours arrive in steady streams, the truth grows heavier: a holiday planned with joy has ended in a loss so deep that no one in the lane will forget it.

Only 52 hotels, 38 clubs possess fire safety certificates: Fire services

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE New Delhi

Scan the QR Code to know more

The Delhi Fire Services (DFS) on Monday said only 52 hotels and 38 clubs of the thousands that exist in the national capital possess fire safety certificates.

The figures have assumed urgency amid intensified checks and the Goa Police action following a blaze at a nightclub there that killed 25 people. A source linked with restaurant associations said the numbers underline a deeply unorganised and unregulated hospitality sector in Delhi.

He claimed that the Capital has over 50,000 restaurants, more than 5,000 hotels, and over 1,000 nightclubs, but only a fraction have undergone fire-safety certification.

"Restaurants that serve liquor require an excise certificate, a fire safety certificate and the FSSAI permit. But the sector is very unorganised, and several hotels, restaurants and clubs do not procure or even apply for a fire safety certificate," the source said.

He added that the DFS has specific norms on the minimum area required for issuing certificates.

"A tragedy can happen anywhere, and it is also the responsibility of hotel, nightclub and restaurant owners to keep all fire-dousing equipment functional and updated. It is very strange that only 52 hotels and 38 clubs in a city like Delhi have valid fire safety certificates," he said.

A DFS official said fire safety certificates are issued to restaurants with a built-up area of 90 square metres and above.

A devastating fire broke out at Birch by Romeo Lane nightclub in Arpora in North Goa. Twenty-five people were killed in the blaze, prompting a nationwide scrutiny of fire preparedness, particularly in high-density entertainment

As part of its probe, a Goa Police team on Monday arrived in Delhi and searched the residence of the nightclub's owners, Gaurav and Saurabh Luthra, in Hudson Lane near Delhi University.

They were not found there.

The Goa Police has sought

the local police's help in tracking down the two. So far, the Goa Police has arrested the club's chief general manager, Rajiv

Modak, general manager

Vivek Singh, bar manager Rajiv Singhania, and gate manager Riyanshu Thakur. Another employee, Bharat Kohli, who handled daily operations at the club and is a resident of Sabzi Mandi in north Delhi, was detained in the capital. His name surfaced during the questioning

being taken to Goa for more questioning, a source said. Out of the 25 who perished in the club fire, four were Delhi residents and all relatives - Vinod Kumar, 43, Kamla Joshi, 42, Anita Joshi,

of a club manager. Kohli is

Bhavna, who was injured in the fire, is Vinod's wife and a sister to the three deceased

41, and Saroj Joshi, 39.

Police deport 130 foreigners illegally residing in Dwarka

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

The Delhi Police have sent 130 foreign nationals for deportation after a monthlong crackdown in Dwarka targeting illegal stays and drug trafficking, senior officials said on Monday. Most of those detained were from Nigeria, followed by Ivory Coast, Cameroon, Ghana and several other African nations.

Police said these individuals were staying without valid visas, and many were linked to drug networks active in the district.

"This action was necespressure on local resources, landlords have been identiand some of them are fied so far, and cases have

involved in drug trafficking," said DCP Dwarka Ankit Singh. He added that police teams were told to act strictly and ensure that offenders do not

out through November. It was named "Operation Clean Sweep." Police conducted door-to-door checks in Dabri, Bindapur, Uttam Nagar, Mohan Garden and Sector 23. Officers said they had received repeated complaints about foreigners staying in large numbers in rented houses without documents. Many landlords had not informed the police sary. "Illegal migrants put about tenants. Police said 25

been filed against them.

stations, the Anti-Narcotics Unit and the Operations Unit mapped neighbourhoods and prepared lists of suspect-The operation was carried ed locations. Extra staff were deployed for the checks. Beat officers visited flats, basements and rented rooms where foreigners were suspected to be staying. Police said several tenants tried to flee when they saw uniformed teams in During the drive, 64 for-

eigners were detained in Dabri, 34 by the Anti-Narcotics Unit, 18 in Bindapur, eight in Uttam Nagar, three in Sector 23 and three in Mohan Garden.

Fire NOC rejected for trauma building of RML Hospital PIONEER NEWS SERVICE New Delh

The Delhi Fire Service (DFS) has refused to renew the fire safety certificate for the trauma building of Dr Ram Manohar Lohia (RML) Hospital after an inspection uncovered 14 major safety lapses.

The building lapse on severe safety standards including non-functional fire systems, damaged hydrants and inadequate access for fire tenders. Officials said on Monday that the violations place one of the capital's busiest government hospitals at serious fire risk.

According to a notice issued on December 4, a DFS team inspected the trauma block on November 14 in the presence of hospital representatives and found that the build-

ing failed to meet several mandatory requirements. The most critical lapse noted was the absence of a six-metrewide motorable road with a nine-metre turning radius needed for the movement of fire tenders. Without this, fire engines cannot reach the structure quickly in an emergency, significantly slowing down rescue operations.

Inspectors also found that the lifts in the building are not protected by designated lift lobbies in the basement. While smoke detectors were installed, none were functional during the inspection. The notice states that the pressurisation system required for lift shafts, lift lobbies and staircases had not been provided, a gap that could allow smoke to fill escape routes during a fire.



The automatic sprinkler system, a critical line of defence in containing fire, was either missing or not working in many areas, including above false ceilings. Hose reels were found to be installed but non-functional, and fire check doors designed to stop the spread of fire and smoke were

missing at several locations. DFS officials also reported that the fire pumps had not been set to auto mode, meaning they would not automatically activate if a fire broke out.

The overhead water storage tank, supposed to feed the firefighting system, was discovered to be com-

pletely disconnected from it. The tank's capacity was only 30,000 litres, far below the required 50,000 litres for a building of this scale and purpose. In addition, temporary

structures had been set up on the fifth-floor terrace, and staircases did not extend up to the terrace level as mandated in the building's sanction plan. Officials said these deviations could obstruct evacuation efforts or hamper fire personnel during rescue operations. Based on these findings, the DFS rejected the hospital's application for a fire safety certificate. The notice clearly states that continued occupancy of the trauma building without rectifying the shortcomings will be "at the risk and liability of the owner/occupier."

Six held for ₹36 lakh robbery in Jahangir Puri

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Six men have been arrested for a violent highway robbery in Jahangir Puri that ended with the attackers fleeing with a bag containing ₹36 lakh and the victim's scooter on Monday. Police also recovered ₹10.4 lakh in cash, a car, two iPhones bought with the stolen money, the victim's scooter and two motorcycles

used in the crime. The robbery took place on November 28. Roshan Lal, a cash courier, was carrying ₹36 lakh on his scooter for delivery to his employer. Around 7.45 pm, near Mukundpur Flyover, two motorcycles blocked his way. One of the pillion riders pushed his scooter. Lal fell to the road. Another attacker stabbed him several times on his left hand. The attackers grabbed the bag of cash and the scooter before speeding away. Lal managed to run to safety and was taken to hospital. "It was a planned dacoity. The gang tracked the victim for days and struck when they were sure he was carrying cash," said Deputy Commissioner of Police (North-West) Bhisham Singh.

He added that the accused

and were desperate for quick money.

Police registered a case the next day and formed a large joint team from AATS, the Anti-Burglary Cell, and Special Staffs. Officers scanned CCTV cameras along the route. They activated local informers, and raids were carried out in Delhi and Noida.

The first breakthrough came when police caught four men: Aman, Manish alias Don, Prince alias Awara and Arshad. During questioning, they confessed their crime, and they also led police to two iPhones bought with the stolen cash. Their statements revealed the names of two more accused, Nitesh and Irfan. Both were arrested from

separate hideouts soon after. Police said the robbery was planned by Nitesh, a driver in Gandhi Nagar. He had been observing the victim for days. He knew the victim travelled with large amounts of cash. He passed this information to Irfan. The gang then conducted a recce of the delivery route. On the day of the incident, Nitesh informed the group that the victim had picked up cash and was on his

way to Rohini. The others waited near Mukundpur Flyover and exehad a history of serious crimes cuted the attack.

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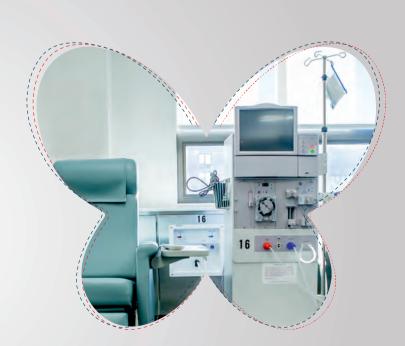
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IN FOCUS



Delhi Court defers bail order in Kartavya Path case to December 9

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

A Delhi court on Monday deferred its order on the bail pleas of several accused in the Kartavya Path protest case to December 9 due to Judicial Magistrate Aridaman Singh Cheema falling ill.

Outside the courtroom, parents of several accused students voiced their grief to their lawyers about being emotionally provoked by the repeated deferrals" on the bail order.

On Thursday, the judge deferred the order on the bail pleas, saying the new material put on record by the investigating officers (IOs) would require time to be perused. Several advocates pleaded that their clients had exams coming up shortly and the bail order Kartavya Path case.

needs to be released "on an urgent basis."

On November 23, a protest took place at the India Gate over rising air pollution in the national Capital.

The protesters have been accused of raising controversial slogans and using pepper spray on the police trying to contain them.

According to police, 23 protesters have been arrested in two separate cases lodged at the Parliament Street and Kartavya Path police stations. Seventeen protesters were

held in connection with a scuffle at the Parliament Street Police Station, while six were arrested in the pepper-spray case.

Fifteen of the 17 accused in the Parliament Street case were rearrested in the

Opposition blasts Govt over Vande Mataram debate PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

Opposition MPs lashed out at the Government on Monday over the "Vande Mataram" debate in the Lok Sabha, calling it an attempt at diverting attention and dividing the country. Some of them also claimed that the debate was started keeping in mind next year's West Bengal Assembly polls.

Speaking in the Lok Sabha, Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra accused the BJP of committing a "big sin" by creating a controversy over Vande Mataram and claimed that Government pushed for a debate on the national song as the West Bengal assembly polls were approaching. She hit out at PM Modi, saving "he is not the prime minister he used to be as his self-confidence is decreasing and his policies are weakening the

Samajwadi Party leader Akhilesh Yadav also hit out at the BJP, claiming that those who did not participate in

now talking of the values of "Vande Mataram" and asserted that the national song should not be used as a tool to impose one's beliefs on others. He said that "Vande Mataram" should be followed in spirit, as it is a song which bonded people during the freedom struggle. He also questioned how individuals who did not participate in the freedom struggle could truly understand the meaning o f "Vande Mataram.'

Priyanka Gandhi said the Government wanted the debate to divert attention from people's problems and make fresh allegations against those who sacrificed for the country's freedom. "... Whatever complaints you have against (Jawaharlal) Nehru, whatever mistakes you think he made... If you want to hurl abuses, if you want to insult as much as you like, please make a list of that too... 999 insults, 9,999 insults... Make a list, and then we will fix a time.

"Just like we debated for 10



Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra speaks in the Lok Sabha during the Winter session of Parliament in New Delhi on Monday

hours today on Vande minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, Mataram, in the same way, we will ask the Speaker, we will fix a time – 10 hours, 20 hours, 40 hours, however many hours it takes for your complaint to be fully addressed," she said. "Let's close the chapter for once and all. After that, let's talk about today's issues — price rise and unemployment," she added.

Launching a strong defence of India's first prime

who was repeatedly criticised by treasury bench members during the debate, Priyanka Gandhi said Prime Minister Modi has been the country's PM for about 12 years, while Jawaharlal Nehru had spent as many years in jail for the independence of the country.

Priyanka Gandhi said that though PM Modi gives a good speech, there is one shortcoming that he is "weak on facts".

Congress from 1905 till now, Vande Mataram is sung, but does that happen in BJP conventions, she asked.

"Modi ji mentioned a letter in the House, in which he said that on October 20, Nehru ji had written to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. But the Prime Minister did not mention the letter written on October 17, which Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose ji had written to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru ji.

"Netaji had written 'My dear Jawahar, reference to Vande Mataram. We shall have a talk in Kolkata and also discuss the question in the Working Committee, if you bring it up there. I have written to Dr. Tagore to discuss this matter with you when you visit Shantiniketan. Please do not forget to have a talk with him when you visit Shantiniketan," she said.

"On October 20, Nehru had replied to it. PM Modi quoted one line of this reply here, but the rest of what Nehru ji wrote was 1 'There is no doubt that the present outcry against extent a manufactured one by the Communalists. Whatever we do, we cannot pander to Communalist feelings'," she She then cited Tagore's

letter to Nehru in which he stated that the two stanzas that were always sung held such profound significance that there was no difficulty in separating that part from the rest of the poem and those sections of the book. She said there was no reason to have a debate on the national song and alleged that "we are having this debate as Bengal polls are coming and the prime minister wants to play his role in that". TMC's Kalyan Banerjee said the way PM Modi addressed author Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay was

"The way he addressed the great author, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, it was really disturbing. Actually, not only Narendra Modi or (Home Minister) Amit Shah, BJP people are Bengali haters," he said.

very "disturbing".

Former CM Prithviraj Chavan slams Modi Govt over aviation monopoly

TN RAGHUNATHA Mumbai

Maharashtra's former chief minister Prithviraj Chavan on Monday came down heavily on the Narendra Modi Government for enabling "unprecedented monopoly" in the aviation sector — an unhealthy development that may prove to be"dangerous" for the country in the long-run.

Chavan — who was a Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) in the Manmohan Singh Government — said that the growing dominance of a single airline like IndiGo posed a 'serious threat" to the national economy and adversely affected passenger interests.

Indigo crisis that has resulted in wide-spread flight disruptions and severe passenger distress and rooted for splitting the 20-year old private airline into two companies to ensure fair competition. Averring that two major

here, Chavan alluded to the

players now dominate India's air travel — IndiGo with 65 per cent market share and the Tata Group (Air India and AI Express) with nearly 30 per cent share, Chavan said that "a dominance by just two carriers "is extremely dangerous" for a sector that once had 10 competing airlines. Chavan said that time had come for the Government to set up its own national airline to prevent Talking to media persons monopolies in the sky.

Chavan said the current situation in the country's aviation sector was a fallout of the 'systemic indulgence' granted to IndiGo by the Government and the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA).

"Both Government and DGCA have failed to enforce their own rules and regulations, compounding the operational failures and the nationwide breakdown," he said.

"Today, 40 crore passengers depend on these two mega-airlines, leaving the public vulnerable to cascading crises whenever one system falters. Government must balance the situation by launching a

sector like aviation fall entirely into private hands," Chavan said. Hitting out at the Competition Commission of India (CCI), the former Union Minister said that the CCI had "miserably failed" in safeguarding consumer rights, demanding it should be dismantled and replaced by a stronger watchdog with real

Referring to reports in a section of media, Chavan demanded to know if the IndiGo's Rs 56 crore donation to the ruling BJP through electoral bonds had influenced regulatory decisions.

authority.

"Was it a contribution or a bribe for a quid pro quo? The national carrier. It was a public deserves answers," wrong policy to let a crucial Chavan asked, while

demanding a probe into the allegation.

Dwelling upon the Adani Defence & Aerospace (ADA)'s November 25, 2025 purchase of the Flight Simulation Technique Centre Pvt Ltd (FSTC), India's largest pilot training academy, Chavan chose to link this with the Civil Aviation Minister's recent statements that India will require 30,000 pilots within the next decade.

"Within days after the FSTC takeover by Adani Group, IndiGo crisis started. The acquisition of FSTC by the Adani group is likely to consolidate its control over yet another critical part of the aviation ecosystem, Chavan said. Chavan made seven specific demands - including the resignation of Civil Aviation Minister K Rammohan Naidu, splitting up of IndiGo and the Government to establish a national carrier to demolish aviation monopoly and removal of DGCA officers responsible for failing to avert the IndiGo crisis.

Chavan's other demands include: immediate suspension of IndiGo CEO Peiter Elbers, setting up of a highlevel inquiry with a 15-day deadline to submit its report, disbanding/restructuring the CCI watchdog and implementing the longpending Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) proposed Among other things, during the UPA era.

IIM Jammu launches workshop on centuries-old Basohli art

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

The Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Jammu on Monday inaugurated a unique week-long workshop on the centuries-old Basohli painting art form, providing students and participants an exclusive opportunity to learn the intricate craft directly from women artists who are officially certified under its Geographical Indication (GI) tag.

Considered one of the most vibrant and distinctive schools of Pahari miniature painting, Basohli painting originated in the erstwhile princely state of Basohli around the 17th-18th centuries. Known for its bold colours, dramatic facial features, rich borders and liberal use of beetle-wing cases for embellishment, the art form



tag in March 2023, recognising its unique geographical and cultural origin.

The workshop, described by IIM Jammu as the "first-of-

campus, brings together nationally recognised women artisans from the Basohli region who have played a pivotal role in reviv-

ing and preserving this 300year-old tradition.

Over the seven-day programme, participants will receive hands-on training under the guidance of award-

Singh Billowaria, state awardees Rajni Bala and Sonam Jamwal, and several others in traditional techniques, including natural pigment preparation, brushwork, gold embellishment and thematic storytelling to families that have been drawn from Hindu mytholo- practising the craft for genergy, court life and Ragamala series, which are hallmarks of authentic Basohli paintings.

Speaking at the inauguration, Professor BS Sahay, Director, IIM Jammu, said he welcomes the living heritage of Basohli Art to its Jagti campus, as it hosts the master practitioners "whose devotion, skill, and cultural memory preserve the aesthetic soul of Jammu and uphold India's artistic heritage"

"By facilitating direct interand these extraordinary Centre Jammu.

winning senior artist Sohan women artisans, we aim to foster appreciation for indigenous art forms while promoting entrepreneurship and sustainable livelihoods in the artisan community," he said. The participating women

artists, many of whom belong ations, have gained national acclaim in recent years. Several have received state and national awards, and their works have been exhibited at prestigious platforms, including the National Museum in New Delhi.

The workshop, scheduled to end on December 14, has been organised under Anandam: The Centre for Happiness and the Painting Club, IIM Jammu, in association with the Indira Gandhi National Centre for action between our students the Arts (IGNCA), Regional

Zill Parishad polls together: Shinde

Mahayuti to contest upcoming civic,

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Nagpur

The Mahayuti will put up a united fight in the upcoming municipal corporation and zilla parishad polls, Shiv Sena leader and Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde said on Monday

He advised MLAs and ministers of his party to follow the "alliance dharma" and refrain from making any statements or behaviour that would lead to a conflict in the Mahayuti alliance of BIP, Sena, and NCP.

Addressing Shiv Sena MLAs and ministers in Nagpur, Shinde said the party contested elections for the post of presidents in 168 municipal councils and 4,000 councillors.

He said the atmosphere

was very conducive for Shiv Sena in the first phase of local body polls, voting for which was held on December 2, and that the party put up a good fight. The results will also be

good for the party, he added. "The municipal corporation and zilla parishad polls will be contested as a Mahayuti alliance. Follow the alliance dharma. Do not make any controversial statement or do anything that will cause a conflict in the

alliance," said Shinde. The first phase of the local body polls saw Mahayuti allies contesting against each other at many places in

Maharashtra. In some cases, the campaign became acerbic. prompting Shinde to raise the issue with the top leadership of the BJP.

Naveen Patnaik dubs BJP's supplementary budget as empty vessel that make good sound

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Bhubaneswar

Leader of Opposition Naveen Patnaik termed the Odisha Government's supplementary budget as "an empty vessel' that makes "good sound".

Patnaik made the statement outside the Assembly while the House debated the Odisha Appropriation (number 2) Bill, 2025, introduced by Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi here. Though the BID president attended the session, he did not participate in the debate.

Responding to the criticism, the chief minister said Patnaik should make his comments inside the House.

'It is said by many people in our state and no expenditure being made by the Government for the people and their development. This is very sad to report. Time and again this is being brought to the attention of the state Government that there must be some expenditure for the development of the people," he

Alleging that the state Government was neglecting the expenditure on development. Patnaik claimed that everyone is suffering.

"It is not exclusively for any section; all are suffering. It

(supplementary budget) is like an empty vessel and you know empty vessels sounds good

said the Leader of Opposition should make his statements in the House "He is not present most of the time. It is another matter if his health is not good. He should attend the proceedings and make statements. The people will not accept the

and they are satisfied with it. I

am very sorry to report this

Replying to the debate, Maihi

plight," the former CM said.

statements made on X posts,' the chief minister said. Participating in the debate, Opposition Deputy Leader

Prasanna Acharya also described the budget as "an illusion."

"I heard many members speaking and the debate is mostly on political aspects. As we discuss budget, there should be some economic

issues," he said. Citing NITI Aayog data,

Acharya said the BJD came to power in 2000 when the state was almost bankrupt and

making overdrafts to pay salary of employees, but Naveen Patnaik, during his 24 years of rule, changed the state's fiscal situation.

BID left the ʻThe Government when the state's financial health was very positive. You (BJP) have inherited a Government that is revenue surplus. Therefore, try to maintain it and do not push the state to bankruptcy again," Acharya

The BID leader accused the state's BIP Government of mismanaging a strong economy handed over to it and cited falling GST collections and declining mining revenue.

BJD MLA Arun Kumar Sahoo accused the Government of poor financial management. He argued that the administration increased the budget size through loans but failed to spend effectively.

Sahoo highlighted rising crimes against women and cited incidents such as the Balasore woman student's selfimmolation death, gang rape of another at Gopalpur se beach and minor girl's death at Balanga and Malkangiri.

Congress MLA Rama Chandra Kadam questioned the Government's ability to utilise funds. He said the annual

While initiating the debate, budget remained underspent and raised doubts about how the supplementary budget would be managed.

He highlighted shortages of doctors and teachers and claimed tribal rights were being ignored while mining projects deprived them of entitlements.

BJP MLA Tankadhar Tripathy countered the allegations and pointed out how the previous BJD Government "failed" in providing drinking water to people, irrigation for agriculture, cold storage for farmers, employment for youths and

others despite ruling the state for 24 years. Mataram completed 100 years. The prime min-

India Issues China Alert

Responding to media queries on Monday, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal called for assurances from Beijing that Indian citizens will not face selective or arbitrary action at Chinese airports.

"We expect the Chinese authorities to ensure that Indian citizens transiting through Chinese airports are not selectively targeted, arbitrarily detained or harassed," Jaiswal said. He emphasised that China must uphold international norms governing air travel and abide by rules that apply to all transiting passengers.

While the MEA continues to follow up on the matter with Chinese authorities, the spokesperson noted that New Delhi's current advice is rooted in concerns about recent developments. "The Ministry of External Affairs would advise Indian nationals to exercise due discretion while travelling to or transiting through China," he added.

The incident has drawn attention at a sensitive time in bilateral relations, which have seen a cautious resumption of exchanges-including the revival of visa services and direct flights-after years of strain. However, New Delhi's latest advisory signals that concerns over individual safety and passport recognition remain unresolved.

Further updates on travel protocols or additional advisories are expected if the situation

FROM PAGE - 1

Nightclub owners fled after fire: Police

Both Goa Police and Delhi Police have said that tracing the owners is now a top priority. The investigation remains active, and officers said they expect further breakthroughs in the coming days. Meanwhile, Saurabh Luthra posted a message on Instagram on Monday, saying the management was "deeply shaken" by the loss of lives. He wrote that the club would extend "every possible assistance and cooperation" to affected families. Police officials said the social media post does not change the status of the investigation and that efforts to find the owners will

continue until they are located and questioned. The tragedy has triggered strong public anger in Goa, with calls for accountability from both the club's owners and officials who allowed the establishment to operate despite repeated lapses. State authorities have launched parallel reviews into

the licensing process and safety inspections

PM questions Nehru legacy

carried out at the venue.

PM Modi lamented that the Constitution was "throttled" and the nation chained by the Emergency when the national song Vande

ister also noted that Vande Mataram stood like a rock and inspired unity despite British The prime minister noted that the mantra of

the national song gave power and inspiration to the entire country during the freedom struggle. Modi recalled that the British were forced to ban Vande Mataram as they brought in laws to prevent printing and propagation of

'Through Vande Mataram, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay responded to this challenge with great strength and resolve. The British divided Bengal in 1905, but Vande Mataram stood like a rock and inspired unity," he said.

1.11 crore PMAY houses sanctioned: Khattar



The Centre has sanctioned 1.11 crore houses under two schemes of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, with 95.54 lakh of those houses having already been completed and handed over to beneficiaries, Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs Manohar Lal Khattar informed the Rajya Sabha on Monday.

Attacks on ECI part of conspiracy: Rajnath Singh

Defence Minister and senior BJP leader Rajnath Singh on Monday accused the opposition parties of attacking bodies such as the Election Commission of India as part of a conspiracy to weaken the institutions of Interjecting in a discussion on 150 years of Vande Matram in Lok Sabha, Singh said constant migration, deaths and rapid urbanisation lead to



Revanth targets 10% national GDP for Telangana by 2047



CM A Revanth Reddy on Monday said he wanted Telangana to contribute 10 per cent to the national GDP by 2047. Speaking at the Telangana Rising Global Summit 2025, he also said the state Government wants to replicate the model of Guang-Dong province in China whose economy is the largest of any province in China.

