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

The Pioneer

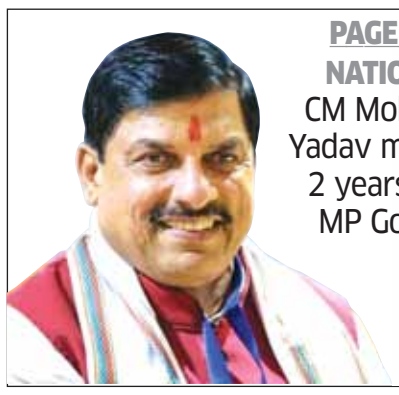
TRUSTED SINCE 1865

LUCKNOW | SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2025 | PAGES 16 | ₹3.00

RNI No. 2016/1957 | Late City Vol.161 | Issue 335

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

PAGE 6
NATION
CM Mohan Yadav marks 2 years of MP Govt



PAGE 7
LAW & JUSTICE
Ex-judges slam impeachment move against Justice Swaminathan

PAGE 10: MONEY
Nearly 4x hike in MF investment

PAGE 13
GLOBAL
Russian police, National Guard to stay in Donbas: Kremlin

PAGE 16
SPORT
Vinesh Phogat returns from retirement

PIONEER IN SHORT

CONGRESS LEADER SHIVRAJ PATIL DIES

Veteran Congress leader Shivraj Patil, former Lok Sabha Speaker and Union Home Minister during the 26/11 Mumbai attacks, passed away at his residence in Latur, Maharashtra, on Friday at the age of 90. Patil, who began his political journey as president of Latur municipality, went on to serve as MLA, Rajya Sabha member, and seven-time Lok Sabha MP, holding key Cabinet portfolios including Home, Defence, Commerce, and Science & Technology. He was also Governor of Punjab and Administrator of Chandigarh (2010–2015). Patil's tenure as Home Minister during the 2008 Mumbai attacks drew criticism, leading to his resignation. Widely respected across party lines, he was praised for integrity, knowledge, and parliamentary contributions, including modernisation of the Lok Sabha and instituting the Outstanding Parliamentarian Award. Known for his dignified conduct, scholarly nature, and ethical approach, he never indulged in personal attacks. Tributes poured in from leaders including President Droupadi Murmu, PM Narendra Modi, Sharad Pawar, Rahul Gandhi, and others.

The ByStander

CENTER RENAMES MNREGA

The Central government has approved a proposal to rename the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MNREGA), the erstwhile UPA government's flagship programme, to Pujya Bapu Gramin Rozgar Yojana. The revamped scheme is expected to guarantee 125 days of rural employment annually, an increase from the current 100 days mandated under MGNREGA. Preparations are underway to allocate over ₹1.5 lakh crore for its implementation. MGNREGA—initially launched as NREGA in 2005 and renamed after Mahatma Gandhi in 2009—is the world's largest employment guarantee programme. It currently engages 154 million workers, one-third of them women, offering unskilled manual work and ensuring unemployment allowance if jobs are not provided within 15 days of application.

NEW BILL TO REPLACE UGC, AICTE

The Union Cabinet on Friday approved a bill to establish a single higher education regulator that will replace major existing bodies such as the University Grants Commission (UGC), the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE). Earlier known as the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) Bill, the proposed legislation has been renamed the Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhikshan Bill. Aligned with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, the new Commission will serve as a unified regulator for higher education—excluding medical and law colleges—and will oversee regulation, accreditation and professional standards. Funding, however, will remain under the administrative ministry and not with the regulator.

India approves its largest-ever digital population count

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

The Centre on Friday approved the conduct of the Census of India 2027 clearing the country's largest administrative and statistical exercise after a prolonged gap. The Census will be conducted in two phases — house-listing and housing census from April to September, 2026; and population enumeration (PE) in February 2027.

For Ladakh and snow-bound, non-synchronous areas of Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, PE will be conducted in September 2026. "The Union Cabinet, at a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the proposal to conduct the Census which will be the first digital exercise of its kind," Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw briefed media.

Cabinet chaired by prime Minister Narendra Modi approved ₹11,718 crore for conducting the Census of India, 2027, which would include the caste enumeration for the first time and also a proposal to conduct the Census which will be the first digital exercise. Around 30 lakh enumerators would be involved in the entire exercise.

> THE LAST COMPREHENSIVE CASTE-BASED COUNT WAS DONE BY THE BRITISH BETWEEN 1881 AND 1931

The exercise is the biggest source of primary data at the village, town and ward-level providing micro-level data on various parameters including housing condition, amenities and assets, demography, religion, SC and ST, language, literacy and education, economic activity, migration and fertility. The last comprehensive caste-based count was done by the Britishers between 1881 and 1931.

Caste was excluded from all Census operations conducted since Independence. The decision to include caste enumeration in the upcoming Census was taken by the Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on April 30.

In 2010, then prime minister Manmohan Singh had assured the Lok Sabha that the matter of caste census would be considered in the cabinet. However, the previous Congress-led government opted for a survey instead of a caste census, known as the Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC). The population of the country according to the Census 2011 was 1,210.19 million of which 623.72 million (51.54 per cent) were males and 586.46 million (48.46 per cent) were females.

The 16th edition of the Census since Independence will also provide an option of self enumeration to the citizens. The decadal exercise which was scheduled to take place in 2021 got postponed due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic across the country.

Vaishnaw said the Census will be conducted in two phases — house-listing and housing census from April to September, 2026; and population enumeration (PE) in February 2027. "This will become the first-ever digital census," Vaishnaw said.

Vaishnaw said the entire digital census system has been created as a very robust system and all personal data protection laws will be applicable. The census will collect the micro-level data of every individual and household and present a macro-level data, he added.

INDIA UNLOCKS 100% FDI IN INSURANCE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
New Delhi

In a bid to expand insurance penetration in the country, the Union Cabinet on Friday approved a bill to raise foreign direct investment in the insurance sector to 100 per cent, according to sources.

The bill may be introduced in the ongoing Winter session of Parliament, which is slated to conclude on December 19. According to a Lok Sabha bulletin, the Insurance Laws (Amendment) Bill 2025, which seeks to deepen penetration, accelerate growth and development of the insurance sector and enhance ease of doing business, is part of the 13 legislations listed for the ongoing session of Parliament.

The Insurance Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2025, may be introduced in Parliament on Monday, sources said.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, in this year's Budget speech, proposed to raise the foreign investment limit to 100 per cent from the existing 74 per cent in the insurance sector as part of new-generation financial sector reforms.

So far, the insurance sector has attracted Rs 82,000 crore through foreign direct investment (FDI). The finance ministry has proposed amending various provisions of the Insurance Act, 1938, including raising FDI in the insurance sector to 100 per cent, permitting the merger of a non-insurance company with an insurance company, and creating a dedicated policyholder fund.

According to sources, the proposed bill also provides a provision for at least one among the top management, like the Chairman, Managing Director, or CEO, to be an Indian citizen as part of the guardrails.

Trump mulls new bloc to sideline EU and shake up NATO

ASHOKE RAJ New Delhi

A recent report has suggested that U.S. President Donald Trump is considering the creation of a new high-level international forum that would bring together five of the world's most influential powers — the United States, Russia, China, India and Japan. The proposed alliance, informally dubbed the "C5" or "Core Five," would represent a dramatic shift in global diplomacy and could sideline traditional Western-led structures such as the G7.

The idea was reportedly mentioned in a longer, unreleased version of the National Security Strategy (NSS) that Politico says was circulated within the administration. The proposal surfaced in a report by the American outlet Politico, which said the idea appeared in an extended, unpublished version of the National Security Strategy released by the White House last week. Although the publication stressed that it could not independently verify the longer document, its existence was previously reported by Defense One.

PM Narendra Modi with the Russian President Vladimir Putin and President of China Xi Jinping at the BRICS Summit-2016 WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

The proposed grouping would bring together states with large populations and significant military capabilities, without the G7's focus on democratic governance or economic criteria. The C5 would hold regular meetings similar to G7 summits, with its inaugural agenda reportedly centered on Middle East stability — particularly efforts to foster a diplomatic breakthrough between Israel and Saudi Arabia.

The new bloc talks also comes at the backdrop of Trump voicing concern and impatience with European allies and put US involvement in further talks in doubt, saying they risked "wasting time".

Amid chaotic American efforts to push through a peace deal, Trump said "We discussed Ukraine in pretty strong words", when asked about an earlier phone call with British prime minister Keir Starmer, French President Emmanuel Macron and Germany's Chancellor Friedrich Merz The US president added that the Europeans wanted to hold fresh talks this weekend but warned that they risked "wasting time".

New troubles emerge for IndiGo

RAJESH KUMAR New Delhi

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has sacked four Flight Operations Inspectors (FOIs) who were directly responsible for monitoring operational compliance and safety at IndiGo. Meanwhile, the Additional Commissioner of CGST, Delhi South Commissionerate, has slapped a tax penalty notice of Rs 58.75 crore on the carrier. To add to the airline's woes, the Competition Commission of India (CCI) is examining whether IndiGo violated competition norms.

The FOIs were directly responsible for overseeing the functioning of India's largest airline in order to ensure safety and compliance with the prescribed rules and standards. FOIs are critical to the functioning of the DGCA's Flight Standards Directorate. The DGCA had 13 FOIs after sacking the four FOIs.

Meanwhile, according to a regulatory filing by Interglobe Aviation, IndiGo parent's company, the firm was slapped a tax penalty of around ₹58.75 crore. The amount includes "GST demand along with penalty" pertaining to FY2020-2021, the company noted. The company said it will contest the order before the appropriate authority. This is the third demand notice by tax authorities in December. On 1 December, the company received a GST penalty/demand order of about ₹117.52 crore from the Joint Commissioner of Central Tax & Central Excise, CGST Kochi Commissionerate. On 8 December, the company disclosed that it had received an income tax demand and penalty of KWD 448,793 (about ?13.16 crore) from Kuwait's Department of Inspection and Tax Claims. The company said it will contest them before the appropriate authorities.

IndiGo cabin crew seen at Kolkata airport PTI

IndiGo has decided to engage an external expert to conduct an independent review and assessment of the disruption and the factors that contributed to it.

Rahul seeks debate on air pollution

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

Rahul Gandhi on Friday sought a discussion on the issue of air pollution in Lok Sabha. The Leader of the Opposition said said cities across the country were living under a blanket of poisonous air and it was important for the government to develop a plan to get rid of air pollution in cities. He said both the opposition and the treasury benches can show the country that they can work together on something that is critical.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju said the government was ready for a discussion on the issue and the Business Advisory Committee of the Lok Sabha can allot time for the same.

In a related developed, flagging vehicular pollution as one of the most significant contributors to Delhi-NCR's persistently poor air quality, the Commission for Air Quality Management in NCR and Adjoining Areas (CAQM) has constituted a 15-member expert committee to recommend a robust, multi-pronged roadmap for emission reduction in the vehicular sector.

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi speaking in the House on Friday PTI

Ashok Jhunjhunwala from IIT-Madras will chair the expert committee with former AIIMS director Randeep Guleria as co-chair. According to the CAQM, the committee has been given a timeline of two months to submit its recommendations. The first meeting of the expert committee is scheduled for December 15.

Also a Parliamentary panel on Friday asked the Centre to come up with the updated India's National Ambient Air Quality Standards "at the earliest", noting that the standards were last revised in 2009.

Raising the issue during Zero Hour, Rahul Gandhi said the issue was not an ideological one and urged the government to frame a discussion in such a manner that the opposition and treasury benches can find a solution to the problem instead of trading abuses.

RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat with Home Minister Amit Shah unveiled a grand statue of Damodar Savarkar in Sri Vijaya Puram the capital of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands on Friday PIB

Visa waiver travellers now face US scrutiny

AGENCIES
New Delhi/Washington

A new US government notice has outlined additional data requirements that could impact travellers from 42countries. According to the notice, individuals who are part of America's Visa Waiver Program may soon need to provide their social media history, telephone numbers and email addresses used and biometrics, to enter the US.

The new notice by the US Customs and Border Protection, is now out for public review. As part of its screening process, the US will now collect social media history and other "high-value data fields" from travellers eligible to enter the country without a visa.

This change will apply to traveller who can enter the US for up to 90 days without a visa and are currently screened through the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA).

This is the latest move in the US administration's measures to restrict immigration and comes days after a planned travel ban for nearly 30 countries after two National Guard members were shot dead in Washington.

India fast-tracks business visas for Chinese

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
New Delhi/Beijing

India has changed norms to ensure expeditious approval of business visas to Chinese professionals visiting the country for short periods. China welcomed India's move describing it as a "positive" step. The move comes amid efforts by the two sides to rebuild ties that came under severe strain following the eastern Ladakh border row.

However, there are no changes in the existing vetting process of all Chinese visa applicants. Chinese professionals coming to India for short periods were earlier issued employment visas or "E" visas with a validity of six months or more. It has now been decided to grant them business visas which are valid for short periods. The changes in the norms will be broadly applicable to visa applicants from all countries, but Chinese nationals are expected to be the main beneficiaries.

PM Narendra Modi and the President of China Xi Jinping in Wuhan's East Lake, China in 2018 WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

CONTINUED ON >> P4

Young girl shot at by jilted lover

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Lucknow

A young girl was shot at by her jilted lover, who allegedly barged into her house in Para late Thursday night.

The assailant, identified as Akash Kashyap, first assaulted the 21-year-old girl and then vandalised the house before firing two shots at her. One bullet hit her shoulder and the other her arm. The assailant then locked the victim inside a room and fled in a SUV.

The sound of gunfire and the screams of the victim alerted neighbours, who rushed to the house and admitted her to a hospital. They also informed the police about the incident.

The police have registered an FIR against the accused.

The incident occurred around 2 Am on Friday. The victim lives with her elder sister, nephew and niece.

The victim's sister revealed that her younger sister had been in a relationship with the accused, Akash Kashyap, for about a year. The victim had recently ended the relationship due to his erratic behavior, but he was allegedly harassing.

The elder sister stated that around 2 am on Friday, Akash Kashyap, who lives in Mana, Sarojini Nagar, arrived at their home in an intoxicated state and when she opened the door, he pushed her aside and went straight into her younger sister's room.

When they tried to stop him, he reportedly abused them and became violent, smashing household items.

When the terrified family called the neighbours for help, Akash whipped out a country-made pistol and shot at the young girl. Akash allegedly tried to shoot her 7-year-old niece but she managed to run away.

Both sisters work in an orchestra. The victim and Akash met at an event a year ago and soon they became friends. However, when she discovered Akash's addiction issues and criminal tendencies, she had severed all ties with him. Akash had been threatening to kill the entire family since then.

The victim's sister alleged that Akash came to their house on Thursday night with 4-5 accomplices and smashed the CCTV camera installed outside before entering the house alone.

Even after fleeing the scene, he reportedly tracked the location of the victim and created a ruckus at Lok Bandhu Hospital where she was undergong treatment.

STUDENT SUCCUMBS TO INJURIES

A Class 6 student succumbed to her injuries at the KGMU Trauma Centre on Friday morning, two days after she was hit by a speeding van while cycling to school in Sarojini Nagar area of the city.

The 13-year-old student was identified as Priyanshi Singh of Amausi village. She was a student at Shri Vinayak Convent School near Amausi railway station.

Priyanshi was cycling to her school when a speeding van hit her bicycle from behind. The impact was so severe that Priyanshi was flung into the air and landed head-first on the road, sustaining serious injuries. The van driver fled the scene with the vehicle after the accident.

She was rushed to the Trauma Centre where she succumbed to her injuries on Friday.

INJURED

Two labourers were seriously injured in a bus-motorcycle collision in Nagaram on Friday morning. The bus was carrying children to Raj Bhavan to attend a programme.

The bus carrying children collided head-on with the motorcycle near Hardoiya canal regulator on the Nagaram-Gangaganj road, injuring two labourers riding the two-wheeler. Both were rushed to Nagaram community health centre from where they were referred to the Trauma Centre.

The injured labourers were identified as Mansharam, a resident of Achakapur in the Lonikatra police station area of Barabanki district, and his cousin Neeraj.

Both of the victims were going to Lucknow for work.

Police seized the bus and detained the driver, Umesh Kumar, a resident of Tanda Sandila, in Hardoi.

Inspector Nagaram, Vivek Kumar Chaudhary, said that none of the children on the bus were injured.

Meanwhile, Gauri of a non-governmental organisation said that 104 children involved in begging were being taken to Lucknow by bus from villages to participate in a sports competition organised at the Raj Bhavan.

Man falls prey to online scam

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Lucknow

A resident of Indira Nagar area fell victim to an online scam involving sale of household goods. The victim was allegedly targeted by a scammer posing as a CRPF employee who manipulated him into transferring money to his account.

The victim, Omji Srivastava, a resident of Indira Nagar, reported that on November 27, he received a message from his relative's Facebook ID. The message claimed that a known CRPF employee was being transferred out of Lucknow and was looking to sell his six-month-old household items.

Following this, a person identifying himself as Ashish Kumar contacted Srivastava via WhatsApp, sending pictures of household goods and asking for a deposit of Rs 1 lakh.

Srivastava stated that he was lured by scammer's ploy and transferred Rs 98,000 to the accused via Google Pay from his bank account. The scammer subsequently demanded an additional Rs 41,500, which is when the victim became suspicious and realised he had been cheated. An first information report (FIR) regarding the incident has been lodged at the Ghazipur police station and investigations are underway.

SIXTH ACCUSED HELD IN FARMER MURDER CASE

Police achieved a major success in the murder case of farmer Shiv Prakash alias Kabir of Dakhina village, with the sixth absconding accused, Dilip Rawat, being arrested on Friday.

Previously, five other accused, including the main suspect, property dealer Sujit Srivastava, had been apprehended and sent to jail.

The victim farmer, Kabir, had been missing since November 15. Police registered a missing person report based on a complaint filed by his friend, Surendra, and initiated an investigation.

The mobile phone location tracing revealed that on November 16, Kabir's phone was located near Patan village under Bighapur police station in Unnao along with suspicious numbers.

Following this lead, the Bighapur police reported the recovery of a partially burnt body. Through photographs, the body was identified as that of Kabir.

Upon confirmation of the murder, police formed a team and advanced their investigation. On December 8, police arrested the main accused, Sujit Srivastava, along with Pintu Rawat, Vinod, Lalu alias Neeraj Kashyap and Raju alias Rajkumar. The five were sent to jail and the police also seized the two Swift Dzire cars used in the crime.

Nigohan station officer Anuj Kumar Tiwari stated that on Friday, the sixth accused, Dilip Rawat of Brahman Tola under Nagaram police station, was arrested near the Devi Kheda bridge. During questioning, Dilip confessed to playing a key role in deceitfully calling Kabir to Lalpur Tabar on the evening of November 15. There, Sujit and his associates, waiting in two cars, forcibly pulled Kabir into a vehicle.

The accused drove him through Sudauli Mod towards Lalganj Dalmau, where they strangled him inside the car while holding his hands and feet. The body was subsequently dumped in a ditch beside the highway in Bighapur (Unnao) and set on fire with petrol in a secluded area.

उत्तर प्रदेश पावर ट्रॉसमिशन कारपोरेशन लिमिटेड
अधीक्षण अभियन्ता
विद्युत पारेषण मण्डल–प्रथम, पनकी, कानपुर

ई निविदा सूचना — दिनॉक– 12/12/2025

ई निविदा संख्या एवं कार्य का संक्षिप्त विवरण

1. अल्पकालीन ई–निविदा संख्या–50/2025–26 विद्युत पारेषण खण्ड प्रथम कानपुर के अर्न्तगत 132 के०वी० उपकेन्द्र पुखरायों पर एक नग 33 के०वी० सुप्रीम 'बे' के निर्माण का कार्य एवं सम्बन्धित सामानों की आपूति। निविदा प्रपत्र शुल्क रु० 590.00 एवं धरोहर धनराशि रु–3300.00 मात्र।
2. अल्पकालीन ई–निविदा संख्या–51/2025–26 विद्युत पारेषण खण्ड प्रथम कानपुर के अर्न्तगत 132 के०वी० उपकेन्द्र जैनपुर पर 33 के०वी० मैव एस्ट्रल लि० की नई बे के निर्माण सम्बन्धी कार्य। शुल्क रू0 590.00 एवं धरोहर धनराशि रू0 13,000.00 मात्र।
3. अल्पकालीन ई–निविदा संख्या–52/2025–26 विद्युत पारेषण खण्ड प्रथम कानपुर के अर्न्तगत 132 के०वी० उपकेन्द्र दादानगर पर 33 के०वी० भौती बे के निर्माण सम्बन्धी कार्य। शुल्क रू0 590.00 एवं धरोहर धनराशि रू० 5,000.00 मात्र।
4. अल्पकालीन ई–निविदा संख्या–53/2025–26 विद्युत 220 के०वी० उप० खण्ड पनकी कानपुर के अन्तर्गत 220 के0वी0 उपकेन्द्र पनकी कानपुर पर 132 के०वी० आई०आई०टी० बे निर्माण कार्य। शुल्क रू0 590.00 एवं धरोहर धनराशि रू0 9,200.00 मात्र।
5. अल्पकालीन ई–निविदा संख्या–54/2025–26 विद्युत 220 के०वी० उप०खण्ड पनकी कानपुर के अन्तर्गत 132 के०वी० उपकेन्द्र जवाहरपुरम् कानपुर पर 132 के०वी० आई०आई०टी० वे निर्माण कार्य। शुल्क रू० 590.00 एवं धरोहर धनराशि रू0 14,500.00 मात्र।
6. अल्पकालीन ई–निविदा संख्या–55/2025–26 विद्युत 220 के०वी० उपखण्ड पनकी कानपुर के अन्तर्गत 60 एम०वी०ए० परिवर्तक के इरेक्शन एवं कमीशनिंग सम्बन्धी कार्य। शुल्क रू0 1770.00 एवं धरोहर धनराशि रू0 61000.00 मात्र।
7. अल्पकालीन ई–निविदा संख्या–56/2025–26 विद्युत 400 के०वी० उपसंस्थान खण्ड पनकी कानपुर पर 420 के०वी० एस०एफ०–6 सर्किट ब्रेकर के ओवर हालिंग का कार्य। निविदा प्रपत्र शुल्क रू0 590.00 एवं धरोहर धनराशि रू–2010.00 मात्र।
8. अल्पकालीन ई–निविदा संख्या–57/2025–26 विद्युत पारेषण मण्डल के अधीन आने वाले विभिन्न उपकेन्द्रों पर स्थापित परिर्वतकों के RLA Test का कार्य। निविदा प्रपत्र शुल्क रू० 590.00 एवं धरोहर धनराशि रू0 13,600.00 मात्र।
9. अल्पकालीन ई–निविदा संख्या–58/2025–26 विद्युत पारेषण खण्ड प्रथम कानपुर के अर्न्तगत 132 के०वी० उपकेन्द्र दादानगर पर बोर अर्थिंग का कार्य। शुल्क रू० 590.00 एवं धरोहर धनराशि रू0 3250.00 मात्र।
10. अल्पकालीन ई–निविदा संख्या–59/2025–26 विद्युत पारेषण मण्डल प्रथम कानपुर के अर्न्तगत विभिन्न उपकेन्द्रों पर स्थापित परिवर्तकों के 400/220/132 के0वी० बुशिंग के टेस्टिंग का कार्य। शुल्क रू० 590.00 एवं धरोहर धनराशि रू0 3,600.00 मात्र।
11. अल्पकालीन ई–निविदा संख्या–60/2025–26 विद्युत पारेषण खण्ड प्रथम कानपुर के अर्न्तगत 132 के०वी० उपकेन्द्र रसूलाबाद पर Alstom make SCADA सम्बन्धी समस्त कार्य। शुल्क रू0 590.00 एवं धरोहर धनराशि रू0 14,000.00 मात्र।
12. अल्पकालीन ई–निविदा संख्या–61/2025–26 विद्युत 400 के०वी० उपसंस्थान खण्ड पनकी कानपुर के अर्न्तगत Retrofitting Nemerical Relay की आपूर्ति एवं अन्य सम्बन्धी कार्य । निविदा प्रपत्र शुल्क रू० 590.00 एवं धरोहर धनराशि रू0 14400.00 मात्र।
13. अल्पकालीन ई–निविदा संख्या–62/2025–26 विद्युत पारेषण खण्ड प्रथम कानपुर के अर्न्तगत 132 के0वी0 उपकेन्द्र सिकन्दरा पर 33 केवी० Nemerical Relay की आपूर्ति तथा रेट्रोफिटिंग, कमिश्निंग, ओवर करंट/अर्थ फाल्ट सम्बन्धी कार्य । निविदा प्रपत्र शुल्क रू0 590.00 एवं धरोहर धनराशि रू–8000.00 मात्र।
14. अल्पकालीन ई–निविदा संख्या–63/2025–26 विद्युत पारेषण खण्ड प्रथम कानपुर के अर्न्तगत 220 के0वी0 उपकेन्द्र सिकन्दरा पर स्थापित परिवर्तको के आयल लीकेज रोकने सम्बन्धित कार्य। शुल्क रू0 590.00 एवं धरोहर धनराशि रू0 4200.00 मात्र।
15. अल्पकालीन ई–निविदा संख्या–64/2025–26 विद्युत पारेषण खण्ड प्रथम कानपुर के अर्न्तगत 220 के0वी0 उपकेन्द्र बिठूर एवं 220 के0वी0 उपकेन्द्र रनियों पर स्थापित परिर्वतकों के आयल के सेन्ट्रीफ्यूजिंग सम्बन्धी कार्य। निविदा प्रपत्र शुल्क रू० 590.00 एवं धरोहर धनराशि रू–2600.00 मात्र।

अल्पकालीन ई–निविदा संख्या 50 से 64 की अन्तिम तिथि– 30.12.2025 समय 12:00 बजे तक।

विस्तृत जानकारी एवं प्रपत्र बेबसाइट http//etender.up. nic.in पर उपलब्ध है अग्रेतर समस्त सूचनाये बेबसाइट पर ही प्रदर्शित की जायेगी।

अधीक्षण अभियन्ता, विद्युत पारेषण मण्डल–प्रथम, पनकी, कानपुर
''राष्ट्र हित में बिजली बचाये''
उपभोक्ता सेवा हेतु सम्पर्क करें–www.uppcl.org
पत्राक–2156/वि0प्रे0म0प्र0 पनकी (का0) T-1 — दिनांक 12–12–25

The Pioneer CLASSIFIEDS

NOTICE

The sale deed dated 21.12.11, Document No. 4865, its last page, and the sale deed dated 03.08.2007, Document No. 2572, have been lost. These documents pertain to Araji No. 1801, Jujhbagh, Maharajpur, Kanpur. Neha Yadav, W/o Vinay Yadav, R/o Mangla Vihar, Kanpur.

NOTICE

It is informed that in the school certificates of my son, his name has been wrongly recorded as Aadhyan Gupta whereas his correct name is Aadyant Gupta. In future he should be known and identified as Aadyant Gupta. Anil Kumar Gupta S/o Shri Dayashankar Gupta 647/P20 Jankipuram Garden Nahar Rd Lucknow.

NOTICE

I Matul, W/o Peer Mohammad, R/o-Village Rani Katra, Majra Aganpur, Pargana Dariyabad, Tehsil Siroli Gauspur, District Barabanki, state that my son's name has been incorrectly entered as LALA MOHAMMAD on his passport, whereas according to his Aadhaar card, his correct name is LAL MOHAMMAD. Therefore, it would be just and proper to have it corrected.

NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is hereby informed to the general public that:
Regarding Plot No. 3 situated on Gata No. 403 & 404 in Village Mahewa, Pargana Srinagar, Tehsil and District Lakhimpur:
Mr. Ashu Shukla, son of Shri Bindra Prasad, purchased the said plot via Sale Deed from its joint owners: Shri Mahendra Kumar Gupta, Rishi Gupta, Kishan Gupta, and Smt. Poonam Gupta. The Sale Deed was executed through General Power of Attorney holder Smt. Poonam Gupta, and is registered in the Office of the Sub-Registrar, Lakhimpur, in Book No. 1, Volume No. 13108, Pages 41-62, at Serial No. 11426, dated 13/08/2019. Additionally, this property is being mortgaged to PNB Housing Finance Ltd., hence verification of the title and records is of special importance.
Be it known that:
Previously, the former owners of the shares in the said Gata No. 403 & 404 Shri Raj Kumar Singh, Sarvjeet Singh, Smt. Gurunam Kaur, and Smt. Gurunam Kaur (in the capacity of natural guardian of minor Navendra Singh) had sold the property via Sale Deed to Shri Amar Singh, Narendra, and Sanjeet. This transaction is registered in the Office of the Sub-Registrar, Lakhimpur, in Book No. 1, Volume No. 6675, Pages 395-428, at Serial No. 3880, dated 07/03/2011. The names of the purchasers were duly recorded in the Revenue Records.
Currently, Plot No. 3 constructed on the said Gata No. 403 & 404 is under the ownership and possession of Mr. Ashu Shukla, son of Shri Bindraprasad Shukla.
Therefore:
Through this current publication, the general public is informed that if any person or institution has any objection regarding the transfer of ownership/ ownership title, or has any rights, interest, or claim of any kind regarding the said property, they should submit their claim or objection to the address mentioned below within 7 working days of this notice publication.
Otherwise, no claim or objection regarding the said property will be accepted in the future.
Advocate Shailendra Srivastava
Sitapur

NOTICE

I have changed my name from NISHAT SHAHIN to NISHAT SHAHEEN W/o Mohd Ahmad R/o 128 B-8, New Friends Colony Harjinder Nagar Kanpur for future purposes.

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Virendra Singh to Virendra Singh Gangwar. In future I will be known as Virendra Singh Gangwar, S/o Shri Ramchandra. R/o 117/1094, M Block, Kakadev, Kanpur - 208019

सूचना

सर्वसाधारण को सूचित किया जाता है मैं हर्ष कश्यप मेरी कक्षा 10 की अंक तालिका में सी0बी0एस0ई0 बोर्ड में माता का नाम त्रुटि वश विद्या देवी के स्थान पर विद्या कश्यप लिख गया सही नाम सभी दस्तावेजों में आधार, पैन कार्ड, में विद्या देवी अंकित है (VIDYA DEVI) किया जाए व पढ़ा जाए। पता–हर्ष कश्यप पुत्र महेश चंद्र म.न.–441–HN/264N जल निगम रोड, हरी नगर बालागंज, लखनऊ

NOTICE

In my daughter's Aadhaar card, her name Pooja and date of birth 18.04.2012 have been incorrectly entered by mistake. Whereas in all documents, her name is Aarti and date of birth is 18.04.2012 which is absolutely true and correct. Kuldeep Kumar son of Lal Ji resident of village Harahara, Pargana and Tehsil Bhognipur, District Kanpur Dehat.

NOTICE

It is informed that I, Jagannath Prasad, S/o Shri Satyanarayan, resident of Gram Post Khwajapur, Tahshil Haidergarh, Dist. Barabanki, declare that the correct name of my daughter is Ayushi, D/o Jagannath Prasad. However, in Aadhaar card number 707515438892, her name is incorrectly recorded as Reshmi, D/o Jagannath Prasad. It is requested that the name on the aforementioned Aadhaar card be corrected from Reshmi, D/o Jagannath Prasad to the correct name Ayushi, D/o Jagannath Prasad.

NOTICE

It is hereby notified that the deponent Azeema Naseem (Azeema Naseem), daughter of Naseem Ahmad, wife of Danish Nafees, resident of Ward No. 10, Shastri Nagar, Nagar Palika Parishad, Nautanwa, District Maharajganj, has different names recorded in various documents. Aadhaar: Azeema Naseem (Azeema Naseem), High School Certificate: Heena Iraqui (Heena Iraqui), Intermediate Certificate: Ku. Heena (Ku Heena).All the above names belong to the same person.

MC inspects night shelters, reviews arrangements

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Lucknow

Municipal Commissioner Gaurav Kumar conducted a surprise inspection of various night shelters on Friday to review arrangements.

During the visit, several irregularities were found at different locations, upon which he directed the officials concerned to take immediate action.

Chief Engineer (Civil) Mahesh Verma and several other officers of the Municipal Corporation were present during the inspection.

The municipal commissioner first visited the night shelter located in Umarav Ahata Colony under Zone 3 in Nishatganj. He reviewed preparations related to providing relief from cold.

During the inspection, a serious issue of sewer blockage was found behind the night shelter. He directed the Jal Kal GM to fix the issue without delay. The municipal commissioner said that no inconvenience at night shelters will be tolerated.

He then visited DUDA Colony in Nishatganj, where residents complained of sewer blockage and waterlogging.

Taking these issues seriously, he instructed the GM, Jal Kal, to ensure immediate resolution. During the inspection, garbage was found scattered in several areas. Residents informed that the door-to-door garbage collection vehicle does not visit the colony.

The municipal commissioner issued strict instructions to the agency LSA to start regular door-to-door garbage collection from Saturday, failing which action will be taken. He directed that IEC activities be conducted to raise awareness among residents regarding cleanliness.

The municipal commissioner also inspected the Paltan Chhawani night shelter located in Zone 3. After assessing the facilities, he instructed the executive engineer to increase number of beds so that sufficient arrangements can be provided to needy people during winter. He later visited the Engineering College Crossing night shelter to review the preparations there as well.

As part of the inspection, the commissioner also visited Laxman Gaushala. He reviewed the care arrangements for cattle, including stock of fodder and other essentials. He directed that no shortage should be allowed in ensuring comfort of animals.

Finally, the municipal commissioner visited the Indira Nagar C Block night shelter, under Zone 7. He reviewed all preparations in detail and issued necessary instructions.

Debt-ridden man ends life

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Lucknow

Vijay Kumar Lodhi (58), neck-deep in debt, committed suicide in the Kundan Vihar Colony under Para police station on Friday morning.

He hanged himself with a plastic rope in a tin shed behind his house. According to preliminary information, he was troubled by debt and financial difficulties.

According to the police, the deceased, Vijay Kumar Lodhi was a carpenter. He had been under stress for some time due to financial constraints and debt.

Family members stated that he was addicted to gambling which was causing his debts to steadily increase. This mental pressure led him to take this extreme step. On getting information about the incident, Para police arrived at the spot. Police took the body into possession and sent it for post-mortem examination.

लखनऊ विकास प्राधिकरण
(ISO 14001 : 2004, ISO 9001-2008 प्रमाणित संस्था)
प्राधिकरण भवन, विपिन खण्ड, गोमती नगर, लखनऊ
फोन नं0 : 0522–2302586

पत्रांकः 200/ई-निविदा/मु0अ0/2025-26 — दिनांकः 12.12.2025

ई-निविदा सूचना

लखनऊ विकास क्षेत्र में निम्नलिखित कार्यो हेतु लखनऊ विकास प्राधिकरण या अन्य विकास प्राधिकरणों में पंजीकृत अथवा आवास एवं विकास परिषद में पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों से ऑनलाइन निविदाएं आमन्त्रित की जाती हैं। कार्य से सम्बन्धित विस्तृत निविदा-नोटिस तथा ड्राफ्ट निविदा-प्रपत्र लखनऊ विकास प्राधिकरण की वेबसाइट **"https://ldalucknow.in"** पर देखा जा सकता है, जिसमें धरोहर धनराशि, निविदा डालने की तिथि, श्रेणी, कार्य पूर्ण करने की अवधि एवं ई-निविदा लागत तथा अन्य नियम व शर्तों का उल्लेख है। कार्य से सम्बन्धित ई-निविदा-प्रपत्र वेबसाइट **"http://etender.up.nic.in"** पर उपलब्ध होंगे तथा ई-निविदित करने होंगे।

क्र.	कार्य का नाम	कार्य की लागत (रु. लाख)	अभियंत्रण जोन/ मोबाइल नंबर	निविदा प्राप्ति की अंतिम तिथि
1	Basant Kunj Yojna ke Sector-O main 9.0 m & 12.0 m and 18.0 m bitumen road work.	344.56	LDA/Zone 7 9918002381	19.12.2025 12:00 AM
2	बसन्त कुंज योजना में बरिकला गांव के पास 24 मीटर चौड़ी अवशेष सड़क, नाला और फुटपाथ का निर्माण कार्य।	234.93	LDA/Zone 7 9918002381	19.12.2025 12:00 AM
3	बसंत कुंज योजना के सेक्टर-आई स्थित 18 मी0 सड़क का चौड़ीकरण, डिवाइडर निर्माण एवं 12 मी0 और 9 मी0 सड़क का सुदृढ़ीकरण का कार्य।	181.37	LDA/Zone 7 9918002381	19.12.2025 12:00 AM
4	बसंत कुंज योजना के सेक्टर जे में 9.0 m & 12.0 m चौड़ी आंतरिक सड़कों का सुदृढ़ीकरण का कार्य।	147.2	LDA/Zone 7 9918002381	19.12.2025 12:00 AM

ई-निविदाओं के सम्बन्ध मे कोई बदलाव अथवा अतिरिक्त सूचना मात्र उपरोक्त दोनों वेबसाइट्स पर ही उपलब्ध कराई जायेगी, अतः इच्छुक निविदादाता नियमित रूप से उक्त दोनों वेबसाईट्स देखते रहें।

मुख्य अभियन्ता

New policy to boost AYUSH industry

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Lucknow

The Uttar Pradesh government is set to introduce a new AYUSH policy to strengthen the state's position in the country's AYUSH sector.

To promote AYUSH industries in the state, the policy will offer various incentives to investors. The policy places strong emphasis on boosting AYUSH research so that Uttar Pradesh can be developed as a hub for AYUSH research. The objective is to create a robust framework for the testing and certification of AYUSH medicines.

Under the new policy, treatment facilities in AYUSH hospitals across the state will be further improved. Along with this, several important steps will be taken to continuously develop the AYUSH Department.

The new AYUSH policy will offer several incentives to attract investors. These include capital subsidy, exemption in stamp duty on land purchase, and special concessions for greenfield projects. The aim is to accelerate the expansion of the AYUSH industry and promote it globally.

Principal Secretary (AYUSH) Ranjan Kumar, stated that Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had directed officials to expand AYUSH businesses so that Uttar Pradesh could become a leading state in the country's AYUSH sector and attract investors from across India. For this, he had instructed the preparation of a master plan.

In line with Chief Minister Yogi's vision, the new AYUSH policy is being created to make AYUSH a key part of the medical sector. Special focus is being given to ancient AYUSH practices such as Panchakarma, Naturopathy and Wellness Centres. This will help boost AYUSH-related businesses in the state.

The new policy will not only promote the AYUSH sector but also increase public access to another level of healthcare services. Under the policy, hospitals and infrastructure development will be encouraged through the PPP (Public-Private Partnership) model. Additionally, new courses related to AYUSH hospital operations will be launched, including subjects connected to Ayurveda, Yoga, and Homeopathy. This will enhance AYUSH education and create better employment opportunities for the youth.

Principal Secretary Ranjan Kumar added that the objective of the new policy is to enhance accessible healthcare facilities for patients, improve medicinal quality, and develop the sector comprehensively with a focus on staff recruitment. New ideas will also be incorporated for better implementation of healthcare services, aligning with the state government's vision.

Under this policy, efforts will be made to promote AYUSH medical systems on a global level and present them as AYUSH Wellness Centres. Special emphasis will be placed on areas like Yoga and Panchakarma. This will lead to large-scale improvements in healthcare services and ensure better facilities for citizens across the state.

Through the new policy, the AYUSH business ecosystem in Uttar Pradesh will expand significantly. It will also help fulfill the dream of establishing the state's dominance in this growing industry across the world. This AYUSH policy will not only contribute to the development of Uttar Pradesh but also position the state as a leading player in the AYUSH sector at the national and international level.

IDFC FIRST Bank Limited
(erstwhile Capital First Limited, amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited and presently known as IDFC FIRST Bank Limited)
CIN : L65110TN2014PLC097792
Registered Office: - KRM Towers, 8th Floor, Harrington Road, Chetpet, Chennai- 600031.
Tel : +91 44 4564 4000 | Fax: +91 44 4564 4022

Notice under Section 13 (2) of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002

The following borrowers and co-borrowers availed the below mentioned secured loans from **IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (erstwhile Capital First Limited, amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited and presently known as IDFC FIRST Bank Limited)** The loans of the below-mentioned borrowers and co- borrowers have been secured by the mortgage of their respective properties. As they have failed to adhere to the terms and conditions of the respective loan agreements and had become irregular, their loan were classified as NPA as per the RBI guidelines. Amounts due by them to **IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (erstwhile Capital First Limited, amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited and presently known as IDFC FIRST Bank Limited)** are mentioned as per respective notices issued more particularly described in the following table and further interest on the said amounts shall also be applicable and the same will be charged as per contractual rate with effect from their respective dates.

Sr No.	Loan Account No.	Type of Loan	Section 13 (2) Notice Date	Outstanding amount as per Section 13 (2) Notice
1	160350871	HOME LOAN	27.09.2025	2,12,932.36/-

NAME OF BORROWERS AND CO-BORROWERS : 1. ASHISH KUMAR PANDEY 2. ARCHANA DEVI

PROPERTY ADDRESS : ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL OF PLOT AREA 100 SQ. MTRS., AT ARAZI NO. 256, SITUATED AT VILLAGE: TENDUAWAN, PARGANA: ARAIL, TEHSIL: KARCHHANA, DISTRICT: PRAYAGRAJ, UTTAR PRADESH-211008,AND **BOUNDED AS: EAST: LAND OF VINOD PANDEY & OTHERS, WEST: PART OF THE LAND OF ARAJI, NORTH: PART OF THE LAND OF ARAJI, SOUTH: INTERLOCKING ROAD LESS THAN 4.5 MTR. WIDE**

You are hereby called upon to pay the amounts to **IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (erstwhile Capital First Limited, amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited and presently known as IDFC FIRST Bank Limited)** as per the details shown in the above table with contracted rate of interest thereupon from their respective dates and other costs, charges etc. within 60 days from the date of this publication, failing which the undersigned shall be constrained to initiate proceedings, under Section 13 (4) and section 14 of the SARFAESI Act, against the mortgaged properties mentioned hereinabove to realize the amount due to **IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (erstwhile Capital First Limited, amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited and presently known as IDFC FIRST Bank Limited).** Further you are prohibited under Section 13 (13) of the said Act from transferring the said secured assets either by way of sale/lease or otherwise.

Sd/- Authorized Officer
Date : 13.12.2025 — **IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (erstwhile Capital First Limited, amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited and presently known as IDFC FIRST Bank Limited)**
Place : PRAYAGRAJ

Suspense over BJP's new UP chief to end soon

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Lucknow

The suspense over Bharatiya Janata Party's new Uttar Pradesh president is likely to end this weekend with the much-awaited election of the new state chief set to take place on December 14.

The ruling BJP has announced the formal process of organisational election to elect the new Uttar Pradesh party president.

The name of the new party state president will be announced on December 14. It can be disclosed on December 13 if only one candidate files nomination.

Senior party leader and former Union minister Mahendra Nath Pandey said that nominations for the post of BJP state president would be filed on December 13 between 2 pm and 3 pm at the BJP state headquarters in Lucknow in the presence of central election observer Vinod Tawde.

Scrutiny of nomination papers will take place on Saturday from 3 pm to 4 pm, and withdrawals can be made between 4 pm and 5 pm. If necessary, voting for the state president will be held on Sunday, and the state president and members of the national council will be announced on the same day.

Central election officer Piyush Goyal will complete the election process on December 14 and announce the name of the new state president.

The term of incumbent UP BJP chief Bhupendra Singh Chaudhary ended in January 2024 and the election of the new state president was overdue.

Pandey said nomination papers would be accepted in the presence of central election observer Vinod Tawde.

The proposers for the nomination of the state president can be Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, both Deputy Chief Ministers Keshav Prasad Maurya and Brajesh Pathak, and key leaders of the organisation.

According to sources in the BJP, the party's central leadership wants to complete the process for election of the new state president before Prime Minister Narendra Modi's proposed visit to Lucknow on December 25 to inaugurate Rashtra Prerna Sthal.

"At present, Other Backward Classes leaders of the party are front runners for the top post. To counter the Samajwadi Party's caste matrix of the PDA, the BJP's list of district presidents also has more OBCs," said a senior BJP leader.

The party is also viewing panchayat polls as an opportunity for a major course correction after its below par performance in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls in Uttar Pradesh.

In a bid to counter the Samajwadi Party's PDA (Pichhda, Dalits and Alpsankhyak) formula, the BJP too will focus on the local caste matrix at the mandal and village levels in panchayat polls.

The party's seriousness about the panchayat polls under the new state president is not without reason. In four successive poll victories in Uttar Pradesh – 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha polls and 2017, 2022 assembly elections – the BJP managed the most diverse representation minus Muslims.

The party succeeded in keeping intact its caste umbrella, broadly non-Jatav Dalits, non-Yadav OBCs and upper castes, in the four polls in Uttar Pradesh. However, in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, the SP's PDA plank succeeded in bringing a large chunk of OBC and Dalit voters into its fold, dealing a blow to the BJP.

The BJP's tally of seats in Uttar Pradesh came down to 33 in the last Lok Sabha election from 62 in 2019. The most resounding defeat was in the Faizabad Lok Sabha constituency, the nerve centre of saffron politics revolving around the temple town of Ayodhya.

ED carries out raids across state in illegal cough syrup case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Lucknow

The Enforcement Directorate on Friday raided multiple locations in various states as part of a money laundering probe against an alleged illegal codeine-based cough syrup (CBCS) trade racket in Uttar Pradesh, officials said.

The searches covered more than 25 premises in Lucknow, Varanasi, Jaunpur and Saharanpur in Uttar Pradesh apart from those located in Ranchi and Ahmedabad, they said.

The locations covered include those of "absconding" main accused Shubham Jaiswal, his chartered accountant Vishnu Aggarwal, alleged associates Alok Singh (a dismissed UP Police constable), Amit Singh, Vishal Singh and some others apart from godowns, offices and shops of a number of manufacturers, distributors and stockists of various CBCS traders.

The federal probe agency recently booked a criminal case under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) taking cognisance of about 30 UP Police FIRs that were registered to probe the misuse of CBCS, their illegal manufacturing, trade and transport including smuggling across the Bangladesh border.

CBCS are abused as an intoxicant and one of them, named Phensedyl, is smuggled to Bangladesh in large quantities through the international border between the two countries.

This category of cough syrup is a Schedule H drug and can only be sold on a doctor's prescription.