Patna airport runway needs expansion: Aviation Minister

The runway at Patna airport needs expansion, and the Government has been repeatedly requesting additional land from the Bihar Government while operating the airport based on all safety risk assessments, Aviation Minister K Rammohan Naidu said in the Rajya Sabha on Monday. According to Naidu, the current runway at Patna airport is not suitable for operating many types of aircraft due to load penalties.



Siddaramaiah to follow high command on turmoil

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE Belagavi (Karnataka)

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday reiterated that he will abide by the Congress high command's decision on the leadership change issue in the state. The CM has been repeatedly stating for the last few days that he and Deputy CM DK Shivakumar will go by what the high

command decides on the

chief minister change. "Will abide by whatever the high command decides," Siddaramaiah told reporters in response to a question on his son and Congress Member of the Legislative Council (MLC) Yathindra Siddaramaiah's statement that there is no question of leadership change as of now, and that he believes that the former will continue as CM for five years. Earlier in the

day, Yathindra claimed that

the Congress high command has said that there is no leadership change in the state.

"I have been saying this, which is not new. I feel that, as of now, there is nothing like leadership change. I hope that he (Siddaramaiah) will complete his five-year term," Yathindra told reporters at the Suvarna Vidhana Soudha.

To a question that Siddaramaiah had been asked to come to Delhi in January, Yathindra said the Congress high command calls the chief minister for various issues. So he will go there and discuss. He will also talk about the prevailing situation in the state, he said.

Yathindra also admitted that there was confusion over the leadership issue because, "the Deputy Chief Minister was asked whether he wants to be the CM. There are aspirants in all the political parties. The high



Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah

command has said that they will not decide it now.'

According to Yathindra. the Congress Legislative Party (CLP) elects a candidate for a

definite period. It is the CLP which decides who should be the chief minister. He claimed that, "The Congress high command has made it clear

that there is no leadership change as of now." Yathindra further claimed that high command had a meeting recently where they said they

have not taken any decision and postponed it. "So, as of now, there is no talk on the change of leadership in Karnataka," he claimed.

The power tussle within the ruling party had intensified amid speculation about a change in chief minister in the state, after the Congress Government reached the halfway mark of its five-year term on November 20.

The speculation was fuelled by an alleged " power-sharing" agreement involving Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar in 2023. However, both CM and Deputy CM had recently held breakfast meetings at each others residences, on the instructions of the high command, which is seen as a move to pause the leadership tussle between the two and to signal Siddaramaiah's continuation as the CM for the time being. especially ahead of the Belagavi legislature session.

5.17 lakh Waqf properties on UMEED portal uploaded



Union Minister of Minority Affairs Kiren Rijiju

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE New Delhi

A total of 5.17 lakh Waqf properties were initiated on the UMEED portal while 2,16,905 properties were approved by the designated approvers during the sixmonth window provided, according to the data provided by the Ministry of

Minority Affairs. The UMEED Central Portal for management of Waqf Properties in India, launched by Union Minister of Minority Affairs Kiren Rijiju on June 6, 2025, officially closed for uploads on December 6, 2025, completing its sixmonth window, as per the UMEED Act, 1995 and the clear directions of the Supreme Court.

In the final count, the momentum significantly accelerated as the deadline approached, the ministry said in a statement.

Many review meetings, training workshops, and high-level interventions even at the secretary-level injected renewed pace into the process, making the upload surge in the last hours, it said.

According to the data provided by the ministry, 5,17,040 Waqf properties were initiated on the portal with 2,16,905 properties approved by the designated approvers. A total of 2,13,941 properties have been submitted by makers and remain in the pipeline as of the deadline, the ministry said, adding that 10,869 properties stood rejected during verification

To support this massive national exercise, the Ministry of Minority Affairs conducted continuous workshops and training sessions with State/UT Waqf Boards and Minority Departments," the statement said. A two-day master trainer

workshop was also conducted in Delhi to equip Waqf Boards and State/UT officials with hands-on training for the uploading process, the ministry said.

Senior technical and administrative teams were deputed across states, and seven zonal meetings were

held nationwide. A dedicated helpline was also set up at the Ministry office for technical support and quick resolution of issues

arising during the uploads. Since the launch of the portal, secretary, Ministry of Minority Affairs, Chandra Shekhar Kumar took 20 plus review meetings, consistently guiding, motivating, and monitoring States/UTs to ensure timely and accurate

uploading of existing Waqf

property details, the state

ment said. The conclusion of this phase marks a significant milestone in bringing transparency, efficiency, and unified digital management to Waqf properties across India under the UMEED framework, it said.

22 MLAs close to Fadnavis, may cross over: Aaditya

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Nagpur

Shiv Sena (UBT) legislator Aaditya Thackeray on Monday claimed that 22 MLAs from a Mahauti ally have "grown close" to Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and are ready to switch sides, an oblique reference to Deputy CM Eknath Shindeled Shiv Sena.

In June 2022, the Shiv Sena split following a rebellion led by Shinde, resulting in the collapse of the then Uddhav Thackerayled Maha Vikas Aghadi Government.

Later, in January 2024, assembly speaker Rahul Narwekar held that the Eknath Shinde-led faction was the "real" Shiv Sena, which is a constituent of the ruling Mahayuti in the state along with the BJP and Deputy CM Ajit Pawar's NCP. Shiv Sena.



first day of the Winter session of State Assembly in Nagpur

"There is one party and two factions on the treasury side. Twenty-two MLAs from one faction have grown close to the CM. They have good funds and they have started dancing to the tune of the CM,"a Aaditya Thackeray claimed, without naming the Shinde-led

The 22 MLAs are "ready to switch (sides)," he further claimed while talking to reporters in the Vidhan Bhawan premises here.

The Worli MLA also said that someone from these 22 legislators calls himself "vice-captain", a veiled reference to Industries Minister Uday Samant.

Actress assault case: Kerala Govt to appeal against verdict

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kerala Government on Monday said it will appeal against the verdict in the actress assault case in which Malayalam actor Dileep was acquitted while six others were found guilty.

Announcing the decision, State Law Minister P Rajeev said the survivor didn't get complete justice through the present verdict.

"Though those who were directly involved in the were found not the verdict everyone reporters, shortly after the court acquitted the actor in the case.

"The state Government has always stood strongly with the survivor, and that will be continued," Rajeev satisfactory, Leader of is released.

■ New Delhi

stand taken by the prosecution, he said it had even submitted a five-volume argument note at the court with regard to the case. "The Government has decided to go on appeal against the verdict. I have already talked to the chief minister and the DGP in this regard. The prosecution has been directed to initiate further proceedings in this regard," he added.

State Cultural Affairs and Cinema Minister Saji Cheriyan also said the Government has always guilty by the court, it was supported the survivor, and its stance is to ensure the guilty are punished, however high-profile they are.

While KPCC chief Sunny Joseph said the verdict pronounced by the principal sessions court was not

Opposition VD Satheesan said declaring those who had direct involvement in the crime as guilty was a relief. Joseph, in a video message, accused the prosecution of completely failing in proving the conspiracy part in the case and assuring justice to the survivor.

Meanwhile, speaking to reporters in Kozhikode, Satheesan said what the survivor went through is a tragedy that should never happen to any woman. This judgment finding six accused directly involved in the crime guilty will help prevent such incidents from recurring. When asked whether the

prosecution has failed to prove the conspiracy angle in the case, he said that will be clear only when the detailed judgment

Over 8,700 to gather as Rajasthan hosts first Pravasi Rajasthani Diwas

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE Jaipur

Rajasthan will celebrate its first-ever Pravasi Rajasthani Diwas at the Jaipur **Exhibition Convention** Centre (JECC) on 10th December, bringing together more than 8,700 Non-Resident Rajasthanis and industrialists who have registered to be part of this landmark occasion organised under the leadership of Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma. The event has been envi-

sioned to strengthen the bond between Rajasthan and its global diaspora by inviting them to Connect, Collaborate, and Contribute to the state's ambitious goal of becoming a \$350 billion economy by 2030, a vision that CM Sharma has been championing through diaspora outreach pro-Hyderabad, Surat, and Kolkata ahead of main event, where he declared, "We have drawn up an action plan towards becoming a 350 billion dollar economy in the next five years, and I invite you all to

growth story of Rising Rajasthan." To translate this vision

be a part of this historic

THE EVENT HAS BEEN ENVISIONED TO STRENGTHEN THE BOND BETWEEN RAJASTHAN AND ITS GLOBAL DIASPORA

into action, the programme will feature sectorial sessions engaging diaspora members, industry leaders, and policymakers across Tourism, Industry, Education, Healthcare, and Water Resources, while an exclusive NRR Roundtable will provide an interactive platform for Non-Resident Rajasthanis to discuss investment opportunities and share their global expertise — an initiative aligned with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Viksit Bharat' vision that aims to transform Rajasthan's diaspora network into a strategic force driving sustainable development.

Laying the institutional foundation for this engagement, the state cabinet recently approved the Non-Resident Rajasthani (NRR) Policy-2025, which establishes an NRR Investment Facilitation Cell along with Investment Liaison Officers and Advisory Councils comprising overseas experts December 11-12.

and business leaders, complemented by a dedi-Non-Resident cated Rajasthani Department with the Additional District Collector appointed as nodal officer in every district to assist NRR families, while the Rajasthan Foundation now operates 26 chapters worldwide including in New York, London, and Riyadh to maintain this global connect.

The event will also be witnessing the annou-ncement of Pravasi Rajasthani Samman Awards honouring distinguished diaspora members for their achievements in business, science, art, philanthropy, and social service, with thirty-three eminent personalities attending as state guests at a venue thoughtfully designed to reflect Rajasthan's rich culture and heritage through a 'Progress Path' showcasing the state Government's achievements and folk artinspired souvenirs that will ensure Pravasi Rajasthanis carry home fond memories of their home land before the celebra-

tions continue with

the Rising Rajasthan Partnership Conclave on

Education and Skills Council meeting (AIESC) held in New Delhi on Monday was chaired by Dharmendra Pradhan, Union Minister of Education, Government of India and Jayant Chaudhary, Minister of State for Skill Development & Entrepreneurship and Education, from the Indian side. From Australia, the meeting was chaired by Hon Jason Clare MP, Minister for Education, Government of Australia and Hon. Mr. Andrew Giles MP, Australian Minister for Skills & Training.

The Third Australia-India

The meeting was also attended by Dr Sukanta Majumdar, Minister of State for Education and DoNER; Hon Julian Hill MP, Assistant Minister for International Education, Govt of Australia. Sanjay Kumar, Secretary, School Education, Dr. Vineet Joshi; Secretary, Higher Education; Ms. Debashree Mukherjee, Secretary, Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, senior Government officials from both the sides and Vice-Chancellors & representatives of Australian universities.

The third AIESC meeting reviewed the ongoing initiatives under school education, higher education, research, and skill develop-



commitment to deepen institutional linkages, expand mobility pathways, and strengthen regulatory cooperation. AIESC is a binational body that guide the strategic direction and strengthen the partnership between the two countries in the fields of the education, training, research and skill ecosystem.

Speaking on the occasion Pradhan said that the 3rd AIESC served as a great opportunity to build upon the progress made since the inaugural meeting of AIESC, break new ground in

Australia-India education, skills and research partnership, open wider avenues for India's youth, and further deepen our bilateral engagements across the full spectrum of education and skill development as well as in areas of national and global priority. He appreciated the

Australian Ministers and the delegation for the substantive discussions on the agenda items-school education, higher education and research and skills and also for their vigorous efforts to elevate the AIESC platform to a higher-level.

Pradhan further said that education, skills and research are the key pillars of India-Australia Strategic Partnership. Both India and Australia remain committed to working together and collaborating more in Early Childhood Care and Education, technology adoption, sports education, building institutional capacities, empowering teachers, preparing youth for critical and emerging areas, like AI,

advanced materials, semi-

conductors, MedTech,

energy, and sustainability

and also for innovative

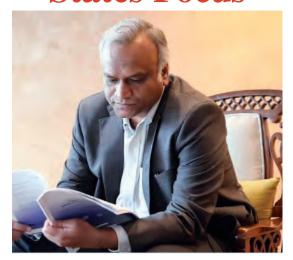
skilling partnerships, he

Taking forward the spirit of collaboration and ambition, the Minister urged all stakeholders to successfully implement the outcomecentric and in-depth discussions held today across school, higher and skill education and to ensure that the bridges built today continue to grow stronger in the years to come. Speaking on the occasion,

Hon Jason Clare MP, Austrálian Minister for Education, said "This is a win-win. It is good for Australia and it is good for India. "It is a great sign of the strength of the relationship between India and Australia. There is no such collaboration with any other country in the field of education and skill development. This shows deep trust and faith between India and Australia". Highlighting the depth

and uniqueness of the India-Australia skilling partnership, Jayant Chaudhary stated that the two countries share a one-of-its-kind institutional platform that is translating discussions into tangible outcomes through structured frameworks, such as, the Mutual Recognition of Qualifications (MRQ) 2023, a dedicated Skills Mapping Framework for demand assessment, and the signing of three key MoUs to strengthen cooperation.

States Focus =



PRIYANK KHARGE SLAMS BJP FOR **NEGLECTING OPPOSITION DUTIES**

Karnataka Minister Priyank Kharge on Monday hit out at the BJP ahead of the Assembly session, alleging that the party has abandoned its responsibilities as an opposition and was instead focusing only on trivial issues. Speaking to reporters on the premises of Suvarana Vidhana Soudha, Kharge took a dig at the BJP for remaining silent on matters that fall under the purview of the central government.

Responding to a question that the BJP was going to target the Congress government in the session, Kharge said, "Let them do it. They have abandoned their responsibilities as an opposition."



PM MODI URGES BIHAR NDA MPS TO SHOULDER 'GREATER RESPONSIBILITY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday told the NDA MPs from Bihar to work with more vigour for the welfare of the people after the ruling alliance's resounding victory in the recent Assembly elections, saying "with great victory comes great responsibility".

Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) MP Shambhavi Choudhary said the prime minister conveyed the message to a delegation of NDA MPs when they called on him here to congratulate him for the NDA's massive victory in the Bihar polls.

"OVER 90% OF

FIRES IN PUNJAB.

GO UNDETECTED"

More than 90 per cent of

large farm fires in Punjab

and Haryana are now going

undetected by the official

monitoring systems as farmers are shifting stubble-

burning activities to late

afternoons, according to a

new analysis published on

Monday. The Stubble Burning

Status Report 2025 by the

International Forum for

Environment, Sustainability

and Technology (iFOREST)

said this led to major under-

estimation of the contribu-

tion of stubble burning to

Delhi's air pollution this year. IFOREST said the govern-

ment's current monitoring

protocol, run by the Consortium for Research on

Agroecosystem Monitoring

and Modeling from Space

(CREAMS) of the Indian

Agricultural Research Institute, is unable to detect

most farm fires as it

relies mainly on polar-orbit-

ing satellites that observe India only between 10.30 am

This narrow time window

At the same time, the

report finds real progress on the ground, with burnt areas

in Punjab and Haryana falling

by 25-35 per cent over recent

years. IFOREST said burnt-

area mapping provides a

more accurate picture than

active fire counts, which cur-

rently suggest a much larger

decline. Chandra Bhushan,

CEO of iFOREST, said, "Our

analysis provides incontro-

vertible evidence that India's

current stubble-burning

monitoring system is struc-

turally misaligned with

ground realities. "Farmers

have shifted burning to the

late afternoon, while our

monitoring relies on satellites

that capture active fires

only during a narrow

time window (10:30 am to

1:30 pm).

no longer matches farmers' burning practices, it said.

and 1.30 pm.

HARYANA NOW

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

LARGE FARM

J&K Police raid hotels over Form-C violations

MOHIT KANDHARI

The Jammu and Kashmir police conducted a massive drive against several hotels and a homestay for violating the mandatory Form-C reporting norms required under the Immigration & Foreigners Act in Srinagar on Monday.

The drive was conducted close on the heels of the detention of a Chinese national who had entered Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir without permission and later stayed in an unregistered guest house in Srinagar in the last week of November 2025. The drive was conducted across several 'hot spots' of Srinagar frequented by foreign tourists.

Official sources claimed that after the Pahalgam terror attack, over 2500 foreign nationals have visited the valley along with domestic travellers.

The Chinese national was detained by the security forces after he was allegedly found using a social media app for chatting.

cials are trying to join the dots and figure out the purpose of his visit to Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir, especially when, as per his tourist VISA, he was only permitted to visit Buddhist religious places in Varanasi, Agra, New Delhi, Jaipur, Sarnath, Gaya and Kushi Nagar.

According to a police spokesman, in the Rajbagh area, Hotel Blossoms, Hotel Grand MS, and Hotel Golden Forest had allowed foreign nationals to check in without submitting Form-C to the Foreigners Registration Office (FRO). Accordingly, FIR No. 65/2025 U/S 8 & 23-B of the Immigration & Foreigners Act was registered at Police Station Rajbagh. Similarly,in the Khanyar area, Hotel Khyber, located in Khayam, was also found violating Form-C reporting requirements. Despite repeated instructions, the management failed to produce any proof of Form-C submission. As a result, FIR No. 57/2025 was registered under relevant sections of law at Police Station Khanyar, the police



REPRESENTATIVE PHOTO

spokesman said.

In the busy Lal Bazar area, IMY Home Stay, Nowabagh Bagwanpora, owned by Mohammad Aslam Baktoo S/o Late Habibullah Baktoo, was found operating without Form-C compliance for Starobinsky Lior, a foreign national from Israel, along with others. The manage-

ment had deliberately concealed the stay of the foreign guest and failed to submit the mandatory online Form-C reporting. Accordingly, FIR No. 60/2025 U/S 8 and 23(b) of the Immigration & Foreigners Act was registered at Police Station Lal Bazar.

Nishat area, a house owner, namely Mohammad Ashraf Zargar S/o Mohammad Ramzan Zargar R/o Vakeel Colony, Brein was found in non-compliance with the mandatory reporting of Form C to FRO. In this connection, FIR No. 101/2025 U/S 8-23(b) of the Immigration and Foreigners Act was regispied by foreign nationals during their brief stay in the valley were found to be violating the norms. According to a police spokesman, Floating Castle owned by Farooq Ahmad Guroo S/o Late Gh Nabi Guroo R/o Ghat No 15 Nehru Park, boarded by Lee Ya Hui of Taiwan, Best View Houseboat owned by Faroog Ahmad Kutroo S/o Ali Mohd Kutroo R/o Ghat No 09 Da Lake, boarded by Maistruik Sergel of Russia, House Boat Crystal Palace, owned by Gh Hassan Karnai S/o Haji Gh Mohammad R/o Abi Karpora Dal lake, boarded by Naum Silviu of Romania and Houseboat Lake Palace, owned by Mohammad Altaf Gunna S/o Habibullah Gunna R/o Abi Karpora Dal Lake, boarded by Eduardo Tejerina Gonzalee of Spain, was found in violation of the norms for mandatory reporting rules. In this connection, FIR no. 94/2025 U/S 7.14, and 16 of the Immigration and Foreigner Act was registered in Police

In RamMunshi Bagh,

several houseboats occu-

Odisha records 40,947 crimes against women: Report

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE Bhuhaneswar

A total of 40,947 cases of crimes against women, including 3,205 rapes, were registered in Odisha in 15 months till September, according to data provided by Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi in the assembly on Monday.

These cases were reported since July 1, 2024, Majhi said, in reply to a written question by BJD legislator Prasanna Acharya.

The BJP came to power in the state in June 2024, ending the 24-year rule of the Naveen Patnaik-led BJD government. The opposition has been regularly criticising Majhi's government, ed by the CM, 202 cases of napping of women, 796



alleging that crimes against women have increased after the BJP came to power in the state.

According to data provid-

attempted rape, 1,476 cases of sexual harassment, 9,851 cases of molestations, 2,310 cases of public disrobing of women, 8,863 cases of kideve-teasing and 556 stalking cases were registered in the state during the period.

Among the other cases registered were 129 trafficking, 277 dowry homicides, 49 dowry suicides, 5,861 dowry tortures, 6,773 non-dowry tortures and 152 voyeurism. Four cases of acid attack were also lodged during the period.

Majhi said several steps have been taken to improve the quality of investigation, fast-tracking of the cases and improving the conviction rate. Investigative Units on Crime Against Women (IUCAW) are functioning in 29 districts. These units take up investigation of important and sensitive cases, he said.

today anyone who speaks

the Bengali language is

promptly dismissed as a

Bangladeshi which is humil-

iation of the Bengali

culture." Referring to Special

BJP claims LoP skipped PM's speech out of guilt



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE New Delhi

The BJP on Monday alleged that both Leader of Opposition (LoP) Rahul Gandhi and Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra remained absent from the Lok Sabha out of a "sense of Parliament House complex. guilt" during Prime Minister's speech on the 150th anniversary of Vande Mataram because he exposed their party and the Gandhi family. Initiating the discussion in the Lower House, Prime Minister Modi spoke about how the original version of the Vande of appeasement. Mataram was "truncated at the behest of" Jawaharlal Nehru to "appease"

and national spokesperson Sambit Patra said. "Perhaps this is the reason why the Leader of Opposition, Rahul Gandhi, and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra were absent from the House on such an important day when it is the 150th anniversary of Vande Matram and the

prime minister is speaking,"

Muhammad Ali Jinnah and

"this seed of division" that he

sowed at that time led to the

partition of India later to

"appease minorities", BJP MP

Patra charged.

Station RM Bagh.

They were absent because of the sense of guilt they had in their hearts because their own family cheated, deceived and betrayed the Vande Mataram. They knew that they wouldn't be able to bear it," he told reporters in the

Initiating the discussion on Vande Mataram in the Lok Sabha, Prime Minister Modi accused the Congress of breaking into pieces the national song under the guise of social harmony, and said it was still following the politics

He also targeted Nehru for 'agreeing" with the suggestion that Vande Mataram could antagonise Muslims. Modi cited a letter written by Nehru to Subhash Chandra Bose and claimed the former prime minister had said that the background of Vande Mataram could antagonise Muslims. He said the letter was written following a protest by Mohammad Ali

Jinnah in Lucknow. Terming Modi's speech "historic", Patra said the prime minister exposed the Congress and its betrayal towards Vande Mataram.

Bengal CM Mamata slams centre over IndiGo crisis

SAUGAR SENGUPTA | Kolkata

Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday slammed the Centre for mishandling the IndiGo crisis and asked the government to arrange for special train services as an alternative to ferry stranded passengers back to their destinations.

"Thousands of passengers are stranded at airports. so what is the alternative for them? This is a travel disaster as maximum number of flights has been stopped," Banerjee told in Kolkata even as the crisis involving India's largest air service provider entered its seventh day.

Alleging that the BJP-led Centre was only concerned about its votes and not the

interests of the people at large, Banerjee asked "the Government of India to make a plan to resolve the issue," adding, "it seems that the BIP is only concerned about capturing the institutions and not the interests of the people.

Speaking on the issue of Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressing to Bengali Novelist — and the creator of the coinage "Vande Mataram" — Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, as "Bankim Da" Banerjee attacked the former for being "unaware of the history of Bengal." This, though the Prime Minister corrected himself the next moment naming the pre-Independence writer as "Bankim Babu.'

Attacking the saffron lead-



ership she said, "they not only do not know history of Bengal but also they have been in the habit of Bengali icons like Netaji Subhas

Chandra Bose, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, Rabindranath Tagore, Vidya Sagar." She said "things have come to such a pass that

Intensive Revision of electoral rolls the Chief Minister also attacked the Election Commission of India for thrusting it on the people of Bengal in "most unplanned manner." She said, "it is difficult to understand why SIR was imposed in such an unplanned manner to be completed in a matter of mere two months why was there such a hurry.' The Chief Minister was

likely to begin a two-day trip of Cooch Behar in North Bengal where she would take up the SIR issue in public rallies, Trinamool Congress sources said.

Randhawa slams Navjot Kaur's ₹500 crore CM chair claim

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE New Delhi

After her " 500 crore for CMs chair" claim, Congress general secretary Sukhjinder Randhawa on Monday said it was "unfortunate" that Navjot Kaur Sidhu made such a remark and asked how much was paid when her husband Navjot Sidhu was made a minister and then the Punjab Congress president.

Randhawa, the former deputy chief minister of Punjab, also said the Congress faces threat from no one in the state but from such people within.

"It is unfortunate that Navjot Kaur Sidhu has made such a statement. Navjot Sidhu joined the Congress from the BJP, and he was made a minister. They should tell how much was paid for Sidhu to become a minister. He was made the number 2 minister. How much was paid?

"Then he was made the Congress



They should reveal how much was paid then," Randhawa told reporters outside Parliament. He also said they all worked with Sidhu and stayed with him when he was made the minister and then the PCC president.

"The party is supreme, the party president is supreme. The chief minister remains under him and leader claimed. "My sister Navjot Kaur

should tell how much money was paid for Sidhu to become the PCC president. For three-and-a-half years, Congress workers in Punjab have been beaten up and facing action from the ruling dispensation in Punjab. Why were they (Sidhus) silent for all this

Jharkhand migrants killed in Goa nightclub fire cremated

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Ranchi

The last rites of the three migrant workers from Jharkhand, killed in the fire at the Goa nightclub, were performed at their native places

on Monday. Pradeep Mahto (24) and Binod Mahto (20), two brothers from Fatehpur village in Lapung in Ranchi district, and Mohit Munda (22) of Govindpur village in Khunti district died in the inferno that ravaged the North Goa club post-midnight on Sunday.

A total of 25 people, including 14 staff members of the nightclub, were killed in the fire.

The bodies of Pradeep, Binod and Mohit, who used to work at the nightclub, were brought back to the state in the morning by a flight.

The mortal remains of Pradeep and Binod were cremated on the bank of the Karo river in Lapung, around 60 km from the state capital, in the presence of villagers and block officials.

The brothers had migrated to Goa about a year ago and



Family members and relatives of Mohit Munda, who was killed in the fire at a nightclub in North Goa mourn during his last rites in Khunti district of Jharkhand

used to send around ₹30,000 per month to their family.

"Both were unmarried. They were scheduled to celebrate Holi with us next vear." their elder brother Phagu Mahto said.

Mohit's last rites were performed as per tribal customs at his native village.

Agriculture Minister Shilpy Neha Tirkey, who coordinated with the Goa government to bring back the bodies,

said all three belonged to her

Mandar constituency.

'The bodies were sent to their native villages in special ambulances. I will request Chief Minister Hemant Soren for some welfare provisions for the families of the

victims," she told PTI. The Labour Department has handed ₹50,000 each to the families of the victims as

immediate assistance. Disaster Management Minister Irfan Ansari said compensation of ₹4 lakh

each would be provided to the kin of the workers.

"There is no such particular provision in this regard. However, as it is a very propeople government led by Chief Minister Hemant Soren, we have decided to give the compensation," he told reporters outside the assembly.

Ansari urged the Centre to provide compensation of ₹1 crore to the families of each



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HC adjourns hearing on plea seeking ASI survey of Gyanvapi's wazukhana



The Allahabad High Court on Monday adjourned hearing on a plea seeking an ASI survey of the 'wazukhana' area, excluding the structure described by the Hindu side as shivling, inside the Gyanvapi mosque at Varanasi till January 16. When the case was taken up on Monday, the court was informed that a related matter is pending before the Supreme Court. Subsequently, the court adjourned the hearing.

Justice Rohit Ranjan Agarwal is hearing the civil revision petition filed by Rakhi Singh, one of the plaintiffs in the Gyanvapi case. The petition has been filed challenging an order of a Varanasi judge passed on October 21, 2023 which refused to direct the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to survey the wazukhana (ablution) area except for the structure which the Hindu side calls a shivling and the Muslims describe as a fountain inside the Gyanvapi mosque located adjacent to the Kashi Vishwanath temple.

In her revision, Rakhi Singh has pleaded that the survey of the wazukhana area is necessary in the interest of justice. It shall benefit the plaintiff(s) and defendants alike and help the court arrive at a decision in the suit, the plea said.

Red Fort blast case: Delhi court extends NIA custody of 3 doctors, preacher by 4 days

A Delhi court on Monday extended the NIA custody of three doctors and a preacher, who were arrested in connection with the November 10 Red Fort blast case, by four days. All four accused - Dr Muzammil Ganai, Dr Adeel Rather, Dr Shaheena Saeed and Maulvi Irfan Ahmed Wagay - were produced before Principal and Sessions Judge Anju Bajaj Chandna on the expiry of their 10-day NIA custody granted on November 29.

Mediapersons were barred from covering the court proceedings, which were held under tight security in and around the Patiala House district court premises.

Till now, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) has made seven arrests in the case, which is linked to a 'white-collar' terror module busted by the Jammu and

"The agency continues to pursue various leads in connection with the suicide bombing, and has been conducting searches across states in coordination with the respective police forces to identify and track the others involved in the gruesome attack," the agency said in a statement earlier.





SC orders 30% seats for women in bar councils

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

The Supreme Court on Monday directed that 30 per cent seats in State Bar councils, where the election process has not been set in motion, be kept for women advocates.

A bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi said for the current year, the State Bar councils where elections are yet to be held should fill 20 per cent seats with women candidates and 10 per cent by cooption if there are not many desirous lawyers to contest.

The top court directed that a proposal for co-option shall be placed before the court in regard to the State Bar councils where the number of contesting women lawyers are inadequate.

At the outset, senior advocate Manan Kumar Mishra, who is also the chairperson of the Bar Council of India (BCI), informed the bench that the election process as per court's earlier direction has commenced in six Bar bodies with notification of the poll.

He submitted that the BCI, in principle, is of the view that

there should be at least 30 per cent women's reservation in the State Bar councils, and suggested that for the present year, the councils should be permitted to fill up

women candidates. He also proposed that 15 per cent of seats be filled by way of co-option of women

the posts by co-opting

However, the bench said it

would be appropriate if cooption is restricted to only 10 per cent seats.

The bench said it would not be prudent to reserve seats for women in the Bar councils, where the election process has already commenced.

It said in the Bar councils of Andhra Pradesh, Punjab and Harvana, Uttar Pradesh and Telangana, where elections

women members who are contesting the polls shall contest with full spirit, and the voters shall also make endeavours to ensure that adequate representation is provided to female advocates in the councils.

It made a similar appeal to the voters of the Bar councils of Bihar and Chhattisgarh, where elections have been notified. For the remaining be undertaken so that

Bar councils, the bench said 30 per cent seats shall be represented by women advocates out of which 20 per cent shall be by election and 10 per cent by co-option.

It said, "Wherever the women members of the Bbar are reluctant to come forward and contest the 20 per cent seats, the process of co-option in such Bar councils shall

cent representation in the executive council."

The top court was hearing pleas filed by

advocates Yogamaya M G and Shehla Chaudhary seeking reservation of one-third of seats for women in all State

Bar councils.

Senior advocate Meenakshi Arora, appearing for the petitioners, said that a blanket order for 30 per cent women's reservation across all state Bar councils may not be practical, as many states have very low percentages of practising women advocates.

On December 4, the top court asked the BCI to ensure 30 per cent reservation for women in the upcoming state Bar council elections. The pleas filed by Yogamaya and Chaudhary also sought that at least one office-bearer post be reserved for women lawyers on a rotational basis.

The pleas were filed relying upon the May 2, 2024, order of the top court, in which it was directed that one-third of seats in the executive committee of the Supreme Court Bar Association, including one office-bearer post, be reserved

Land-for-jobs scam: CBI seeks time to verify status of accused persons



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

The CBI on Monday sought time from a Delhi court to verify the status of various accused persons in the alleged land-for-jobs scam involving RJD chief Lalu Prasad, his family members and others.

Special CBI Judge Vishal Gogne is hearing the case on whether there is sufficient evidence to frame charges

The judge had, on December 4, directed the Central Bureau o f Investigation (CBI) to file a report after verifying the status of the accused in the case. Of the 103 accused, four have died. "Some time is sought on behalf of the CBI to verify the status of various accused persons in terms of the previous order. List on December 10," the judge said on Monday.

On November 10, the judge had deferred the order on framing charges against the accused till December 4.

The CBI had filed chargesheets against Lalu Yadav, his wife and former Bihar chief minister Rabri Devi, their son and former deputy chief minister Tejashwi Yadav and others in connection with the alleged scam.

The prosecution has alleged that appointments in the Group-D category of

the Indian Railways' West Central Zone based in Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh, were made during Lalu Yadav's tenure as the railway minister from 2004 to 2009 in return for land parcels gifted or transferred by the recruits in the name of the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) supremo's family members and associates.

The CBI has also claimed that the appointments were made in violation of norms and that the transactions involved benami properties, amounting to criminal misconduct and conspiracy. The accused have denied the charges and claimed that the case is politically motivated.

Court acquits actor Dileep, convicts six in 2017 actress sexual assault case

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

A Kerala court on Monday acquitted Malayalam cinema star Dileep in the sensational 2017 actress sexual assault case, in which six people, including the main accused charged with committing the crime, were pronounced guilty. In a case that made national headlines while sending shockwaves over the top actor's alleged involvement in the matter, three others, including Dileep's close friend Sarath, were also acquitted.

Coming out from the court, Dileep said that there was a "real conspiracy" by some police officials and a section of media to implicate him in the case earlier with an eye on destroying his career.

Dileep also said that his first wife and actress Maniu Warrier started a conspiracy to tag him in the case. The Left Government in Kerala said it would prefer an appeal against the lower court verdict while reiterating its support to the survivor, a multi-lingual female actor who has worked in a number of Malayalam, Tamil and Telugu movies.

Apart from Dileep (57), the eighth accused in the case, the court also acquitted three others — Charley



Thomas (A7), Sanil Kumar alias Mesthri Sanil (A9) and Sarath (A15). The verdict was pronounced by Ernakulam District and Principal Sessions Judge Honey M Varghese, in a tightly packed courtroom here.

Judge Honey M Varghese began by substantiating the offences charged in the case and then declared the first six accused — Sunil, Martin Antony, Manikandan B Vijesh VP, Salim H, and Pradeep, guilty.

"Since the offenses are grave and serious in nature and perpetrated against a woman, accused not entitled to get benevolence the Probation of Offenders Act.

cancelled and remanded to custody," the court ordered. They were charged under Sections of the then IPC and IT Act, including criminal conspiracy, wrongful confinement, gang rape, kidnapping or abducting a woman and criminal force to a woman with an intent to outrage her modesty. Later, after reading out the charges against Dileep, the cour

Bail bonds of A1 to A6 are

found him not guilty. Dileep was acquitted after the court ruled the prosecution failed to substantiate the charges, including criminal conspiracy, wrongful confinement, assault, gang rape, and related IPC offences.

SC seeks ED's response on journalist bail plea

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE New Delhi

The Supreme Court on asked the Enforcement Directorate (ED) to file its response within three days on a bail plea of journalist Mahesh Langa in a money laundering case linked to an alleged financial fraud. A bench comprising Chief Justice of India (CII) Surva Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi also asked senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for the jailed journalist, to file rejoinder, if needed, to the ED's response within two days of it The top court fixed the

case for further hearing on

During the brief hearing able at the moment.

December 15.

on Monday, Sibal said a journalist has been facing as many as six cases. "The journalist is accused of extortion," the counsel for the ED said and sought a short adjournment on the ground that Solicitor General Tuhar Mehta was unavail-

The top court on September 8 sought responses from the Gujarat Government and the ED on Langa's bail plea. While issuing the notices on Langa's bail plea, the bench asked, "What kind of a journalist is he?" "With due

genuine journalists. But there are also people who on their scooter say we are 'patrakar' (journalists) and

what they actually do everybody knows," the bench told Sibal. Sibal replied that these are all allegations. "In one FIR, he gets anticipatory bail, then a second FIR is lodged and again anticipatory bail is granted but now he is booked under a third FIR for income tax evasion. There are other things also against him," Sibal submitted. He added that there is a back-

On July 31, the Gujarat High Court rejected Langa's

ground to the case also.

respect, there are some very bail plea in the money laundering case on the grounds that if released on bail, prejudice would be caused to the prosecution case. On February 25, the ED said it arrested Langa in a money laundering investigation linked to an alleged financial fraud. He was first arrested in October 2024 in a GST fraud case.

The money laundering case against Langa stems from two FIRs filed by Ahmedabad police on charges of fraud, criminal misappropriation, criminal breach of trust, cheating and causing wrongful loss of lakhs of rupees to certain people.

the apex court. The a jail term of 10 to 20 years

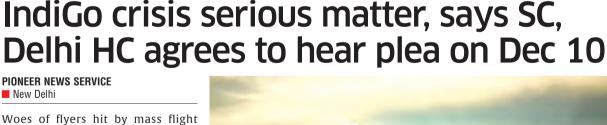
The airline has delivered 4,500 bags

out of a total of 9,000 to the passengers,

lation of flights by IndiGo was mentioned in the top court, a bench headed by the CJI said, "It is a serious matter. Lakhs of people are stranded at the airports. We know that the Government of India has taken timely action and cognisance of the issue.'

comprising Justice Joymalya Bagchi, added, "We know people may have health issues and other important

Over the day, a separate petition seeking directions to the Centre to provide support and refunds to affected passengers was mentioned in the Delhi High Court. A bench of Chief



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE New Delhi

Woes of flyers hit by mass flight cancellations by IndiGo found a compassionate ear in the Delhi High Court, which agreed to hear one of the pleas on December 10, while the Supreme Court termed the consequent chaos a "serious matter", but stopped short of intervening.

Chief Justice of India Surya Kant said lakhs of people are stranded at the airports, even though the apex court refused to accord an urgent hearing to a plea seeking judicial intervention into the matter, saying the Centre had taken steps to address it.

IndiGo cancelled 500 flights and plans to operate 1,802 services on Monday, the civil aviation ministry said.

and will deliver the rest in the next 36 hours, the ministry said in a statement. When a plea concerning the cancel-

IndiGo over the last few days, and the passengers were suffering. "The cancellations are not informed to the flyers," he said, adding that around 2,500 flights were delayed and flyers were hit at 95 airports across the country. In the High Court, the counsel The CJI, who was heading a bench for the petitioner said they had filed a PIL on the crisis with the airline.

"Several people are stuck. The ground

situation at airports is inhumane. We are expecting the court to pass orders to IndiGo and ground support staff for people stranded at the airports. There is no proper system for

When the High Court pointed out that

refunds," he said.

Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya

and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela listed the

Before the apex court, a lawyer men-

tioned the issue and said there have

been a lot of flight cancellations by

matter for hearing on December 10.

the Government had already passed some directions in the matter, the counsel responded in the affirmative. The bench said the PIL will be listed

for hearing on December 10. IndiGo has been facing heat from both

the Centre and the passengers for cancelling hundreds of flights since December 2, citing regulatory changes in the pilots' flight duty and regulations norms. The disruptions have left lakhs of passengers stranded at airports across the country.

Over 250 IndiGo flights were cancelled from Delhi and Bengaluru airports on Monday as the disruptions of the airline's flight operations entered the seventh

At the Delhi airport, 134 flights were cancelled - 75 departures and 59 arrivals -- while at the Bengaluru airport, the carrier cancelled 117 services — 65 arrivals and 62 departures, they said.

SC seeks response from Rajasthan on plea challenging validity of anti-conversion law

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday issued notice to the Rajasthan Government seeking its response on a petition challenging the validity of the State's 2025 law against illegal religious

A bench of Justices Dipankar Datta and Augustine George Masih tagged the plea filed by 'Catholic Bishops Conference

pending petitions challenging the validity of the provisions of the Rajasthan Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Act, 2025. The top court had earlier

of India' with separate

agreed to hear some separate pleas raising similar issues and sought replies from the state Government. During the hearing on Monday, Solicitor General

Tushar Mehta told the bench

that similar matters are

pending consideration before

petitioner has urged the apex court to declare the 2025 Act "ultra vires and unconstitutional". The Rajasthan law has a provision of imprisonment for 20 years to life for mass conversions through deception and a jail term of seven to 14 years for conversions by fraudulent means. Conversion of minors,

women, Scheduled Castes,

Scheduled Tribes, and

persons with disabilities

through deceit would attract

and a fine of at least ₹10 lakh. In September, another bench of the apex court

had sought the stand of several states on separate pleas seeking a stay on their respective anticonversion laws. The top court had then

made it clear that it would consider the prayer for staying the operation of such laws once the replies were filed.







Why India needs a legal right to disconnect

A nation cannot build a future on depleted minds and exhausted bodies. Supriya Sule's Bill offers not just legal protection but a cultural reset

Stress has become endemic in the corporate world, and "burnout" is now the widely accepted term for it. Burnout is a state of intense physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion caused by prolonged and excessive work-related stress. These two words capture the reality of today's corporate workforce on a massive scale. The death of 26-year-old chartered accountant Anna Sebastian Perayil, whose death was linked to severe work-related stress, is a case in point.

The irony is that most people do not even realise they are experiencing it, seeking treatment is a far cry. Reports of suicides and worsening mental health due to work pressure are increasingly common. Both mental and physical health deteriorate sharply, leaving individuals drained, cynical, and exhausted. Fatique, insomnia, headaches, detachment, and disturbed sleep have become alarmingly routine.

The constant ringing of the smartphone and the rise of hybrid digital work culture have erased personal boundaries, making it difficult for many to have any "me time". Being available 24×7 has turned into a modern form of slavery that takes a heavy toll on lives.

To restore work-life balance, Supriya Sule has taken an important initiative. If her proposal succeeds, it may soon become law, introducing penalties for employers who overstep time boundaries and encroach on workers' personal lives. Supriya Sule's Right to Disconnect Bill, 2025, is a longoverdue intervention, seeking to restore a basic but endangered human need: the right to switch off and relax.

The core premise of the Bill is simple yet transformative. It states that employees should not be penalised for choosing not to respond to work-related communication after office hours. The bill sets to end the culture of checking messages throughout the day, during dinner, on weekends, and even on holidays. Studies have repeatedly shown that such constant pressure to check phone leads to sleep deprivation, chronic stress, emotional burnout, and a slow erosion of family life.

The Bill recognises that mental health is not separate from productivity; it is its very foundation. Importantly, the legislation does not ignore the realities of India's competitive and diverse business landscape. Sule's proposal allows companies to set their own after-hours communication norms through Employees' Welfare Committees. Companies that disregard these provisions could face penalties equivalent to one per cent of their total employee remuneration, ensuring that compliance is mandatory and damages are for real.

Yet the path ahead is not without challenges. India's workforce is vast and varied, and cultural attitudes often equate overwork with dedication. Smaller firms may fear compliance burdens, while multinational companies may worry about servicing their offshore clients. Besides, enforcement remains a perennial weakness in India.

Despite these obstacles, the direction is clear and the move is a step in right direction. For India to continue its progress, it must safeguard the well-being of its workers.

SAARC@40: An idea that refuses to die

As the world reorganises around regional blocs and shared vulnerabilities, South Asia cannot afford to remain disconnected. SAARC may be dormant, but its spirit endures, waiting for a political moment that restores its relevance



SANTHOSH MATHEW

Forty years ago, on a December morning in 1985, South Asia embarked on an ambitious experiment. Seven neighbours — united by shared histories yet separated by borders, suspicion and political complications — met in Dhaka to outline a collective vision for peace, prosperity and cooperation. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) emerged from that hope, designed to transcend bilateral tensions and forge a regional identity grounded in development. Four decades later, that optimism feels remote. The organisation has been effectively frozen since 2014, its institutional vitality drained by enduring political hostilities. Yet, paradoxically, the idea of SAARC is more essential today than ever. The phrase "SAARC is dead, long live SAARC" captures this duality: the institution may be dormant, but the logic of regional cooperation remains compelling.

South Asia itself embodies profound contradictions. It is home to nearly 40 per cent of the world's democracies, each with its strengths and complexities. Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka together represent one of the most diverse political landscapes on earth. Bangladesh's strides in poverty alleviation, Bhutan's pioneering Gross National Happiness framework, Sri Lanka's social indicators, Nepal's federal evolution, Maldives' climate resilience, Pakistan's active civil society, Afghanistan's enduring cultural heritage and India's unmatched electoral scale all testify to a region rich in innovation and vitality.

To see South Asia only through the prism of conflict is to overlook its immense civilisational, demographic and strategic advantages. This potential, however, has been consistently undermined by geopolitical mistrust, particularly between India and Pakistan. SAARC's stagnation is rooted in this unresolved hostility. Without political trust at the highest level, regional structures lose momentum. The cost of this paralysis has been significant. South Asia remains among the least economically integrated regions in the world. Intra-regional trade hovers around a mere 5 per cent, compared with ASEAN's over 25 per cent. High tariffs, rigid borders and bureaucratic obstacles have stifled the movement of goods, services and ideas that could dramatically uplift the region.

Against this backdrop, the South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) deserves renewed focus. Operational since 2006, SAFTA was designed to dismantle tariff and non-tariff barriers and build a seamless regional market. Fully implemented, it could transform South Asia economically by strengthening supply chains, reducing logistics costs and opening vast new opportunities for employment and investment. The stakes are large: nearly 736 million South Asians still live in



TO SEE SOUTH **ASIA ONLY** THROUGH THE PRISM OF **CONFLICT IS TO OVERLOOK ITS IMMENSE** CIVILISATIONAL, **DEMOGRAPHIC** AND STRATEGIC ADVANTAGES. THIS POTENTIAL,

HOWEVER, HAS **BEEN** CONSISTENTLY UNDERMINED BY **GEOPOLITICAL** MISTRUST, **PARTICULARLY BETWEEN INDIA** AND PAKISTAN

Santhosh Mathew is a Professor at Puducherry University, and Inputs by **Denny Thomas**

@veranani

extreme poverty. Global comparisons illustrate what is possible. The African Continental Free Trade Area is projected to raise Africa's regional income by 7 per cent and lift 30 million people out of extreme poverty by 2035. With its larger consumer base and energetic private sector, South Asia could achieve even more if SAFTA were revived with genuine political commitment.

But cooperation must extend beyond trade. South Asia's civilisational heritage — Hinduism, Buddhism and Sufi traditions — offers a reservoir of cultural connections that can be harnessed to rebuild trust even when politics stagnates. India's soft power initiatives, such as the Buddhist Circuit, the revival of

University, the International Solar Alliance and the International Big Cat Alliance, create platforms that transcend **SINCE 1865** political divides. These efforts draw

on the ethos of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam — the world is one family — and demonstrate that meaningful regional collaboration does not always require formal institutional momentum.

India's neighbourhood-first policy has, in many ways, kept the idea of SAARC alive. The South Asia Satellite exemplified technological cooperation, supporting communication and disaster management across the region. India's vaccine diplomacy during the COVID-19 pandemic further highlighted its role as a regional first responder. When global supply chains collapsed, India supplied vaccines and essential medical aid to Nepal, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Bangladesh and other neighbours. More recently, India's rapid assistance during the Sri Lankan floods under Operation Sagar Bandhu reaffirmed its consistent commitment to regional humanitarian support. Such gestures cannot replace formal diplomacy, but they help rebuild trust and demonstrate the tangible value of cooperation.

Every member of SAARC, however, must recognise what is lost by leaving the organisa-

tion dormant. South Asia faces shared, transnational problems - climate change, water scarcity, terrorism, cybercrime, unemployment and migration — that no country can solve alone. The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation's Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure provides a useful example of how coordinated security cooperation strengthens collective resilience. A comparable mechanism within SAARC could enhance intelligence-sharing and counter-terrorism efforts at a moment when radicalisation and cyber threats are growing.

Equally significant is the demographic challenge. South Asia has the world's largest youth

population, with nearly 100,000 people entering the labour force **Jioneer** each day, yet UNICEF estimates that more than half will lack the skills needed for employment by 2030. Without regional frame-

works for mobility, innovation, skilling and academic exchange, this demographic dividend could be squandered, even though instruments such as the dormant SAARC Youth Charter offer a ready framework for collaboration.

A reimagined SAARC must also prioritise mobility. Visa liberalisation, academic exchanges, cross-border tourism and digital corridors can revive cultural linkages and unlock economic potential. Drawing on Europe's multiple-entry visas or ASEAN's reciprocal arrangements, South Asia could adopt Mutual Favourable Access to facilitate travel, study and business with transformative impact.

Ultimately, SAARC's future may lie in redefining it as a flexible development platform focused on digital public goods, climate resilience, health networks and research collaboration. India's digital governance tools — UPI, Aadhaar architecture, e-governance and tele-health could anchor such a partnership, reaffirming a shared South Asian destiny rooted in cooperation, connectivity and collective prosperity.

PIC TALK



Artists from Punjab perform at the National Craft Fair in Prayagraj.

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Confronting popcorn brain in the digital age



SAKSHI SETHI

ND OPINION THE PIONEER

In the relentless pulse of our digital era, silence has become a scarce commodity. Screens glow from dawn to midnight; alerts blink with the insistence of tiny sirens; content arrives in bursts designed to captivate and distract. In this environment of continuous cognitive stimulation, a troubling behavioural pattern has entered educational conversations: Popcorn Brain Syndrome. Though not a medical diagnosis, the term vividly expresses a growing reality-minds conditioned to crave rapid, high-intensity digital input, much like kernels bursting unpredictably in hot oil. For educators, this is no passing metaphor but a looming crisis. Increasingly, teachers observe shrinking attention spans, heightened restlessness, and an erosion of the ability to engage in deep, sustained thinking. The modern student,

equipped with limitless access to information, is paradoxically losing the capacity to grapple with it meaningfully. When the brain becomes accustomed to the quick bursts of dopamine offered by fast-paced media, slower, more reflective tasks-reading, writing, analytical reasoningbegin to feel burdensome. The very founda-

tion of real learning is compromised. The sits in class, eyes fixed on the teacher, but their attention flickers. A phantom notification tugs at their mind; an impulse to check a device momentarily derails focus. This mental hopping

mirrors popcorn in motion-bright, brief, and directionless. What suffers in the process is not merely academic performance, but the deeper capacities that shape intellectual maturity: critical thinking, creativity, emotional steadiness, and the ability to connect ideas in meaningful ways. Reflection, that slow and steady cultivator of insight,

Teachers now carry a dual mandate: to deliver curriculum content and to rebuild the cognitive stamina necessary to absorb it. It is a daunting task-almost like teaching a child to find stillness while surrounded by whirlpools of distraction. Yet it is not an impossible one. Recognising that Popcorn Brain is a cultural construct-not a personal failing-is the first step. Our digital environment is designed to hook, stimulate, and fragment; young learners are simply

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

responding to the architecture around them. The solution, therefore, is not to reject technology but to reintroduce balance. Classrooms can become places where deliberate pauses are woven into the learning fabric. Slow reading exercises, device-free discussions, and moments of reflection can act as anchors.