ED officials say they have estimated that the total proceeds of crime (illicit money generated under the definition of PMLA) at about Rs 1,000 crore. The officials, during the searches, recovered 46,891 CBCS bottles from a company office located in Transport Nagar area of Lucknow apart from computer devices and documents from all the locations.

ED staff, as per officials, found dilapidated buildings and fake addresses at multiple places as they reached to raid the premises of those companies which are alleged to be doing "illegal" trade of CBCS worth crores of rupees.

Shubham Jaiswal is understood to have fled to Dubai while his father Bhola Prasad Jaiswal was arrested by the UP Police recently from the Kolkata international airport while he was reportedly trying to flee abroad.

A total of 32 persons have been taken into custody by the state police till now which has also constituted a SIT to probe the case, the officials said.

UP Director General of Police Rajiv Krishna had told reporters early this week that the investigation so far had exposed a network of major "super stockists" allegedly involved in illegal diversion of the "highly regulated" CBCS.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath takes a look at vegetables on display at the Kisan Sammelan in Barabanki on Friday

More tipplers, hooligans challaned

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Lucknow

Lucknow police continued its special campaign against tipplers and hooliganism in public places and took action against 2,361 persons late Thursday night.

All police stations and zonal teams, under the supervision of senior police officials, are conducting continuous checking drives.

The police teams checked 5,276 individuals across all zones and challaned 2,361 who were found consuming alcohol at public places. A stern warning was issued to them to refrain from such activities in the future.

A police spokesman said the primary focus of the campaign, which commenced on December 11, 2025, was to ensure the safety and convenience of pedestrians, commuters, women and the general public, and to prevent disturbances caused by public drinking, rowdy behaviour and hooliganism in public spaces.

The campaign follows continuous complaints received from the general public regarding miscreants consuming alcohol and causing nuisance across various thoroughfares.

The Lucknoe police commissionerate has issued explicit directives to all police officers to ensure decisive action is taken.

During this continuous operation, the police teams comprising station house officers and their staff of all zones have carried out checking in public places such as roadside areas, markets, bus stops, crossings, and other major public thoroughfares.

The campaign has resulted in penal action, with challans issued under relevant sections against 2,361 individuals found consuming alcohol in public.

IIM-L achieves EQUIS accreditation

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Lucknow

The Indian Institute of Management, Lucknow has achieved the prestigious EFMD Quality Improvement System (EQUIS) Accreditation, a globally recognised marker for excellence in management education.

As of 2025, 231 business schools across 46 countries hold EQUIS accreditation, reflecting its global influence and the exclusivity associated with achieving this benchmark.

With this milestone, IIM-Lucknow has become a part of the elite group of triple-accredited business schools, a distinction held by less than one per cent of B-schools in India.

Administered by the European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD), on a global scale, EQUIS accreditation is considered as one of the most rigorous institutional accreditation system for B-schools. Its assessment process goes beyond academic excellence, and evaluates the institutions on a comprehensive set of criteria.

Congratulating the institute on this achievement, IIM Lucknow Director Prof MP Gupta said, "IIM Lucknow is proud to achieve the prestigious EQUIS accreditation. With existing AMBA and AACSB accreditations, and now EQUIS, we are glad to join the distinguished league of Triple Crown-accredited institutions. This milestone belongs to our faculty, students, officers, staff, alumni and partners who have worked tirelessly to advance our vision. It is their collective efforts which continue to drive our institution to greater heights."

The process for EQUIS accreditation spans between 12 and 24 months. It begins with submitting a comprehensive institutional data sheet outlining the institute's programmes, governance, research and international and corporate engagements.

Once approved by EFMD, one academic programme from the institute is selected for a focused review, and the institute submits a self-assessment report. This is followed by a peer-review visit where an international panel evaluates the institution through meetings with key stakeholders and an in-depth assessment of the selected programme.

The whole process culminates in an Accreditation Board decision on the institute's accreditation.

UP CM, DyCMs condole demise of Shivraj Patil

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Lucknow

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Deputy Chief Ministers Keshav Prasad Maurya and Brajesh Pathak on Friday condoled the demise of former Union minister Shivraj Patil at his home in Latur, Maharashtra, on Friday morning.

In a post on X in Hindi, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said, "The passing of former Union minister and senior politician Shri Shivraj Patil ji is deeply saddening. Humble tributes to him! I pray to Lord Shri Ram to grant the departed soul a place at His feet and grant the bereaved family the strength to bear this immense loss. Om Shanti!"

IDFC FIRST Bank Limited
(erstwhile Capital First Limited and amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited)
CIN : L65110TN2014PLC097792
Registered Office: - KRM Towers, 8th Floor, Harrington Road, Chetpet, Chennai- 600031.
Tel : +91 44 4564 4000 | Fax: +91 44 4564 4022

IDFC FIRST Bank

APPENDIX IV [Rule 8(1)]
POSSESSION NOTICE
(For immovable property)

Whereas the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (erstwhile Capital First Limited and amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited) under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice dated 30.08.2025 calling upon the borrower, co-borrowers and guarantors **1.RAJ KUMAR SONI,2. NUTAN SONI, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being INR 6,25,822.06/- (Rupees Six Lakh Twenty Five Thousand Eight Hundred Twenty Two and Six Paise Only) as on 29.08.2025 within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said Demand notice.**

The borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under sub – section (4) of section 13 of Act read with rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 on this **09th day of DEC 2025.**

The borrowers in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of **THE IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (erstwhile Capital First Limited and amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited) for an amount of INR 6,25,822.06/-(Rupees Six Lakh Twenty Five Thousand Eight Hundred Twenty Two and Six Paise Only) and interest thereon.**

The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub – Section (8) Of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

DESCRIPTION OF MORTGAGE PROPERTY

ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL OF GATA NO. 46, MEASURING SOUTH TO NORTH: 15 FT. AND EAST TO WEST: 48 FT. SQ. MTRS., TOTAL AREA 720 SQ. FT., SITUATED AT VILLAGE: PATKHAULI, PARGANA & TEHSIL: SADAR, DISTRICT: PRATAPGARH, UTTAR PRADESH-230001, AND BOUNDED AS:- EAST: ANSH NO. HAJA, WEST: KACHCHA RASTA 20' WIDE, NORTH: ANSH NO. HAJA, SOUTH: ANSH NO. HAJA

Date:09-12-2025
Place:UTTAR PRADESH
Loan Account No:115764632

Authorised Officer
IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (erstwhile Capital First Limited and amalgamated with IDFC Bank Limited)

RMLIMS launches poison info centre

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Lucknow

The Ram Manohar Lohia Institute of Medical Sciences (RMLIMS), on Friday, launched an integrated multispecialty poison information centre, a dedicated facility aimed at providing expert guidance and immediate assistance in poisoning cases. The centre is designed to cater to emergencies involving various toxins, including plant poisons, pesticides, medicines, drugs, snake bites and chemical exposures.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by RMLIMS Director Dr CM Singh who emphasised the importance of such a resource in saving lives and promoting public safety. The centre features a 24x7 service, ensuring timely advice for medical professionals and the public.

Equipped with a modern setup and expert toxicologists, the poison information centre aims to enhance poisoning management, spread awareness and reduce fatalities.

Fraudster held near DyCM residence

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Lucknow

A fraudster was apprehended late Thursday night outside the official residence of Keshav Prasad Maurya after he allegedly called the staff and claimed to be a former state president of the Bharatiya Janata Party and sought an immediate meeting with the deputy chief minister.

The accused, identified as Dashrath Pal Singh, managed to reach the deputy chief minister's residence but was caught during security check.

He has been involved in multiple cases of fraud across several districts by impersonating political figures.

The police registered a case against Dashrath Pal Singh under relevant sections and have started investigating his network.

According to police, Dashrath has cheated people in several districts, including Noida, Bulandshahr, Meerut and Lucknow, by misleading them about his political influence and identity.

During a search, the police found a visiting card in the possession of the accused, bearing the name of a former district president of BJP's Bulandshahr unit. An immediate verification confirmed that the accused was never a BJP office-bearer and currently has no association with the party, and the card is fake.

The police have registered the case as one of forgery and fraud and are preparing to send the accused to jail.

Authorities are also investigating his mobile and digital activities to determine if he is linked to a larger criminal syndicate.

Initial interrogation revealed that Dashrath Pal Singh, also known as Thakur Dashrath Pratap Singh, has been involved in fraud across several districts by claiming political connections. Police recovered five Aadhaar cards from him, listing various addresses, including those in Ghaziabad and Noida. This discovery has further heightened suspicions regarding his potential involvement in a wide network.

A formal complaint against Dashrath has been filed by the private secretary of Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya at the Gautam Palli police station.

Preliminary investigations reveal that the accused's modus operandi to defraud people was to present his false political identity to promise favours government work, resolution of police matters, and arranging meetings with ministers and politicians,.

Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya has ordered the strictest possible action in the case, making it clear that those who tarnish the image of the government or the political party and mislead the public will not be spared.

Gold, silver prices reach all-time high

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Lucknow

Gold and silver rates have hit an all-time high price affecting sales in local markets. The current price of gold is Rs 1,35,000 per 10 grams while silver rates have increased to Rs 2,01,000 per 1 kg.

Vice-President Saraffa Association Lucknow Adheesh Jain said that in the last one year there has been a constant increase in the prices of gold and silver showing a dip only one and half months back. "However, currently there is a rapid increase in the rates which may show further rise in the coming months," he said. He pointed out that in the past one year silver rates have increased by 117.84 per cent while gold rates have increased by 65 per cent which was phenomenal.

He stated that the rise in the prices of gold and silver was owing to the US Federal rate cuts in the international markets.

"The supply and demand ratio has also been impacted with high demand for silver and gold in the market. There is a very high demand for silver which is used in the solar industry and in electronic equipment," he added.

He admitted that the local market has been affected. "Those who have weddings in their houses are buying gold because they have to make these purchases as against others who are finding it difficult to make the purchases of gold and silver," he added.

Jain further said that buyers were preferring 18 carat gold which was priced at Rs 1, 02,000 per 10 grams instead of the 24 carat gold. "Also, there was preference for light jewellery over heavy jewellery," he said. Jain said that gold, with such high prices, can be a good investment. "However, the buyers are selling gold rather than buying it currently," he added. He said that with such soaring prices they would be able to sell gold and silver worth the same value as last year but in terms of weight sold, the figures would be low.

यूनियन बैंक ऑफ इंडिया Union Bank of India
Regional Office : C.P.O. 4/4, 2nd Floor, Keshavpuram, Kalyanpur, Kanpur
Head Office : 239, Vidhan Bhawan Marg, Nariman Point Mumbai

SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES | Date of e-Auction : 30-12-2025

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable assets under the securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 Read with Proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rule, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the secured creditor, the constructive possession of which has been taken by the authorized officer of **Union Bank of India** (Secured Creditor), will be sold on **"As is Where is," "As is What is," and "Whatever there is"** on the date mentioned below, for recovery of dues as mentioned hereunder to Union Bank of India from the below mentioned Borrower(s) & Guarantor(s). The Reserve Price & the Earnest Money Deposit or also mentioned hereunder.

Branch Name : Sadar Bazar, Jhansi • Address : 341-G, Sadar Bazar, Jhansi, Branch Head : Shri Naresh Ratnakar • Mob. : 9506849123

Borrower : Smt. Jayanti Devi W/o Shri Hari Shankar and Shri Hari Shankar S/o Shri Panna Lal, Both R/o : House No. 396 Isai Tola, Krishna Nagar, Jhansi and Also at House on Arazi No. 2952, Krishna Colony, Gariya Gaon, Abadi Khera, Jhansi, **Guarantor :** Shri Roop Kishore S/o Shri Narendra Mohan, R/o : House No. 73-A, Isai Tola, Khati Baba, Jhansi, O/s Amount as per Demand Notice : **Rs. 3,12,104.16** + Intt.+Others Charges,
Property : Land & Building on Arazi No. 2952, Gram Gadiya Gaon, Abadi Khera Jhansi. **Owner of Property :** Smt. Jayanti Devi W/o Shri Hari Shankar, **Area :** 984 Sq. Ft., **Bounded -North :** Rasta 10 Ft., **South :** Plot of Seller, **East :** Rasta 10 Ft., **West :** Plot of Seller
Date & Time of E-Auction : 30-12-2025 at 12.00 Noon to 5.00 pm
Reserve Price : Rs. 14,31,000/-, Earnest Money to be deposited Rs. 1,43,100/-. For detailed terms and condition of the sale, please refer to the link provided in https://www.unionbankofindia.co.in// english/TendelViewAllAuction.aspx

Borrower : Shri Babu Singh Gurjar S/o Late Badam Singh, R/o : House No. 863/1, Outside Datia Gate, Distt. Jhansi. **Guarantor :** Shri Udayraj S/o Shri Kanhaiyalal, R/o : Village-58Hastanapur Ambavay, Jhansi. O/s Amount as per Demand Notice : **Rs. 15,70,392.55** + Intt. + Others Charges
Property : Residential Land & Building at House No. 1256, Arazi No. 2296 Situated at Mohalla Thapak Bagh, Outside Datia Gate, Distt. Jhansi. **Owner of Property :** Shri Babu Singh Gurjar S/o Late Badam Singh, **Area :** 1600 sq. Ft., **Bounded -North :** Plot of Seller, **South :** Khet of Shri Kushwaha, **East :** 15 Ft. Wide Way, **West :** House of Mr. Goswami. **Date & Time of E-Auction : 30-12-2025 at 12.00 Noon to 5.00 pm**
Reserve Price : Rs. 39,75,000/-, Earnest Money to be deposited Rs. 3,97,500/-. For detailed terms and condition of the sale, please refer to the link provided in https://www.unionbankofindia.co.in// english/TendelViewAllAuction.aspx

Borrower : Shri Subhash Chand S/o Shri Deep Chand & Smt. Rama Devi W/o Shri Subhash Chand and Shri Deep Chand S/o Shri Lala Ram, All R/o : 58, Idgah, Pulia No. 9, Near Power House, Tehsil & Distt. Jhansi. O/s Amount as per Demand Notice : **Rs. 9,30,387.70** + Intt. + Other Charges
Property : Residential House No., 58, Idgah, Pulia No. 9, Distt. Jhansi. **Owner of Property :** Shri Deep Chand S/o Shri Lala Ram, **Area :** 61.68 Sq.Mtr., **Bounded :** North- Rasta 5 Ft., South : House of Ram Swaroop Kansoria, East- Kachha Rasta 10 Mtr., West : Rasta 5 Ft.
Date & Time of E-Auction : 30-12-2025 at 12.00 Noon to 5.00 pm
Reserve Price : Rs. 10,60,000/-, Earnest Money to be deposited Rs. 1,06,000/-, For detailed terms and condition of the sale, please refer to the link, provided in https://www.unionbankofindia.co.in// english/TendelViewAllAuction.aspx

Branch Name : Ranipur, Distt. Jhansi • Address : Near Bus Stand, Devari Singhpura, Ranipur, Jhansi, Branch Head : Shri Mrigank Kumar • Mob. : 9423514710

Borrower : Shri Manoj Kumar S/o Late Anandi Lal, R/o : Mohalla Ladganj, Near Sitanath Mandir, Ranipur, Distt. Jhansi, **Guarantor :** Smt. Sanjana Devi W/o Shri Manoj Kumar, R/o : Mohalla Ladganj, Ranipur, Distt. Jhansi.
Property : Residential House situated at Mohalla Ladganj, Ward No. 1, Ranipur, Distt. Jhansi. **Owner of Property :** Smt. Sanjana Devi W/o Shri Manoj Kumar, **Area :** 209.98 Sq. Mtr., **Bounded -North :** Land of Suresh Bidi Wale, **South :** House of Ram Prakash Baroniya, **East :** 2.40 Mtr. Wide Rasta, **West :** House of Bhajju Rajpuriya. O/s Amount as per Demand Notice : **Rs. 14,16,079.84** + Intt. + Others Charges
Date & Time of E-Auction : 30-12-2025 at 12.00 Noon to 5.00 pm
Reserve Price : Rs. 21,47,000/-, Earnest Money to be deposited Rs. 2,14,700/- For detailed terms and condition of the sale, please refer to the link provided in https://www.unionbankofindia.co.in// english/TendelViewAllAuction.aspx

Branch Name : Jhansi Main, Jhansi • Address : Elite Chauraha, Civil Lines, Jhansi, Branch Head : Shri Ramesh • Mob. : 9918500711

Borrower : Shri Shahnawaz Khan S/o Shri Yakoon Khan and Smt. Ashma Khan W/o Shri Shahnawaz Khan, Both R/o : 470, Outside Orachha Gate, Distt. Jhansi. **Guarantor :** Shri Shamshul Haq S/o Shri Kamar Khan, R/o : House No. 30/9, Outside Sainyar Gate, Distt. Jhansi.
O/s Amount as per Demand Notice : **Rs. 11,80,988.25** + Intt. + Others Charges
Property : Residential Land & Building Situated at House No. 471,Outside Orachha Gate, Distt. Jhansi. **Owner of Property :** Shri Shahnawaz Khan S/o Shri Yakoon Khan, **Area :** 139.40 Sq. Mtr./1500 Sq. Ft., **Bounded -North :** House of Shri Nathu, **South :** 3.66 Mtr. Way, **East :** House of Mohd. Ziya, **West :** Land of Vendor. **Date & Time of E-Auction : 30-12-2025 at 12.00 Noon to 5.00 pm**
Reserve Price : Rs. 41,00,000/-, Earnest Money to be deposited Rs. 4,10,000/-. For detailed terms and condition of the sale, please refer to the link provided in https://www.unionbankofindia.co.in// english/TendelViewAllAuction.aspx

For Registration and Login and Bidding Rules visit https://baanknet.com

Date : 12-12-2025 **Place : Jhansi** **Authorized Officer, Union Bank of India**

UPDIC swiftly taking shape on ground

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Lucknow

The Uttar Pradesh Défence Industrial Corridor (UPDIC) is swiftly taking shape on the ground.

Envisioned to strengthen India's defence and aerospace self-reliance, the project has already allotted more than 977.54 hectares of land to 62 companies. These firms alone have paved the way for investments worth Rs 11,997.45 crore and the creation of 14,256 direct jobs.

Additionally, MoUs with over 110 companies are in the pipeline, bringing potential investments of nearly Rs 23,000 crore and more than 38,000 jobs.

The Uttar Pradesh Expressways Industrial Development Authority (UPEIDA) has approved over 2,097 hectares of land across six nodes — Aligarh, Kanpur Nagar, Lucknow, Jhansi, Chitrakoot and Agra. Of this, more than 2,040 hectares have already been acquired, and 1,598.92 hectares are currently available for allotment.

Aligarh has emerged as the leader in the number of companies allotted land (24), while Kanpur Nagar ranks first in total land allotment with 210 hectares allocated to five companies. In Jhansi, 17 companies have been allotted 571 hectares, and in Lucknow, 16 companies have received more than 131 hectares. The land allotment process is set to begin soon in Chitrakoot, Aligarh Phase-2, and the Agra node, further accelerating the pace of development.Under the continuous guidance and monitoring of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, a total of 197 MoUs have been signed for the défence industrial corridor so far, including 172 industrial MoUs. Together, they represent a proposed investment of Rs 34,844.49 crore and the potential to generate 52,658 jobs.

In the upcoming phase, over 110 additional MoUs are on track, with combined investment possibilities of more than Rs 22,847 crore and an estimated 38,000 new jobs.

According to UPEIDA, the défence industrial corridor has been strategically aligned with initiatives like One District, One Product (ODOP) and Make in India as envisioned by the chief minister. He reiterated that the UP défence industrial corridor will not only transform Uttar Pradesh's industrial landscape but also position India as a global defence manufacturing hub.

A major milestone has already been achieved with the establishment of the BrahMos missile manufacturing unit in the Lucknow node — significantly elevating the corridor's strategic relevance. With this momentum, Uttar Pradesh is now competing strongly with states like Gujarat and Tamil Nadu in defence production. More major announcements are expected in the coming months, driving the state closer to its goal of becoming a trillion-dollar economy.

UPSIDA emphasis on investor-friendly services

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Kanpur

The Uttar Pradesh State Industrial Development Authority (UPSIDA) organised an extensive review and interaction meeting chaired by chief executive officer with senior officers and representatives of industrial associations.

The discussion focused on strengthening investor services, accelerating infrastructure development across industrial areas, optimising land utilisation and enhancing digital systems to further improve the ease of doing business in the state.

Senior officials, including the additional chief executive officer, principal general manager, additional general managers, regional managers, site managers and over 50 representatives from diverse industrial associations participated in the deliberations.

The CEO emphasised UPSIDA's commitment to providing transparent, efficient and investor-friendly services related to land allotment, transfer, subdivision and building plan approvals. Officers were directed to ensure timely disposal of applications and maintain a proactive approach in facilitating entrepreneurs.

UPSIDA reiterated its focus on ensuring optimum utilisation of its land bank across industrial areas. The Authority is prioritising reallocation of land to sectors that can contribute effectively to industrial growth, job creation and economic development. Officers were instructed to identify opportunities for faster allotments to upcoming industries and high-potential sectors.

UPSIDA has set an ambitious goal of saturating all 176 industrial areas with essential infrastructure -- including roads, drainage, sewerage, street lighting and power-related facilities -- within the coming months.

Regional managers and engineering teams have been directed to assess ground requirements and prepare a detailed, prioritised project shelf for both the current and next financial year. Revised project lists and cost estimates will be finalised within one week.

To ensure quality, transparency and cost-effectiveness in infrastructure implementation, RITES has been engaged as a third-party verification agency. Senior UPSIDA officials will conduct structured field visits and technical inspections across industrial areas in a phased manner. UPSIDA is working on modernising its Annual Maintenance Contract framework covering waste management, sweeping, drainage, and civic services. Standardised vendor performance parameters and monitoring mechanisms will be introduced, supported by active feedback from Industrial Associations.

UPSIDA presented the progress of digital reforms, highlighting: New investor-friendly features under Nivesh Mitra 3.0; Integration of UPSIDA's e-services for seamless approvals; Simplified compliance processes for environmental, labor and building permissions; Enhanced auto-allotment and e-auction systems designed to ensure full transparency and zero manual intervention. These initiatives aim to minimise physical touchpoints, reduce documentation complexity and provide a uniform, simplified digital experience for investors.

A key part of the meeting focused on ensuring that industries benefit from various State and Central Government policies. Major policies were discussed and highlighted for wider industry awareness.

Regional managers have been instructed to actively promote these policies among industries and investors, conduct follow-up workshops and maintain continuous coordination with industrial associations and Invest UP. The UPSIDA CEO announced that future review meetings will be conducted in a structured, data-driven format supported by dashboards, KPIs and regular progress reports. Key performance indicators will cover land allotments, infrastructure execution, service delivery timelines and investor facilitation.

Integrated eco-tourism roadmap finalised

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Lucknow

Uttar Pradesh has moved a step closer to emerging as a leading wildlife tourism destination, with the Tourism and Forest departments agreeing on an integrated roadmap for eco-tourism development across the state.

A joint review meeting chaired by Tourism and Culture Minister Jaiveer Singh and Minister of State for Forest, Environment, Zoo and Climate Change (Independent Charge) Arun Kumar Saxena was held in the state capital on Friday. It focused on coordinated development of the state's four tiger reserves, 10 Ramsar sites and key wetlands, with an emphasis on conservation-led tourism.

Jaiveer Singh said eco-tourism would play a defining role in Uttar Pradesh's future tourism growth, and close coordination with the Forest Department was essential to build destinations that were both visitor-friendly and ecologically responsible.

He said the state was now moving forward with an integrated and long-term approach to tourism development.

The meeting reviewed plans to develop eco-tourism facilities at Dudhwa, Pilibhit, Amangarh and Ranipur Tiger Reserves, along with Ramsar sites including Nawabganj at Unnao, Parvati Arga at Gonda, Saman at Mainpuri, Samaspur at Raebareli, Sandi at Hardoi, Sarsai Nawar at Etawah, Sur Sarovar at Agra, Upper Ganga Stretch from Brijghat to Narora, Bakhira at Sant Kabir Nagar and Haiderpur near Muzaffarnagar. Proposed infrastructure includes entrance gates, nature trails, watchtowers, signage, cottages, gazebos, reception areas, canteens and RO drinking water facilities.

Discussions also covered training of eco-tourism guides and drivers, improving visitor signage and appointing consultants in consultation with the Forest Department.

Looking ahead to 2026-27, the state plans to give fresh momentum to eco-tourism projects, with upgrades proposed at Nagar Van in Bareilly and Lakh Bahosi Bird Sanctuary in Kannauj. Integrated development of the Bird Circuit covering Sur Sarovar, Shekha Lake, Rapri Wetland, Sarsai Nawar and Lakh Bahosi Wetland was also discussed to strengthen these sites as tourism destinations.

A key outcome of the meeting was consensus on promoting wetland tourism under a structured One District, One Wetland model. Under this initiative, 52 wetlands have been identified for integrated development and projection through tourism circuits.

Other issues discussed included operation and maintenance of facilities at Rajdari-Devdari Waterfall in Chandauli, organising a bird festival at a Ramsar site with Forest Department support, and infrastructure development at Gorakhpur Zoo, including an amphitheatre, canteen and parking.

Arun Kumar Saxena said the objective was to showcase Uttar Pradesh's wildlife and natural heritage as a global attraction while ensuring conservation remains central.

He noted that eco-tourism generates livelihoods for local communities and strengthens collective responsibility toward nature protection.

The Forest Department proposed improved signage at Okhla Bird Sanctuary near Delhi-National Capital Region and development of tourist facilities at Surajpur Bird Sanctuary in Greater Noida. The tourism minister agreed, noting the high footfall at both sites.

IIVR director stresses role of PPPs

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Varanasi

The ICAR–Indian Institute of Vegetable Research (IIVR) on Friday signed licensing agreements for commercialisation of its grafted 'Brimato' technology with Hargauri Farmers Producer Organisation, Godda (Jharkhand) and Dudhai Farmers Producer Company Limited, Kushinagar (Uttar Pradesh), and for the dissemination of the improved vegetable pea variety 'Kashi Nandini' with Tripathi Seed Producer Committee, Jalaun (Uttar Pradesh).

The programme was chaired by the Director of the Institute, Dr Rajesh Kumar. From Hargauri FPO, CEO Amrendra Kumar Amar participated and from Dudhai Farmer Producer Company Limited, CEO Manoj Kushwaha attended the event.

The programme was organised and coordinated under the banner of ABI and ZTMU by Project Investigators Dr Sudarshan Maurya, Dr Neeraj Singh and Dr Indivar Prasad.

The IIVR director emphasised that public-private partnerships play a crucial role in the rapid dissemination of advanced production technologies such as the grafted Brimato and improved varieties like Kashi Nandini. He called upon the private sector to actively participate in supplying quality grafted seedlings and seeds. He also highlighted that grafting technology is highly beneficial for enhancing tolerance to biotic and abiotic stresses in vegetables and for improving productivity and therefore needs to be adopted on a larger scale. The licensing of these technologies and varieties will further strengthen the institute's objectives of enhancing farmers' income and promoting sustainable vegetable production technologies.

On the occasion, Head (Vegetable Production) Dr Anant Bahadur assured the license holders of all necessary technical support related to vegetable grafting.

The programme was attended by scientists associated with the development of Brimato, Dr Anant Bahadur, Dr Hare Krishna, and Anish Kumar and scientists involved in the development of the vegetable pea variety 'Kashi Nandini', senior scientist Dr Jyoti Devi; Head (Vegetable Improvement) Dr Nagendra Rai; Head (Vegetable Protection) Dr Arvind Nath Singh; Emeritus Scientist Dr Prabhakar Mohan Singh; PME Incharge Dr Siddharth Singh and Media Incharge Dr Dhananjay Pratap Singh.

The programme concluded with a vote of thanks by Dr Neeraj Singh.

The representatives of the companies visited the experimental fields, observed the varieties and technologies, and expressed their satisfaction and happiness upon obtaining the licenses and collaborating with the institute.

FROM PAGE - 1

India fast-tracks business visas for Chinese

All the applications for business visas will be processed within a period of three-four weeks, the people said. New Delhi's decision is likely to help travel of Chinese experts to India to provide technical support to companies in various sectors using Chinese equipment and machines.

In the last few months, India and China have initiated a series of measures to normalise their relations after ending the over four-year military face-off along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh in October last year. In July, India resumed granting tourist visas for Chinese nationals.

Issuance of visas to Chinese nationals were suspended following the start of military stand-off along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh that began in May 2020. India and China have in recent months agreed on several people-centric steps to reset their ties.

These include agreement to resume Kailash Manasarovar Yatra, resumption of direct flights, commemoration of 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations and visa facilitation. The direct flights between the two countries resumed in October.

In August, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping agreed to deepen bilateral ties to combat pressing challenges and work towards a "fair" solution to the festering border issue. In a meeting in the Chinese city of Tianjin on the margins of the Shanghai Cooperation Summit, Modi and Xi also vowed to expand trade and investment ties to stabilise global commerce.

Days ahead of Modi's trip to China, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi visited New Delhi India that saw both sides unveiling a series of measures for a "stable, cooperative and forward-looking" relationship that included jointly maintaining peace along the frontier, reopening border trade and promoting investment flows.

Guo said that easing cross-border travel "serves the common interests of all parties". "China will maintain communication and consultation with India to further facilitate people-to-people exchange," he said.

The move was expected to give a fillip to trade and investment relations between the two countries, facilitating travel for Chinese businessmen to visit India. In July, India resumed issuance of tourist visas to Chinese nationals after a gap of over five years, in a major move to normalise relations between the two countries. China also started issuing visas to Indian tourists, including group tourists.

The resumption of tourist visas was regarded as a significant move, as the two countries started the normalisation process after a freeze in bilateral ties since the military standoff at Eastern Ladakh in April 2020.

NITI Aayog member shares success mantras at BHU

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Varanasi

NITI Aayog Member Dr VK Saraswat presenting certificate to a medallist at BHU convication in Varanasi on Friday

"The choices you make in the years ahead will shape not only your individual journeys but the trajectory of the nation itself," remarked member of NITI Aayog Dr VK Saraswat, as he shared the mantras of success with students during the 105th Convocation of Banaras Hindu University here on Friday.

In his address as the chief guest of the convocation, he called upon the graduating students to aspire to be transformational leaders of the 'new era'. He listed a few qualities that should shape their leadership -- humility, integrity, empathy, discipline, lifelong learning and collaboration.

Dr Saraswat reminded students that these qualities have consistently been reflected in the life of Mahamana, the revered founder of BHU.

Hailing the contribution of BHU to the independence movement, nation building, and the country's progress through its scholars, scientists and technologists, the former DRDO secretary said it is the great legacy of BHU that forms the foundation of the success of today's graduates. Dr Saraswat said that among graduating students, he sees engineers who will design tomorrow's infrastructure, technologists who will democratise innovation and leaders who will navigate complexity with wisdom. "You represent the finest outcome of India's educational ecosystem, equipped with knowledge that spans from artificial intelligence to sustainable engineering, from management sciences to applied research," he stated.

Underlining the importance of innovation in a fast-evolving world, Dr Saraswat stated it is not merely about technology but about the ability to see the world differently. In the context of design thinking, he called upon teachers to inculcate this approach in their classes to enable students to use it in the larger interest of society and country.

He cited one of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's addresses at the Indian Science Congress, in which he called for transforming knowledge to transform the nation. Dr Saraswat lauded BHU for the headway it has made in academic, research and institutional excellence, adding that the transformation has already begun at BHU.

Vice-Chancellor Prof Ajit Kumar Chaturvedi said that the year 2024–25 has been one of significant progress and achievements for the university. Guided by the vision of its revered founder, Mahamana Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya , BHU continues to uphold its glorious legacy of scholarship, research, and contribution to nation-building, he said.

During the ceremony, Chancellor Medals, Late Maharaja Vibhuti Narayan Medals and BHU Medals were presented to meritorious students.

Chief Guest Dr VK Saraswat, Vice-Chancellor Prof Ajit Kumar Chaturvedi, Rector Prof Sanjay Kumar, and Registrar Prof Arun Kumar Singh conferred the medals and degrees upon students.

Proposing the vote of thanks, Registrar Prof Arun Kumar Singh encouraged the graduating students to embrace self-belief and self-reliance as guiding principles in their personal and professional journeys. Following the main convocation ceremony at Swatantrata Bhawan, degree distribution functions of various institutes and faculties began at multiple locations on the campus. Degree distribution ceremonies will continue till December 13.

During the 2025 convocation 13,650 degrees are being conferred to the graduating students. These include 7,449 undergraduate degrees, 5,484 postgraduate degrees, 712 PhD degrees, four M Phil degrees, and one Doctor of Science degree with a total of 556 medals being presented across institutes and faculties.

Mass marriage: 171 couples tie the knot

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Sonebhadra

Under the Chief Minister Mass Marriage Scheme, 171 couples tied the nuptial knot at the Railway Football Ground, Chopan, on Friday.

The responsibility of the wedding ceremony was handled by Chief Development Officer Jagriti Awasthi along with the entire team under the direction of district magistrate.

At the event, UP Minister of State for Social Welfare Sanjeev Kumar Gond, Sadar MLA Bhupesh Choubey, Vice Chairman of the SC/ST Commission Jeet Singh Kharwar and other officials gave their blessings.

The district social welfare officer informed that three eligible couples from development block Robertsganj, 15 from Karma, five from Chatra, three from Nagwan, 21 from Chopan, three from Obra, eight from Kon, 30 from Duddhi, 29 from Babhani, 51 from Myorpur, two from Renukoot and one eligible couple from Nagar Palika Robertsganj participated.

A selfie point was made under the Mass Marriage Selfie Point and Drug-free India Campaign.

On the occasion, District Development Officer Hemant Kumar Singh, District Social Welfare Officer, District Basic Education Officer Mukul Anand Pandey, DC MNREGA Ravindra Veer Singh, District Panchayat Raj Officer Namita Sharan, Additional District Information Officer Vinay Kumar Singh were present.

'Participation more important than winning'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Chandauli

The two-day Annual Sports Competition-2025 concluded on Thursday at Poorva Madhya Rail Inter College, DDU Division. Divisional Railway Manager Uday Singh Mina was the chief guest at the closing ceremony. Senior Divisional Personnel Officer Ujjwal Anand welcomed the chief guest. The programme began with the school band playing and an impressive march-past by students.

Over 50 competitions were held over the two days in various categories for boys and girls, including traditional and entertaining events such as the 50, 100, and 200 metre races, relay race, shot put, high jump, potato race etc. Over 200 participants participated with enthusiasm and discipline.

A total of 167 prizes were awarded. Indu Kumari and Anurag Kumar, studens of class XI, were declared college champions.

In his address, Divisional Railway Manager Mina said, "The biggest thing is participation. Participation is more important than winning."

He congratulated the organising team, especially the players, for the successful organisation of this annual sports competition.

At the closing ceremony, Mina presented a collective prize of Rs 30,000 to the school team for successfully organising the competition.

ମୁଖ୍ୟ ନିର୍ମାଣ ଯନ୍ତ୍ରୀଙ୍କ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟାଳୟ
ଗ୍ରାମ୍ୟ ନିର୍ମାଣ ମଣ୍ଡଳ, ବ୍ରହ୍ମପୁର
(ଡାକଘର / ପୋଷ୍ଟ- ଆମ୍ବୁପୁଆ, ଆୟକର ଭବନ ନିକଟରେ, ,
ବ୍ରହ୍ମପୁର - ୭୬୦୦୧୧, ଗଞ୍ଜାମ, ଓଡିଶା

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, BERHAMPUR
(At/Po- Ambapua, Near Income Tax office, Berhampur-760011, Ganjam, Odisha)

O-1577 (E-Mail (ଇ-ମେଲ):- serwbpr2004@yahoo.com, Tel No. (ଫୋନ):- 0680-2404287)

E-Mail / E-despatch

NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement

Bid Identification No. Online Tender/42-2025-26/BPR

Identification No	Name of work	No. of Works	Approx. Estimated Cost (In lakh)	Class of Contractor	Period of Completion
Online Tender / 42-2025-26/BPR	Road Works under MMSY- CUVDA	16 Nos	From Rs. 118.34 Lakhs to Rs. 2666.67 Lakhs	"B" Class, "A" Class, "Special" Class & "Super" Class as applicable	Period of Completion as provided as per Col. No. 5 of Annexure of NIT

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No	Availability of tender online for bidding	
		From	To
Chief Construction Engineer, R.W.Circle, Berhampur	Online Tender/42-2025-26/BPR	15.12.2025 at 10.00 A.M.	29.12.2025 upto 5.30 P.M.

(I) EMD / Bid Security, Cost of Bid document is to be transferred through Online as per the procedure mentioned in the DTCN.

(II) Non-submission of the information/documents through online by the bidder as per the items mentioned in the eligible criteria of the DTCN will also liable for rejection of his tender.

Further details & Corrigendum if any can be seen from the website: - www.tendersodisha.gov.in

OIPR-25071/11/0172/2526

Chief Construction Engineer
R.W.Circle, Berhampur

Kerala CM inaugurates Kochi-Muziris Biennale

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Friday inaugurated the Kochi-Muziris Biennale, a visual art festival, and announced financial assistance of ₹7.5 crore for the event. The sixth edition of the Kochi-Muziris Biennale (KMB), featuring 66 artists and collectives from 25 countries, will be held across 22 venues in the city over the next 110 days.

Nadda chairs BJP meeting in Himachal Pradesh

Ahead of the foundation stone-laying ceremony of the new BJP State office in Shimla, the party's national president JP Nadda on Friday chaired a meeting to discuss the political situation in the State and organisational strengths. The meeting of the legislative party also focused on organisational activities and programmes in the coming months, besides strategy.

Rajasthan CM Bhajan Lal flags off 50 *Vikas Rath*

Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma on Friday flagged off 50 *Vikas Rath* outreach vehicles to publicise Government schemes and achievements across all Assembly constituencies to mark his two years in office. The Chief Minister said the initiative was part of the Government's commitment to transparency.

Stalin launches phase II of cash assistance scheme

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin on Friday launched the second phase of KMUT, a welfare initiative aimed at providing ₹1,000 direct cash assistance to women heads of families every month. Distributing ATM cards to 10 women on the occasion, he said while referring to the 16 per cent GSDP achieved by the State, that women should get their share in the economic growth.

Govt under pressure on Vande Mataram, poll reforms: Rahul

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi with party MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra leaving after a review meeting of the party's Lok Sabha MPs at Parliament House annexe in New Delhi PTI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Friday hailed his party MPs' performance during the debates in both Houses on Vande Mataram and election reforms, and claimed that the Government's narrative was shredded to pieces by the Opposition. The Congress' Lok Sabha MPs also observed silence to pay their respects to former Union minister Shivraj Patil, who passed away on Thursday morning in Latur.

However what irked the grand old party once again was the complete absence of senior party MP Shashi Tharoor. Party sources said Tharoor had already informed the party about his unavailability. Another senior Congress leader and Chandigarh MP Manish Tiwari was also absent in the meeting.

According to Shashi Tharoor's social media post he was at an event hosted by Prabha Khaitan Foundation in Kolkata last night. Earlier, Congress MP Shashi Tharoor on December 1 clarified that he did not intentionally skip the Congress strategic group meeting held a day earlier, stating that he was on a flight returning from Kerala when the meeting took place.

Responding to questions on his absence, the Lok Sabha MP said, "I did not skip it; I was on a plane, coming from Kerala."

Tharoor also skipped a meeting chaired by Sonia Gandhi to discuss the party's strategy for the Winter Session which drew wide attention within political circles, especially given that he had also missed the Congress meeting on the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) issue earlier, citing ill health.

Rahul, who is the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, chaired a meeting with Congress MPs in the Lower House and also heard the views of the party legislators besides taking their feedback.

During the meeting, Rahul told party MPs that the Government seemed "under pressure" from the Opposition on both the issues, sources said. "There was an acrimonious debate on Vande Mataram and SIR (Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls). I felt good because in both the debates, we shredded their narrative to pieces (dhajjiya uda di unki)," Rahul said speaking with reporters in Parliament House complex.

After the MPs meet, Rahul claimed that Union Home Minister Amit Shah was disturbed during the SIR debate and even used an abusive word in Parliament. "So he was mentally disturbed and under pressure and there is a reason for that — the whole structure is involved in vote chori, the whole country knows it," he claimed.

Deputy Leader of the Congress in the Lok Sabha Gaurav Gogoi said it was discussed during the meeting that the party was successful in raising the current problems of the people such as IndiGo flight disruptions, air pollution and labour codes issue.

"It was also discussed how during the debate on 150 years of Vande Mataram, Mallikarjun Kharge Ji in the Rajya Sabha and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra ji in the Lok Sabha brought the truth before the people and blunted the intentions of politicising the issue," Gogoi told reporters after the meeting.

"On vote chori, everyone saw how Rahul Gandhi ji challenged the home minister for a debate on the floor of the House on the issues raised by him in the press conferences on the basis of evidence. The home minister was rattled and also made some unparliamentary remarks," he said.

Congress' chief whip K Suresh said it was a routine meeting that Gandhi calls every session to evaluate the performance of MPs and also heard their views and feedback.

PM to visit Jordan, Ethiopia and Oman from December 15

ASHOKE RAJ
New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will undertake a four-day visit to Jordan, Ethiopia and Oman from December 15 to 18, the Government announced on Thursday, positioning the trip as a significant push to strengthen India's engagement with key partners in West Asia and Africa.

According to an official statement, Modi will begin his tour in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan on December 15–16 at the invitation of King Abdullah II bin Al Hussein. The two leaders will review the full spectrum of bilateral cooperation and discuss regional developments. The visit coincides with 75 years of diplomatic ties, underscoring India's focus on deepening political, economic and strategic engagement.

Modi will then travel to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia from December 16–17—his first visit to the country. He will hold wide-ranging talks with Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali, covering bilateral partnerships and cooperation as part of the Global South. The meeting aims to reaffirm mutual priorities and expand ties across development, technology, and capacity building.

The PM will conclude his tour with a state visit to Oman from December 17–18 at the invitation of Sultan Haitham bin Tarik. This will be Modi's second visit to Muscat and comes as the two nations mark 70 years of diplomatic relations. India and Oman share what the Government describes as an "all-encompassing strategic partnership," strengthened by historical maritime links and a large Indian community contributing to Oman's economy.

The visit will allow both sides to undertake a comprehensive review of cooperation in trade, investment, energy, defence, security, technology, agriculture and culture, along with an exchange of views on regional and global issues. Defence ties have grown in recent years, including joint exercises, training programmes and cooperation on maritime security in the Indian Ocean.

At a briefing in New Delhi, the Ministry of External Affairs stressed the importance of the visit and indicated that several agreements are likely to be signed.

"We are all very optimistic about the India-Oman Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement. Teams on both sides have been working very hard for its early finalisation," the MEA said, adding that multiple documents are in the final stages of completion.

The ministry also expressed confidence that hydrocarbon cooperation with Oman will continue to strengthen in the coming years. The Sultanate is a key strategic partner for India and an important interlocutor within the GCC, Arab League and IORA frameworks.

Union Cabinet approves bill to create single higher education regulator

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

A bill to set up a higher education regulator which will replace bodies such as the UGC and AICTE was approved by the Union Cabinet on Friday. The proposed legislation which was earlier christened the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) Bill has now been named Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhikshan Bill.

The single higher education regulator which was proposed in the new National Education Policy (NEP), looks to replace the University Grants Commission (UGC), the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE). "The bill to set up Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhikshan has been approved by the Cabinet," said an official.

While the UGC oversees non-technical higher education, the AICTE oversees technical education and the NCTE is the regulatory body for teachers' education. The Commission is proposed to be set up as a single higher education regulator, but medical and law colleges will not be brought under its ambit. It is proposed to have three major roles — regulation, accreditation and setting professional standards.

It adds that the new system should ensure the distinct functions of regulation, accreditation, funding and academic standard setting are performed by distinct, independent and empowered bodies.

Thakur files complaint against TMC MP

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

BJP MP Anurag Thakur on Friday lodged a written complaint with Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, demanding action against a TMC lawmaker for allegedly smoking an e-cigarette inside the House. Thakur had on Thursday raised the issue in Lok Sabha without naming the TMC MP.

In his complaint Thakur said "A Member of Parliament belonging to the All India Trinamool Congress was seen openly using an electronic cigarette while seated in the House during the sittings." The act was "clearly visible" to several members present in the House, he added.

Thakur said the "open use" of a banned substance and a prohibited device inside the 'sanctum sanctorum' of Indian democracy, the Lok Sabha chamber, constitutes not only a blatant violation of parliamentary decorum and discipline but also a cognisable offence under the laws enacted by the House.

Such conduct lowers the dignity of the House, sets an "extremely poor precedent", and sends a dangerous message to the youth of the country at a time when the Government and Parliament have taken a firm stand against all forms of tobacco and nicotine products, he said.

"Therefore, earnestly request you to take immediate cognisance of this serious breach of rules and law; direct an inquiry into the incident through the appropriate committee or mechanism of the House," the BJP MP said in his letter to the Speaker

He also urged Birla to initiate "appropriate disciplinary proceedings against the member concerned" as per the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha.

ECI deploys SIR observers in 8 States

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
New Delhi

Seeking to ensure greater transparency, the Election Commission of India (ECI) has deployed 'special roll observers' in eight states to oversee the ongoing Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls.

The observers have been appointed in West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan, the poll authority said in a statement on Friday.

The special roll observers (SROs) have already begun their work and are expected to be present two days a week in these states until the final electoral rolls are published in February 2026. They will hold meetings with the state-level and district-level leadership of all the national and State political parties.

The SROs will also attend meetings with the chief electoral officers and district election officers of the States, either physically or virtually, to ensure that the entire Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise is completed in a smooth, transparent and participatory manner.

The SROs will observe the process of SIR so that no eligible elector is left out and no ineligible person is included in the electoral rolls. On Thursday, the poll panel extended the timeline for SIR in five states and one Union territory following requests from the chief electoral officers.

The schedules were revised for Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

The enumeration period for these six states and UT was to end on Thursday, and the draft electoral rolls were to be published on December 16.

The enumeration period for Tamil Nadu and Gujarat has been extended till December 14, where the draft electoral rolls will be published on December 19, the statement said.

For Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, the enumeration period has been extended till December 18, and the draft electoral rolls will be published on December 23.