Teachers can cultivate an atmosphere signs are subtle yet unmistakable. A student where depth is celebrated over speed, where observation matters as much as reaction. observation matters as much as reaction. Simple routines-journalling, mindful breathing, silent thinking-can gently retrain wander-

ing minds. Parents, too, play a pivotal role. Children absorb what they see, not what they are told. A home where conversation, play, and unstructured time coexist with digital tools helps restore natural rhythms of attention. The partnership between school and family is essential to recalibrating young minds. The broader education system must recognise this phenomenon as a silent disruptor of learning outcomes. As curricula grow more rigorous, attention has become a critically limited resource, making investment in executive function, emotional regulation and digital discipline urgent. Without intervention, Popcorn Brain will continue to fragment focus across classrooms, undermining deep engagement and sustained understanding that are essential for shaping thoughtful, purposeful thinkers.

The writer is an educator and counsellor

THE NAMAMI GANGA PROGRAMME: GANGA **GHATS REVEAL ADMINISTRATIVE LAPSES**

The front-page report of 8 December on the deteriorating condition of Ganga ghats exposes a grim and deeply troubling account of man-made neglect. The collapse of ghat infrastructure across Uttarakhand and along the Gangetic plains is the result of multiple failures, foremost among them weak municipal accountability compounded by persistent local political

interference. Ghats are often sanctioned to serve constituency interests, even when locations are ecologically fragile or geographically

The Namami Ganga programme was conceived as an ambitious and essential initiative to conserve the river and protect surrounding plains from floods during the monsoon. Yet, crores of rupees have been squandered

due to poor planning, inadequate supervision, and indifference on the ground. Public apathy has further aggravated the problem, with citizens frequently neglecting their responsibility to maintain cleanliness and preserve environmental assets created for their benefit.

Ganga ghats are sensitive environmental interventions requiring expert design and sustained oversight by conservation architects and geological scientists, yet serious consultation with such specialists appears largely absent, Local municipal authorities must therefore be held fully accountable for maintenance and for regulating public access during vulnerable periods to prevent further degradation.

VINOD JOHRI | DELHI

IndiGo disruptions signal deeper crisis

There has been widespread chaos at several airports as turbulence in IndiGo's operations continues unabated, leaving passengers anxious, exhausted, and stranded for over a week. Mass cancellations and delays have transformed terminals into scenes of distress, with travellers sleeping on floors and, in some cases, near operational areas. Many passengers missed job interviews, family emergencies, and long-planned commitments, despite tickets being reissued multiple times only to face repeated cancellations. While IndiGo has stated that operations will stabilise by December 15, this assurance rings hollow for those still marooned without clarity or support. The situation reflects not merely operational failure but a deeper issue of regulatory oversight. Both IndiGo and the DGCA ignored early warning signs arising from new pilot duty norms.

Instead of adjusting manpower to meet regulatory requirements, IndiGo expanded its winter schedule, fully aware of its staffing limitations. It is deeply concerning that regulatory authorities appeared to yield under pressure, easing norms to manage public inconvenience. Such short-term relief undermines aviation safety and accountability. This crisis must serve as a moment for corrective action, not quiet compromise. BHAGWAN THADANI | MUMBAI

Goa tragedy highlights safety failures

Apropos "Goa nightclub blaze kills 25" (Dec. 8), the devastating incident once again exposes how routine disregard for safety norms turns leisure spaces into sites of avoidable tragedy. Reports indicate a convergence of structural violations, inadequate exits, and delayed emergency access-conditions that make disaster inevitable rather than accidental. More troubling is the apparent awareness of these violations by multiple authorities, followed by delayed or diluted action.

As Goa's tourism economy expands, the need for professional oversight becomes critical, especially in venues with high crowd density and limited evacuation options. Safety cannot depend on goodwill or postincident outrage. Mandatory clearances, transparent licensing, and regular inspections must be strictly enforced. Officials who ignore violations must be held as accountable as operators who commit them. Infrastructure issues such as narrow access roads and informal expansions further compound risk and must be addressed urgently. A coordinated emergency protocol involving municipal bodies, fire services, and police should be standard, not reactive. A time-bound review of all public entertainment venues would be a constructive first step toward preventing future tragedies.

Aviation regulation under scrutiny

It takes years to build a reputation, but only days to destroy it. The ongoing IndiGo crisis appears less accidental and more self-inflicted, aided by regulatory inertia. Despite being aware of revised pilot duty norms, both the airline and the DGCA failed to act in time. IndiGo's decision to expand its winter schedule without adequate crew strength reflects corporate arrogance rather than operational prudence.

Equally culpable is the regulator's delayed auditing and passive oversight, which allowed the situation to escalate into a national disruption. When the crisis peaked, the DGCA appeared compelled to dilute enforcement to ease passenger hardship, effectively allowing the airline to escape accountability. Such precedents are dangerous in a safety-critical sector like aviation.

This year has already witnessed tragic incidents, including an aircraft crash in Ahmedabad, helicopter accidents in Uttarakhand, and an ATC systems failure

Together, these point to systemic vulnerabilities. The current disruption offers the aviation ministry a crucial opportunity to conduct a comprehensive review and institute reforms.

Please send your letter to the info@dailypioneer.com.

A MYILSAMI | TAMIL NADU

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Misuse of FRA: Undermining forest rights framework

From recognising ineligible encroachments to manipulating community forest rights, the law meant to protect vulnerable groups and safeguard forests is being bent and exploited. This misuse now threatens both conservation goals and the long-term credibility of India's forest rights framework







ARVIND **KUMAR JHA**

Although the Forest Survey of India, in its 2023 report, indicates an increasing trend in the country's forest cover, a major undisclosed ailment is affecting the heart of India's forest conservation efforts: the alleged widespread misuse of the Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006. Apart from procedural irregularities and misreading of provisions noticed in the implementation of the FRA, the major and substantive issues are the recognition of post-2005 encroachments on forest land as Individual Forest Rights (IFR) for habitation or cultivation, and the massscale grant of management rights (named Community Forest Resource Rights, or CFRR, under the FRA Rules amended in 2012) in cases of grossly ineligible claims.

The pattern of misuse of the FRA was initially highlighted by the 2011 NC Saxena Committee Report. The Committee, an inter-ministerial body, raised serious concerns about the recognition of ineligible claims. It found evidence that "fresh encroachers, with business interests in forest lands", were manipulating the Act in states such as Maharashtra and Assam. The Committee pointed to specific instances of forest land being cleared after the cut-off date of December 13, 2005 in protected areas such as Kawal Sanctuary and Yaval Sanctuary, stressing that the FRA was never intended to be a "ploy to distribute national wealth of forest land to all claimants irrespective of their real legal eligibility". The FRA is meant exclusively for Forest Dwelling Scheduled Tribes (FDSTs) and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (OTFDs).

The Maharashtra Forest Department launched a detailed study in 2012 covering 35,044 finally approved Individual Forest Rights (IFR) cases, encompassing over 60,000 hectares of forest land across

The Department established a system using Cartosat-1 satellite images from 2005, 2007, and 2011, overlaid with GPS polygons delineating land parcels for each claim. Data on granted cases was available on the website of Maharashtra's Tribal Research and Training Institute (TRTI), which had developed and utilised a robust, transpar-

India's Viksit Bharat aspiration by 2047 transcends

traditional capital investment. While tangible

infrastructure remains critical, the primary con-

straint to sustained, high-quality growth is the

knowledge ecosystem deficit. To successfully tran-

sition from a middle-income economy to a fully

developed nation, India must aggressively cultivate a robust, home-grown intellectual infrastruc-

ture; one encompassing R&D, credible think tanks,

advanced data infrastructure, and scalable

India's gross expenditure on R&D (GERD)

remains persistently low at just 0.65 per cent of

GDP; far below advanced economies such as the

US and Germany (3 per cent), as well as emerg-

ing markets like China (2 per cent). This places

India well under the global average of approxi-

mately 1.8 per cent, reflecting a structural under-

investment in innovation. This structural weak-

ness is compounded by a profound imbalance:

only about 5 per cent of India's R&D spending

comes from the private sector, compared to

While the 2025-26 Union Budget increased

national R&D allocations to ₹61,028 crore, repre-

senting only 1.28 per cent of the Central Budget,

the scale is still insufficient to trigger the kind of

innovation acceleration India needs. The govern-

ment's announcement of a ₹1 lakh crore Research

Development and Innovation (RDI) Fund in 2025

could be transformative, but its impact will hinge

on execution discipline and meaningful alignment

with private-sector investment. For the fund to

succeed, execution discipline must include trans-

parent governance, mandated industry co-

funding, and a focus on measurable outcomes

This chronic underinvestment depresses inno-

vation output, technological absorption, and pro-

ductivity growth. OECD studies show that a 1 per

cent rise in business R&D increases productivi-

ty by approximately 0.13 per cent, and an equiv-

alent increase in public R&D yields about 0.17 per

cent productivity growth. If India does not

correct its R&D deficit, it cannot realistically close

grants have grown fourfold, from 7,509 (2010-11)

to 28,391 (2020-21), and patent applications have

risen from approximately 39,400 to 58,500

(Economic Survey 2022). In 2023, India was

among the fastest-growing patent origins glob-

ally (WIPO). The gap, though, remains large. India's

patent portfolio is still only a small fraction of

its productivity gap with peer economies India's innovation output has improved. Patent

tied to national priorities.

approximately 70 per cent in the US.

domestic innovation capacity.



THE FACT ALSO REMAINS THAT **GENUINE** COMMUNITIES AND ELIGIBLE LANDS, SUCH AS SACRED **GROVES AND** COMMUNITY-OCCUPIED. **CUSTOMARILY AND RULE-BASED** MANAGED AREAS **AWAITING** FORMALISATION OF **THEIR** MANAGEMENT AND **GOVERNANCE** UNDER THE FRA,

> **BKP Sinha is Former PCCF.** UP and Arvind Kumar Jha is

LEFT OUT

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HAVE SIMPLY BEEN

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs SINCE 1865 (MoTA) amended the FRA Rules in 2012, effectively downgrading the evidentiary value of satellite imagery. Such imagery, as well as other uses of technology, could thereafter be used only to "supplement" other forms of evidence and not as a replacement. Critics argue that this

move prioritised subjective claims over

maximum permissible limit of

ent, and technology-driven verification

system for comparing land-use status

before and after the December 2005 cut-

off date, documenting approximately 2.9

Despite this technological safety net

based on satellite imagery, it was found

that about 16 per cent of the studied cases

were granted IFRs on lands that were

clearly ineligible-being fully barren, tree-

covered, or a mixture of both, as seen in

satellite images. More than 3,000 cases

showing land-use change, specifically

conversion to cultivation after the 2005

cut-off date, were also found to have been

cleared as valid claims. Additionally,

approximately 4 per cent of cleared claims exceeded the

lakh polygons under IFR claims.

Maharashtra's well-grounded system was not only derailed but the invaluable dataset of 2.9 lakh GPS polygons embedded in satellite imagery also reportedly became untraceable. Notably, in response to a requirement from the Forest Survey of India (FSI) for analysis in compliance with the Hon'ble Supreme Court's February 2019 order in Writ Petition (C) No. 109/2008, Maharashtra did not make the data available. With regard to eviction of encroachers, no state has initiated proceedings against those with rejected claims, and even the Hon'ble Supreme Court, on February 28, 2019, stayed its own

eviction order within fifteen days.

The right to minor forest produce is mandated to be limited to the quantity traditionally collected The Pioneer by beneficiaries. However, the recognition process has been

misused to grant rights over the entire commercial MFP output and trade, often to Gram Sabhas, disregarding the heterogeneity and occupational diversity of their members. As a result, new intermediaries are emerging in states such as Maharashtra and Odisha. They operate as contractors in league with tendu leaf objective science. As a result, while many traders, while the intended empowerment states, including major ones such as of FDST and OTFD communities for Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh, resource conservation and democratic

is subverted. A similar atmosphere is being created in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh to dismantle their federationbased systems

With regard to CFRRs, these are being illegally recognised almost unabated on government forest lands (such as Reserved or Protected Forests under working plans), even though their specified location is statutorily limited to "customary common forest land" or "community forest resource" as defined in the Act. Further, CFRRs are being granted to ineligible communities that do not meet the criteria under Section 3(1)(i), which requires proof of a traditional role in protection and conservation of the land under claim. Such grants to ineligible entities have been facil itated by amendments to the FRA Rules themselves, whereby the presence of even a few Scheduled Tribes or OTFDs qualifies a Gram Sabha to submit a claim. Shockingly, scrutiny of 80 randomly selected sanctioned cases from districts in Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh reveals that all are illegal recognitions. Meanwhile, genuine communities and eligible lands, such as sacred groves and customary rule-based managed areas awaiting formalisation under the FRA, have been excluded.

Unfortunately, misuse of the FRA has been continuously and systematically

ignored despite repeated complaints. Foresters objecting to ineligible claims in Sub-Divisional and District-level Committee meetings are often branded anti-tribal and persecuted. Pressurised, and frequently backed by political authorities and civil society, Committees tend to exceed the Act's provisions with impunity, without recognising that the long-term sustenance of forest rights depends on the sustainability of forest resources. While the MoTA issues regular instructions for reconsideration of rejected claims, it has never mandated scrutiny of approved claims, even on a sample basis. By reiterating that implementation responsibility lies with States and Union Territories, it overlooks the implication that reviewing rejected cases while ignoring illegally granted ones amounts to implicit permission for continued misuse.

Objective and verifiable scientific evidence must be treated as the primary defence against fraudulent claims, not merely a supplement to easily manipulated traditional evidence. The FRA Rules must therefore be amended to restore the high evidentiary value of satellite imagery and GPS data. The government, in accordance with Section 13 of the FRA, must demonstrate a genuine commitment to enforcing all existing laws.

Prosecution of powerful individuals misusing the FRA for land speculation or for harming the interests of genuine beneficiaries can act as a strong deterrent. While the Central Empowered Committee's recent action regarding alleged irregularities in IFRs granted to Podu cultivators in Telangana is welcome, rectifying errors requires significant resources and political neutrality. Comprehensive retraining must therefore be provided to Committee members to ensure strict implementation of the Act, and they must be held accountable for permitting demonstrably false claims.

The government should prioritise the establishment of a National Audit Mechanism for technology-based scrutiny of approved cases and cancellation of all illegally recognised rights. The MoTA, in collaboration with the FSI and the National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC), must develop and maintain a centralised database to securely store GPS polygons and records of recognised claims nationwide. Given the scale of potential error, the FRA must not be allowed to undermine conservation laws or the rights of genuine. eligible forest dwellers.

Towards a home-grown knowledge ecosystem







KUNTALA KARKUN

of high-quality publications come from fewer than 200 institutions, signalling an ecosystem that remains narrow, institutionally shallow, and highly concentrated. Yet India has proven that strategic investments

programme, built on modest budgets and indige- partnerships. nous capabilities, has delivered world-class missions such as Chandrayaan and Mangalyaan at a The Pioneer fraction of global costs. India's digital

public infrastructure (DPI) has revolutionised financial inclusion and service delivery and now serves as a model for developing nations worldwide. These successes demonstrate that when India invests in knowledge systems with clarity and commitment, the results can leapfrog conventional development paths. Talent

is not the constraint. Institutional depth is. A successful knowledge ecosystem requires more than isolated R&D labs; it needs the systemic translation of research into actionable policy and practice. Strong, independent domestic think tanks, policy centres, and data institutions are crit-

ical for: Contextualisation: Bridging the gap between academic research and on-the-ground implementation, generating timely, governance, which global firms often lack.

 Diffusion: Ensuring technology and best practices are adapted and diffused to MSMEs and lagging regions, mitigating the concentration of innovation within a few large firms or urban

 Intellectual sovereignty: Protecting India's development agenda from being shaped by foreign-funded or non-contextual research, and offering a cost-efficient alternative to large, protracted global consulting engagements for struc-

India's current policy research landscape remains fragmented. While NITI Aayog plays an important role in policy formulation, the broader ecosystem of independent think tanks and research institutions operates at a limited scale with constrained resources. Many rely heavily on external grants, limiting their ability to pursue long-term, strategic research agendas.

Global studies show that a 1 per cent increase in R&D intensity typically delivers a 0.13-0.17 per cent annual boost in productivity growth (OECD). Raising R&D spending could help India break into upper-middle-income bracket, strengthen industrial competitiveness, and power high-skill job creation in digital technology, biotechnology, artificial intelligence, and clean technology

To realise this vision, policymakers must act with long-term focus. Key steps should include: Raising R&D investment to globally compet-China's or the United States', and over 70 per cent itive levels. Set a clear national target for R&D

intensity; for example, gradually increasing from approximately 0.65 per cent to at least 2 per cent of GDP by 2047, with an increasing share from the private sector. This will require not only higher government outlays but also incentives yield transformative outcomes. ISRO's space such as tax credits, grants, and public-private

reportedly discontinued their use, local governance envisioned by the FRA

 Institutionalising long-term funding for domestic think tanks and policy research bodies. Create a dedicated Viksit Bharat Knowledge Fund or similar endowment, allowing multi-

year grants, seed funding for new institutions, and stable operating resources.

 Building a National Knowledge Ecosystem. Link universities, research institutes, think tanks, industry, and government into a network that facilitates research, innovation, technology transfer, policy formulation, and diffusion of knowledge, especially to MSMEs and lagging regions. Promoting technology diffusion beyond large firms. Provide support for smaller firms and regional enterprises to adopt or adapt technologies through subsidies, incubation, outreach, and technical assistance.

• Expanding the notion of a "domestic Big Four" beyond consulting firms. Encourage the emergence of large, credible, Indian-owned knowledge institutions and think tanks that can compete granular, India-focused participal foundation globally in consultancy, policy research, data for evidence-based Putting India First to Make India First data analytics, design, and technology transfer.

> India's CSR spending has grown sharply, from ₹26,278 crore in FY22 to ₹34,909 crore in FY24 (Bharat CSR Performance Report, 2024), yet less than 3 per cent of this pool supports research, policy, or knowledge infrastructure. Redirecting even 5-10 per cent of CSR funding towards knowledge creation-such as think tanks, public data systems, applied research labs, and digital public goods-would significantly strengthen India's intellectual capacity. In parallel, industry must deepen its own R&D investment by leveraging fiscal incentives, building in-house research capabilities, and expanding industry-academia collaboration. Together, these shifts would reduce dependence on imported technologies and external consulting, while building the longterm competitiveness required for India's inno-

> For India to become a developed nation, it must invest as much in brains, ideas, and institutions as in roads, ports, and industrial parks. Countries that mastered the knowledge game-South Korea, Germany, and Japan-used it to leapfrog into highgrowth, high-productivity, high-innovation economies. India's story must now follow that path. Viksit Bharat requires Viksit Buddhi; a developed nation needs developed minds. The time to build is now.

Director at Pahle India Foundation & Kuntala at Pahle India Foundation

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MAHENDRA **KUMAR SINGH**

Understanding the Yogi factor

The figure of Yogi Adityanath, Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, invariably triggers a familiar, polarised debate. To his supporters, he is the 'Hindu Hriday Samrat', a decisive administrator who has restored order and pride. To his detractors, he is a deeply divisive communalist and a symbol of majoritarian assertion that undermines India's secular fabric. This binary, however, is a lazy and inadequate framework — a relic of an older political vocabulary that fails to capture the complexity of his political project. To understand Yogi Adityanath's enduring influence, one must look beyond the simplistic communal-versus-secular

His politics represents a far more sophisticated and potent synthesis: a unique blend of spiritual authority from the Gorakhnath Peeth, a strategic project of "subaltern Hindutva", and a governance model framed around "Lok Kalyan" (public welfare). This model is rooted in a politics of labharthi (beneficiary) and a law-and-order situation unimaginable in Uttar Pradesh before 2017. It fulfils a public craving not just for a normal life but for a quality of life that many felt was sacrificed under the previous guise of social justice. These elements converge into a powerful form of identity politics that is fundamentally reshaping the

At the core of Yogi Adityanath's identity is his role as the Mahant, or head priest, of the Gorakhnath Peeth.

This is not merely a religious title; it is the bedrock of his philosophical outlook and an autonomous source of political legitimacy. The Peeth, belonging to the Nath Panth tradition, carries a legacy of spiritual and temporal influence that predates modern political parties by centuries. This role grants him an authority insulated from the whims of party politics, setting him apart from career politicians. Crucially, the Peeth's ideology provides a philosophical bridge connecting the spiritual to the material.

The principle of 'Lok Kalyan' is central here. Adityanath articulates a vision in which spiritual values are not antithetical to material progress but are its very foundation. He has often stated that India's spiritual traditions provide a "moral compass to humanity", rooted in compassion and the principle of 'live and let live'. He argues that "spirituality, cultural advancement, and material development all require a safe, civilised, and clean environment". This philosophy allows him to seamlessly frame the construction of a temple and the building of an expressway as complementary, not contradictory, acts-both presented as sacred duties in the larger project of national reju-

venation. This refutes the Western-inspired dichotomy that separates the sacred from the profane, offering a holistic vision in which development is imbued with cultural and spiritual

Perhaps the most politically astute element of the Yogi model is its project of 'subaltern Hindutva'-a conscious effort to broaden the social base of Hindu nationalism beyond its traditional upper-caste anchor. This is a strategic move to dismantle the caste-based political fortresses of parties such as the Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party, whose politics of social justice gradually converted into fiefdoms of specific families and castes. This re-engineering operates on multiple fronts. First, there is the radical inclusivity historically associated with the Gorakhnath Peeth itself, an unorthodox institu-

tion known for its openness to lower castes. Second, and more crucially, was the founding of the Hindu Yuva Vahini, an organisation that gave prominent positions and a sense of agency to youth from OBC and Dalit communities, alongside their mobilisation in the Ram Janmabhumi Andolan by his guru, Mahant Avaidyanath. This created a populist, often aggressive, form of 'non-Brahmin Hindutva'. It empowered non-dominant castes by tapping into their "anxieties and aspirations" — their desire for recognition and a share of power that they felt was denied to them by established 'social justice' parties. By offering a platform within a pan-Hindu identity, the Yogi model convinced a significant section of the subaltern electorate that their interests were better served by aligning with a majoritarian project than by remaining within caste-specific silos. This strategic inclusion is not about erasing

The Pioneer SINCE 1865

caste but about subsuming it within a larger religious-political identity positioned against a perceived

common 'other'. This leads to the third pillar of his strategy: a distinct form of identity politics that constructs a pan-Hindu social coalition while positioning itself as a corrective to the "politics of appeasement", a term used to critique policies aimed at Muslim minorities. His discourse consistently contrasts this alleged appearement with his government's commitment to 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas', reflected in his labharthi politics. The implicit-and often explicit-message is the dawn of a new era in which the majority community receives its due. This is identity politics on a grand scale, appealing to a sense of historical grievance and majoritarian entitlement. The success of this strategy is starkly evident in electoral outcomes. The BIP, under his leadership, secured a massive majority in the 2022 State Assembly elections without fielding a single Muslim candidate.

Please read the complete article online at https://www.dailypioneer.com

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index fell by 600 points. It was kind of unexpected since it had turned around its southward movement over the past few sessions. Once, the pundits began to explain the reasons behind the fall, there was a feeling of hollowness, and inexplicability about them. For example, one of the factors was the two-day meeting of the US Federal Reserve Board, which was expected to announce another minor rate cut. But then this was expected for weeks, and one thought that the stock markets, like it does with future expected events, had discounted it. Indeed, one of the reasons for the earlier rises was that the minor rate cut was unlikely to change things materially in the form of foreign outflows, which are turbo-charged when the US interest rates seem attractive, and the money flies to a safer less-risky

Another factor that the experts harped on was the fall of the rupee, and it having crossed the ₹90 mark against the dollar. One can partially accept it. But then again, the rupee breached ₹90 days ago, and has firmed up since then, or at least has not gone down further, as the Reserve Bank of India stepped in to support the currency. One thought that the investors would be enthused by the intervention. No one can say. Maybe they believe the doomsayers, who contend that it is a matter of when, and not if, for the rupee to fall to ₹100 a dollar. Maybe the investors were more concerned by the central bank's opinion, which chimed with that of the finance minister, rather than the former's actions. In the recent past, both maintained that they have no target for the rupee, and the currency needs to find its stable, steady, and appropriate level.

The stock markets are uncertain about the India-US trade deal, which has been delayed. Thus, they reacted to the growing apprehensions. One can flip this argument, and contend that an American delegation is on its way to New Delhi to discuss the tariffs. This is good news as it shows an urgency among the two nations. Indian ministers have repeatedly claimed that an agreement will be in place by December 2025 since most of the issues are finalised, and the two sides need to dot the i's, and cross the t's. Of course, the investors are peeved that the earlier deadline was November 2025. But that one passed more than a week ago. Why should the Sensex and Nifty crash on December 8? This factor seems to be a non-factor that was cooked up by some of the experts as a reasonable factor to provide some logic to the market madness on Monday.

Several analysts reiterated a view that the Indian valuations were overstretched. For several months, in fact this entire year, valuations were raised as a worry. This is one of the major reasons why the markets behaved so erratically during 2025, and Indian equities were among the worst performers among Asian peers, and emerging markets. Hence, a concern about a persistent past concern, which has shaken up investors for more than 11 months, cannot be a legitimate one to explain a one-day fall of 600 points. Another twisted logic: Same analysts say in the same breath that steady (domestic) inflows, and long-term retail participation suggest continued optimism. In addition, high valuations may persist, supported by investor confidence, and consistent domestic equity inflows. Please explain clearly whether valuations are stretched or not, whether investors will sell to book profits or not, or whether the high valuations do not matter because of the steady inflows. We are suitably confused.

To add to the confusion and uncertainty, the stock markets went down on Monday because of the steady outflows by foreign investors. For months, and throughout this year, the foreigners have proved to be net sellers in the secondary market. Yet, they have aggressively participated in the IPOs (Initial Public Offerings), which provides clear hints that they feel the listed stocks are overvalued, and there are chances to earn higher returns on new stocks. But again, this trend is evident for the past several months, and is nothing new. It is not that on Monday the foreigners dumped the stocks. One can add this as a factor if the Indian equities had consistently gone down due to this regularly-occurring trend. But stocks went up in the past few sessions, and the same analysts remarked that this was the great turnaround, which would push the Sensex past 1,00,000 points by December 2026. Moreover, one is unsure which section is more important, foreigners or domestic investors.

At one level, the net selling by the foreigners pulls down the market indices. At another, there is a feeling that valuations will remain stretched because of huge domestic inflows. There is a tussle between the two, and one is not sure who will win. Both cannot, or maybe they can. The foreigners will book profits, and the locals will take valuations to higher levels to book profits later. A clear win-win.



Marathon, steeplechase & sprint

In the third global business race, India is fast losing to China

It was a manufacturing marathon. While India and China were the favourites, South Korea, \$1.25 billion to a Chinese biotech firm for the Taiwan, and Brazil were the dark horses. India lost, China won, and the smaller Asian nations stood on the podium. In the steeplechase in the software and hardware space, India and China are the joint winners. The former vaulted over the oceans to emerge as the world's IT leader, and China overcame the obstacles to directly compete with the US in chips, and Artificial Intelligence. In the ongoing healthcare sprint, while China is about to touch the tape, India has not even left the blocks.

Until a few years ago, 'Big Pharma' in the West focused on the discovery and launches of billion-dollar blockbuster drugs, India became the global supplier of generics (off-patent medicines), and China mastered the science of Active Pharma Ingredients (APIs). Today, after America, China is the world's largest developer of new molecules and drugs. According to a recent article in 'The Economist,' Chinese firms conducted a third of the global clinical trials last year and, in the first six months of 2025, they were responsible for a third of the licensing deals signed by 'Big Pharma.'

Over the next decade, the battles in areas such as biosciences, medical research, and discovery of life-saving medicines (cancer) will be aggressively fought between China and America. India is more likely to pursue its generics journey, and take advantage of the steep 'patent cliffs,' "as drugs expected to generate more than \$300 billion in total revenues over the next six years will lose their patent protection by 2030. Yet again, India will be left behind in this third global race. Americans and Europeans, who will intensify their global searches for new molecules, will

rights to make-and-sell a new cancer drug. GlaxoSmithKline of Britain paid \$500 million to another Chinese firm for lung-disease treatment, and unbelievably committed a further \$12 billion for 11 drugs in the pipeline. China's share in global licensing has gone up four times in four years. In comparison, except for a small oasis of new discoveries, India is way behind despite a slew of ongoing clinical trials.

Like the Indian market, the

Chinese one is rugged, and difficult. Both are price-sensitive, with political and social pressures to enable the poor to access the medicines. In SINCE 1865 China, "state insurance covers most

purchases," which forces private firms into "bidding wars." Drugmakers need to "slash prices by half or more to reach a wide patient pool." Hence, it made sense for the Chinese, as well as Indians, to work with generics, which are cheaper. India extended the business model in the overseas markets, either by exporting, or setting up generics' plants in the West. China chose differently. In conjunction with the policy-makers, Chinese

The Pioneer

firms looked at America and Europe as "big prizes," or markets where they could sell new drugs, rather than continue to export generics or APIs. They decided to boost research, and ink licensing agreements with 'Big Pharma' to boost profits, and margins. According to the article in The Economist,' "A growing model is the 'New-Co,' under which a biotech company sets up a legally distinct company in America, often backed by foreign investors, and spins off promising assets into it." Since 'Big Pharma' and tempting.

Governance models make a huge difference. In the recent past, India has struggled with clinical trials due to irregularities, even illegality, which were highlighted by the judiciary, and activists. These rightfully delayed, and derailed them. In China, the period to secure human trials shrank from more than 500 days to less than 90. Unlike India, the workforce at China's regulator quadrupled, and cleared a backlog of 20,000 drug applications within two years. Despite reforms, Indian drugmakers continue to complain about

red tape. In a sense, China has reinvented regulation. One is not sure if it is for better or worse, but it has speeded up the approval processes. Of course, given the existing secu-

rity, economic, energy, business, defence, and trade tensions between China and the West, China's regulatory framework is being questioned and scrutinised. The US drug regulator is stricter when it deals with medicines based on clinical trials only in China. There are concerns about data security, and data privacy. The US halted trials that exported American genetic data to China. The US policy-makers, states the piece in 'The Economist,' "fret about the security risks at the junction of pharmaceuticals and biotechnology." India faces some of

This explains the Indians' penchant to make generics in America through the inorganic M&A route. China innovated to produce "fast followers," which enhance the safety and/or delivery of the existing drugs. The next step was to move on to the "first-in-class" medicines, which have proteins or genes, or mechanisms to boost functions. The first, according to experts, provided the firms with the courage to do the second. This led to the making of new drugs. For example, according to a media report, of the 160 obesity drugs in development across the world, a third are being made in China.

these challenges as the US questions its drug-effi-

India has the potential for drug discoveries. The skills, management, and research were evident during the pandemic, when India emerged as a leading drugmaker, and a low-cost exporter. But this was due to the help from the Government, which cajoled and pushed the private sector. Similar impetus lacks in other cases, and Indian firms are generally happy with their march in the generics segment. They are low-hanging fruits, with ample margins, especially when they are sold in the US and Europe. In most cases, Indian firms lack the risk-taking abilities to spend billions on a new discovery.

However, as of now, China, which won the manufacturing race comfortably, and raced ahead in chips and AI, is comfortably placed in healthcare and biosciences. India needs to build an efficient ecosystem to achieve similar results. It has the right ingredients such as scientific temper, cheap manpower, research and manufacturing units, and government support. What it requires is access to foreign capital, and a change in entrepreneurial mindset so that producers switch from off-patent mentality to new-patent one.



The Cynical Optimist

Even as IndiGo Airline grounds flights, passen gers go crazy, regulators take refuge behind inquiries, pilots blame managers, and the country's civil aviation sector goes for a six, the central minister, K Rammohan Naidu claims that this is the best "time to start an airline in India." He adds that the country needs "five big airlines," and the ministry encourages competition, and wants "more airlines to join the industry" with the Government's support. He predicts that the demand is likely to grow at a rapid pace in the future. While the desires are noble, the in-air realities are turbulent.

Of course, there is a difference between a need, desire, or wish, and what the market dynamics can accommodate. In the past three decades, each time, the Indian skies became competitive, airlines either nosedived, and crashed, or found it difficult to take off, and were forced into a competitor's lap. Despite the growing demand, competition curtailed ticket prices, and profitability which, in turn, ended up killing competition. Thus, closures, mergers, and acquisitions became the regular norms in the aviation sector. Higher the number of airlines, the more the pressures that grounded them.

Not just this but each time an airline attained a dominant position vis-à-vis domestic market share, the cost structures ate into its financials, which bankrupted it, or forced it on the auction block. Look at Jet Airways, which ruled the skies, and was sold under the insolvency laws. Sahara and Deccan aimed big, and flew into competitor's hangars. The state-owned Indian Airlines, and Air India were prisoners of their monopolistic successes, until they were merged, and then sold to the Tata Group. Today, the largest airline, IndiGo, faces a similar situation, and critics blame its seemingly-successful business model as the reason for its problems.

Globally, airlines grapple with volumes, costs, market shares, apart from the impact of policies and regulations on them. Volumes are obviously critical but they cannot be universal, national, or international. The trick is to acquire passengers on select, highly-profitable, and fast-churning routes. For example, domestically, Delhi-Mumbai, Bangalore-Delhi, and local regional routes are more coveted given the number of passengers who travel to these cities. Internationally, Delhi-London, Delhi-Hong Kong, and India-US journeys are crowded, and desired by the airlines. Getting overall volumes, as national share is irrele-

However, volumes imply huge one-time investments, and capital costs to buy and ity over a few years. The medium-term for another nine per cent of the revenues.

India goes, India grounded

Why does competition invariably crash in the aviation sector?



acquire aircraft. In most cases, the planes are purchased before the demand increases, which create a lag time before the investments pay off. Despite the lucrative financeand-lease deals offered by the manufacturers, airlines can find themselves in a tailspin, and get stuck in financial air-pockets. Several airlines are in trouble because either they buy too many planes, and are forced to operate them on low-profit routes, or buy too less, and lose volumes, and market shares on highprofit ones. It is a delicate balance that keeps changing, and needs to be tweaked.

Thus, the levers to control and manage costs fall on manpower since most other expenses are necessary, and continuous. This forces even the dominant and

successful airlines, or rather only these ones, to short-circuit salaries and benefits. This implies that they understaff certain areas,

overwork others, and underpay most. This creates a vice-like cycle of safety concerns combined with apathy and unhappiness among the employees. Morale is down, even as the senior management claims profitabil-

Policies, regulations, and external non-controllable factors play a part. For instance, the global prices of crude oil and, hence, aviation fuel fluctuates, and eats into profits. In several quarters, IndiGo went from profits to losses, largely because of the prices of aviation fuel. Sudden policy changes impact operational and business models, especially for low-cost airlines. Regulations can create havoc, and force the planes to fly off the radar. The flight-schedule rules imposed by the regulator after the recent crash in Ahmedabad apparently forced Indigo's delays, and cancellations. The low-cost struc-

ture spun out of control, which was blamed

around 16 per cent of the revenues. Add the

various taxes such as landing fees, gate

charges, and navigation fees, which account

on management errors. According to experts, aviation fuel accounts for 20-30 per cent of the total costs, and the prices can be highly-volatile. Leased engines, and aircraft result in "significant

fixed monthly rent payment," which is

Under such a rigid structure, regular socalled fixed expenses can account for almost 60-70 per cent of the costs, not revenues. There is little leeway for the airlines

to immediately counter shifting changes. Profit margins are wafer-thin despite high volumes, or market shares. During competition, there are downward pressures on ticket prices. This happens even when there is minimal competition as the airlines scamper to sell more seats on relatively-low traffic routes. Unexpected events like wars and pandemics, policy and regulation changes, and economic slowdowns can rapidly change things. "This pushes down profit margins to low levels, typically 2-5 per cent globally, which makes it different to absorb financial shocks, or support high capital investments." It is a typical catch-22 situation. You need to spend more to grab volumes. This creates cost pressures.

Consider the case of Southwest Airlines, which faced a huge crisis during the winter holiday season in the US in 2022. While other airlines recovered from the severe winter effect within days, Southwest went south for days and weeks. It was its unique and, till then, highly successful business and operational model that was unable to react to the new unusual challenges. According to a case study (2024), the IndiGo-like crisis, which led to the cancellations of thousands of flights, "provides an opportunity to dig deeply into the need for scalability, challenges of risk management... and the wide variety of challenges of managing airline supply chains.'

Concludes the same case study, "Airlines are not easy businesses to run. They are capital and labour intensive, they are subject to impact from weather, politics, public health, and other unexpected issues. And they are competitive, seeking not only to provide good price and performance for customers but also an appropriate yield for every seat on the plane, and to keep planes in the air, and generate revenues." Thus, competition, and five airlines, as the civil aviation minister desires, may be the wrong solution for the wrong pinpointed problems. IndiGo did not crash because of lack of competition. It could not take off because of its straitjacketed business model.



The real AI revolution in banking: Decision packs, not algorithms



SUNDAR SUNDARARAJAN

Rethinking the race in banking

For nearly a decade, the financial industry has been obsessed with the wrong race. Banks have focused on who can deploy the smartest models, the fastest algorithms, or the most advanced AI platforms. Yet the real transformation underway is not about faster predictions or more complex math. It is about making better decisions.

The competitive frontier is shifting. Success is no longer determined by model accuracy alone. Predictions only hold value when paired with context and alerts only matter when they contribute to decisions that are consistent, defensible and trusted. In banking today, AI is no longer a race for speed-it is a race to prevent breakdowns before they occur.

The limits of model-only thinking

Banking operates in deeply interconnected environments. Every customer interaction, exception case and transaction activates a web of operational decisions that must work seamlessly. Models can detect anomalies at scale, but without institutional context, they rest on assumptions that can quickly unravel under real-world pressures

The risk is rarely a single bad decision. It is the gaps between systems, where incomplete or contradictory information can slip through unnoticed. A customer's cash flow in the core system may suggest stability, while transaction history hints at stress. Branch notes, call-center transcripts and chat interactions add further fragments, rarely reconciled. When AI is applied on top of unchanged processes, it magnifies inconsistencies rather than correcting them, making operational cracks increasingly costly as pilots

Al works-but only with context

Modern AI excels at pattern recognition, anomaly detection, document interpretation, and structured data triage. McKinsey estimates generative AI could unlock between 200 and 340 billion dollars annually for global banking-but only where context already exists. Early successes are seen where structured data is available, single-customer views are real and workflows are intentionally redesigned to integrate AI inputs, rather than patched superficially.

A striking example comes from HSBC. Their Alpowered transaction-screening engine now



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per month, identifying more suspicious activity while reducing false positives. The real breakthrough was not the algorithm itself, but pairing detection with structured decision packs and audit-ready trails. By consolidating history, evidence, exceptions and reason codes into a sequenced context pack, analysts can focus on informed decision-making instead of unraveling contradictions. This approach also addresses regulatory concerns over undocumented overrides a systemic weakness that decision packs directly resolve.

The enduring role of human judgment

processes more than 900 million transactions

Even the most sophisticated AI models stumble when faced with intent, ethical considerations, rare events, market shocks or adversarial behavior. Humans, however, excel at interpreting nuance and cross-domain context. Yet humans alone cannot sustain consistent. auditable decisions at scale. Judgment becomes operational controls-the very artifacts AI can provide at speed and volume.

The emerging hybrid model blends both capabilities. Al aggregates, alerts, summarises, and contextualises information, while humans are routed to the right decision at the right moment, applying ethics, accountability and experience. Automation does not replace judgment; it restores the conditions for good judgment to prevail.

Decision packs: engineering context into workflows

Leading banks are moving beyond delivering raw alerts to analysts. They are creating decision packs-structured, sequenced bundles of information delivered precisely when a decision is required. These packs weave together customer history, channel behavior, transaction patterns, risk flags, documents, prior actions and reason codes into a coherent, actionable view.

In trade finance, for example, AI might flag reliable only when supported by structured irregular document signatures, sanctions-list hits, evidence, transparent lineage and clear or routing anomalies. The human officer adds at the right moment.

trends, geopolitical insights and country risk into the decision-making process. The resulting decision is informed, defensible, timely and aligned with policy. Context-aware banking transforms the question from "What does the model say?" to "What does the model say within the full context the institution can recover and verify?" This shift closes the gaps that historically caused inconsistency, omission and operational fragility.

Operating models matter more than models

Across the industry, there is growing consensus: the operating model-how decisions are designed, governed, and executed-delivers far more value than the model architecture itself. Banks that extract the most value from AI maintain auditable override controls, human-inloop workflows, strong data lineage cross-channel decision rights and scalable accountability. In practice, a model contributes perhaps ten to twenty percent of value, while the remaining eighty to ninety percent comes from how decisions are operationalized. Al cannot fix broken workflows, but effective workflows make Al meaningful.

Fewer contextless decisions, not faster decisions

Banks do not simply need faster decision-making. They need fewer decisions made in the absence of context. The purpose of Al is not to replace bankers but to remove the breakdowns that force decisions to be made using incomplete fragments.

Forward-looking institutions are designing systems where ledgers record not only the model output, but also the decision pack, the human override and the governance trail. This creates a future where decisions are explainable, repeatable and trusted at scale.

The future: Al-assisted, context-rich, human-governed banking

The real revolution is subtle but profound. It is not AI replacing bankers; it is AI replacing the conditions that constrained them for decades. Banks that embrace decision packs will achieve consistent decision-making at scale, strengthen regulatory defensibility, reduce operational fragility, unlock deeper predictive intelligence, and build enduring trust with customers and regulators.

The path ahead is clear. The banks that will thrive in the AI era will not be those with the fastest algorithms. They will be the ones capable of making the best decisions, armed with context, evidence and human judgment

Labour codes: Legally accurate, socially transformative, and politically defining. A landmark reform of the Modi era



ASEERVATHAM **ACHARY**

India, that is Bharat had long been burdened by laws created during the British regime, shaped by a colonial mentality that openly viewed Bharatiyas as their slaves and servants. Those laws were never meant to empower the people of this land.

They were crafted only to safeguard the interests of foreign rulers and to keep the native population dependent, restricted and voiceless. For decades, Bharat waited for a Government with the conviction to break free from these outdated colonial structures. This long pending transformation became possible only under the Modi Government, which has consistently delivered bold decisions, structural reforms and governance that truly serves the nation.

In the past decade, the Modi Government has brought a historic reform package that has reshaped the governance landscape of India, making it simpler, transparent and friendly for innovation and growth. More than 40000 unnecessary compliances have been abolished, around 1500 obsolete laws have been repealed and several existing regulations have been streamlined to reduce the burden on citizens, businesses and startups.

Through legislative action, more than a dozen laws have been simplified. Around 280 provisions have been removed to make governance more accessible and citizen centric. These reforms are fully aligned with the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat and the goal of making India a developed nation by 2047.

Taking this reform journey to the next level, the Modi Government has now implemented the four Labour Codes from 21 November 2025. These Codes replace 29 scattered and confusing laws with one modern, clear and worker friendly framework. For the first time, India has a labour system that supports today's economy, today's workforce and tomorrow's aspirations. It gives workers better protection, ensures fair wages, improves safety and strengthens industries so India can compete globally.

This change was long overdue. Most of our old labour laws were written even before Independence viz., Workmen's Compensation Act, 1923, Indian Trade Unions Act, 1926, Trade Disputes Act, 1929, Industrial

Act, 1946, etc. The economy changed, industries changed, technology changed, but those laws remained frozen in the past. Workers suffered. Employers struggled. Compliance became a maze. The new Labour Codes finally break

Employment (Standing Orders)

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@AseerAchary Dr. Aseervatha Achary this cycle and bring India into a new era of simple rules and honest governance. A broad range of benefits

across sectors The new Labour Codes bring

clear, future ready protections for workers across every sector of the economy. Fixed term employees now receive the same benefits as permanent staff including leave, medical cover and social security, with gratuity eligibility reduced from five years to one. Gig and platform workers get formal recognition for the first time, with aggregators contributing to their social security and Aadhaar linked UAN ensuring portable benefits

Contract workers gain transparent protection, social security and health coverage from principal employers, along with annual free health check-ups. Women workers are assured equal pay, protection from discrimination and the freedom to work night shifts and in all sectors with full safety and consent. Youth workers benefit from guaranteed

minimum wages, mandatory appointment letters and wages during leave.

The Labour Codes mark a historic step in modernising India's workforce by aligning with international standards on wages, gender equality and occupational safety. Over 2.78 million workers die globally each year from occupational accidents and diseases, highlighting the relevance of OSH provisions in the Codes.

MSME workers receive minimum wages, safe working conditions, double overtime wages and timely salary payments. Beedi and cigar workers are protected with fixed working hours, double overtime rates and bonus eligibility after thirty days. Plantation workers receive mandatory safety training, medical facilities for families and education support for children.

Audio visual and digital media workers including journalists and artists get clear wage structures, appointment letters and social security. Mining workers are protected under national safety standards, receive free annual health including transgender persons.

check-ups and regulated working hours. In hazardous industries. annual medical tests and safety committees are mandatory. Women are empowered to work safely even high-risk environments.

Textile and migrant workers receive equal wages, PDS portability and protection for pending dues. IT and ITES workers get timely salaries, equal pay, social security and strong grievance redressal. Dock workers gain formal recognition along with provident fund, pension, insurand workplace facilities.

Additional transformative reforms under the labour

A national floor wage now guarantees that every worker receives a dignified minimum earning ensuring uniform protection across the country. Gender neutral job opportunities and wages have been emphasised extending equal rights and safeguards to all workers

To replace outdated inspection systems an inspector cum facilitator model has been introduced focusing on guidance and compliance support rather than fear and harassment. Disputes will now be resolved in a time bound manner through two member calling it an important Industrial Tribunals giving step toward stronger social workers and employers faster and predictable outcomes.

Paperwork has been simplified through single registration, single licence and single return replacing the earlier system of multiple overlapping filings. Workplace safety has also been strengthened with the creation of a National OSH Board to ensure uniform safety standards across sectors. Mandatory safety committees in major establishments further enhance accountability and on site protection.

Higher factory applicability limits ensure that smaller units are not overburdened by excessive regulations while core safeguards for workers remain fully intact. These reforms collectively reflect a clear commitment to worker dignity, workplace safety and smoother industrial operations.

Labour codes: modernising workplaces and empowering MSMEs

The new Labour Codes bring clarity, transparency and digitisation to India's labour framework. Clear rules on contract labour, retrenchment and fixed-term employment will reduce disputes and help MSMEs formalise previously informal arrangements. Mandatory appointment letters, wage linkages to the national floor and timely payments encourage proper records and digital payroll adoption.

Recognition of fixed-term employment provides flexibility for project or seasonal work while ensuring wage and benefit parity, including gratuity after one year. Expanded ESIC, EPF and insurance coverage for casual, fixed-term, gig, platform and hazardous sector workers strengthens social

security for all. Provisions on safety, welfare and timely wages are expected to improve workplace conditions, raise morale and create a more motivated workforce. Experts note that these reforms will lead to structured, predictable and cooperative labour management, benefiting both workers and businesses.

Global backing for India's labour codes

The Director General of the International Labour Organisation praised India's decision to implement the four Labour Codes, protection and fair wage systems. He emphasised that social dialogue between the Government, employers and workers will play a key role in ensuring positive outcomes for both labour and industry.

The International Social Security Association also welcomed the reforms, stating that India's Labour Codes add powerful momentum to global efforts for building stronger and more inclusive social security systems. ISSA highlighted that India's initiative strengthens global progress toward wider coverage, better protection and stronger institutional capacity.

Opposing for the sake of opposing

The Opposition's stand against these reforms is baseless and unjustified. Their poster marches and dramatic protests are nothing more than political theatrics designed to manufacture issues where none exist. These reforms have been thoughtfully drafted to protect workers' interests and to strengthen Bharat's workforce. It is difficult to comprehend why the Opposition is resisting measures that clearly benefit the nation.

Do they not want Bharat's workers to have stable and secure employment? Do they not want gig workers, platform workers and contract workers to receive the protections they deserve?

Do they not want women and youth to receive equal pay for equal work? Do they not want workers to access gratuity, health support and social security?

Do they not want our labour force to become more skilled and our economy to grow faster? What exactly are they protesting? Only they can answer, because their objections clearly do not align with national interest.

Despite the opposition raised by the Left supported Trade Unions, Modi Government has delivered reforms that will protect workers, will formalise jobs and will strengthen the workforce while enabling businesses to grow, proving its commitment to a modern and prosperous India.

FROM THE

Coup leader missing

The apparent leader of a failed coup in Benin was on the run and the fate of hostages remained unclear a day after a group of soldiers attempted to overthrow the Government of the West African nation. The soldiers calling themselves the Committee

for Refoundation stormed the national television station early Sunday morning. Led by Benin army officer Lt. Col. Pascal Tigri, eight soldiers appeared in a broadcast announcing the removal of President Patrice Talon, dissolution of the Government and suspension of all state institutions. By Sunday afternoon, the

coup was foiled by Benin's military, supported by Nigerian air and ground forces, which launched a series of attacks against fleeing mutineers. At least a dozen soldiers were arrested while others remained at large Monday.