The enumeration period for Uttar Pradesh has been extended till December 26, and the draft electoral rolls will be published on December 31.

The enumeration period for Goa, Puducherry, Lakshadweep, Rajasthan and West Bengal will end on Thursday, and the draft electoral rolls will be published on December 16.

Chouhan urges Punjab to implement PM Fasal Bima Yojna

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
New Delhi

Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Friday said in Rajya Sabha that Punjab has not yet implemented the PM Fasal Bima Yojna, and that had it been done, the farmers of the State would not have suffered during the recent floods.

The minister also informed the house that there has been a 44 per cent increase in production from 2014 to 2024 and the Government is making efforts to help increase the production of crops per hectare.

"I am happy to say that after 2014 till 2024, there has been a 44 per cent increase in production, which is a record," Chouhan said while replying to supplementaries during question hour. He said new technology and new systems is being adopted in agriculture sector and Government is also making efforts to reduce the cost of production.

"The Modi Government is paying nearly ₹2 lakh crore as fertiliser subsidy to farmers to help reduce their costs. Nearly 4.09 lakh crore is being submitted into the accounts of farmers under the Prime Minister Kisan Samman Nidhi.

"Another ₹1.90 lakh crore is being paid to farmers under the Fasal Bima Yojna. Besides, 15 lakh crore has been given to farmers as loans under different schemes at lower rates," he said. Noting that sometimes the produce is damaged due to certain calamities and the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana proves to be boon for such farmers.

"However, the Punjab Government has not yet implemented the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana in the state and I would urge the AAP member to help. Had this scheme been implemented in Punjab, the farmers who suffered due to floods would have benefitted.

"I have written a letter to Punjab chief minister to implement the Fasal Bima Yojna so that farmers there can be helped," he said in response to the supplementary asked by AAP MP Sant Balbir Singh.

Parliament committee expresses concern over uneven distribution of medical seats across country

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
New Delhi

A Parliamentary committee has expressed concern over the uneven distribution of medical seats across the country and the huge cost of medical education "as if there are no takers for the poor guardian to get their offsprings admitted in the medical colleges".

Flagging the seat distribution issue, the department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health and Family Welfare in the 167th report presented to Rajya Sabha on December 11 stated that while some states have a high concentration of medical seats, some are severely lacking against the national average of 75 MBBS seats per million population.

It suggested the Government open up new medical colleges to provide quality medical education in Delhi so that students from the national Capital do not have to travel to other states or even other countries to pursue medical education.

Not accepting the Action Taken by Government on the its recommendations/ observations contained in the 157th Report on "Quality of Medical Education in India", the panel strongly recommended that the NMC must come forward with guidelines for establishing new medical colleges in States where there are fewer than hundred MBBS seats per million population. It observed that Karnataka, Telangana and Tamil Nadu have approximately 150 MBBS seats per million and Puducherry has close to 2,000 or even more MBBS seats for a population of just about one million.

While some other states have less than 50 seats per million population, Bihar has only 21 seats per million, it stated in the report.

"The committee further suggests that the government may consider to plan to open new medical colleges to provide quality medical education in Delhi so that students from Delhi have not to travel to other states or even other countries to pursue medical education," the report said. The Committee

appreciated the UG-MSR 2023 guidelines regarding setting up of new medical colleges providing approval for annual intake capacity of 50/100/150 MBBS seats. Notwithstanding the same, it stated that as per the guidelines, given that the infrastructure and faculty position required are in place, a college, whether old or new, may be considered for granting permission to increase the undergraduate MBBS seats up to a maximum of 250 in a phased manner.

It further recommended that adequate attention must be given for opening of medical colleges in underserved districts which can be encouraged to use the locally available government medical colleges and hospitals for imparting healthcare services.

The committee further reiterated that the affordability of medical education in the country continues to a matter of concern due to huge cost of medical education that ranges between ₹60 lakh to ₹1 crore or even more, "as if, there is no takers for the poor guardian to get their offsprings admitted in the medical colleges".

It endorses that the Government may apply the fee structure to 50 per cent of seats in private medical colleges and the State Government fee may be levied to this 50 per cent of MBBS seats while the other 50 per cent to be decided in consultation with the fee regulatory committee of each of the States.

The panel reiterated its recommendation that the ministry in collaboration with states consider need-based scholarships to deserving students. Other suggestive options that can be explored were running the medical college and hospital on a PPP model, giving tax benefits to the company/group, etc, it stated in the report.

On the issue of addressing faculty shortages in medical colleges, especially in remote areas, the panel stressed that it is essential to provide incentives for teaching positions and opined that competitive salaries, job security, and structured career growth need to be prioritized over adhoc or contractual appointments for streamlining and strengthening the faculty.

The Committee reiterated that clear criteria and milestones for promotions by recognising and rewarding excellence in teaching, research, and clinical work are required to be embedded in the system.

States Focus

DISRUPT TERROR FINANCING IN J&K: LG TO POLICE

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday directed police to disrupt terror financing pipeline in the Union territory, and effectively counter radicalisation attempts by separatist elements. The Lieutenant Governor (L-G) met the families of those killed in last month's accidental blast in Nowgam police station and handed over appointment letters on compassionate grounds, an official spokesman said. Referring to the busting of the "white collar" terror module involving doctors last month, Sinha said the whole country is proud of Jammu and Kashmir Police for stopping terror in its tracks by unearthing and dismantling the network. The spokesman said Sinha appreciated the police's meticulous investigation and multi-faceted effort to detect, disrupt and prevent terrorist acts. The L-G also directed senior officials to identify and disrupt terror financing and counter radicalisation attempts by separatist forces, the spokesman added.

SHAH TO UNVEIL VAJPAYEE'S STATUE: CM NAYAB SINGH SAINI

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Friday said Union Home Minister Amit Shah will unveil former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's statue at Atal Park in Panchkula on December 24. Saini said this after inspecting the arrangements for the event at Atal Park in Panchkula, according to an official release. He said that after unveiling the 41-foot-tall metal statue of the former prime minister, Shah will inaugurate a mega blood donation camp at Atal Park. He will also inspect an exhibition set up at the state BJP office, 'Panchkamal.' The Chief Minister said the Union home minister will then take the salute at the passing-out parade of about 5,000 police personnel at the Tau Devi Lal Sports Stadium, Sector 3. Shah will also attend the "Veer Bal Diwas" programme to be held the same day as the chief guest.

Congress stalwart Shivraj Patil passes away at 90

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Mumbai

Veteran Congressman Shivraj Patil, who served as the Lok Sabha Speaker and also served as Union Home Minister, passed away at his hometown Latur in Maharashtra on Friday morning. Patil, 90, passed away at his residence 'Devghar' after a brief illness, as per family members, adding his funeral will be held on Saturday.

He is survived by his son Shailesh Patil, daughter-in-law Archana, who unsuccessfully contested the assembly polls last year on a BJP ticket against Congress' Amit Deshmukh from Latur city, and two granddaughters.

President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, Lok Sabha Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi and many others offered condolences and paid tributes to Patil.

Patil remained a Congress and Nehru-Gandhi family loyalist till his last days and held several key constitutional and ministerial posts during a public life spanning more than five decades. The veteran politician faced severe public and media backlash as Union Home Minister in 2008 when he was seen in three different sets of clothes on the night of November 26 when Mumbai was facing unprecedented attacks from ten heavily-armed Pakistan-trained terrorists.

Defending himself over the criticism, he had said people should criticise policy, not clothes. The sheer scale of the Mumbai attacks weighed heavily on Patil's political career and made his position in the Union Cabinet virtually untenable, leading to his resignation on November 30, 2008.

Born on October 12, 1935, Patil began his political journey as the president of Latur municipality between 1966 and 1970 and was subsequently elected as an MLA for two terms. He held key

posts in the Maharashtra assembly, including Deputy Speaker and Speaker, between 1977 and 1979. He then went on to win the Latur Lok Sabha seat seven times and was the 10th Speaker of the Lok Sabha from 1991 to 1996. He lost to BJP's Rupatai Patil Nilangekar in the 2004 Lok Sabha elections.

He was also a Rajya Sabha member. The Congress leader held several key portfolios in the Union Cabinet, including Home, Defence, Commerce, and Science and Technology. Patil was the Governor of Punjab and also served as Administrator of the Union Territory of Chandigarh from 2010 to 2015.

In 2022, speaking at a book launch, he courted controversy for claiming that the concept of "jihad" was present not just in Islam but also in the Bhagavad Gita and Christianity. In March 2025, he had met Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Delhi with his family. Calling Patil a distinguished parliamentarian and statesman, Fadnavis said his demise was deeply saddening.

As Speaker of the Lok Sabha, Patil initiated and supported several innovative parliamentary practices, earning respect across the political spectrum. Sharad Pawar said Patil played a significant role in the politics of both Maharashtra and the nation, harmoniously blending the Congress ideology with his unwavering commitment to resolving people's issues.

"In every position he held, his work consistently reflected justice for the common man," said the NCP (SP) chief. Pawar said he pushed for modernisation and computerisation of the House. "The OutstandingParliamentarian Award was also started during his tenure," said Pawar in a statement.

Patil was also known for his vast reading, meticulous study, and articulate presentation. His command over Marathi, English, and Hindi, along with his exceptional grasp of constitutional matters, made him a much-respected parliamentarian of his time.

Bengal SIR: 58 lakh names marked for deletion

SAUGAR SENGUPTA
Kolkata

About 58 lakh names of voters have been marked for deletion after Thursday, the last date of completion of Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Bengal, sources in the office of the State Chief Electoral Officer said.

This number is apart from about 29,000 forms, which were not returned by the voters. This is also apart from those names which are likely to be summoned for hearing in days to come, sources said, adding a preliminary impression shows that there is a huge discrepancy in the forms that have been submitted.

"This could be tens of lakhs... that is, such a large number of people is likely to be summoned for hearing," an official said, adding the exact number of names likely to be deleted after the digitisation of forms completed and uploaded on December 11 is 58.08 lakhs. Considering the fact that this figure was obtained at about 12 pm on Thursday, the total number of deletions could further go up beyond 60 lakh, sources said.

The breakdown of the numbers till Wednesday was: 24,25 lakh deceased voters, 12.05 lakh voters who could not be traced, 19.93 lakh voters marked as 'shifted', 1,38 lakh identified as bogus, and 57 lakh categorised under 'others'.

Sources in the Election Commission said that "a good number of names may fail the hearing session as there are a large number of people who have the same numbers or same parental names or addresses... the discrepancy is considerable," adding one would not be surprised if the number goes beyond 50 lakh more.

Incidentally, Bengal Opposition Leader Suvendu Adhikari had on several occasions said that there could be more than 1 to 1.5 crore fake voters in Bengal. "We are confident that there are more than 1 crore voters including Bangladeshi Muslims and Rohingyas in Bengal and they have been voting for the Trinamool Congress... these names have to be deleted," he said on Thursday adding, "several lakh of them have still managed to creep into the voters' lists with the help of the BDOs and booth level officers... we ask the ECI to catch these people and deport them to Bangladesh."

Adhikari's statement came hours after Bengal Chief Minister asked the "mothers and sisters of Bengal" to "remain prepared with your kitchen tools to resist the deletion of names from voters' lists... because if a single name is deleted I will descend on the street and hold a dharna with the help of the people."

Six months of AI crash: UK dreams shattered following loss of loved ones

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Ahmedabad

The tragic crash of Air India flight AI 171 in June has compelled some of the victims' kin to abandon their dreams of a life in the United Kingdom.

Surat-resident Hiren Dayani's mother Kailashben was one of the 260 persons who were killed when the Boeing 787-8 aircraft on its way to London crashed into a medical hostel complex shortly after it took off from Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport here on June 12.

After her mother's death, Dayani, who lost his father to cardiac arrest some time ago, left his high-paying job in London and permanently shifted to Surat with his wife Namrata to start a new life. In London, he was working as a clinical research scientist, while his wife worked as a dental therapist.

"I went to London in 2020 after finishing my M Pharm, and had planned to acquire a PR (permanent residency) so that my wife and I can easily travel between two countries and stay for a longer period in India with my mother. She was travelling to London alone when the tragedy struck," said Dayani.

After his father's death, Kailashben was the sole caretaker of Dayani's intellectually disabled younger sister.

"Now, since there is no one back here to look after my sister, I have decided to come back to Surat and start from scratch. My wife and I were offered some jobs, but the salaries were too low compared to what we used to get in the UK," he said. "So my wife has opened a dental clinic, and I am in the process of starting my own pharmacy," he added.

Harish Godhaniya from Bhanvad town in Devbhumi Dwarka district lost his wife Riddhi and three-year-old son in the crash as they were returning to London following her dental surgery. Godhaniya, who now lives in Jamnagar with his parents, said he is not going back to the UK where he was working as a data analyst for the last three years.

"I am not going back. I had planned to settle in the UK to have a better future for my son. But now, it has no meaning because my wife and son are no more," he said.

"My wife and I were doing jobs in London and we had planned to settle there. But everything is over. I have not planned anything yet because I am yet to get over the loss," he added.

Jeevika Didis playing major role in overall Bihar development: CM

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Patna

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Friday praised the efforts of Jeevika Didis saying their "hard work is playing a major role in the overall development of the State". 'Jeevika Didis' are women associated with self-help groups under the Bihar Rural Livelihoods Project.

The CM, during a visit to Haridih panchayat in Rajauli block of Nawada district, interacted with students and 'Jeevika Didis', and distributed cheques to beneficiaries of various Government schemes.

According to a statement by the Chief Minister's Office (CMO), "Interacting with Jeevika Didis, the CM praised their work and said it is because of their efforts the economic condition of people living in rural areas is improving rapidly. Your hard work is playing a major role in the overall development of the state".

The CM added that the Government is providing all possible assistance to Jeevika Didis so that every household can progress. "Earlier, women had to depend on their families for

money, which used to cause stress at home. But now, due to various Government schemes, people, especially Jeevika Didis, are earning and contributing to their households," he said.

Launched in 2006, the Bihar Rural Livelihoods Project, popularly known as Jeevika, aimed to reach 4,000 villages across 42 blocks in Gaya, Khagaria, Madhubani, Muzaffarpur, Nalanda, and Purnia districts, benefiting 5.9 lakh households.

The main objective was to enhance the social and economic empowerment of the rural poor in Bihar. Now, Jeevika Didis have spread across the State and through their initiatives with the help of the State Government, lakhs of women are gaining financial literacy, starting enterprises, and transforming their communities in the State.

Kumar also interacted with schoolgirls undergoing self-defence training. "Study with full dedication. You all are the future of India. Whatever support you need, the Government will provide," he said. The CM inspected the Har Ghar Nal Ka Jal scheme, ensuring supply of safe drinking water to every household.

"Earlier, people had to fetch water from far-away wells or hand-pumps. Due to safe drinking water supply, water-borne diseases have reduced substantially," the CMO statement said.

Zubeen death case: Promise made to people fulfilled with filing of chargesheet: Himanta

TONY DAS
Guwahati

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday asserted that the promise made to the people of the State in connection with singer Zubeen Garg's death has been fulfilled with the filing of the chargesheet by the Special Investigation Team (SIT) within the stipulated time frame.

"We had taken the responsibility of ensuring justice to Zubeen Garg and we fulfilled this with the SIT submitting the charge sheet within a record time in the court today," Sarma said on the sidelines of a programme in Kokrajhar.

Some of the accused have been charged with murder, and "now I am sure that the court will conduct the trial and give necessary punishment to the accused", he said. The SIT on Friday charged four of the seven accused with murder in its charge sheet filed in a Guwahati court.

The murder accused are the chief organiser of the North East India Festival, Shyamkanu Mahanta, Garg's secretary Siddhartha Sharma, and band members

Shekhar Jyoti Goswami and Amritprava Mahanta.

Garg's cousin and suspended Assam Police officer Sandipan Garg has been charged with culpable homicide not amounting to murder, while two of the singer's personal security officers (PSOs) — Nandeswar Bora and Paresh Baishya — have been charged with criminal breach of trust.

Barring the two PSOs, the five accused had accompanied Garg to Singapore where he died under mysterious circumstances while swimming in the sea on September 19.

"We all know that the court is impartial. Now, the entire responsibility lies with the court of law. We must all respect the process of the law," Sarma said.

On the issue of hearing the case in a fast-track court, the CM said the Government will have to talk with the chief justice in this matter.

"There is a procedure to be followed. The case will go from the CJM's court to that of the sessions judge, and only after that, the issue of fast-track court and special prosecutor will come up," he said.

Sarma had said earlier that the state government will request the Gauhati High Court to set up a fast-track court for hearing Garg's death case.

The Assam cabinet had also decided to appoint a special public prosecutor on the recommendation of the advocate general, who will be engaged exclusively for the hearing of the case from the filing of the charge sheet to the delivery of justice.

He further said that now that the SIT had already submitted the charge sheet on the case related to Garg, "we will now move on to the case of Gaurav Gogoi".

The Assam Government had constituted an SIT to probe into the alleged Pakistani links of state Congress president Gaurav Gogoi and his British wife Elizabeth Colburn.

The SIT had submitted the report on September 10 to the Chief Minister, who claimed that the investigating agency had "unearthed startling facts which point towards a larger conspiracy aimed at undermining the sovereignty of our nation".

Sarma has been attacking Gogoi and his wife over the last few months, alleging that they have a connection with the Pakistani intelligence agency ISI.

CM Mohan Yadav hails progress in jobs, education as MP Govt completes 2 years

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Bhopal

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav marked the completion of two years in office by presenting a detailed account of the Government's performance, outlining sector-wide achievements across welfare delivery, infrastructure expansion, law enforcement, youth support and economic growth.

Addressing mediapersons, on Friday, the Chief Minister said the administration has focused on decisive governance, accelerated development and reforms that directly impact citizens.

According to him, improving law and order has remained a central priority. Operations against land mafia, mining mafia and organised crime were intensified, while a zero-tolerance framework was adopted for crimes against women and children.

Urban policing, digital surveillance and coordinated enforcement have been strengthened to enhance safety across cities. Parallel to this, municipalities initiated major urban-improvement campaigns — beautification of public spaces, solid-waste modernisation and Smart Road projects in key urban centres.

Youth empowerment has been positioned as a cornerstone of the Government's agenda. More than 5.28 lakh young beneficiaries were supported through employment-linked schemes, while the state scaled up skill training and industrial placements.

Officials said Madhya Pradesh continues to register one of the highest industrial growth rates in the country, supported by new industrial corridors, MSME incentives and growing investor interest.

Tourism and cultural development also recorded substantial progress. Projects around Mahakal Lok, Omkareshwar and other religious destinations have been executed to strengthen the state's position as a spiritual tourism hub. Preparations for Simhastha 2028 have begun, with large-scale infrastructure upgrades under way — including bridge construction, road expansion and telecom-network augmentation.

The Government report highlights extensive gains in irrigation, agriculture and water management. Under the Jal Ganga Abhiyan and multiple large irrigation projects, efforts to double the state's irrigated area have accelerated. The administration stressed that major schemes in groundwater recharge, micro-irrigation and canal modernisation are now providing long-term support to farmers.

Welfare programmes have seen notable expansion over the past two years. Support under PM Kisan Samman Nidhi, Ladli Behna Yojana, housing schemes and tribal-welfare initiatives formed a substantial part of the State's social safety net.

Healthcare infrastructure has undergone parallel strengthening, with 52 Maternal and Child Health wings completed and upgrades in 935 PHCs and CHCs, alongside expansion of ambulance and emergency services.

Infrastructure development remained one of the most visible areas of progress. The State added or upgraded more than 3,200 km of roads, expanded rural connectivity under PMGSY, and pushed forward energy reforms including the addition of 8,800 MW in solar capacity. Airport upgrades, mobility improvements and new logistics infrastructure are also under implementation.

The Chief Minister said the Government will continue to prioritise transparent governance, rapid development and citizen-focused delivery, adding that Madhya Pradesh is positioned to build on these gains in the coming years.

TRANSGLOBE ADVISORS

Your Trusted Management Advisory

www.transglobeadvisors.in

Ex-judges slam impeachment move against Justice Swaminathan

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

Fifty-six former judges on Friday issued a statement denouncing the attempt by the DMK to impeach Madras High Court judge Justice GR Swaminathan, saying it was a "brazen attempt to browbeat judges". On December 1, Justice Swaminathan held that the Arulmighu Subramania Swamy Temple was duty-bound to light the lamp at the Deepathoon, in addition to the customary lighting near the Uchi Pillaiyar Mandapam.

The single judge bench said that doing so would not encroach upon the rights of the adjacent dargah or the Muslim community. The order sparked a row, and on December 9, several opposition MPs, led by the DMK, submitted a notice to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla to move a motion for the removal of the judge.

The statement said, "This is a brazen attempt to browbeat judges who do not fall in line with the ideological and political expectations of a particular section of society. If such an attempt is permitted to proceed, it would cut at the very roots of our democracy and the independence of the judiciary."

It said even if the reasons mentioned by the signatory MPs were taken at face value, these were inadequate to justify resorting to such a rare, exceptional and serious constitutional measure of impeachment.

Justice GR Swaminathan

"The present move is not an isolated aberration. It fits into a clear and deeply troubling pattern in our recent constitutional history, where sections of the political class have sought to discredit and intimidate the higher judiciary whenever outcomes do not align with their interests," said the statement signed by two former Supreme Court judges, five former Chief Justices of High Courts and 49 retired High Court judges.

It said the attempt was an attempt to weaponise impeachment as an instrument of pressure, which struck at the heart of judicial independence and the basic norms of constitutional democracy.

"The very purpose of the impeachment mechanism is to uphold the integrity of the judiciary, not to convert it into a tool of arm-twisting, signalling and retaliation."

"To wield the threat of removal as a means of compelling judges to conform to political expectations is to turn a constitutional safeguard into an instrument of intimidation," the statement said.

It said such an approach was anti-democratic, anti-constitutional and an anathema to the rule of law.

"Today, the target may be one judge; tomorrow, it will be the institution as a whole. We, therefore, call upon all stakeholders, MPs across party lines, members of the bar, civil society and citizens at large to unequivocally denounce this move," the statement said.

It said judges had to remain answerable to their oath and to the Constitution, instead of partisan political pressures or ideological intimidation.

Order Order

Indigo moves Delhi High Court for refund of ₹900 crore customs duty

IndiGo has moved the Delhi High Court seeking a refund of over ₹900 crore paid as customs duty on aircraft engines and parts re-imported into India after overseas repairs. The petition argued that the levy of customs duty on such re-imports was unconstitutional and amounted to double levy on the same transaction.

The matter was heard on Friday by a Division Bench of Justices Prathiba M Singh and Shail Jain. However, Justice Shail Jain recused from hearing the matter as her son is a pilot with IndiGo. The case will now come up before another Bench subject to the order of the Chief Justice.

The petition said that customs authorities compelled IndiGo to pay the duty to secure clearance of aircraft engines and other critical components. The airline submitted that unlike GST, which is self-assessed, customs clearance depends on the approval of officers and aircraft could not be grounded indefinitely. As a result, it paid the duty under protest across more than 4,000 bills of entry, amounting to over ₹900 crore, said the petition.

When IndiGo later filed refund claims, customs authorities refused on the ground that the airline must first seek reassessment of each bill of entry. IndiGo argued that it had paid duty under protest in every case and that speaking orders had already been passed on the protested assessments, against which appeals were filed.