TURKEY

Officer killed in drug raid

A police officer died on Monday after being shot and seriously wounded during an early morning drug raid in Istanbul, Turkish officials said. Officer Emre Albayrak died of his wounds in a hospital. He was part of a special operations team carrying out the raid in the Cekmekoy district on Istanbul's Asian side. "Our police officer Emre Albayrak, who was seriously injured in a narcotics operation in the Cekmekoy district, could not be saved despite all interventions in the hospital to which he was

Governor's Office said in a statement. The man who opened fire on police was killed, and two other suspects were detained, the office said. Turkiye has experienced a rise in drug-related crime in recent years.

taken and became a

martyr," the Istanbul

PUBLIC NOTICE Here by it is informed that the person present in the photo is Mr. Rav Prakash Goyal, Directo of Gopish Pharma Ltd illage Behrampur, Tehsil Nalagarh, District Solar machal Pradesh. A case was filed agains

him violation of drugs and Magic remedie advertisements act 1954 and it was unde trial at Hon'ble Court of Additional Judicia First Class Magistrate, Vizianagaram, Andhra Pradesh but he is not attending the Court hence the court issued warrants and also ordered for proclamation of his properties Further on enquiry, it was learn that he is residing in Delhi. Therefore, it is requested that if anyone knows the whereabouts of this person, kindly inform details to the following address:Drugs Inspector, Vizianagaram Drugs Control Administration, backside, Collector Office Vizianagaram, Andhra radesh 535002

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Public Notice

Zelenskyy hasn't read US peace proposal: Trump

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Kyiv

President Donald Trump on Sunday claimed Ukrainian Volodymyr President Zelenskyy "hasn't read" a US-authored peace proposal aimed at ending the Russia-

Trump was critical of Zelenskyv after US and Ukrainian negotiators completed three days of talks on Saturday aimed at trying to narrow differences on the US administration's proposal. But in an exchange with reporters on Sunday night, Trump suggested that the Ukrainian leader is holding up the talks from moving forward.

"I'm a little bit disappointed that President Zelenskyy hasn't yet read the proposal, that was as of a few hours ago. His people love it. But he hasn't — Russia's fine with it.' Trump told reporters on the red carpet at the Kennedy Center Honors. "Russia is, I believe, fine with it, but I'm not sure that Zelenskyy's fine with it. His people love it, but he hasn't read it."

Putin also hasn't publicly expressed approval for the White House plan. In fact, Putin last week had said that aspects of Trump's proposal were unworkable, even though the original draft heavily favoured Moscow. Trump has had a hot-and-

cold relationship with Zelenskyy since riding into a second White House term insisting that the war was a waste of US taxpayer money. Trump has also repeatedly urged the Ukrainians to cede land to Russia to bring an end to a now nearly four-year conflict he says has cost far too many lives. Zelenskyy said Saturday

he had a "substantive phone call" with the American officials engaged in the talks with a Ukrainian delegation in Florida. He said he had been given an update over the phone by US and Ukrainian officials at the "Ukraine is determined

to keep working in good faith with the American side to genuinely achieve



peace," Zelenskyy wrote on social media.

Trump's criticism of Zelenskyy came as Russia on Sunday welcomed the Trump administration's new national security strategy in comments by the Kremlin spokesman published by

Russia's Tass news agency. Dmitry Peskov said the

updated strategic document, which spells out the administration's core foreign policy interests, was largely in line with Moscow's vision.

"There are statements there against confrontation and in favour of dialogue and building good relations," he said, adding that Russia and that ending the war is a hopes this would lead to

"further constructive cooperation with Washington on the Ukrainian settlement."

The document released Friday by the White House said the US wants to improve its relationship with Russia after years of Moscow being treated as a global pariah core US interest to "reestab-

lish strategic stability with

Speaking on Saturday at the Reagan National Defense Forum, Trump's outgoing Ukraine envoy, Keith Kellogg, said efforts to end the war

were in "the last 10 meters." He said a deal depended on the two outstanding issues of "terrain, primarily the Donbas," and the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power

Russia controls most of Donbas, its name for the Donetsk and neighbouring Luhansk regions, which, along with two southern regions, it illegally annexed three years ago.

The Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant is in an area that has been under Russian control since early in Moscow's invasion of Ukraine and is not in service.

It needs reliable power to cool its six shutdown reactors and spent fuel, to avoid any catastrophic nuclear incidents.

Kellogg, who is due to leave his post in January, was not present at the talks

Separately, officials said the leaders of the United Kingdom, France and Germany would participate in a meeting with Zelenskyy

in London on Monday. As the three days of talks wrapped up, Russian missile, drone and shelling attacks overnight and Sunday killed at least four people in Ukraine.

A man was killed in a drone attack on Ukraine's northern Chernihiv region Saturday night, local officials said, while a combined missile and drone attack on infrastructure in the central city of Kremenchuk caused power and water outages.

Kremenchuk is home to one of Ukraine's biggest oil refineries and is an industrial hub.

Kyiv and its Western allies say Russia is trying to cripple the Ukrainian power grid and deny civilians access to heat, light and running water for a fourth consecutive winter, in what Ukrainian officials call "weaponising"

Ukraine President visits London for peace talks

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ London

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy was meeting the French, German and British leaders in London on Monday as Kyiv's European allies try to strengthen Ukraine's hand in thorny talks on a USbacked plan to end the Russia-Ukraine war.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer was due to gather with Zelenskyy, Emmanuel Macron and Chancellor Friedrich Merz at the British leader's 10 Downing St. Residence. Zelenskyy said late Sunday

that his talks with European leaders this week in London and Brussels will focus on security, air defence and longterm funding for Ukraine's The leaders are working to

ensure that any ceasefire is backed by solid security guarantees, both from Europe and the US, to deter Russia from attacking again. US and Ukrainian negotiators completed three days of

talks on Saturday aimed at

trying to narrow differences

on the US administration's peace proposal. Zelenskyy said in a post



British Prime Minister Keir Starmer (left), Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy (centre) and French President Emmanuel Macron (right) meeting at 10 Downing Street in London

had been "substantive" and that National Security and Defence Council Secretary Rustem Umerov and Chief of the General Staff Andrii Hnatov were travelling back to Europe to brief him.

A major sticking point in the proposal is the suggestion that Ukraine must cede control of its eastern Donbas region to Russia, which illegally occupies most but not on Telegram that talks all of the territory. Ukraine

and its European allies have baulked at the idea of handing over land.

Starmer said he "won't be putting pressure" on Zelenskyy to accept a peace settlement.

"The most important thing is to ensure that if there is a cessation of hostilities, and I hope there is, it has to be just and it has to be lasting, which is what we will be focused on this afternoon," he told

broadcaster ITV.

In an exchange with reporters on Sunday night, US President Donald Trump appeared frustrated with Zelenskyy, claiming the Ukrainian leader "hasn't yet read the proposal.'

"Russia is, I believe, fine with it, but I'm not sure that Zelenskyy's fine with it,' Trump said before taking part in the Kennedy Centre Honours in Washington.

Top EU official warns US against interfering in Europe's affairs

ASSOCIATED PRESS Brussels

A top European Union official on Monday warned the United States against interfering in Europe's affairs and said only European citizens can decide which parties should govern them.

European Council President Antonio Costa's remarks came in reaction to the Trump administration's new national security strategy, which was published on Friday and paints European allies as weak while offering tacit support to far-right political parties.

It's "good" that the strategy depicts European countries as an ally, but "allies don't threaten to interfere in the domestic political choices of their allies," Costa

"What we can't accept is the threat of interference in European political life. The United States cannot replace European citizens in choosing what the good or the bad parties are," he said in Paris at the Jacques Delors Institute, a think tank.

The strategy was critical of European free speech and



migration policy. US allies in Europe face the "prospect of civilizational erasure," the document said, raising doubts about their longterm reliability as American partners.

But Costa, who chairs summits of the 27 national EU leaders, said Europe's "history has taught us that you can't have freedom of speech without freedom of information

The former Portuguese prime minister also warned there will never be free speech if the freedom of information of citizens is

sacrificed for the aims of the tech oligarchs in the United States.'

The security strategy is the administration's first since President Donald Trump returned to office in January. It breaks starkly from the course set by President Joe Biden's Democratic administration. which sought to reinvigorate

US alliances. It comes as the US seeks an end to Russia's nearly 4year-old war in Ukraine, a goal that the national security strategy says is in America's vital interests.

Nepal's Home Minister Aryal seeks cooperation to conduct free, fair elections

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA < Kathmandu

Nepal's Home Minister Om Prakash Aryal on Monday said that the Government is committed to institutionalising democracy as he sought cooperation from all stakeholders to conduct the next year's general elections in a free, fair and fearless manner.

"The effective implementation of human rights is possible only when democracy is strengthened, as democracy and human rights are interdependent," Aryal said while addressing the inaugural ceremony of the 17th Human Rights National Magna Meet 2025 in Lalitpur district.



In the present context, the Government is committed to institutionalising democracy, he said.

The minister sought cooperation from all stakeholders to conduct the upcoming general elections in a free, fair and fearless manner.

Aryal underscored the need for a logical conclusion to the Transitional Justice Process, both relating to the decade-long Maoist insurgency and the recent Gen Z movement that toppled the KP Oli-led Government in September.

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Cairo

The head of the World Health Organisation said on Monday that the death toll from drone strikes on a kindergarten and other sites in

week is now at 114 people killed, including 63 children. WHO said there were three separate drone strikes on Kagoli last Thursday. The first targeted the kindergarten, and the subsequent strikes targeted paramedics as they were transporting the survivors to a hospital. The death toll was not immediately clear at the

time, in part due to commu-

nications outages.



114 people were killed, including 63 children,

Dr Tedros Ghebreyesus, the director of the WHO, said on X that the organisation "deplores these senseless attacks on civilians and health facilities, and calls again for an end to the violence, and increased access to humanitarian aid, including health."

The Sudan Doctors' Network and Emergency Lawyers, groups that track violence against civilians in

Sudan, blamed the Rapid Support Forces paramilitary, also known as the RSF, for the

In a statement Saturday, Emergency Lawyers called the attack "a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law, including the protection of civilians, especially children, and vital civil-

ian infrastructure."

The strikes come amid a two-year war between the RSF and the Sudanese military. More than 40,000 people have been killed to date. according to the World Health Organisation, and 12 million displaced. However, aid groups warn that the true death toll is likely far higher.

SR. NO	NAME OF DEPARTMENT	NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE	AMOUNT / EMD (APPROX.) IN RUPEES	WEBSITE OF THE DEPARTMENT	NODAL OFFICER/CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL
i	PWD B&R, HISAR	WIDENING AND STRENGTHENING OF DADRI CHIRYA ROAD (ROAD ID-2440) (MDR124) FROM KM 30.55 TO 48.57 IN THE STATE OF HARYANA (UNDER CRIF SCHEME) (PDG. DECORATIVE STREET LIGHT ETC ONLY). + 2 WORKS	05.12.2025 11.12.2025	986.18 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	01662225651 pwd-eeed-hissar@hry.nic.in
2	PANCHAYATI RAJ, BHIWANI	CONSTRUCTION WORK IN BAIRAGI CHOUPAL (RAILING AND ELECTRICAL WORKS) AT VILLAGE - RAJGARH BLOCK AND DISTT BHIWANI SCHEME D PLAN + 7 WORKS	06.12.2025 11.12.2025	157.93 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	01664243927 prexeeng.bhw@hry.nic.in
3	PANCHAYATI RAJ, KARNAL	GHARI BHARAL CONST. OF MAHILA CHOUPAL/MAHILA SHG MEETING HALL VILLAGE DEVIPUR BLOCK GHARAUNDA DISTT. KARNAL UNDER SCHEME VANGY 2024-25 + 1 WORKS	05.12.2025 15.12.2025	27.08 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	9896202019 prexeeng.krl@hry.nic.in
4	PANCHAYATI RAJ, KURUKSHETRA	KDB WORK FOR SEWERAGE CONNECTION OF TOILET BLOCKS AT SOUTH SIDE OF BRAHMA SAROVAR (OUTER) AND JYOTISAR TIRTH BLOCK THANESAR DISTT KURUKSHETRA	05.12.2025 18.12.2025	8.37 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	9896224357 prexeeng.krk@hry.nlc.in
4	PANCHAYATI RAJ, REWARI	CONST OF LINK RASTA JEETPURA TOWARDS ROJKA IN VILLAGE JEETPURA BLOCK DHARUHERA DISTT, REWARI + 8 WORKS	05.12.2025 11.12.2025	342,72 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	9466112077 prexeeng.rwr@hry.nic.in
6	PANCHAYATI RAJ, FATEHABAD	MANAWALI SURAJ RAM DHAKKARWAL TO KHAIRATI ROAD AT VILLAGE MANAWALI BLOCK AND DISTT FATEHABAD HGVY	05.12.2025 11.12.2025	69.80 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	01667230855 prexeeng.ftb@hry.nic.in
7	IRRIGATION & WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT HARYANA, SIRSA	ESTIMATE FOR INTERNAL CLEARANCE OF SAHARAN DISTY. FROM RD. 0 - 73740- TAIL + 3 WORKS	CLOSING DATE 11.12.2025	5.91 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	9996665761 xensrs.swd1925@yahoo.com
8	IRRIGATION & WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT HARYANA, KARNAL	CONSTRUCTION OF YR BRIDGE AT RD 74,080 ON AUGMENTATION CANAL.	04.12.2025 18.12.2025	162.77 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	0184-2258008 xeninddivn@yahoo.in
9	PUBLIC HEALTH ENGINEERING, MANDI DABWALI	KALANWALI STP:- CONSTRUCTION OF COLLECTING TANK, INSTALLATIONS OF PUMPING MACHINERY AND ELECTRIC INSTALLATIONS, PROVIDING AND LAYING 500MM O/D HDPE RISING MAIN FROM STP TO GHAGGAR DRAIN AND PROVIDING AND FIXING OF HYDRANTS ETC. CHARGEABLE HEAD:- KALANWALI TOWN:- PROVIDING AND LAYING OF RISING MAIN FROM EXISTING 9.50 MLD STP KALANWALI TOWN TO RORI GHAGGAR DRAIN NEAR VILLAGE PHAGGU DISTT. SIRSA.	05.12.2025 29.12.2025	2112.75 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	873000001 ee.mandidabwali@gmaii.com
10	FOREST DEPARTMENT, BHIWANI	TENDER FOR CONSTRUCTION OF BRICKS BOUNDARY WALL INCLUDING PILLAR AND BARBED WIRE FENCING.	27.11.2025 12.12.2025	113.08 LACS	https://haryanaeprocurem ent.gov.in	9416251743 dfo.bhiwani@yahoo.com

पुणे महानगरपालिका



पुणे महानगरपालिकेच्या खाली नमुद केलेल्या विभागाकडील कामांना फेरनिविदा देण्यात येत आहे. सदर कामाबाबतच्या निविदा अटी, शती इ बाबतचा सर्व तपशिल निविदा संच मध्ये नमुद केलेला आहे. सदर निविदा संच WWW.MAHATENDERS.GOV.IN या संकेतस्थळावर नि:शुल्क

निविदा विक्री कालावधी दिनांक 09/12/2025 सकाळी 09:00 वा. त्रे दिनांक 02/01/2026, दुपारी 2:30 पर्यंत निविदा स्विकृती कालावधी 09/12/2025 सकाळी 09:00 वा. ते दिनांक 02/01/2026, दुपारी 2:30 पर्यंत निविदा उघडणे कालावधी दिनांक 05/01/2026 दुपारी 03:00 वाजता (शक्य झाल्यास) पी बीड दिनाक 18/12/2025 रोजी

Test Stiffed DMC/DOAD/2025/221 to the second se	.क्र.	विभागाचे नाव	फेर निविदा क्रमांक	कामाचे नाव
(पथ) कार्यालय डी. पी. रस्ता विकसित करणे.	1	मुख्य अभियंता (पथ) कार्यालय	DMC/DOAD/2025/221	वेलस्ली रोड ते जनाई माता मंदिर ते बंडगार्डन पुल पर्यंत 30 मीटर रुंदीचा डी. पी. रस्ता विकसित करणे.

उपरोक्त निविदा विक्री व स्विकृती <u>www.mahatenders.gov.in</u> या संकेत स्थळावरून फक्त ऑनलाईन पध्दतीने चालू आहे. बाकी सर्व मजकूर पुर्वी प्रसिध्द केल्याप्रमाणे कायम् राहिल.

अधिक्षक अभियंता (पथ) Advt No. - 3/1440 8/12/2025 पुणे महानगरपालिका

Thailand strikes Cambodia as border tensions flare

ASSOCIATED PRESS Bangkok

Thailand launched airstrikes along the disputed border with Cambodia on Monday as both sides accused the other of breaking a ceasefire that halted fighting earlier

Longstanding border disputes erupted into five days of combat in July that killed dozens of soldiers and civilians. US President Donald Trump pushed the Southeast Asian neighbours to sign a truce agreement in October, but tensions have continued to simmer.

The Thai army said that more than 50,000 people have left areas near the border for shelters, while Cambodia's Information Minister Neth Pheaktra said that residents of several villages near the border have been evacuated.

The latest round of clashes has killed at least one Thai soldier and four Cambodian civilians, officials said

Thai Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul said in a televised speech that military operations would be carried out as necessary to defend the country and protect public safety.

"Thailand has never wished for violence. I'd like to reiterate

UK care home agency boss

jailed for hiring

Indian migrants

A director of a care home

agency based in south-east

England has been jailed for

two-and-a-half years after

being found guilty of repeat-

edly employing immigrants

from India with no right to

victed after a trial at Lewes

Crown Court in July and sen-

tenced on Friday, the UK's

Crown Prosecution Service

assistants through his A Class Care Recruitment Ltd at

Bexhill-on-Sea in East Sussex,

despite being aware of their illegal migration status.

by employing people who

had no right to work in the

Specialist Prosecutor for CPS

South East, said in a state-

"Many of those he illegally

employed were working with

some of the most vulnerable

people without adequate

training or medical expertise,

putting the safety and well-

being of those who needed

Service will continue to

prosecute those who exploit

our immigration system,'

An investigation by

Immigration Enforcement, an

agency of the UK Home Office.

determined that Thomas

assisted the "unlawful immi-

gration" of 13 individuals

between 2017 and 2018.

"The Crown Prosecution

care at significant risk.

Katie Samways,

"Benoy Thomas knowingly breached immigration laws

The 50-year-old was found to have recruited Indian nationals to work as care

Benoy Thomas was con-

work in the UK.

(CPS) said.

ment.

illegally

PRESS TRUST OIF INDIA



A wounded Thai soldier is carried to be transferred to a hospital in Sisaket province Thailand on Sunday after, according to a Thai army spokesperson, Cambodian troops fired into Thai territory

that Thailand has never initiated a fight or an invasion, but will never tolerate a violation of its sovereignty," he said.

Fighting followed the exchange of fire on Sunday The ceasefire was strained in early November after Thai troops were injured by land mines, leading Thailand to

announce that it would indefinitely suspend implementation of the agreement. Both sides continue to trade accusations over responsibility, even as they are supposed to be cooperating in getting rid of the mines.

Trump said in mid-November that he'd inter-

vened to preserve the ceasefire as tensions simmered between the two countries.

But another brief episode of fighting took place along the border Sunday, after which both sides said the other fired first. The Thai army said Cambodian fire injured two Thai soldiers, and Thai troops exchange of fire that lasted around 20 minutes. Cambodia said that the Thai side fired first and that its own troops did not retaliate.

On Monday, Thai army pokesperson Maj. Gen. Winthai Suvaree said the Cambodian troops fired first into Thai territory in multiple areas. He said at least one Thai soldier was killed and about eight other soldiers were wounded, and civilians were being evacuated from the affected areas.

Thailand used aircraft "to strike military targets in several areas to suppress Cambodian supporting fire attacks," he said.

The Thai army said artillery rounds landed near residential areas on the Thai side, but reported no civilian casualties so far. Cambodian Defence Ministry spokesperson Maly Socheata said the Thai military attacked the Cambodian troops first on Monday, and that Cambodia did not retaliate during the initial attacks.

"Cambodia urges that Thailand immediately stop all hostile activities that threaten peace and stability in the region," she said.

Neth Pheaktra, the Cambodian Minister of

Thai forces killed four Cambodian civilians and injured about nine others.

The prime minister of regional neighbour Malaysia, Anwar Ibrahim, called for restraint in a statement posted to social media and said that his country is ready to support efforts to avert further fighting.

"Our region cannot afford to see long-standing disputes slip into cycles of confrontation," he wrote.

Centuries of rivalry lie beneath the territorial dispute Thailand and Cambodia have a history of enmity going back centuries, when they

were warring empires. Their modern territorial claims stem largely from a 1907 map drawn when Cambodia was under French colonial rule, which Thailand

The International Court of Justice in 1962 awarded sovereignty to Cambodia over an area that included the 1,000year-old Preah Vihear temple, which still rankles many Thais.

has argued is inaccurate.

The ceasefire does not spell out a path to resolve the underlying basis of the dispute, the longstanding differences over where the border should run.

Earthquake triggers tsunami on northern coast of Japan



ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Tokyo

A powerful 7.6-magnitude earthquake struck off northern Japan on Monday, triggering a tsunami of up to 40 centimetres in coastal communities in the region, the Japanese Meteorological Agency said.

The agency said the magnitude quake struck just east of Aomori, the northernmost prefecture of Japan's main Honshu island, and just south of Hokkaido island. It said a tsunami of 40 centimetres struck the Hokkaido prefecture town of Urakawa and the Aomori prefecture port of Mutsu Ogawara. Several people were injured at a hotel in the Aomori town of Hachinohe public broadcaster NHK

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, in a brief comment to reporters, said the government set up an emergency task force to urgently assess the extent of damage. "We are putting people's lives first and doing everything we can," she said

'One Battle After Another' leads **Golden Globe nominations**



ASSOCIATED PRESS Beverly Hills (US)

Paul Thomas Anderson's "One Battle After Another" scored a leading nine nominations to the 83rd Golden Globe Awards on Monday, adding to the Oscar favourite's momentum and handing Warner Bros. A victory amid its deal to be acquired by Netflix.

'One Battle After Another" landed nominations for its cast Leonardo DiCaprio, Teyana Taylor, Sean Penn and Chase Infiniti – along with nods for Anderson's screenplay and

direction. It's competing in the Globes' category for comedy and musicals.

Close on its heels was Joachim Trier's "Sentimental Value," a Norwegian family drama about a filmmaking family. The Neon release's eight nominations included nods for four of its actors: Stellan Skarsgard, Renate Reinsve, Elle Fanning and Inga Ibsdotter Lilleaas.

The Globe nominations, a tattered but persistent rite in Hollywood, are coming on the heels of a potentially seismic shift in entertainment

UAE-backed separatists tighten grip of southern Yemen ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Aden

The airspace of war-torn Yemen was briefly closed Monday, an official said, as tensions escalated in the country's south after a separatist group, backed by the United Arab Emirates, took over of an oil-rich region in a rift that could fracture the anti-Houthi alliance.

A Yemeni government official said that the Saudiled coalition didn't issue required permissions for flights to or from Yemen, briefly halting flights to and from the southern city of Aden — the seat of the internationally recognized government.

move as a "Saudi message" to the separatist Southern Transitional Council's latest clashes across southern Yemen, including its seizure of much of the sprawling oilrich province of Hadhramaut, which borders Saudi Arabia.

The move was later reversed, allowing flight operations in Aden airport, where hundreds of passengers were stranded for hours, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorised to brief the media.

An Associated Press journalist at the airport said workers have begun processing passengers of a Cairo-bound flight that was supposed to take off early Monday. Since the entry of a Saudi-

led coalition into Yemen's war in 2015, the coalition has controlled the country's airspace. Saudi Arabia didn't acknowledge closing Yemen's airspace on Monday.

The Southern Transitional Council (STC) — an umbrella of armed groups trained and financed by the UAE has expanded its control over Yemen's south earlier this month.

They seized control of Seiyun in Hadhramaut, including crucial oil fields and energy installations following brief clashes with

the Yemeni military, and allied tribes. Forces of the secessionist

group were deployed across strategic Wadi the Hadramout area, which includes major urban centres and military bases, according to STC-allied media. They took over the presidential palace and the international airport in Seiyun last week, and advanced to the province of Mahra, which borders Oman, the group said.

STC hoisted the flag of South Yemen over government buildings across the country's south including on the border crossing with Oman. Images circulated on STC-allied media showed the South Yemen flag, with its light blue chevron and a red star, flying over government buildings and schools in the south. The separatists enjoy

loyalty through much of southern Yemen and have repeatedly pushed to break up Yemen into two countries, as it was between 1967 and 1990. Hundreds of STC supporters took to the streets in

Aden to call for the establishment of an independent state in the south. The demonstrators raised

the flag of South Yemen, and pictures of Aidarous al-Zubaidi, the STC leader, who is also vice president of the

Rubio, Hegseth meet Australian counterparts on Indo-Pacific security

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Pete Hegseth are meeting their Australian counterparts Monday in Washington for annual talks expected to focus on Indo-Pacific security and countering China's increasing assertiveness in the region. including in the South China Sea and directed at Taiwan.

Rubio, Hegseth, Australian

Foreign Minister Penny Wong and Defence Minister Richard Marles gathered at the State Department, with many eyes also on the Russia-Ukraine war, fragile ceasefire in Gaza and US military strikes against alleged drug traffickers in the Western Hemisphere that have raised questions about the use of force there.

"This is a very strong partnership, it's a strong alliance, and what we want to do is continue to build on it. We

tum behind this alliance," erals, defense production and troop deployments.

None of the four mentioned China by name in their brief comments to reporters before the formal meeting began, but the challenges posed by Beijing throughout the Pacific and elsewhere for years have been a central theme of the US-Australia relationship.

President Donald Trump and Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese signed a critical minerals deal at the White House in October after China imposed tougher rules on exporting its own critical minerals, used in technology from cellphones to fighter jets and of which Beijing is the

top producer and processor.

After Trump and Chinese leader Xi Jinping met later

think we have a lot of momenthat month, Beijing said it would pause those rules for Rubio said, hailing coopera- a year. "We have to have crit-Secretary of State Marco tion between Washington ical mineral supplies and and Canberra on critical min-supply chains that are reliable, and that are diverse and not overly invested in one place where they can be used as leverage against us or our partners of the world,"

Rubio said Monday. One element of that is the AUKUS pact, a Biden administration-era agreement under which the US, Britain and Australia committed to building an Australian fleet of submarines powered by US nuclear technology.

Rubio is to meet later Monday with British Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper. "The alliance has always been to ensure it delivers concrete benefits for our security and prosperity and for that of the US. And AUKUS is central to that: a win for Australia, a win for the US and a win for the United

China positive on Putin's India visit; calls for stronger trilateral cooperation

PRESS TRUST OF IDNIA Beijing

China on Monday reacted positively to Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to India, framing the three countries as an important part of the Global South and saying that sound trilateral ties are conducive to regional and global peace and stability, besides their own national interests.

"China, Russia and India are emerging economies and important members of the Global South," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun told a media briefing here, reacting for the first time to Putin's high-profile visit to New Delhi last week and his interactions with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Guo said that the "three countries maintaining sound relations is not only in line with their own interests but also conducive to regional



and global peace, security, stability and prosperity". Putin's visit was watched

here closely, considering Beijing's close and strong ties with Moscow.

Responding to a question about Putin's comments about New Delhi and Beijing ahead of his visit, Guo said that "China stands ready to work with Russia and India to continue advancing the bilateral relations". In an interview ahead of his

visit, Putin had said, "India and India to view and handle the

China are our closest friends we treasure that relationship deeply.

On India-China relations currently on a path of normalisation after the Eastern Ladakh confrontation, which resulted in a freeze in ties from 2020 until last year -Guo said China wants to promote sustained and strong ties with New Delhi with a long-term perspective.

"On China-India ties, China stands ready to work with

strategic height and longterm perspective, promote the sustained, sound and steady development of China-India ties, so as to better benefit the two countries and two peoples and make due contributions to peace and prosperity in Asia and beyond," he said.

bilateral relationship from a

Besides terming New Delhi and Beijing as close friends of Moscow, Putin, in the interview with an Indian news channel, also expressed confidence that the leaderships of India and China are committed to finding solutions to their issues, and Russia has no right to interfere in their bilat-

eral affairs. Chinese official media highlighted Putin's comments on India-China relations.

The state-run Xinhua news agency carried his remarks refuting US accusations over India's purchases of

Corío Deepwater Port: India's strategic gateway to South America



JAVIER PAULINICH

As India accelerates its global economic expansion, the need for diversified and resilient supply chains has become central to long-term national planning. With nearly 90 per cent of global trade dependent on maritime routes, India's future industrial growth, food security, and energy transition hinge on access to strategic ports around the world. In this context, the Corío Deepwater

Port in southern Peru emerges as a rare geoeconomic opportunity-an asset capable of shaping India's commercial and strategic trajectory for the next 30 to 50 years.

Its 28-metre natural depth and scalable capacity of over 100 million tonnes position it as one of the deepest and

coast of South America, offering India an unprecedented gateway into a resourcerich continent.

Peru's importance to India is rooted in both mineral security and agricultural diversification. As the world's thirdlargest copper producer, Peru holds the key to India's rising demand for critical minerals essential for renewable energy, electric mobility, data centers, and advanced electronics.

With India projected to import more than 90 per cent of its copper needs by 2047, securing steady access to Peru's southern mining corridor becomes strategically indispensable. At the same time, Peru's \$24 billion agricultural transformation has positioned it as a global powerhouse for high-value agroexports such as avocados, blueberries. quinoa, grapes, and speciality grains.

By 2040, Peru's agro-exports are expected to triple to \$40 billion, creating new avenues for India to diversify food imports and build integrated coldchain and logistics networks.

What makes Corio uniquely valuable is its ability to serve as a continenmost future-ready ports on the Pacific tal gateway. The port connects India not Andean, Amazonian, and Southern Cone



only to Peru but to four additional South American economies-Bolivia, Brazil, Argentina, and Chile-each with substantial reserves of minerals, lithium, agricultural commodities, and industrial products.

This single-entry platform allows Indian companies to access the broader

markets through interconnected overland routes. For example, Bolivia and Argentina provide strategic lithium access, Brazil's western states offer soy and protein exports, and northern Chile adds further copper and mineral capacity. Corío thus becomes India's multi-

country springboard into South America. A dedicated Corío-Visakhapatnam

(Vizag) maritime axis can further transform trade flows between India and South America. Vizag, one of India's leading deepwater ports, is already a major industrial and export hub on the eastern coast.

A direct corridor linking Vizag with Corío would create predictable, highvolume trade routes for copper, lithium, grains, and fresh produce outbound from South America, while enabling inbound shipments of Indian pharmaceuticals, fertilizers, heavy machinery, engineering goods, and digital infrastructure solutions. Such balanced cargo flows reduce empty return voyages and improve shipping economics, making the corridor attractive for private investment, Indian shipping lines, and

long-term logistics planning. Realising this opportunity requires proactive strategy. India should consider forming a public-private investment consortium, initiating government-level engagement with Peru, and commissioning an Indian-led pre-feasibility and ESG baseline study tailored to India's long-term needs.

Aligning Corío with India's critical

mineral plan and maritime strategy would ensure sustained national benefits. Ultimately, Corío is far more than a port-it is a strategic bridge to South America's natural resources, agricultural strength, and industrial potential.

For long-term investors, it represents a rare infrastructure platform capable of delivering commercial viability, supply-chain resilience, and geopolitical value for decades to come.

The Corío Deepwater Port is a rare, next-generation infrastructure asset. Situated in Peru's Arequipa region, it offers a natural depth of 28 metresamong the deepest on South America's Pacific coast-making it capable of accommodating Very Large Bulk Carriers (VLBCs). This depth, coupled with a scalable capacity exceeding 100 million tonnes per year, positions Corío as a long-term maritime platform that can evolve in tandem with India's expanding industrial and logistical requirements.

This article has been written by Amb. Javier Paulinich, the Ambassador of the Republic of Peru, presently stationed in New Delhi.

▼ PROSPECT



Nandil Biswa Sarma from Assam participates in the 'Ironman 70.3' in Baharain. Nandil is son of Assam Chief Minister

15 CRORE PM JAN DHAN ACCOUNTS ARE INOPERATIVE



As many as 15 crore, or 26 per cent of the total 57.07 crore Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) accounts, are inoperative, Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said on Monday. "The data regarding number of inoperative accounts vis-a-vis women, rural and semi-urban areas that are closed under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), is not centrally maintained. However, there are about 15.09 crore inoperative PMJDY accounts out of the total 57.07 crore PMJDY accounts in the country," he said in a written reply in the Lok Sabha.

Replying to another question, Chaudhary said as on September 30, 2025, banks have a total of 7.81 crore KCC accounts with an outstanding amount of ₹10.39 lakh crore, of which public sector banks (PSBs) have a total of 2.22 crore KCC accounts with an outstanding amount of ₹4.19 lakh crore.

Under Stand-up India Scheme, he said, banks have sanctioned 2.75 lakh loans amounting to ₹62,791 crore, of which PSBs have sanctioned 2.28 lakh loans amounting to ₹51,191 crore.

Further, under Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana, banks have disbursed ₹2.54 lakh crore till October, 2025 during the current FY 2025-26, out of which PSBs have disbursed ₹1.03 lakh crore.

Replying to another question, he said the International Monetary Fund (IMF) report on 'Growing Retail Digital Payments (The Value of Interoperability) dated June 2025 had recognised Unified Payments Interface (UPI) as the world's largest retail fast-payment system (FPS) by transaction volume.

Further, as per ACI Worldwide report on 'Prime Time for Real-Time' 2024, UPI has around 49 per cent share in the global real-time payment system

PSU banks write off ₹6.15 lakh cr over 5.5 years

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

Public sector banks have written off loans worth ₹6.15 lakh crore in the last five and a half years, Parliament was informed on Monday. "As per Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data, PSBs have writtenoff an aggregate loan amount of ₹6,15,647 crore, during the last five financial years and the current financial year till September 30, 2025 (provisional data)," Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said in a written reply in the

There has been no capital infusion in Public Sector Banks (PSBs) by the Government since FY2022-23, he said, adding, PSBs have significantly improved their financial performance,

strengthening their capital position. PSBs now rely on market sources and internal accruals to meet their capital requirements and they have raised ₹1.79 lakh crore capital from market through equity and bonds since April 1, 2022 till September 30, 2025, he said. He further said, banks

write-off NPAs, including those in respect of which full provisioning has been made on completion of four years, as per RBI guidelines and policy approved by banks' board. Such write-off does not result in waiver of liabilities of borrowers to repay, he said. Further, he said, recovery in written-off loans is an ongoing process and banks continue pursuing their recovery actions initiat-



ed against borrowers under the various recovery mechanism available to them, such as filing of a suit in civil courts or in Debts Recovery Tribunals (DRT), action under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of

Act 2002, filing of cases in the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 etc.

As provisioning for bad loans has already been done and the write-off process does not entail any actual Security Interest (SARFAESI) cash outflow, the bank's liq-

uidity position remains intact, he said. Moreover, banks evaluate/consider the impact of write-offs as part of their regular exercise to clean up their balance-sheet, avail tax benefit, optimise capital base, enhance lending capacity and boost investor senti-

ments, he added. Replying to

said, banks and financial Institutions have traditionally been the primary source of export finance in India. The total export credit disbursed by Public Sector Banks, SIDBI and Exim Bank in the last five years (FY 20-21 to FY 24-25) stood at ₹21.71 lakh crore, he said.

In another Chaudhary said, 5,83,291 fraud cases were registered in the last four and a half years till September 2025 amounting to ₹3,588.22 crore. Of this, he said, ₹238.83 crore have been recovered.

With increasing digital payment transactions in the country, incidence of cyber frauds including digital payment frauds have also gone up in the last few years,

Attorney General inaugurates State-of-the-art Club House in Noida

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

Noida

The newly constructed Club Housecum-Community Centre at Heart Beat City, Sector-107, Noida, was inaugurated on Monday, marking a significant step in delivering fully serviced residential ecosystems to the residents. The facility was officially opened by the Chief Guest, R. Venkataramani, Attorney General for India and Learned Court Receiver for Amrapali projects.

He was present alongside Ravi Bhatia and DK Mishra, Court Committee Members, KP Mahadevaswamy, CMD, NBCC and Suman Kumar, Director (Commercial), NBCC, as well as officer bearers of the Apartment Owner's Association and residents.

The Club House stands as a testament to NBCC's (National Buildings Construction Corporation) commitment to completing and upgrading amenities for the erstwhile Amrapali projects, which it took over under the guidance of the Learned Court Receiver and Committee members. NBCC has successfully completed all residential units in Heart Beat City.

Spread across 5,200 square metres of built-up area, the Club House is a ground plus two-storey structure equipped with three lifts. It is designed to be a vibrant social



Dignitaries present during the inauguration of Club House-cum-Community Centre at Heart Beat City, Sector-107, Noida

comprehensive suite of amenities experience.

and recreational hub, offering a to enhance the residents' living

Key features include a 400-sqm Community Hall capable of accommodating 350-400 persons, a squash court, crèche, kitchen and multi-purpose hall. The first floor houses a well-equipped gymnasium along with yoga and aerobics rooms, while the second floor features six guest rooms, a library, an indoor games area, a reception, a kitchen-cum-restaurant and an open terrace. During the occasion, residents acknowledged the efforts of the Learned Court Receiver Committee and the NBCC team in bringing the Club House into service, which will significantly foster community engagement and offer high-quality lifestyle amenities.

Under the divine presence of Pujya Dwarkeshlalji Maharajshree and the esteemed inauguration by Home Minister Amit Shah, the iconic Narsinh Mehta Lake

Assam Govt to hand over 992 acres to AAI for Silchar greenfield airport

TONY DAS Guwahati

The Assam Government decided to hand over 3,000 bighas (nearly 992 acres) of land at Doloo Tea EState in Cachar district to the Airports Authority of India (AAI) for the construction of a greenfield airport, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said. Addressing a press conference after a cabinet meeting on Sunday, Sarma said the panel approved an increase of 500 bighas from the earlier decision to allocate 2,500 bighas (826.45 acres) for the proposed airport near Silchar.

'The cabinet approved the transfer of 3,000 bighas at Doloo Tea EState in Silchar to the AAI for the construction of a greenfield airport," Sarma said, adding that the decision will pave the way for obtaining the Union Cabinet's nod for the project. The State Government had proposed a new airport in Silchar spread over 2,500 bighas as the existing facility at Kumbhirgram is a defence



media after Cabinet meeting

accommodate the increasing demands of air traffic is not possible.

airport and expansion of the facility to had distributed financial assistance to 1,296 ment of land to 1,200 families under flagship

families living at Doloo Tea EState "as a good-will gesture". Earlier that year, a controver-sy had arisen over the State Government's efforts to acquire land for setting a greenfield airport with the then Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia claiming that no such proposal was received for the facility from the BIP-led State. It was later clarified that the land was being acquired at AAI's request.

Because of the confusion, land acquisition at the tea eState for the airport had led to protests by the garden workers, but the Government assured that no worker would be evicted from their homes and there would be no job loss.

The State Government had previously announced a compensation of ₹50 crore for the acquisition of land at Doloo, Lalbagh and Mainagarh tea gardens for setting up the greenfield airport.

Talking about other cabinet decisions, the In November 2022, the Assam Government CM said the Government has approved allot-

scheme Mission Basundhara. The cabinet also approved a joint project to be set up at Staterun Assam Engineering College and Dassault Systems India Pvt Ltd.

"The project, to be established over 5,000 sq ft at a cost of ₹243 crore, will offer courses related to aerospace and defence, automotive and electric vehicles." Sarma said. Of the total cost, the Assam Government will contribute ₹43 crore, while Dassault Systems will invest Rs 200 crore, he added.

Sarma further said the cabinet granted administrative approval for the construction of Assam's second Sainik School at Longvaku in Karbi Anglong district.

"The school will be built at a cost of ₹335 crore, of which 80 per cent will be borne by the Ministry of Defence and the remaining 20 per cent by the Assam Government," he added. Besides, the cabinet approved compensation to 884 families for land acquired during the construction of the four-lane National Highway in Dima Hasao district.

RInfra setting up integrated solar manufacturing ecosystem

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE New Delhi

Anil Ambani-led Reliance Group on Monday said its arm Reliance Infrastructure is setting up one of India's most advanced, fully integrated solar manufacturing ecosystems spanning ingots, wafers, cells and modules.

According to an investors presentation of Reliance Infrastructure, the manufacturing facility will have nextgen technology.

The facility will bridge large demand-supply gap as India will need 55–60 GW of solar modules annually by 2030, while upstream capacity remains significantly short.

It will be a high-value, vertically integrated platform India's clean energy security. It is establishing an endto-end battery manufacturing ecosystem covering cell manufacturing, pack assembly and grid-scale containerised BESS (battery energy storage system) As per the presentation,

to reduce import depen-

dence and strengthen

India's installed stationary storage base is less than 1 GWh today and will rise to 250 GWh by 2032. Domestic manufacturing currently meets less than 10 per cent of expected demand.

Reliance Group's another firm Reliance Power said in its investor presentation that Reliance NU Energies is powering the shift from plain-vanilla solar to hybrid and firm, round-the-clock (RTC) renewable energy.



Trident Group to invest ₹1500 Crore in modernising sustainable paper manufacturing and terry towel production in Punjab

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE New Delhi

Trident Group, one of India's leading agro-based and environmentally responsible paper manufacturers, has announced a ₹1500crore investment to upgrade its sustainable paper operations and Terry Towel production at its Punjab unit. The move strengthens the company's commitment to eco-friendly manufacturing and futureready technologies.

announcement follows Trident's strong presence at PaperEx 2025, where it showcased its expanded range of sustainable, wheat-straw-based paper-produced without ing its portfolio with new



cutting a single tree. The company also highlighted its shift toward automation, digitalisation and circular manufacturing, aimed at improving efficiency, reducing waste and enhancing

production accuracy. Trident is further expandbook variants designed to meet evolving consumer and institutional needs. Speaking on the

announcement, Rajnish Kumar Gera, CEO - Paper & Chemicals, Trident Group, said: "This investment marks a new phase of transforma-

tion for Trident. It reinforces our commitment to sustainable, zero-tree paper manufacturing while accelerating our shift toward a technologically advanced, resource-efficient ecosystem. By strengthening automation and expanding our eco-smart product portfolio, we are preparing for the next generation of sustainable solutions for our customers." With this investment and

technology-driven transformation, Trident Group is poised to further strengthen its position as a leader in sustainable manufacturing, delivering high-quality, environmentally responsible products to markets in India and across the world.

across 1,450 km long-haul network PIONEER NEWS SERVICE Constl India's first digital infrastructure provider to achieve a 1 Tbps transmission

■ New Delhi

Capitalising on India's burgeoning digital economy, digital infrastructure provider Constl has successfully tested and deployed a record-breaking 1 terabit per second (Tbps) line rate on a single optical channel across the 1,450 km Mumbai-Chennai route.

breakthrough, achieved in collaboration with global networking leader Ciena, utilised Ciena's Wave Logic 6 Extreme (WL6e) solution on one of Constl's most critical corridors, without the need for regeneration. Constl is a subsidiary of the Space World Group.

This milestone makes

rate over a long-haul distance. The WL6e upgrade is set to significantly boost Constl's ambition to become the network of choice for hyperscalers operating in India.

The deployment effectively doubles the fibre wavelength capacity from 800 Gb/s to 1.6 Tb/s compared to its earlier WaveLogic 5 Extreme deployment, delivering a strong competitive edge by increasing capacity while simultaneously reducing cost per bit, improving spectral efficiency and low-

ering power consumption. "Since inception in 2023 just two years ago—Constl

has deployed over 12,000 km of fibre and connected around 100 data centres across 13 Indian cities, powered by Ciena's industryleading optical technology," said Ankit Goel, Chairman and Founder, Space World Group. "This milestone positions us to expand our terrestrial fibre network and deliver high capacity 800GbE services for the AI era."Constl's successful trial is also seen as a testament to

Constl, Ciena achieve 1 Tbps transmission

laying across the country. Amit Malik, Vice President and General Manager, Asia Pacific, Japan and India, Ciena, reinforced the partnership's focus on future-ready connectivity. "Constl is com-

the high-quality fibre infra-

structure the company is

mitted to developing networks tailored to hyperscaler requirements and Ciena's coherent optics are recognised as the best-inclass platform for high-capacity Al services. Together, we are driving next-generation connectivity to support India's digital future and AI ambitions.' Constl specialises in deliv-

ering advanced digital infrastructure solutions purposebuilt for hyperscalers, telcos and OTT/CDN providers, operating a pan-India highspeed network. Ciena is a global leader in

high-speed connectivity, known for building adaptive networks to support exponential growth in bandwidth demand.



The Dioneer Property of the New Delhi | Tuesday | December 9, 2025

DORTMUND BEATS HOFFENHEIM 2-0 IN BUNDESLIGA



Former Tottenham defender Mauricio Taricco will resign as assistant coach of South Korean champion Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors after receiving a five-match ban for an alleged racist gesture during a K League game, the club said on Tuesday. On November 8 as Jeonbuk faced Daejeon Hana, the Argentine assistant was sent off by referee Kim Woo-seong for vehemently protesting a penalty decision. Subsequently, Taricco placed his index fingers besides the corner of his eyes – a gesture the referee interpreted as racist and reported to the league's disciplinary committee. On November 19, the committee banned Taricco for five games and fined him 20 million won (\$13,646). The 52-year-old, who featured for Tottenham between 1998 and 2004 and also played for Ipswich Town, West Ham and Brighton in England, denied any racist intent, insisting that he was asking the official if he had seen the incident.

HORNBILL E-SPORTS FESTIVAL KICKS OFF IN KOHIMA



The Hornbill Esports Festival 2025, the second edition of Nagaland's premier competitive gaming showcase, will feature competition in three categories including E-chess. The event that began Monday is being organised by the Esports Association of Nagaland (ESAN) in collaboration with the Department of Youth Resources and Sports.

Speaking at the inaugural session, Abu Metha, advisor to the Chief Minister and Vice President of the Athletics Federation of India (AFI), said, "E-Sports is a modern-day trend and a billion-dollar industry that cannot be ignored." He emphasised that Nagaland does not want its youth to miss opportunities in this fast-growing sector.

India beat Wales in FIH Junior Women's World Cup

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Santiago (Chile)

Out of quarterfinal contention, India defeated Wales 3-1 to remain in the hunt for a ninth-place finish at the FIH Junior Women's World Cup.

Hina Bano (14'), Sunelita Toppo (24'), and Ishika (31') scored for India, while Eloise Moat (52') netted the lone goal for Wales. India had logged two wins and a loss to finish outside the top eight in the pool stage.

In Sunday's match, India began with a penalty corner in the first 30 seconds. They were playing between the lines to carve out opportunities on regular occasions, but couldn't find the opening

Wales had the opportuni-



ty to surge ahead with a penalty stroke, but were a sharp stop to keep the towards the end of the first

scores level. India eventually managed denied by Nidhi as she made to break the deadlock

quarter, courtesy a tap-in from Hina after some neat work by Sakshi Rana. Looking to double their

penalty corner at the start of the second quarter. They continued to create chances regularly, and were

rewarded for their persistence after Rana's initial shot fell in the way of Sunelita, who made no mistake from close range. With 14 circle penetrations in the first half, India held a deserving 2-0 lead at the break.

India extended their lead to 3-0 early in the second half as Ishika found the back of the net after a rebound from the Welsh goalkeeper fell in her way.

Jyoti Šingh's side controlled the tempo of the game, stretching the Welsh defense by playing between the lines and pressing high, while remaining disciplined and

advantage, India maintained compact at the back. India continued to create chances pushing Wales back in their own half to close out the

third quarter. With the lion's share of possession, India remained in pursuit of more goal-scoring

opportunities to further increase their advantage in the final quarter. Wales had an opening on the other end and Eloise Moat (52nd) made it count, pulling one back for her side. However, that only proved to be a consolation goal as India

deserved 3-1 win. India will next play Uruguay on Tuesday and the winner of this match will progress to the ninth place showdown. The losing team will fight for the 11th spot in the overall standings.

held firm to secure a well-

1191 posts lying vacant in SAI: Sports minister THE GOVERNMENT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA New Delhi

Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Monday acknowledged that over 1,000 posts are currently lying vacant in the Sports Authority

of India (SAI), a concern that was highlighted in a recent Parliamentary Standing Committee report which had described the body as "critically" under-funded and under-staffed.

The minister was responding to a question from Congress MP Adoor Prakash. who represents Kerala's Attingal constituency, in Lok Sabha. Asked whether the government has noted the concerns raised by the Parliamentary Standing Committee over severe shortage of funds and staff in SAI, Mandaviya said, "The Government has taken note of the observations."

"A total of 1,191 posts are lying vacant in the SAI. The recruitment process of certain posts has already been initiated," he added.

In its report in August, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on sports, headed by Congress' Rajya Sabha MP Digvijaya Singh, observed that about 45 per cent of sanctioned posts in the SAI are



Union Minister Mansukh Mandaviya speaks in the Lok Sabha during the Winter session of Parliament in New Delhi

presently vacant.

'The fact that these shortfalls in staff are being managed through contractual appointment may at best be only an ad hoc arrangement," it had pointed out. The Committee. which also includes cricketer and AAP Rajya Sabha MP Harbhajan Singh, and BJP MPs Sambit Patra and Bansuri Swaraj, among others, expressed "grave" concern over the shortage of staff and low funding of SAI.

The panel "heard the views" of Sports Secretary, and SAI representatives in its meeting held on June 6 this year. It commended the recruit-

ment drive to fill up these vacancies but asked the Sports Ministry to complete the process in the next six months and "furnish an Action Taken Report (ATR)."

In its annual budget this year, the government allocated ₹3,794 crore to the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports. Of this ₹830 crore were earmarked for SAI.

"The budget allocation to SAI is based on the proposals submitted by them for the respective financial year. Any additional requirements that arise during the year are examined at the RE stage and, where appropriate, considALLOCATED ₹3,794 CRORE TO THE MINISTRY OF YOUTH **AFFAIRS AND** SPORTS. OF THIS ₹830 CRORE WERE EARMARKED FOR SAI

ered through supplementary grants," the minister stated in Lok Sabha.

Dealing with sexual harassment

To another question on whether the government has a consolidated record of sexual harassment complaints filed by sportspersons, the minister reiterated that no such dedicated database exists. He, however, listed the measures that have been in place to "ensure a safe and positive environment".