Six people convicted in 2017 actress assault case get 20 years imprisonment

A court on Friday sentenced six people convicted in the 2017 actress assault case to 20 years of rigorous imprisonment. Ernakulam District and Principal Sessions Court Judge Honey M Varghese sentenced Sunil NS, also known as Pulsar Suni, Martin Antony, Manikandan B, Vijesh VP, Salim H, and Pradeep to 20 years of rigorous imprisonment for the offence of gang rape.

The court also ordered imprisonment for other offences, but they will run concurrently. The court also ordered the victim to be paid a compensation of ₹ five lakhs, and the pen drive containing the sexual assault visuals should be maintained in the custody of the investigation officer. On December 8, the court acquitted four accused, including actor Dileep.

The assault on the multilingual actress, after the accused allegedly forced their way into her car and held it under their control for two hours on February 17, 2017, had shocked Kerala.

Prime accused Pulsar Suni sexually assaulted the actress and recorded the act on video with the help of the other convicted persons in the moving car. Actor Dileep, who was accused of conspiring in the crime, was arrested during the investigation. However, after a nearly six-year trial, the court found him not guilty.

It is completely immune, says SC, flags half baked running commentary on pending cases

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

Observing that half-baked truth and ill-informed running commentary on sub-judice cases affects public perception, the Supreme Court on Friday asserted that it is "completely immune" from reporting of cases for the sake of publicity or narrative building.

The observations were made when the top court was hearing a case concerning the repatriation of certain individuals deported to Bangladesh on the alleged ground that due process was not followed.

During the proceedings, the court was informed that Sunali Khatun, a pregnant woman, and her eight-year old son have come back to India and presently, she is getting medical attention at her father's residence in Birbhum in West Bengal.

CJI Surya Kant

A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi fixed January 6 to hear the Centre's appeal against a Calcutta High Court judgment that directed the repatriation of certain individuals deported to Bangladesh on the alleged ground that the due process was not followed.

During the proceedings, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, expressed strong disapproval of a news report published in an English newspaper regarding the issue. Terming the reportage as "tabloid-like," the top law officer said, "I do not want to escalate ... but attempts are made to build a particular kind of narratives" in a bid to influence the outcome.

The law officer said he was sure that the bench is not influenced by any such reports, but it does cast doubt about the intention to build a particular kind of narrative.

"My faith was shaken," Mehta said.

"We are completely immune from publicity and pseudo-publicity stunts. Narratives should not affect the lives of individuals," Justice Bagchi said. Advising the law officer to "just ignore them", the CJI, however, said, "Ideally, ill-informed running commentary on sub-judice matters should not be made."

"The problem is half-baked distorted facts and ill-informed facts are being reported," he said. "Reporting that a matter is coming up (for hearing) is fine. But if you thrust your opinion, then that is an issue. The issue is with half-baked truth and ill-informed opinion which affects public perception," the CJI added.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for the West Bengal Government, referred to the media's role in recent times in countries like the UK and the US, and said immigration issues are part of a "global discourse" and comments and public discourses are held on social media and other platforms.

"People write opinions in the US and England on immigration. As long as you don't attribute motive, it is not sacrilege," Sibal said.

At the outset, senior advocate Sanjay Hegde brought to the court's attention the plight of another deportee, Sweety Bibi, who remains stuck with her husband and two children.

Hegde offered to provide documents proving their Indian citizenship. He urged the solicitor general to take up the other case on humanitarian grounds, saying, "that side of the border is very difficult for Indians."

The law officer assured Hegde that he will look into the issue and the verification may take sometime.

The court said once documents are verified, modalities for their return could be considered in a time-bound manner.

The case involves families who had been working as daily wagers in Delhi's Rohini area for two decades.

They were detained by police on June 18 on suspicion of being illegal Bangladeshi immigrants and deported on June 27.

The Calcutta High Court, in its impugned order, had observed that the deportation violated the Union Home Ministry's own protocols, which require an inquiry by the state Government before deportation.

The High Court had noted that the "overenthusiasm" in deporting the detainees disturbed the "judicial climate."

Sibal reiterated this point during the hearing and said, "The Union does no inquiry for 30 days before deporting them."

OSA case: SC seeks CBI's reply on former R&AW official's plea seeking documents

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Friday sought a response from the CBI on a former R&AW official's plea seeking documents relied upon by the probe agency in a trial against him under the Official Secrets Act.

A bench of Justices JK Maheshwari and Vijay Bishnoi issued the notice to the CBI seeking its reply on a plea by Major General VK Singh (retired).

Advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing for Singh, submitted that the High Court on September 19 modified an order of the trial court and stated that the documents relied upon by the CBI in the case can only be inspected by the counsel for petitioner and not supplied to him owing to their sensitive nature. "It is normal procedure under Section 207 of the CrPC where the accused is supplied the document relied upon by the prosecution. The magistrate allowed supply of documents but the High Court modified it," Bhushan said.

Singh has served in the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW) and has written a book in which certain allegations of corruption in procurement of equipment were made but the CBI booked him under the Official Secrets Act (OSA), Bhushan said.

The bench said it is seeking CBI's response on the plea and posted the matter for hearing after four weeks.

The CBI has registered a case against Singh on September 20, 2007, on a complaint that he allegedly revealed secret information by publication of his book titled 'India's External Intelligence — Secrets of Research and Analysis Wing'.

Search warrants were issued against Singh on September 20, 2007, and a compliance report was filed on September 24, 2007, in the court.

On April 7, 2008, the Centre authorised the filing of a complaint under Section 13(3) of the Official Secrets Act and a chargesheet was filed in the case under Sections 3 and 5 of the Official Secrets Act, 1923, and Sections 409 and 120B of the IPC on April 11, 2008, with request to keep the classified documents in sealed cover.

The trial court took cognisance of the chargesheet on January 31, 2009, for the offences under Sections 3 and 5 of the Official Secrets Act, 1923, and under Sections 409, 120B of the IPC.

On December 12, 2009, the chief metropolitan magistrate (CMM) allowed the application filed by the respondents under Section 207 of the CrPC and directed the CBI to supply the documents sought by Singh to them after moving appropriate application for desealing of the documents.

However, considering the sensitive nature of the documents, the CMM clarified that the documents supplied to the respondents would remain in the personal custody of the counsel representing Singh, who were to ensure that the documents are not circulated in any manner.

The Delhi High Court on September 19 noted that the CBI is not opposed to the inspection of the documents but in view of their sensitive nature, it sought that a hard copy of the same be not supplied to him. It said the court deems it expedient to allow the inspection of the documents sought by Singh as opposed to the supply of the copies of the documents to the counsel representing him.

"In view of the above, the present petition is allowed to the extent that the impugned order is modified and the respondents along with their duly authorised counsel are permitted to inspect the documents lying with the trial court as and when required to enable the respondents to effectively defend themselves during the trial," it had ordered.

Aggrieved by the order, Singh approached the top court challenging the High Court order.

On May 31, 2023, the High Court had refused to quash a CBI case registered against Singh and said whether the revelations in the book were likely to affect the sovereignty, integrity and security of the country was a matter of trial and what prejudices national security cannot be decided by courts.

Singh, who was a former joint secretary of India's external spy agency, earlier contended before the High Court that his intention to write the book was to highlight issues of lack of accountability and corruption in R&AW and the allegation of revealing secrets harmful to the country's security and sovereignty were totally baseless and unfounded. Singh retired from service in June 2002 and his book was published in June 2007. The FIR was registered against him in 2008.

SC slaps ₹1 lakh costs on NGO for filing a writ petition against its verdict

Justice R Mahadevan
Justice BV Nagarathna

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Friday took strong exception to the filing of a writ petition that sought to challenge its earlier ruling which grants exemption to the minority schools from the provisions of Right to Education Act (RTE Act). The bench of BV Nagarathna and Justice R Mahadevan saw it as an attempt to bring down the judiciary of the country. "You cannot do this to Supreme Court. We are enraged.

This is against the entire system of judiciary in this country if you start filing such cases. You don't know the seriousness of your case. We are restraining ourself to 1 lakh cost. Don't bring down the judiciary in this country by filing such cases," Justice Nagarathna remarked. The Court also questioned how advocates were advising filing of such petitions against top court's own judgments. "What is happening here? Advocates are giving such kind of advice? We will have to penalise the advocates. You are law knowing citizens, professionals, and you file a writ petition challenging the judgement of this Court under Article 32? Grossest abuse! We are restraining ourself. We are not issuing contempt," it said.

The Court ordered imposition of ₹1 lakh costs on the petitioner United Voice for Education Forum. "Let this be a message to others. You want to crumble the judiciary of this country," it said. The writ petition sought for a declaration that the exemption granted to minority educational institutions, as upheld in Pramati Educational and Cultural Trust v Union of India is unconstitutional to the extent that it grants blanket immunity to them from RTE obligations.

Court to hear on Dec 18 UP Govt plea to withdraw Akhlaq lynching case

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Noida

A fast-track court at Surajpur in Gautam Buddh Nagar has fixed December 18 for hearing the Uttar Pradesh Government's application to withdraw the 2015 mob lynching case of Mohammad Akhlaq in Dadri, officials and counsel for the victim's family said on Friday.

The State Government has sought withdrawal of charges against all the accused in the case, which pertains to the killing of Akhlaq in Bisahda village under Jarcha police station area over rumours that beef was stored in his home.

The matter came up before the court of the Additional District and Sessions Judge, where the prosecution informed that it had moved the withdrawal plea in compliance with an order issued by the State's Justice Section-5 (Criminal), Lucknow, on August 26.

Yusuf Saifi, counsel for the Akhlaq family, told media, "The court has set December 18 as the date for hearing the application for withdrawal of the case against the accused in the mob lynching of Mohammad Akhlaq."

According to officials, the withdrawal application was filed by the Assistant District Government Advocate (Criminal) following directives from the Government and the Joint Director of Prosecution.

The plea cites restoration of social harmony as the reason for seeking withdrawal of the case.

The 52-year-old Akhlaq, a resident of Bisahda village in Dadri area of Gautam Buddh Nagar, was lynched to death on September 28, 2015 by a mob allegedly over suspicion that he had stored beef in his house.

The lynching case is being heard by a fast-track court here in which the judgment is awaited.

CAPF jawans face eviction, penalties over 2017 policy; plan to move SC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

Hit by penalties and a near possibility of eviction of their families, hundreds of CAPF personnel — deployed in hard duty areas hit by Naxalism, terrorism and insurgency — have decided to petition the Supreme Court and the Union home ministry for succour, officials said on Friday.

The jawans and officers are worried for their families and finances with regard to an "adverse order" issued against them regarding the general pool residential accommodation (GPRA) houses provided by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) in metro cities of Delhi, Kolkata and Chandigarh to paramilitary forces personnel for keeping their families.

"Till 2017, the personnel were allowed to keep their families and children in these cities under the GPRA scheme for as long as they were deployed in hard areas.

"That year, a new rule was brought by the housing ministry restricting allotment of these houses to these jawans and officers for only 3 years, jeopardising the education of their children and medical issues of their family members," a senior CAPF officer told PTI.

Ninety-five per cent of these personnel stayed in Delhi, where the MoHUA has said there was "an acute shortage of residential quarters and a long waiting list of eligible officers seeking accommodation."

A second officer said a number of the affected jawans and officers petitioned the Delhi High Court in 2020, and the court initially stayed the MoHUA order.

In July this year, the HC issued its final order and refused the personnel any relief, and they are now being served monetary penalty notices by the ministry for "overstaying" and for "eviction".

"Where do we go? How do we pay such high penalty amounts that are running into lakhs of rupees, and in one case, a jawan has been penalised for over ₹1 crore in the name of damage charges?" a jawan said on the condition of anonymity.

All this is happening when we are still deployed in hard areas, tackling major internal security challenges that the country is facing. However, the MoHUA, in May this year, strangely granted a one-time exemption from this clause (Rule 43) to CPWD employees serving in border areas, a senior officer said.

The CAPF jawans and officers said this was a "step-motherly" treatment to them as they serve the country in high-risk and hard internal security duty areas.

A senior Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) officer said the MHA was "in cognisance of the issue and has held meetings with the MoHUA."

"A full solution regarding waiver of the penalty and extension of the GPRA scheme, like what was till the year 2017, is in works," he told PTI. The officer said the MHA had written a communication on December 2 to all CAPFs asking them to inform them about all such cases so that a "corrective" action can be taken.

Editor's TAKE

SAARC: A regional dream needing renewal

At 40, SAARC is not obsolete. It is underutilised. Its future depends not on rewriting its Charter but on renewing its political imagination

Forty years ago, South Asia envisioned a regional alliance that would serve the collective interests of a region home to one-fifth of humanity. Inspired by successful models like ASEAN, leaders believed that shared history and geography could form the foundation for meaningful cooperation. Yet the promise of this vision remained unfulfilled. While other regional blocs prospered, SAARC – the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation – struggled to take off. Despite its lofty ideals and sincere efforts, political fault lines repeatedly overshadowed the organisation's purpose, preventing the region from realising the benefits of true collaboration.

As South Asia marked the 40th anniversary of the SAARC Charter in Kathmandu this week, it is time to reflect on what exactly happened and why the region that needs cooperation could not cooperate. In Kathmandu, the occasion was rich in symbolism and sober in its reminders. Diplomats, policymakers, and representatives from across the region gathered to commemorate a vision conceived in 1985 - one that aspired to bind the subcontinent in cooperation, dialogue, and shared progress. Despite the lip service to it, the big question is where SAARC stands today, and whether it can reclaim the promise it once held or it is time to give it an august requiem. SAARC's journey over four decades can be described in two words – hope and hesitation.

The SAARC Food Bank, the South Asian University, the SAARC Development Fund, and regional agreements on trade and energy cooperation demonstrated a willingness to create shared platforms for collective benefit. These platforms were indeed a step in the right direction, but they still lack on delivery. SAARC's greatest success has arguably been its ability to keep a diverse and often fractious neighbourhood engaged in dialogue. Indeed, SAARC remains a rare forum where South Asian nations can meet as equals, beyond bilateral constraints. In this sense, it has served as a stabilising anchor – a reminder that geography binds the region far more tightly than politics divides it. Yet the challenges have been equally persistent. The organisation has long been hostage to political tensions, especially between India and Pakistan. SAARC's consensus-based model, once seen as a strength, has become its weakness. Summits have been postponed, agreements stalled, and meaningful integration – particularly in trade – remains far below potential. Secretary General Md Golam Sarwar's remarks during the anniversary reception reflected both pride and pragmatism. He acknowledged SAARC's evolution - from institution-building in the first decades to broader global engagement today. But global outreach cannot substitute for intra-regional dynamism. Without political will, even the most well-crafted charters remain aspirational. The road ahead demands realism. Reviving SAARC does not require rewriting its Charter but functional cooperation in areas that transcend political divides, like health, climate adaptation, and cultural exchanges. At 40, SAARC is not obsolete but underutilised; its future lies in realising its strengths.

Agniveer and the broken Gorkha legacy

When India's Agniveer scheme brought the long-standing recruitment of Nepal Domiciled Gorkhas (NDGs) to a halt, three years on, the gap remains unaddressed, its strategic, political, and emotional repercussions deepening on both sides

ASHOK K MEHTA

Pokhara has long been the cradle and nursery of Nepali Gorkha recruitment, a tradition abruptly halted in June 2022 when India dropped the Agniveer "bombshell" on Nepal and its Gorkha community. Until then, approximately 1,200 to 1,600 Nepal Domiciled Gorkhas (NDGs) were inducted into the Indian Army each year. Although there were hints that such a move was coming-given Agniveer's tactical and strategic flaws-virtually no one outside the PMO and NSA Ajit Doval knew the plan would actually be implemented. The scheme has since drawn serious criticism from former service chiefs. Agniveer was conceived to cut manpower costs, especially pensions under OROP, which in 2019 exceeded even the modernisation budget. Yet it was marketed as an effort to "youth-ify" a military that was already among the world's youngest and fittest. Recruitment was initially halted under the pretext of Covid-19, even as far more crowded activities like elections and the Kumbh Mela continued. In reality, the freeze that began in 2020 served to cut salary and pension allocations.

At the Chanakya Dialogue in November 2025, Defence Secretary Rajesh Singh lamented that India's defence spending had dipped below 2 per cent of GDP. With recruitment paused for nearly three years, combined with Agniveer's limited intake and the annual retirement of 60,000 soldiers, fighting units-typically 850 strong-are now short by 120 to 140 soldiers. The worst hit are the 38 Gorkha battalions, the Army's largest regiment, which have not recruited a single Nepali Gorkha in six years. India was fortunate that Operation Sindoor did not escalate beyond visual-range exchanges, given such manpower deficiencies.

From the gate of the Embassy of India Pension Paying Office in Pokhara's Ram Bazaar (formerly Rum Bazaar), one can still see the majestic Machapuchare massif watching over the town. Gold shops have multiplied despite the rising cost of bullion and shrinking remittances from the dwindling Brigade of Gorkhas. Yet ex-servicemen (ESM) are no longer openly lamenting Nepal's ban on sending recruits or Delhi's silence. Before the Gen Z uprising, nearly 60 per cent of Nepal's Parliament comprised Communist MPs who had long opposed foreign military recruitment-even as 2,000 Nepalese youth leave the country daily in search of work.

Today, ESM prefer to stay quiet, just 90 days after the September uprising that produced an interim government. Many are now willing to accept Agniveer terms, even if reluctantly, but the Nepal government continues to oppose them. A future Parliament with a non-Communist majority may soften its stance. For the Gorkha community, the issue is existential: they do not want their legacy of valour to fade. Neither India nor Nepal has taken the initiative for a frank dialogue.

> AT THE CHANAKYA DIALOGUE IN NOVEMBER 2025, DEFENCE SECRETARY RAJESH SINGH LAMENTED THAT INDIA'S DEFENCE SPENDING HAD DIPPED BELOW 2 PER CENT OF GDP

Delhi neither informed Kathmandu nor explained the implications of Agniveer. Nepal, for its part, referenced the 1947 Tripartite Treaty with the UK and India, hinting that the scheme might violate its spirit. Legally, Agniveer is tenable, but the dispute is fundamentally political and strategic, requiring high-level engagement. The dispute began in June 2022, when the Indian Embassy sought routine permission to conduct recruitment rallies. Kathmandu did not respond. Nepal signalled that the truncated terms of service-four years, only 25 per cent retention, and no pension for those discharged-were unacceptable compared to the earlier 15-year minimum service with pension. While the Indian Army has taken the hit, the British Army and Nepal Army have benefited. The British Army has always been the top choice due to better pay, but for combat exposure, discipline, and character building, the Indian Army remains unrivalled. Meanwhile, the Odisha Police and several Indian states, including Bihar, have tapped the gap by recruiting thousands of Nepali Gorkhas.

At the official level, India appears unperturbed by the loss of NDGs, seeing it as shedding colonial baggage. An MEA official even remarked that Nepal "has not come back to us." The Army hierarchy has shown little concern, though senior commanders continue to swear by their Gorkha battalions. Senior Gorkha officers, including CDS Gen Anil Chauhan, have maintained silence, accepting the scheme as a "political decision." Veterans hope matters will somehow resolve, yet no unified "Save the Gorkha" campaign has emerged despite the presence of a former Army Chief and dozens of Army Commanders from the regiment.

Among those advocating for a revival of recruitment is Subedar Khem Jung Gurung, a versatile ESM and member of the Janata Samajwadi Party. He told me in Pokhara that this is a "Gen Z ko sarkar," and that since youth want to join-even under Agniveer — the issue must be pursued. For Gorkhas, this is about preserving an identity forged in blood and history. Only Prime Minister Modi can amend Agniveer to carve out an exception for Nepal, but little attention has been paid to the scheme's impact on India-Nepal relations.

Questions over NDG loyalty have also surfaced. However, Indian officers posted across Nepal-many from Gorkha regiments-affirm that Gorkha ESM remain loyal to India, except on sensitive issues like the Kalapani dispute or the 2015 blockade. They refer to India as "hamro Bharat" and "Daju" (elder brother)-terms of affection, not doubt. For Nepal's remittance-driven economy, Gorkha pensions and salaries-around ₹5,000 crore annually-are vital, especially after the losses from the Gen Z uprising. By 2075, when India hopes to be "Viksit Bharat," the last Gorkha soldier may retire, his aura long diminished.

This is a collective, avoidable loss: economic for Nepal, emotional for Gorkhas, and strategic for India. Are Modi and Doval listening?

The writer, a retired Major General, served as Commander, IPKF (South), Sri Lanka, and was a founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, now the Integrated Defence Staff

dailypioneer
@dailypioneer
The Pioneer

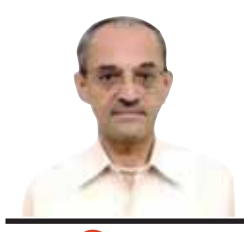
PIC TALK

The sky is coloured red before sunrise in Frankfurt, Germany.

PHOTO: PTI

DIGITAL EXPERIENCE
www.dailypioneer.com
facebook.com/dailypioneer
@TheDailyPioneer
instagram.com/dailypioneer
linkedin.com/in/The Pioneer

The one true purpose of life: Taking shelter of God



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

2ND OPINION
THE PIONEER

Human life appears complex, yet its true purpose is profoundly simple: to take shelter of God and advance ourselves spiritually. The *Bhagavad Gita* (15.7) states that we are souls, eternal parts of God. If we were merely our bodies, then why are these bodies discarded after death-burned or buried without hesitation, even by those dearest to us? The answer is clear: the body is not our true identity. We are souls, and souls do not die. However, merely recognising this truth is not enough.

As eternal souls, we continue to wander through different bodies and species according to the Karmaphala Principle — "as you sow, so shall you reap." Throughout this journey, we face sickness, old age, and death. We move helplessly under the influence of the three modes of nature-goodness, passion, and darkness. The Gita describes how goodness binds us with happiness, passion binds us with desires and restless activity, and darkness binds with ignorance, laziness, and delusion.

These modes form not only our bodies but shape our tendencies, choices, and life outcomes. Is our situation hopeless? Not at all. God's grace is available, but we must consciously take shelter in Him. The first step is strengthening the mode of goodness within ourselves. As Krishna explains, whatever we place our faith in, we eventually become (17.3). When we cultivate goodness, it becomes our nature and leads us to live by *maryada* — social and moral discipline. From *maryada* arises *dharma*, the foundation of fairness and order in creation. Dharma pleases God, who incarnates whenever it declines (4.7).

Once established in goodness, we naturally move towards seva-selfless service. Souls are meant to serve; creation cannot function if everyone seeks only enjoyment. Wealth or privilege can produce the illusion that others exist to serve us, but life quickly reminds us how dependent and helpless humans truly are. The wise choose service until their last breath, remaining useful and respected. Those who serve cultivate humility, which is essential for taking shelter of God. As we obey God's instructions and serve others, a deeper connection forms-God begins to guide and shape His devotee's life personally.

God's guidance is invaluable. Who can guide us better than the Omniscient? When we pray sincerely, God gives direction, strength, and protection. Krishna promises, "For those who worship Me with undivided devotion, I provide what they lack and preserve what they have" (9.22). True peace comes only from God's mercy; without it, happiness remains distant, and people settle for fleeting sense pleasures that ultimately drain them.