"In order to provide a safe environment in sports, the SAI also runs a 24x7 helpline for the players," he said.

In addition, National Sports Federations have been told to mandatorily have women coaches in contingents that feature female athletes during camps and competition exposures. They have also been asked to increase the strength of women Coaches and Support Staff in camps.

Santos stuns Cruzeiro NEYMAR, WHO

ASSOCIATED PRESS Sao Paulo

Nevmar's Santos secured its survival in Brazil's Serie A on Sunday with a 3-0 win over Cruzeiro, and the 33-yearold soccer star later confirmed he will undergo surgery on his left knee.

Playing its last league match of the season, Santos which achieved a global following with all-time great Pelé - avoided what would have been the club's second relegation in its history. Santos was relegated in 2023 for the first time almost a year after the death of Pelé.

Neymar struggled to recover from a torn ACL in October 2023 during a World Cup qualifier against Uruguay. But he proved key for Santos in its successful fight to avoid relegation in the Brazilian championship after its promotion last year.

Neymar, who returned to Santos in January, was decisive for the club where he started his professional career. In the last three rounds of the league, Neymar scored a goal against Sport Recife in a 3-0 win, netted a hat trick against Juventude on Wednesday in another 3-0 victory, and on Sunday was an effective playmaker.

RETURNED TO SANTOS IN JANUARY, WAS DECISIVE FOR THE CLUB WHERE HE STARTED HIS **PROFESSIONAL CAREER** Thaciano (26th and 28th

minutes) and Ioão Schmidt (60th) scored against Cruzeiro at Vila Belmiro Stadium as Santos finished 12th with 47 points. Neymar played only 19 of the 38 rounds of the league, which started in April. He scored eight goals. "I came for this, to try to help the best way I can. These

have been tough weeks for me," Neymar said after the game. "I thank those who were with me to lift me up. If it weren't for them, I wouldn't have played these matches because of these injuries, this knee problem. I need to rest and then we will have this knee surgery."

Neymar did not give more details about the knee injury and surgery. He still hopes to be included in Brazil's final squad for the 2026 World Cup, though coach Carlo Ancelotti is yet to pick the former captain since he took over in May.

Napoli beat Juventus 2-1 in Serie A

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Luciano Spalletti's return to the team he led to the Serie A title was spoiled by Rasmus Højlund's brace as host Napoli beat Juventus 2-1 on Sunday. The result also lifted Napoli back to the top of the Italian league. The defending champion moved a point above Inter Milan and three points above AC Milan, which visits Torino on Monday.

It was Juventus coach Spalletti's first time at Napoli as opposition manager since he led the southern team to its first scudetto in more than 30 years in 2023.

Napoli coach Antonio Conte was also facing his former team. He steered Juventus to three Serie A titles during his time in charge and also played for the Bianconeri for 13 years, winning numerous trophies.

Adding to the occasion, it was the first time the two coaches had faced each



other. Napoli got off to a great start as the in-form David Neres got away down the right before rolling the ball across for Højlund to tap it in with less than seven minutes on the clock.

Napoli had the better of the chances but Juventus leveled in the 59th minute as the Bianconeri went on the counterattack and Kenan Yildiz played a one-two with Weston McKennie before placing an angled drive into the far bottom corner.

McKennie inadvertently also played a role at the other end in what proved to be the winner for Napoli in

The United States international tried to head away a cross for Neres but his attempt was rather weak and went to Hojlund to head in from four yards (meters).

Roma loses ground Roma lost ground in the title race as it fell to a 1-0 defeat at Cagliari after playing most of the match

Roma remained fourth but slipped four points below Napoli. It was Cagliari's first win since September and lifted the Sardinian team four points above the drop zone.

The match turned in the 49th minute when Roma defender Zeki Çelik brought down Cagliari midfielder Michael Folorunsho right on the edge of the area.

The referee initially awarded a penalty but realized the foul was just outside the area after reviewing the incident. He revoked the spot kick but showed Çelik a straight red card for denying

a clear scoring occasion. Roma goalkeeper Mile Svilar pulled off a number of impressive saves but Cagliari broke the deadlock in the 82nd minute.

Gianluca Gaetano was left completely unmarked to chest down a corner and fire the ball in off the inside of the far post.

Abu Dhabi

La Liga: Real Madrid lose 2-0 to Celta Vigo

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Real Madrid had two players sent off in its 2-0 home defeat to Celta Vigo on Sunday and lost more ground to Spanish league leader Barcelona.

Madrid conceded early in the second half and then saw red cards for Fran García and Álvaro Carreras in its first defeat of the season at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium in all competitions. Unused Madrid substitute Endrick also was shown a red card for complaining.

Williot Swedberg scored for the visitors with a nice flick from near the penalty spot in the 54th.

Madrid lost García with a second yellow card in the 64th and Carreras in stoppage time. Swedberg sealed Celta's victory in a breakaway shortly after Madrid was reduced to nine players.

"We are all upset. It wasn't the game or the result that



Xabi Alonso said. "The referee's decisions threw us off balance. I didn't like the refereeing.

Madrid has won only two of its last seven matches across all tournaments. It next hosts Manchester City in the Champions League on Wednesday.

Madrid's only other league loss this season was a heavy defeat at Atletico Madrid in September. It also lost at we wanted," Madrid coach Liverpool in the league phase

of the Champions League in November.

Sunday's setback left Alonso's team four points behind Barcelona. The Catalan club won 5-3 at Real Betis on Saturday. Madrid is only one point ahead of thirdplaced Villarreal, which has a game in hand.

Vinícius Júnior and Kylian Mbappé both had good chances to equalize for Madrid but couldn't capitalize on their opportunities.

Militão had to leave the game Celta moved to 10th place

with its second win in three league games. Goalkeeping mistakes

Girona goalkeeper Paulo

Gazzaniga had an afternoon to forget in Girona's 3-0 loss to Elche at home.

The Argentine goalkeeper's mistakes led to two Elche goals, including one after he passed the ball straight to an opponent inside the area while trying to send it to a defender. Earlier, he had failed to make a routine save on an angled shot by the

near post. Gazzaniga also had a nightmare game in Girona's opening league match, when his blunders led to a goal and a penalty and his ejection in

Girona, sitting inside the relegation zone in 18th place, has only one win in its last six games in all competitions.

a 3-1 loss to Rayo Vallecano.

Nice fans boo team during 7th loss

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Nice (France)

Nice was booed on the field a week after its players were attacked by supporters. The French team's crisis on and off the pitch deepened as it lost 1-0 at home to Angers in Ligue 1 on Sunday for a seventh straight loss across all competitions.

After last week's defeat at Lorient, Nice players were confronted by a large number of their supporters when they returned to the club's training and academy centre.

Players and staff were reportedly assaulted and fans shouted insults and demanded greater commitment from the squad. Jérémie Boga and Terem Moffi took multiple blows,

including to the head and groin. Those two players were absent against Angers and their teammates took the field with the names of either Boga or Moffi on the backs of their jerseys instead of their own.

The jeers rang out right from the start.

Yassin Belkhdim scored for Angers in the 33rd minute and Nice's hopes of ending its losing streak diminished early in the second half when Tom Louchet was sent off for a foul on Jacques Ekomié.

Surprise win Lorient upset fifth-placed

Lyon 1-0 to move up to 13th. Lyon had to play the entire second half with 10 men after Ainsley Maitland-Niles was sent off in the 42nd minute following two quick yellow cards.

Lorient had taken the lead three minutes before the dismissal with a goal from Pablo Pagis.

Off the bottom Auxerre moved off the

bottom of the table with a 3-1 win over Metz, which took its opponent's spot. The result ended a nine-

match winless run for

Auxerre. Lassine Sinayoko's penalty and a goal by Oussama El-Azzouzi three minutes later put Auxerre 2-0 ahead before Gauthier Hein halved the deficit on the stroke of halftime.

But Kévin Danois scored his first Ligue 1 goal late on to secure the win.

Le Havre forward Issa Soumaré failed to convert a penalty as another relegation fight, against Paris FC, ended in a 0-0 draw.

F1 in 2026: Key dates, new title hopefuls and Cadillac's debut **ASSOCIATED PRESS**

Say goodbye to DRS, and hello to a battery power boost. Sunday's Abu Dhabi Grand Prix marked the last time Formula 1 uses the Drag Reduction System overtaking aid, introduced in 2011.

Next year, drivers will have to manage the car's systems more closely than ever with a more visible role for aerodynamic and electrical technology After a season-long title

battle ended with Lando Norris' first title, here's what to expect in 2026: Smaller, lighter, more electric The biggest regulation changes in years make cars

shorter, narrower and lighter,

with movable "active aerodynamics" — X-mode for straight-line speed, Z-mode

reliance on electric hybrid The FIA's target was for electrical power to make up half of total output along with a traditional V6 turbo

for cornering — and more

engine. Instead of DRS, drivers can deploy extra elec-

more strategic but could lead to drivers lifting off the power and coasting on some straights to allow the electrical systems to harvest energy.

The FIA claims the rules emphasize driver skill but there have been mixed reviews from those who've tried 2026 designs in their trical power at key moments. That makes driving even teams' simulators.

Smaller, more agile cars could help overtaking but the fastest and slowest cars may be up to four seconds per lap apart on pace, tire supplier Pirelli has reported. In F1 terms, that's an eternity. Expect to see more engine failures as teams balance reliability with performance. Mercedes, Aston Martin

aim for more Could this be the year Lewis Hamilton finds his form again at Ferrari and chases an

eighth title? Maybe not. Even though he never got on with the 2022-25 cars, Hamilton told the BBC he was "not looking forward" to 2026 after the Las Vegas Grand Prix last month, yet

another disappointment

Mercedes has designed some of F1's most dominant engines before, but its eye-

since he joined Ferrari.

catching "zero-pod" aerody namic concept was a bust when the last regulation period began in 2022. Get both aspects right this time and George Russell could be a title contender after two wins in 2025. Another team to watch is

Aston Martin, which has its first car created with design great Adrian Newey in charge, and is hoping it can make two-time champion Fernando Alonso an F1 race winner for the first time in 13 years. Williams too could make a step forward after abandoning its 2025 projects early to focus on 2026.

New Cadillac team, old faces

The F1 grid expands to 22 cars for the first time since 2016 as Cadillac becomes the 11th team with backing from General Motors.

The Pioneer New delhi | Tuesday | December 9, 2025

India begin official T20I WC build-up against South Africa

The return of Shubman Gill and Hardik Pandya will lend fresh sheen and muchneeded completeness to reigning world champions India when they begin their official march towards the home T20 World Cup with the opening match of a fivegame series against South Africa on Tuesday.

This series marks the start of India's formal build-up to the February showpiece, where they will play 10 T20Is – five against South Africa followed by another five against New Zealand before opening their title defence against the USA at the Wankhede on February 7.

The defending champions will look to enter this phase with clarity of intent as they refine roles, streamline combinations and settle the XI that will carry the weight of expectations in front of home crowds.

India have been a formidable T20I unit post their World Cup triumph in the format last year, where they won eight matches in a row to lift

Since then, they have extended their tally to 26

including a seven-match streak during their Asia Cup victory in Dubai.

They have not lost a T20I series in this period, and with only minor tweaks needed, they will be hoping to sharpen the edges against the side they defeated in the T20 World Cup final.

Gill's return comes after he missed almost a month of cricket owing to a neck spasm suffered while attempting a slog sweep during the opening Test against the Proteas.

Having played non-stop cricket since the last IPL and with India facing a packed season ahead, his workload management will be closely

But for Gill, who has 837 runs from 33 T20Is at an average of 29.89, this series also doubles up as vital preparation heading into the ICC event.

His reunion with Abhishek Sharma brings back a highimpact opening pair that marries brute force with clean, classical strokeplay.

Abhishek, fresh from a standout tour of Australia where he topped India's scoring charts with 163 runs return in style with a 42-ball in the 2-1 victory, has been in 77 not out for Baroda in the



India's Shubman Gill during a practice session on the eve of the first T20 cricket match of a series between India and South Africa at Barabati Stadium in Cuttack, Odisha

In the Syed Mushtaq Ali T20s, the Punjab left-hander hammered 304 runs at an average of 50.66 and a staggering strike rate of 249plus, including a breathtaking 52-ball 148 against Bengal as Punjab posted 310/5.

Hardik Pandya's comeback is equally significant.

Out for more than two months after a quadricep injury during the Asia Cup, the all-rounder marked his monstrous domestic touch. SMAT before bowling four

overs at full tilt for 1/52. He arrived here a day ahead of the squad, trained solo at the Barabati Stadium, bowled for 20 minutes and went through an extended physical routine.

His presence not only deepens India's batting but restores the balance of a bowling attack built heavily on flexibility. One of the central conversations ahead of the series has been skipper Suryakumar Yadav's prolonged lean patch.

The contrast between his

dazzling IPL 2025, where he amassed 717 runs for Mumbai Indians, and his underwhelming T201 returns have been striking.

Since taking over as fulltime T20I captain in July last year, his form has dipped to an average of 15.33 with 184 runs in 15 innings, he has not scored a fifty in the last 20 games, and his strike rate has reduced to 127.77 from the 187-plus he clocked in 2022. Even in the SMAT this season, he failed to reach a fifty, scoring 165 runs from **India vs South Africa T20 Series 2025** Dec 17 Dec 19 Dec 14 3rd T20 4th T20 5th T20 Narendra Modi Head-to-Head in T20s South Highest Total India: 283/1 South Africa: 227/3 KBK Sports Graphics

five matches. Any drastic move before the World Cup looks unlikely, but the next 10 T20Is will add fodder to conversations surrounding

both his form and captaincy. The wicketkeeper-batter debate — Sanju Samson or Jitesh Sharma — remains

equally tantalising.
India's handling of the pair during the Australia series raised eyebrows, with Samson batting only once, promoted to No. 3, before Jitesh was backed for the last three T20Is.

Since India's World Cup triumph, Samson has been the team's third-highest rungetter, flourishing as an opener with three centuries, including two in South Africa. But Gill's return as vice-captain pushed Samson down the order into a role he rarely occupies in T20 cricket. In the recent SMAT, Samson looked in excellent touch with two fifties, two 40s and a 56-ball 73 not out

against Andhra, while Jitesh

managed modest returns

for Baroda with a top score

South Africa, for their part, welcome back tearaway pacer Anrich Nortje for his first international appearance since last year's T20 World Cup final.Marco Jansen's evolution as a genuine all-rounder adds heft to the visitors; his blistering 93 in the Guwahati Test and 70 off 39 balls in Ranchi underscored a renewed authority with the bat to go with his established potency with the ball.

Teams (from):

India: Suryakumar Yadav (c), Shubman Gill (vc), Abhishek Sharma, Tilak Varma, Sanju Samson (wk), Jitesh Sharma (wk), Hardik Pandya, Axar Patel, Shivam Dube, Washington Sundar, Jasprit Bumrah, Arshdeep Singh, Harshit Rana, Kuldeep Yadav and Varun Chakravarthy.

South Africa: Aiden Markram (captain), Ottineil Baartman, Corbin Bosch, Dewald Brevis, Quinton de Kock, Tony de Zorzi, Donnovan Reeza Hendricks, Marco Jansen, George Linde, Keshav Maharaj, Kwena Maphaka, David Miller, Lungi Ngidi, Anrich Nortje, Tristan Stubbs.

DUBAI CAPITALS

DHABI KNIGHT

RIDERS IN ILT20

West Indian hard-hitting

batter Rovman Powell

struck a stunning unbeaten

half-century as Dubai Capitals crushed Abu Dhabi

Knight Riders by 83 runs to

notch their first win in ILT20

balls and Jordan Cox's 52 runs

(32 balls) to set the oppo-

In response, the Knight

Riders were bundled out for

103 runs in 15.3 overs as the

nents a target of 187 runs.

Dubai Capitals recovered from a shaky start thanks to Powell's 96 not out off 52

CRUSH ABU

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Dubai

Season 4.

No major changes in T20 squad before World Cup: Skipper Salman

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Karachi

Pakistan's T20 skipper Salman Ali Agha has ruled out any major changes in his squad for the Men's T20 World Cup next year, saying the side has shown a marked improvement after the players were given specific roles in recent months.

Pakistan, who had made big changes to its side following the Asia Cup final defeat to India earlier this year, bringing in Abdul Samad, Babar Azam, Usman Khan and Naseem Shah, defeated South Africa at home in a three-match T20I series and then won the Tri-series, also involving Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka,

"In my personal opinion, don't see any major changes in the national T20 squad before the World March 8 next year, and Cup," Salman said on a

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Yash Dhull and skipper Nitish

Rana scored fine half-

centuries as Delhi ended

their Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy

campaign with an 18-

run win over Uttarakhand

With their third win in

seven games, Delhi finished

third in Group D, behind

Jharkhand and Rajasthan

who advanced in the premier

Both Dhull (52 off 37) and

Rana (51 off 29) had a produc-

tive tournament but the team

failed to qualify for Super 8

stage after a disappointing

first leg of the Ranji

Trophy.Delhi made 162 for

domestic T20 competition.

Ahmedabad

Delhi end SMAT campaign

with win over Uttarakhand



one we will have in the World Cup. Every player had been given a specific role in recent months and with that the team had moved forward," he added.

Pakistan are scheduled to play six T20 games before the World Cup, scheduled to be co-hosted by India and Sri Lanka from February 7 till Salman said the limited Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) number of matches will make it difficult to make "I think the current com- major changes.

"We have six T20 matches

seven in 20 overs before lim-

iting Uttarakhand to 144 for

seven. Prashant Chopra (54 off 50 balls) top scored for

Leg-spinner Suyash Sharma and Digvesh Singh Rathi took two wickets each for Delhi

Uttarakhand.

group stage

to play before the World Cup and I don't think we can make any big changes now in these remaining matches. We have to show consistencv and move forward with the current combination,"

Experienced allrounder Shadab Khan, who was the vice-captain of the side before he got injured in May and underwent a shoulder surgery in London, is now rehabilitated and is set to make a comeback in the Big Bash in Australia.

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Vidarbha pacer Yash

Thakur halted Andhra in its

tracks by grabbing four

wickets to guide his side to

a 19-run victory in a Group

A final-round match of the

Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy

Andhra, who have

already qualified for the

next stage along with Mumbai from the group,

failed to overhaul

Vidarbha's 154/8, with the

26-year-old right-hand

bowler returning excel-lent figures of 4/22 to

restrict the opponents to

here on Monday.

Hardik gives us lot of options: Suryakumar

TAPAN MOHANTA

India captain Suryakumar Yadav believes Hardik Pandya's return will restore the tactical depth and balance that shaped the team's Asia Cup surge when the world champions take on South Africa in a five-match T201 series starting here on Tuesday. The ace India seam-

sustained a left quadriceps injury and missed the Asia Cup final, is fully fit and in fine form after making his comeback in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy. His timely return ahead of next year's T20 World Cup

bowling all-rounder, who

has brought back the muchneeded flexibility and balance, with his new-ball spells offering India the cushion to field three, even four spinners. "I think what you saw in

the Asia Cup also, when he was bowling the new ball, he opened a lot of options,

'That's what he brings to the table. His experience, the way he has done really well in all the matches, all good games also, all bigger games in ICC events.

"I think that experience will count a lot. His presence will definitely give a good balance to the side.

Incidentally, Pandya, who landed a day early in Cuttack and trained solo at Barabati Stadium, skipped the optional session on Monday, but the skipper confirmed that both he and Shubman Gill returning from a neck spasm are available.

"Right now, both of them look healthy and fit," he

For India, this series is the start of a 10-match run into the home T20 World Cup in February, but Suryakumar said the groundwork was laid long

"Our 2026 T20 World Cup preparation began right after we won the T20 World lot of combinations for us Cup in 2024... Our prepara- have not changed too with respect to playing tion is similar. The preparamuch... Everything is going XI," Suryakumar said on tion started after the T20 well. We wanted to continthe eve of the series- World Cup 2024 got over. ue the same way.

Yash Thakur stars as Vidarbha beat Andhra by 19 runs



thing is working for us." He underlined that India's

recent success stems from consistency of selection.

"I feel in the last 5-6 series which we have played, we have tried and played with a similar combination. We

earlier match, ended

his SMAT campaign with

Vidarbha's innings

revolved around Aman

Mokhade's 50 and keeper-

batter Akshay Wadkar,

who scored a 33-ball 41

Satyanarayana Raju's 4/26

playing a big role in restricting the opponents

to a below-average score. However, Andhra fared

even worse when they

came out to bat, losing

three wickets for 31 runs

including India player

Srikar Bharat for a golden duck. Pyla Avinash scored

a 37-ball 44 but that was

not enough as seven

players could only manage

single-digit scores.

Andhra pacer

18 scalps.

On the conversation around Sanju Samson and Jitesh Sharma, Suryakumar reiterated that flexibility is key. "In terms of Sanju, yes, when he came into the circuit, he batted higher up the order. Now, the thing is, other than the openers, I feel everyone has to be very flexible. He was ready to bat at any number." He insisted

In another match, young

Assam pacer Sadek

Hussain returned a four-

wicket haul on way to

defeating Kerala by five

Vidarbha 154/8 in 20

overs (Aman Mokhade 50,

Akshay Wadkar 41;

Satyanarayana Raju 4/26)

beat Andhra 135/9 in

20 overs (Pyla Avinash

44; Yash Thakur 4/22) by

Kerala 101 in 19.4 overs (Sadek Hussain 4/19, Abdul

Ajij Kuraishi 2/16, Avinov

Choudhury 2/15) lost

to Assam 105/5 in 18.5

overs (Pradyun Saikia 41

not out; KM Asif 2/22) by

Haryana beat Bengal to enter

wickets.

19 runs.

5 wickets.

Brief scores:

Dubai Capitals secured an easy win. Dubai Capitals did not have the best of starts with openers Toby Albert (8) and Sediqullah Atal (8) going cheaply with the team ending the powerplay at 43 for 2.

Piyush Chawla, playing in his 300th T20 match, struck with his first ball to get rid of the USA batter Shayan Jahangir (14) to leave the Dubai Capitals reeling at 43 for three.

Cox and Powell took control of the match as they stitched a 119-run stand off 76 balls While Powell smashed eight fours and four sixes in his innings, Cox hit four fours and one six in his stay.

Abu Dhabi Knight Riders were off to a bad start as David Willey got rid of Alex Hales for a duck and Alishan Sharafu for 4 in the first over. Mustafizur Rahman reduced the Knight Riders to 10 for three by dismissing Unmukt Chand for a golden duck.

Phil Salt (27 off 21) tried to keep his team in the game with a fighting innings but fell to Rahman with his side struggling at 44 for 4 at the end of the powerplay. Mohammed Nabi trapped Liam Livingstone (16 off 15) plumb in front of the wicket to bring Andre Russell (12 off 6) out in the middle.

Thakur, who also had a five-wicket haul in an Bihar humble UP by 6 wickets

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

that stemmed the flow of Jharkhand topped Group D India's T20 specialist Rinku after a 36-run win over Rajasthan, maintaining their unbeaten run in the

Jharkhand hammered 215 for five courtesy quickfire contributions from Virat Singh (69 off 36), captain Kushagra (55 off 37 and Robin Minz 58 off 27). Rajasthan could only manage 179 in 19.2 overs.

Kolkata

Singh failed to fire with the bat as Bihar humbled fancied Uttar Pradesh by six wickets in their Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy Group B match on Monday.

Opener Piyush Singh shone with a 54-ball 57 to help Bihar complete a chase of 145 with four balls to spare after Mangal Mahrour returned excellent figures of 3/12 in four overs to help his team restrict balls after IPL star Rinku was UP to 144 for six in the allot-

Mahrour, who bowls 50 runs for a solitary success.

medium pace, was well supported by skipper Sakibul Gani (1/20) and Sakib Hussain (1/31), both picking up a wicket each in their full quota of overs but Amod Yadav was expensive as he leaked

Batting at number seven,

University Campus ground. Middle-order batter Sameer Rizvi was shown the door by Mahrour after a 17ball 22, while pacer Shivam Mavi remained not out on 13 off 12 balls.

Had it not been for the 50run seventh-wicket stand between Veer and Mavi, UP Prashant Veer top-scored for would have probably ended UP with an unbeaten, up with less than what they counter-attacking 40 off 26 eventually got.

dismissed for a 25-ball 19 by Mahrour at the Jadavpur

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Monday.

Haryana (+0.409) finished

Super 8s, Punjab also qualify the group league engagements with 20 points and

Hyderabad

Mohammed Shami's impressive figures of 4 for 30 went in vain as Haryana comfortably beat Bengal by 24 runs in a group C game to enter the Super 8s of the Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 tournament here on

qualified as the second team from the group behind Punjab (+2.716), who logged the same number of points but had a better net run rate.

Shami finished the tournament with 16 wickets and on the day, was once again instrumental in polishing off the Haryana tail, restricting

after Haryana were 170 for 4 in 17 overs. In this edition of SMAT. Shami has been very effective at death barring the Punjab game when Abhishek

Sharma took him to cleaners. In reply, Bengal managed only 167 in 20 overs and that too after requiring 69 runs from eight overs with six wickets in hand.

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