Yet, in daily life, what do we usually do? We study, work, earn, struggle, age, and eventually face death with uncertainty. No amount of wealth, power, fame, or knowledge brings lasting peace or security. The cycle of birth continues, life after life, with little spiritual progress.

The conclusion is clear: we must actively take shelter of God-now. Delay only prolongs our suffering. The wise reject this endless cycle, strive for liberation while living (jeevan mukti), and ultimately gain entry into Vaikuntha, our eternal home.

The writer is a spiritual teacher

RAJINIKANTH AT SEVENTY-FIVE: A TIMELESS CINEMATIC PHENOMENON

A living legend whose journey from bus conductor to global icon continues to inspire millions, Rajinikanth's legacy is not just about superstardom - it is about humility, discipline, and an energy that remains unmatched in Indian cinema. His style, his screen presence, and his larger-than-life aura are phenomena that generations have celebrated and will continue to celebrate. Here's to the Thalaivaa, whose magic only grows stronger with time.

Rajinikanth's rise in the Indian film industry – known for its glamour, family networks, and rigid hierarchies – remains one of the most astounding success stories. His five decades in cinema stand as proof of authenticity, reinvention, and an unequalled charisma. As he turns 75, it is worth revisiting a journey that has created a legacy stretching across languages, generations, and borders.

Superstar Rajinikanth recently shared an interesting behind-the-scenes moment from Padayappa. Aishwarya Rai Bachchan was his first choice for the iconic role of Neelambari, and the team reportedly spent months trying to secure her dates, even willing to wait years if required. However, Aishwarya was not interested, and Ramya Krishnan eventually took on the role – delivering a powerful performance that became legendary and left an indelible mark on Tamil cinema.

Rajinikanth continues to evolve with grace as the years pass. At seventy-five, he still shows India what true greatness feels like.

CK SUBRAMANIAM | MUMBAI

Please send your letter to the info@dailypioneer.com.
In not more than 250 words. We appreciate your feedback.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

End violence against children now

Physical punishment by parents remains widespread in India, despite its serious social impact. In many homes, hitting children is still seen as acceptable discipline. Minor mistakes — a broken object, poor marks, or disobedience - often lead to slapping or beating, justified with remarks like "This is how children learn" or "We were beaten too." Such beliefs, rooted in habit rather than evidence, normalise violence in the home.

Research shows corporal punishment does not improve behaviour. Instead, it creates fear, trauma, anxiety, aggression, and low self-esteem. Children may obey out of fear, not understanding, and those raised with violence often struggle emotionally as adults, sometimes repeating the cycle. The silence around the issue worsens it. While school violence faces criticism, violence inside homes remains largely invisible. Children are discouraged from speaking up, and society often defends parents without questioning harmful methods. Awareness and community action are urgently needed. Parenting workshops, counselling, sensitisation campaigns, and school outreach can promote non-violent, emotionally intelligent discipline. Fear may force obedience, but it cannot build trust or confidence. A child who is loved should not have to learn through pain.

BLOOM

India's digital dilemma for children

This refers to the editorial "Should India ban social media for kids?" (December 12, 2025). The argument that tech addiction now mirrors earlier public-health crises is hard to dispute, especially as children spend more time online than in real-world interactions. The editorial rightly notes that a blanket ban, though emotionally appealing, may neither be practical nor effective in a country as large and unequal as India.

What we are witnessing is not merely overuse of devices but a deeper shift in how young minds process information, communicate, and cope with stress. Reports of anxiety, aggression, and declining attention spans underline how urgent the problem has become.

India needs layered solutions that combine digital literacy, parental involvement, psychological support, and curriculum redesign. Some encouraging signs are visible in community-driven initiatives where parents and educators are trying to rebuild healthy digital habits. The real challenge is ensuring these efforts scale beyond urban pockets and reach families with limited awareness or access to support.

A national framework that guides schools, equips parents, and sets age-appropriate online norms would be a more sustainable step forward.

K SAKUNTHALA | COIMBATORE

Australia's bold social media ban

The recent decision to ban the use of social media by children and teenagers marks a landmark moment in online safety. The Australian Government passed a new law, the Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Bill 2024, on November 28, 2024. This legislation introduces a mandatory minimum age of 16 for accounts on designated social media platforms. It came into effect on 10 December 2025, and parents cannot give consent for under-16s to access these platforms.

The ban currently applies to YouTube, X, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, Reddit, Twitch, Threads, and Kick. Technology companies that own these platforms could face fines of up to $50 million if they fail to take reasonable steps to prevent under-16s from creating or maintaining accounts. Apps designed specifically for younger users, such as Messenger Kids, WhatsApp, Kids Helpline, Google Classroom, and YouTube Kids, are expected to remain exempt from the ban. Critics have expressed concern about the large-scale data collection required to verify users' ages, and the associated risks of data theft and breaches of privacy. Nonetheless, supporters view this decision as a necessary step towards improving digital well-being and protecting children from online harm.

DIMPLE WADHAWAN | KANPUR NAGAR

Goa nightclub inferno exposes India's fire safety crisis

As the nation mourns those who lost their lives in the Birch nightclub blaze, the incident stands as a grim reminder that India's fire safety apparatus is dangerously out of sync with its rapid urban growth and booming entertainment culture

FIRST Column

SATENDRA SINGH

On the night of December 6, 2025, Birch — a trendy nightclub tucked near one of Goa's busiest beaches — was buzzing with pulsating lights, music, and more than a hundred partygoers revelling at a "Bollywood Banger Night." But at around 11:45 pm, the festive mood turned into pure terror. A sudden blast-believed to have been caused by indoor electrical firecrackers-triggered a chain reaction. Within seconds, flames shot across the club's interior, igniting decorative materials and plunging the venue into chaos. Panic seized the crowd as thick smoke consumed the space. Patrons rushed towards a single, narrow exit-quickly turning it into a death trap. Flammable ornaments became towering torches. Those in the basement reportedly suffocated as smoke filled the air, while others were crushed in the desperate stampede.

After nearly two painstaking hours, firefighters finally managed to control the blaze. By then, 25 people-including young workers from various states and several tourists-had lost their lives. Over 50 were injured. Investigations soon confirmed the worst: the nightclub lacked basic fire safety clearances, had received demolition notices earlier, and had no functional fire exits. The tragedy was not a freak accident-it was a predictable catastrophe waiting to happen.

The Goa incident mirrors a long, troubling history of deadly fires across India. In recent years alone, a series of fatal incidents has shaken the nation: in Hyderabad, 17 people died when a three-storey commercial building caught fire. A month earlier, a hotel blaze in north Kolkata killed 14 guests. In 2024, an amusement arcade fire in Gujarat claimed 24 lives-mostly children.

And these incidents echo older tragedies that continue to haunt public memory: the Uphaar Cinema fire (1997), the Kumbakonam school blaze (2004), the AMRI Hospital catastrophe (2011), and the Puttingal Temple explosion (2016). Despite their varied settings-schools, hospitals, cinemas, hotels, nightclubs-the causes remain alarmingly similar: illegal structures, overcrowding, flammable interiors, blocked exits, and blatant flouting of safety norms. India's fire disasters follow a familiar, deadly pattern: an ignition source, rapid flame spread, locked or obstructed exits, dysfunctional alarms, absence of trained personnel, and slow emergency response. The Goa tragedy fits this template all too closely.

> THE GOA TRAGEDY MUST SERVE AS A TURNING POINT. IF INDIA EMBRACES THE PRINCIPLES OF RISK RECOGNITION, STRONG GOVERNANCE, SAFETY INVESTMENT, AND PREPAREDNESS, COUNTLESS LIVES CAN BE SAVED

The writer is the former Executive Director of the National Institute of Disaster Management, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, and Director of the SAARC Disaster Management Centre

dailypioneer
@TheDailyPioneer
satendra-singh-150358

India has fire safety laws, standards, and building codes-but their implementation is inconsistent and often compromised. Many establishments operate without valid fire safety certificates. Approvals are sometimes obtained through opaque processes, while others brazenly skip them altogether.

Common violations include:

- Non-functional alarms and sprinklers
- Out-of-date or inaccessible fire extinguishers
- Blocked exits used for storage
- Combustible interiors and illegal building extensions
- Untrained staff lacking basic emergency preparedness

Urban design issues worsen the problem. Narrow lanes, clogged streets, and the absence of hydrants frequently delay firefighting operations. In Goa, fire trucks reportedly had to stop 400 metres away due to the nightclub's isolated layout, slowing rescue efforts at the most critical moment. Compounding this is public complacency. Rarely do people check for emergency exits, functioning alarms, or building certifications. Safety is often assumed-until tragedy exposes the truth.

Fire Safety Norms: Strong on Paper, Weak in Practice

India's National Building Code and state fire laws prescribe detailed standards-multiple exits, smoke detectors, fire-resistant materials, routine audits, trained staff, and emergency ventilation systems. Such requirements are mandatory for public venues, especially enclosed spaces like malls, clubs, hotels, and auditoriums.

Yet many establishments treat these norms as optional. The Goa nightclub's complete lack of permissions and use of combustible décor reflects a deeper national problem: the gap between what is mandated and what is practised. And that gap is often fatal.

A Growing Threat in a Rapidly Urbanising India

As India's urban centres expand and nightlife, tourism, and hospitality industries boom, millions flock to indoor entertainment spaces daily. But regulation and infrastructure have not kept pace with this surge. The mismatch between expanding demand and stagnant safety standards has made such spaces increasingly vulnerable. If India aspires to be a global tourism hub and a modern economy, recurring fire disasters are an unacceptable stain on that ambition. They send a strong message-that human life is undervalued, and safety is negotiable.

What India Can Learn from Global Disaster Frameworks

India must shift from reacting to fires to preventing them. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction-a global blueprint for minimising disaster losses-offers a useful model. Its core principles can help India revamp its fire safety ecosystem.

- Understanding Risks Before They Turn Deadly

Authorities must identify vulnerable buildings, illegal constructions, and high-risk zones. AI-enabled monitoring systems, heat sensors, and real-time smoke detection tools can help pre-empt fires. Public awareness must grow: people should know where exits are, learn basic firefighting skills, and report unsafe establishments. Regular fire drills in schools, offices, and public buildings must become routine.

- Strengthening Governance and Accountability

Fire departments require better staffing, equipment, and legal powers. Audits should be transparent and accessible to the public. Violators-owners, contractors, and officials-must face strict penalties. Political or commercial influence should never override safety requirements.

- Investing in Safer Infrastructure and Cities

Buildings should adopt modern sprinklers, alarms, fire-resistant materials, and safe architectural designs. Cities need wider access roads, hydrants, and clearly planned emergency lanes. Tourist hotspots with heavy footfall can benefit from dedicated safety monitoring units. Incentives such as insurance rebates can encourage compliance.

- Preparing for Emergencies and Rebuilding Better

Emergency training for staff of public venues must be compulsory. Panic buttons, digital alert systems, and faster communication channels can drastically reduce response time. After any disaster, reconstruction must follow the "Build Back Better" principle-ensuring that the rebuilt structure eliminates previous weaknesses.

A Call for Urgency, Accountability, and Change

The Goa nightclub blaze is not just a tragic accident-it is a moral indictment of systemic negligence. Twenty-five lives, including young workers and an entire family of tourists from Delhi, were lost in a matter of minutes. Their deaths must stir the nation's conscience and compel immediate reform. Fire disasters are not acts of fate. They are the consequences of choices-by business owners who ignore safety rules, by officials who fail to enforce them, and by a society that overlooks risks until it is too late.

As India moves towards a future of rapid development, its safety systems must evolve too. No nightclub, hotel, banquet hall, or public venue should ever become a site of avoidable carnage.

The Goa tragedy must serve as a turning point. If India embraces the principles of risk recognition, strong governance, safety investment, and preparedness, countless lives can be saved. The country must act now-because every day lost increases the chance of the next headline of preventable deaths and needless grief.

Fire safety should not be treated as an afterthought. It should be a national priority. Lives depend on it.

The collective ego: GDP over wisdom

ACHARYA PRASHANT

The stock ticker scrolls across the bottom of the screen, numbers, numbers, numbers, and a man watches it as if it is scripture. His coffee grows cold, his child calls from the other room, and he barely hears. The numbers have become more real to him than life. He has a rich library in the same room: Nagarjuna and Nietzsche, Upanishads and Ulysses. He does not remember when he last touched it.

Nations were supposed to emerge from the distilled wisdom of a people, yet they end up mirroring the collective ego. What the individual does with net worth, the nation does with GDP, treating what can be counted and compared as proof of worth. We call this sanity, then wonder why both person and country feel perpetually cornered, as if resting were forbidden.

Individuals need a bank balance to feel rich, and nations need a surplus to feel powerful. Yet we rarely name this as fear. We rename it ambition, practicality, and maturity. Even our vocabulary has learned to flatter the disease.

Underneath all the spreadsheets runs one primitive panic: if we stop worshipping wealth, we will collapse. We will be overtaken, and the hungrier neighbour will devour us. So we keep running, consuming, extracting, destroying, and we name it progress.

Ahead of what? Toward what?

Look at the man who buys a bigger car, then a bigger house, then a bigger portfolio, each purchase whispering a familiar promise: this time I will feel complete. But the promise never matures because the hunger is not in the garage; it is in the mind.

Now look at the country with a huge GDP, an unsurpassable military budget, a lion's share of global trade, a higher ranking, and a louder voice in international fora. The pattern is identical, only scaled up and decorated with flags. The individual ego and the collective ego run on the same fuel, acquiring more to become more, because being seen as small feels like death.

This is not economics in the innocent sense. It is insecurity pretending to be policy, the ego turning into administration.

GDP looks objective, so it becomes the perfect idol. It counts activity, not sanity. A flood raises GDP through repairs, a war through weapons, a forest when it is cut and sold, and air pollution through the sale of air purifiers. Even exhaustion passes as prosperity if enough people work long enough hours. The number rises, and we call it progress, without asking what kind of life is being purchased or what is being destroyed to fund it.

At the core of the concept lies valuation: anything that a people find materially valuable will add to their GDP. But what if the people, i.e., the individual, have not learnt what to value? What if they value ornaments over knowledge, and weapons over wisdom?

You ask whether a nation without material strength will be conquered. The question sounds reasonable, but it is usually asked with a trembling hand, because fear is doing the thinking. Fear recognises only crude strength and refuses to acknowledge the deeper strength of a society that is inwardly stable and educated, and therefore harder to stampede. Fear then distorts the question into the false either — or dilemma, as if wisdom means starvation and subjugation.

When a society changes what it respects, the economy changes what it produces, because output is only the shadow of values. If status comes from owning, life becomes a showroom, politics becomes the management of craving, and relationships become transactions. If status comes from understanding and contribution, people step out of the consumptive spell, not through forced austerity but because they stop trying to buy an identity.

Can our talent not flow differently? Must our brightest spend their best years manufacturing addictions and monetising attention? They could build schools, labs, public systems, and art that refines perception. Business would change character as well, for it merely follows society's definition of success.

This is why the fear of collapse is usually exaggerated. Economies do not die when values elevate. They reorganise, sometimes painfully, sometimes slowly, but always for the better.

So why does the GDP obsession remain so stubborn, even when it is clearly burning the planet and hollowing out the human being? Because it is not mainly economic. It is psychological.

GDP obsession is ego hunger dressed in spreadsheets, a craving for proof that can be displayed. A skyline, a portfolio, a surplus, a headline, a chart, something that looks clean and therefore feels holy. Wisdom, contentment, and inner clarity cannot be flaunted at parties or parliaments or global summits, nor can they be used to bulldoze one's desires or ideologies on the other. And that is precisely why the ego calls them useless.

We see why GDP worship is so convenient for power. It lets you point to graphs instead of graves, to celebrate exports while ignoring extinctions, to announce growth while the inner quality of human life quietly decays. It keeps the gaze outward, toward competitors and rankings and trophies, and away from the one place where real change begins: the self, the individual that is forever trying to escape its own emptiness by adding more.

The ego knows itself as hollow, so it keeps demanding external certification: tell me I matter, tell me I am bigger than the other. The individual does it through possessions and applause, the country does it through rankings, parades, and slogans about being the largest and the fastest, the same hunger with a grander microphone. That is why the story of Nachiketa still burns. Death offers him everything that looks impressive: kingdoms, gold, pleasures, long life, and Nachiketa refuses because he sees the expiry date. He asks for what does not perish, and the story becomes a mirror: which currency do you trust, the one that lasts till tomorrow, or the one that survives the fall of all tomorrows?

Nations face the same choice.

This is not mushy fantasy. Yes, contemplation does not automatically protect borders, and refinement can degenerate into negligence if clarity is missing. When inwardness becomes laziness, and vigilance is mocked as worldly, the neighbour with fewer poems and more missiles rampages in, and history has shown that enough times.

This is not wisdom instead of strength. It is wisdom directing strength: preparedness without aggression, capability without obsession, defence without vanity.

What would a nation rooted in wisdom look like? Not primitive, not anti-technology, not allergic to comfort, because infrastructure, science, and medicine are not sins. The change would be in the guiding question, shifting from "What's the quantity of goods we are producing?" to "What's the quality of human beings we are producing?".

In such a society, education is not only for employment but for self-knowledge and freedom from inner slavery. Art is not merely entertainment; it is training in sensitivity, honesty, and depth. Industries that profit from dissatisfaction are called out, because much of advertising is not communication but a manufacture of inner lack. The cleanest economy is not merely the one with transparent accounting. It is the one where people do not consume their way out of inner emptiness. When joy is found within, compulsive extraction reduces-extraction of the Earth, of others, and of one's own body and mind. A nation of such people does not withdraw from the world; it trades, builds, collaborates, defends itself, and innovates, yet is not enslaved by the need for more. It does not treat the economy as a god and the human being as fuel. It knows what to value, because value arises from the valuer. When the valuer has self-knowledge, she knows who she is and therefore what she needs. What is truly needed gains value; the rest stands devalued. That is the economy we need.

The real question is not whether economies can reorganise; they can and always have. The question is whether we can see the ego's terror of a world where it cannot prove its worth through ownership. Those numbers scrolling across the screen reveal nothing; they only save you from having to face yourself. Dissolve that fear, and a different civilisation becomes possible, not poorer, not weaker, simply no longer terrified of its own depth.

Acharya Prashant is a Teacher, founder of the PrashantAdvait Foundation, and author on wisdom literature

@acharya_prashant_paf
@Prashant_Advait
prashantadvait

Resurgence of Ashwagandha

VAIDYA RAJESH KOTECHA

As the world confronts new stresses on health, society and the environment, a universal realisation is taking shape: restoring balance is no longer a philosophical idea but an urgent global priority. This sense of urgency lies at the heart of the Second WHO Global Summit on Traditional Medicine, which India is proud to co-host with the World Health Organisation from 17–19 December 2025 in New Delhi. Guided by the newly adopted WHO Global Traditional Medicine Strategy 2025–2034, the Summit marks a decisive step in elevating traditional knowledge through evidence, innovation and global cooperation.

Traditional Medicine is increasingly recognised as a living, evolving science that can complement conventional healthcare systems and advance Universal Health Coverage. For India, this acknowledgement resonates deeply. Our civilisation has long held a holistic view of well-being — one that sees the individual in harmony with community, nature and the wider universe. Today, that wisdom is finding new relevance through rigorous scientific validation and responsible integration into global health frameworks.

Among India's vast repository of medicinal plants, Ashwagandha (Withania somnifera) has emerged as a symbol of this convergence between tradition and conventional science. Once known primarily as a Rasayana in Ayurveda and widely used in Ayush systems for enhancing vitality and resilience, it is now studied across the world for its adaptogenic, neuroprotective and immunomodulatory potential. In Ayush systems, Ashwagandha's roots are used for its health and therapeutic benefits. Rarely has a medicinal plant drawn such simultaneous attention from researchers, clinicians, regulators and global industry leaders.

Rarely has a medicinal plant drawn such simultaneous attention from researchers, clinicians, regulators and global industry leaders.

Recognising this moment, the upcoming Summit will host a dedicated session titled "Ashwagandha: From Traditional Wisdom to Global Impact – Perspectives from Leading Global Experts." This side event represents more than a technical discussion; it reflects a turning point in how the world views botanicals and their role in the future of healthcare. Over two hours, international experts will explore the growing body of clinical and pre-clinical evidence on Ashwagandha, discuss its safety profiles and pharmacovigilance systems, and place traditional knowledge in dialogue with conventional scientific methodologies. They will also address one of the most critical issues for global acceptance: the standardization of extracts and formulations, so that efficacy and safety remain consistent regardless of where the product is manufactured or consumed.

Such discussions are essential because global trust cannot be built on tradition alone; it must be anchored in evidence. India has undertaken extensive scientific work to establish Ashwagandha's therapeutic value, but wider international collaboration is crucial for harmonised standards, regulatory convergence and transparent data sharing. This is precisely what the WHO's Summit framework enables. By inviting scientists, policymakers and knowledge-keepers to a common platform, it helps create pathways that respect cultural heritage while meeting the stringent expectations of conventional health systems.

The significance of Ashwagandha's journey cannot be separated from the broader themes of the Summit. Traditional medicine is not only about healing individuals; it is deeply tied to biodiversity, sustainability and community livelihoods. The medicinal plants we celebrate today — from Ashwagandha to countless others — are nurtured by ecosystems that must be protected. A holistic approach to health therefore demands ethical sourcing, sustainable cultivation and fair value distribution to farmers and indigenous communities. The Summit's wider discussions on intellectual property rights, biodiversity preservation and cross-sector innovation reflect this integrated vision.

As global leaders, scientists and practitioners gather in New Delhi, India's message is simple yet forward-looking: traditional medicine stands as a strong ally in building resilient, affordable and balanced health systems. It offers approaches that are preventive rather than reactive, personalised rather than generic, and rooted in a profound understanding of the interconnectedness of life.

Ashwagandha stands at the forefront of this evolution. It represents how a herb nurtured in India's soil for millennia can now serve humanity across continents—not by abandoning its heritage, but by embracing scientific validation and global partnerships. Its story reflects the larger journey of Traditional Medicine itself: grounded in ancient wisdom, shaped by conventional science and propelled by a shared commitment to human well-being.

As India welcomes the world to the Second WHO Global Summit on Traditional Medicine, we reaffirm our dedication to advancing scientific rigour, fostering international cooperation and ensuring that the wisdom of our ancestors continues to illuminate the path to a healthier, more harmonious future.

The writer is Secretary, Ministry of Ayush

dailypioneer
@dailypioneer
dailypioneer

iexceed
Appzillon™
AI Powered Digital Banking Solutions
WWW.i-exceed.com

Nearly 4x hike in MF investment

Assets under management to exceed Rs 300 lakh crore by 2035

OUR TAKE

Mutual funds may emerge, and are emerging, as the most preferred investment choice for Indians. Most money is, and will be, pumped into equity funds. These are the major trends in the segment over the past decade, which will continue over the next one. According to the Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI), the mutual funds' assets under management (AUM) grew six-fold to over ₹80 lakh crore between November 2015 and November 2025. A new report, 'How India Invests,' by Bain & Company in partnership with Groww, projects it to exceed nearly four-fold to ₹300 lakh crore by 2035. By then, direct equity holdings will climb to a lower ₹250 lakh crore.

More households are opting for mutual funds as a route to invest in equity and debt instruments. The Bain-Groww report notes that the penetration level is likely to double from 10 per cent to 20 per cent over the next decade. This will be driven by sustained investor trust, digital access, and broader financial awareness. Saurabh Trehan, Partner & Head of Financial Services at Bain & Company India, highlights the shift in behaviour. "Indian households are steadily shifting from a traditional savings mindset to a more investment-oriented approach. We are seeing the emergence of a deeper and more resilient domestic investor base," he explains.

Three trends are evident over the past few years. The first is that mutual funds have reached higher acceptance levels in the smaller cities and towns. According to a Bain-Grow report, 55-60 per cent of new SIP (Systematic Investment Plan) registrations now originate from B30 cities, and those beyond the top 100 ones contribute almost a fifth of AUM, a figure which is up from a tenth six years ago. According to its press release, "The next phase of industry growth will come primarily from mass and mass-affluent households beyond the top 30 cities. Increased adoption among affluent investors across the next 70 cities will further accelerate this expansion."

AMFI's data and claims support these contentions. The association states that with large scale advertising and messaging, like the 'Mutual Fund Sahi Hai' campaign that reached 350 million, mutual funds have become a mainstream investment option, and are accessible to first-time and young Indians. The industry conducted 14,500 educational programmes for a million people in FY2024, and there were attempts to integrate financial literacy with school curricula. Over the past decade, AMFI's senior management focused on expansion to the smaller cities, and inclusion of more households. Over the next decade, AMFI hopes to enhance retail penetration, and increase the number of retail investors by five times to 250 million.

The second noticeable trend is the higher discipline among the retail investors. This is evident, according to Bain-Groww, from the more than doubling of investors who held the mutual funds for more than five years, from seven per cent to 16 per cent over the past few years. In addition, long-term SIP holdings increased from 12 per cent to 21 per cent over the recent past, which signals stronger investor discipline and confidence. Despite the regular discontinuance of SIPs, which invariably happens during downturns, the higher overall acceptance, and growth of SIPs indicates a shift among the investors towards goal-based, and target-based investing.

Finaly, it is about the changing demographics. Youngsters, first-timers, and newcomers have adopted mutual funds, and are "likely to contribute to the market growth" over the next decade. The Bain-Groww report highlights that the average monthly SIP inflows rose by a compounded annual growth rate of 25 per cent, "driven largely by 18 to 34-year-olds, a demographic which is increasingly shaping the direction of domestic capital markets." In addition, younger investors under 30 represent 40 per cent of the NSE-registered investors, which is up from 23 per cent six years ago. Women's share grew from 20 per cent to 25 per cent in the same period.

While the mutual funds folios grew 2.5x in the past five years, individual gross flows went up by a mere seven per cent. For some experts, this may be a matter of concern. For Bain-Groww, this underscores the "entry of a large cohort of new investors with smaller ticket sizes." Investments in smaller amounts indicate that there is more acceptance of SIPs, and the entry of a huge number of first-timers and youngsters, whose salary bases may be low but they are still interested in disciplined and long-term investing. Women may be generally keen to start with low amounts, and gradually shift to higher ones once they gain confidence and experience.

Digital investment platforms play, and will continue to play a catalytic role in accelerating equity and mutual fund participation. At present, nearly 80 per cent of equity investors, and more than a third of mutual fund investors are onboarded digitally, and the smaller Tier-2+ cities account for almost half of the users. "Gen Z now makes up approximately 45 per cent of the investor base, and continues to grow," states the Bain-Groww press release. Harsh Jain, Co-founder and COO of Groww, says, "We are witnessing a definitive structural shift. The Government's push on digital infrastructure, combined with progressive regulatory measures, has democratised access and fostered deep trust in the ecosystem."

This tech-led expansion is expected to bring in nearly 90 million new retail investors, largely millennials and Gen Z, which will propel India toward a deeper, more stable domestic capital formation. Younger demographics, and a diverse and more resilient investor base will strengthen the capital markets. Such changes will be both expansive, and inclusive, as a larger number of households shift from savings to investing. The broad reach of the digital investment channels, and the Government's efforts to inculcate digital payment modes will aid and enhance the investment process.

Retail investing, say experts, will play a pivotal role in India becoming a $10-trillion-plus economy. It will prove to be a crucial turning point in how India builds long-term wealth, and capital market strength over the next decade, and onwards till 2047. "India is entering a new era of retail investing, one that is poised to play a pivotal role in the country's economic development. By expanding access to capital, broadening wealth creation, unlocking new job opportunities, and strengthening the resilience of India's capital markets, retail investors are reshaping the flow of capital in meaningful ways. Just as importantly, steady domestic inflows are giving India's capital markets a level of resilience we have not seen before, helping them to absorb volatility, and recover faster," explains Rakesh Pozhath, Partner and a leading member, Bain & Company.

BLASÉ CAPITAL

NAME GAME

Most governments, both central and states, generally indulge in name changes. The name of the existing welfare projects are changed, roads and streets are renamed, and new schemes are named as per the wishes of the regimes, and not as per historical practices. The reasons can be many. Officials may want to highlight the names of the new political leaders, prime ministers, and chief ministers. They may wish to remove the names of the old ones who belonged to the opposing and competing political parties. Legacies need to be removed, new names added that may become the future ones. The naming and renaming exercises go on over decades in the new nations, and over the centuries in the older states. The efforts to determine which names will remain, and which vanish never ends. Hence, it is not surprising that the name of the popular scheme under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) is now Pujya Bapu Gramin Rozgar Yojana (PBGRY).

In this specific case, there are several specific reasons to change the name. One of them is that this central regime does not believe in popularising the names of personalities, and political families. Indeed, one of the reasons for its three consecutive victories is because of the precise, crisp, and regular attacks on specific families within the Congress Party. Although several leaders across the political spectrum still follow the earlier generations' profession, there is at least a public impression created to disassociate from the continuing practice. This is evident from the fact that most of the schemes in the past 11 years are named after a more general Pradhan Mantri (Prime Minister), rather than a specific personality, or personalities. In addition, the names used earlier were removed. The personality cult is enhanced through other means such as massive national advertising, which has large displayed images. In most cases, the photographs of the prime minister are visibly larger than those of the chief ministers, and central ministers.

Another major reason for the changes is to remove past, and historical legacies. For example, in the recent past, the names of some of the colonial laws were changed to give them distinct Indian identities. This provides a nationalist fervour to the entire exercises. Indeed, the ruling leaders confidently espouse that their attempts are to establish India, and Bharat as entities with their own culture, traditions, beliefs, civilisation, and ancient past. De-linking the nation with the Mughals, British, and other past rulers is crucial for the citizens to feel themselves as a part of a separate nation. This logic includes disconnecting the past, present, and future with the main Congress Party that emerged as the frontrunner in the freedom movement, and ruled the country for six decades in the next 78 years. The idea was to disconnect some of the prominent prime ministers, who deliberately gave names to the national welfare schemes, and other programmes, and associated others who were popular leaders.

Apart from politics, nationalism, and identity, symbolism is clearly an embedded objective. Renaming public spaces and national projects allows the governments to "shape national narratives," and enhance specific debates and discussions. They may not have a direct impact over electoral equations, immediate identities, and instant political gains, but slowly and steadily allow the narratives to sink into the hearts and minds of sections of the population, who hear and talk about the new names. In an insidious manner, the citizens, or part of them, slowly distance themselves from the old personalities, and political and societal legacies. Thus, new ones are born, and symbolism, whether one likes it or not, contributes to this change. This enables the ruling regimes to claim credit for the old programmes, which were initiated by the previous rulers. Instead of personalities, the focus shifts to institutions, which are long-lasting, and enable political parties to claim the schemes as their own.

Thus, the change of MNREGA to PBRY is a continuation of the old practices that the ruling regimes have accepted in the recent past. The change of name from Mahatma Gandhi to Pujya Bapu is obviously linked to the personality cult. Although the political regimes cannot wean away from the name of the Mahatma, who is still revered throughout the country, it is smart to introduce him as 'Pujya Bapu,' rather than a name. This is akin to the practice of using Pradhan Mantri, or Prime Minister, as an institution, rather than a personality. The usage of Bapu, which is an identity like Mahatma, gets rid of the association with the Congress Party, which considers the Mahatma as its leader, apart from his national identity. Bapu constitutes an effort to give it a nationalist twist, rather than a specific political one. Suddenly, Mahatma Gandhi emerges as Pujya Bapu, which changes the national narrative in meaningful ways.

Obviously, the name change comes with changes in the rural unemployment scheme, which was launched two decades ago by a Congress regime. Instead of 100 days, the new norms offer guaranteed employment in rural areas for 125 days in a year. The minimum wages offered to an individual is revised to a higher ₹240 per day. Recently, the Government introduced the rules to four new labour codes that aim to revolutionise the laws. The changed name of a rural labour scheme is a step in this direction.

Business and Culture

Chai-nation to coffee culture

Premium coffee is entering Indian homes, slowly but surely

India is a confirmed chai nation. In the north, east, and west, it is tea that is the most-ordered beverage on the streets, and in offices, and most-offered one at homes. Only in the south is there a prevalent, and large scale coffee culture, and that too filter coffee. But things have changed over the past few years. The entry of foreign coffee shops like Starbucks, growth of Indian ones, and the mushrooming of both premium (Blue Tokai), and less-expensive franchises across the country hint at a change in hot beverage consumption.

The sound of coffee machines, and the aroma of freshly-ground beans are slowly finding their way into Indian homes. From single-serve pod systems to fully automatic espresso makers, a new class of consumers is treating coffee as an experience, rather than a mere caffeine fix. The question is whether India is truly ready for the premium end of coffee, and what this means for the Indian and foreign brands that are betting on this transformation. The Starbucks and Blue Tokai depend on the members of the middle class, and upper middle class to throng to their outlets.

In terms of numbers related to national numbers, coffee consumption has not reached there yet. Over the past decade, the demand grew modestly in volumes, but more significantly in aspiration. The Coffee Board of India estimates that the per capita national consumption is 0.07 kg a year, which is peanuts, or coffee beans, compared to the global average of more than one kg. Despite the dismal numbers, a quiet shift is underway. Urban households are experimenting with pour-overs and cold brews. Cafés have expanded beyond the metros.

Online sales of beans, grinders, and capsule systems are rising faster than before. According to the IMARC Group, India's coffee pods, and capsules market was worth $967 million in 2024. It is expected to reach $1.69 billion by 2033, or a growth of 6.4 per cent annually. This has enthused both the Indian and foreign firms to test, and change, the beverage taste of India. Nestlé's Nespresso, considered a pioneer in single-serve systems, entered India in early 2025 with its first boutique at Select Citywalk in Delhi. The firm sells its machines starting at ₹16,500, and capsule sleeves of ten priced ₹950.

These are clear attempts to tap the growing appetite for in-home coffee experiences. "In recent years, coffee consumption in India has witnessed a surge, with a discernible trend towards in-home consumption," claimed Suresh Narayanan, CMD, Nestlé India, at the Nespresso launch. He added that the country

is one of the company's fastest-growing coffee markets. Nespresso's global chief executive, Guillaume Le Cunff, described the Indian entry as an effort to bring its signature coffee experience to local homes, and to deepen the appreciation for quality coffee. Even at the market outlets, Indians experiment with coffee flavours from abroad.

The economics of the premium and quality segment are simple and straightforward, but challenging. The price of a single Nespresso cup works out to Rs 95, placing it below a café latte at a decent outlet but more expensive than a pack of instant coffee. This positions the capsules as affordable, but still a luxury that is acceptable to affluent urban consumers. The brand's razor-and-blades model depends on steady capsule sales once a household invests in a machine. If Nespresso can capture 10-20 per cent of the pods market, it can generate $100-200 million in annual revenues within a few years.

Add to these revenues the sales of machine, and B2B placements in the hotels and offices. The opportunity becomes meaningful for a category that barely existed a few years ago. To accelerate adoption, Nespresso has partnered with Thakral Innovations for distribution across retail and professional channels. The Delhi boutique functions as both a store, and a sensory space where customers can sample blends and receive guidance. Industry watchers expect the next boutiques to appear in Mumbai, Bengaluru, and Hyderabad over the next two years, following a metro-first approach.

The larger task will be to ensure consistent service, and build the infrastructure for capsule collection and recycling, which remains limited in India. For the industry segment, Nespresso's arrival has had a ripple effect. Starbucks, which has nearly 500 stores in the country, has witnessed fluctuating footfalls as consumers weigh in, and adopt, at-home alternatives. Local but large players like Blue Tokai, Third Wave Coffee Roasters, and Sleepy Owl are expanding furiously, and educating a new generation of coffee drinkers about drinking, flavours, brewing and taste profiles.

The success among retail outlets has created a customer base that appreciates quality, and may eventually upgrade to the home machines. This is a win-win for both the suppliers of the machines and coffee, and outlets that serve the beverage. Although both categories will initially compete for market shares, over the years, they will gain in revenues, and grow. Some of the smaller, and mid-size retail outlets may lose out, but this is the nature of competition. The tea-focused retail outlet brands like Chaayos and Chai Point will continue to dominate the mass beverage market, even as coffee's growth is limited to the largely premium and urban segment. However, there are several risks on the horizon. Import duties and exchange rate fluctuations can make the foreign coffee capsules costlier. Competing products such as compatible pods or premium Indian roasts can erode loyalty, and market shares of the foreigners. A slowdown in the economy may limit discretionary spending on luxury beverages. Yet, the present underlying consumer trends appear durable. Coffee in India is evolving from an occasional café outing into a ritual that reflects lifestyle, convenience, and status.

India may still be a tea-drinking nation in volume terms. It may still be common, even in large offices, to consume chai with snacks like samosa and bread pakoda. But recent trends indicate a change in attitude and mindset towards a premium coffee nation. It is hip and cool for the youngsters to meet at cafes over coffee and cookies. This segment will increase as more retail outlets begin to compete with Starbucks, and Blue Tokai. In time, it will become convenient to invite guests and friends at home for a coffee. As more homes invest in machines, and more consumers choose to brew instead of buy, the sound of coffee grinding early in the morning, or late in the evening may soon become as familiar as the whistling of a pressure cooker.

Cabinet nod to hike FDI in insurance sector to 100 pc

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
New Delhi

The Union Cabinet on Friday approved a bill to raise foreign direct investment in the insurance sector to 100 per cent, according to sources.

The bill may be introduced in the ongoing Winter session of Parliament, which is slated to conclude on December 19.

According to a Lok Sabha bulletin, the Insurance Laws (Amendment) Bill 2025, which seeks to deepen penetration, accelerate growth and development of the insurance sector and enhance ease of doing business, is part of the 13 legislations listed for the upcoming session of Parliament.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, in this year's Budget speech, proposed to raise the foreign investment limit to 100 per cent from the existing 74 per cent in the insurance sector as part of new-generation financial sector reforms.

So far, the insurance sector has attracted ₹82,000 crore through foreign direct investment (FDI).

The finance ministry has proposed amending various provisions of the Insurance Act, 1938, including raising FDI in the insurance sector to 100 per cent, reducing paid-up capital, and introducing a composite licence.

As part of a comprehensive legislative exercise, the Life Insurance Corporation Act 1956 and the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority Act 1999 will be amended, alongside the Insurance Act 1938.

The amendments to the LIC Act propose empowering its board to take operational decisions, such as branch expansion and recruitment.

The proposed amendment primarily focuses on promoting policyholders' interests, enhancing their financial security, and facilitating the entry of additional players into the insurance market, thereby driving economic growth and employment generation.

Such changes will help enhance the efficiency of the insurance industry, enable ease of doing business, and enhance insurance penetration to achieve the goal of 'Insurance for All by 2047'.

The Insurance Act of 1938 serves as the principal Act to provide the legislative framework for insurance in India. It provides the framework for the functioning of insurance businesses and regulates the relationships among insurers, their policyholders, shareholders, and the regulator, Irdai.

Retail inflation rises to 0.71 pc in Nov on higher food prices

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
New Delhi

Retail inflation inched up to 0.71 per cent in November, from a record low of 0.25 per cent in the previous month, on rising prices of food items, government data showed on Friday.

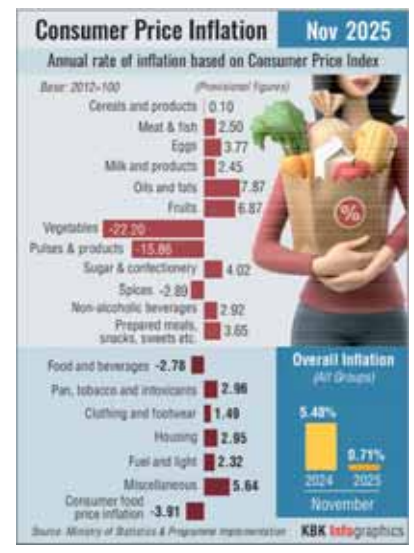
Consumer Price Index-based retail inflation remained below the RBI's 4 per cent inflation target for the 10th month in a row. Also, November is the second month when retail inflation has remained below 1 per cent level in the current CPI series which has data from 2014.

According to data released by the National Statistics Office (NSO), deflation in food items was 3.91 per cent in November against 5.02 per cent in October.

The rise in headline and food inflation during November 2025 is mainly attributed to an increase in inflation of vegetables, eggs, meat and fish, spices, fuel and light, the NSO said.

Fuel and light inflation for November was 2.32 per cent against 1.98 per cent in October 2025.

ICRA Chief Economist Aditi Nayar said a continued base-normalisation



and the hardening in prices of some vegetables could make the headline CPI inflation cross 1.5 per cent in the next print, which will be the last before the next MPC.

"The evolving inflation-growth outlook, as well as the fiscal policy measures unveiled by the next Union Budget, will guide the MPC's next decision. Our base case suggests a pause in the MPC's February 2026 policy," Nayar said.

PHDCCI CEO & Secretary General Ranjeet Mehta said, "Over the next two quarters, we anticipate that India's inflation will stay within a manageable range on the back of benign food prices, GST rates rationalisation, reasonable energy prices, and Reserve Bank of India's strategic monetary management."

Kotak Mahindra Bank Chief Economist Upasna Bhardwaj said, "While the inflation trajectory is expected to move upward from here on, we see the trajectory fairly benign until 1HFY27."

"Going ahead, with RBI having kept additional actions data-dependent, we see some room for a 25 bps repo rate cut. However, the rate-cutting cycle is clearly nearing the end, followed by a prolonged pause," Bhardwaj added.

Low inflation in the current fiscal year has given room to the RBI to cut policy interest rates by 1.25 percentage points. The Reserve Bank, earlier this month, significantly lowered the inflation projection for the current fiscal to 2 per cent from 2.6 per cent estimated earlier, as the economy continues to witness rapid disinflation.

India-Oman trade pact may be signed during PM's Oman visit on Dec 17-18

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
New Delhi

The Union Cabinet on Friday approved a free trade agreement between India and Oman, which is expected to be signed during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Oman on December 17-18, sources said.

Talks for the free trade agreement, officially termed as CEPA (Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement), formally began in November 2023 and the negotiations concluded this year.

Prime Minister Modi will embark on a four-day visit to Jordan, Ethiopia and Oman from December 15, according to an official statement. In the third and final leg of his visit, Modi will visit Oman on December 17-18 at the invitation of Sultan Haitham bin Tarik.

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal is also expected to visit Oman for the signing of the pact.

In free trade agreements, the two trading partners either significantly reduce or eliminate customs duties on a maximum number of goods traded between them. They also ease norms to promote trade in services and attract investments.

Oman is the third-largest export destination for India among the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. India already has a similar agreement with another GCC member, the UAE, which came into effect in May 2022.

The Shura Council or Majlis A'Shura of Oman on Wednesday concluded its deliberations on the draft CEPA. At the conclusion of the deliberations, the Council approved the agreement.

India-Oman bilateral trade was about USD 10.5 billion (exports USD 4 billion and imports USD 6.54 billion) in 2024-25. India's key imports are petroleum products and urea. These account for over 70 per cent of imports. Other key products are propylene and ethylene polymers, pet coke, gypsum, chemicals, iron and steel, and unwrought aluminium.

The main items of India's exports to Oman include mineral fuels, chemicals, precious metals, iron and steel, cereals, ships, boats and floating structures, electrical machinery, boilers, tea, coffee, spices, apparel, and food items.

Finmin initiates ranking for banks, insurance firms based on grievance redressal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
New Delhi

In order to improve the grievance redressal framework, the finance ministry has initiated the ranking of public sector banks, private sector banks and public sector insurance companies, based on quality and timely redressal of grievances. The initiative started in June this year has significantly improved performance of these entities, the finance ministry said in a statement.

Besides, the ranking of private sector insurers is also in the pipeline.

This has strengthened the grievance redressal mechanism by increased focus on faster turnaround time (TAT) by banks and insurance companies, transparent communication between customer and the respective organisations, and an increase in customer service training in the organisations, it said.

Furthermore, the Department of Financial Services (DFS) has also initiated the 'Financial Institutions Interaction Program' from December 2025, wherein meetings are held with selected organisations based on grievances received on the CPGRAM Portal.

"As a first step, Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) are selected for this exercise. DFS remains committed to further improving the grievance redressal framework in the financial services sector," it said. The DFS under the finance ministry has been undertaking several key initiatives aimed at streamlining the process of the grievance redressal mechanism in the banking, financial services and insurance (BFSI) sector.

DFS Secretary has been personally reviewing twenty grievances selected on a random basis every month, wherein citizens are given an opportunity to raise their concerns against the BFSI sector in the presence of the chairman/MD & CEOs/senior managements of the organisations concerned, it said.

Such an exercise had a salutary impact and helped in building greater customer trust in the financial services sector, it said. To date, fifteen such meetings have been held, and 300 grievances have been analysed to ensure the quality of the resolution, it said.

"Similar meetings are also held by Joint Secretaries of the department. Drawing from the experience, the Chairman/MD&CEO of financial institutions are also conducting a similar exercise at their level for their organizations. Objective is to assess the efficacy of grievance resolution through a 'dip-stick survey' at the top-most level in the Department," it said.

Sensex jumps nearly 450 pts on positive global trends

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Mumbai

Benchmark stock index Sensex rallied nearly 450 points while broader Nifty closed above the 26,000 level on Friday following buying in metal shares and positive global trends.

Rising for the second day, the 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 449.53 points or 0.53 per cent to settle at 85,267.66. During the day, it jumped 502.69 points or 0.59 per cent to 85,320.82.

Rebounding from the month's low level, the 50-share NSE Nifty surged 148.40 points or 0.57 per cent to settle at 26,046.95.

Among Sensex firms, Tata Steel, Eternal, UltraTech Cement, Larsen & Toubro, Maruti and Bharti Airtel were the major gainers.

However, Hindustan Unilever, Sun Pharma, ITC and Asian Paints were among the laggards.

"Global risk appetite improved after the US Fed rate cut, boosting liquidity optimism and lifting domestic equities despite the rupee hitting record lows and continued FII outflows. Broader indices are showing buying interest, bouncing back post recent consolidation," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

The BSE midcap gauge jumped 1.14 per cent and smallcap index climbed 0.65 per cent. Among sectoral indices, metal surged 2.58 per cent, commodities (1.84 per cent), realty (1.47 per cent), services (1.34 per cent), telecommunication (1.27 per cent), oil & gas (1.21 per cent) and industrials (1 per cent).

BSE FMCG emerged as the only laggard.

A total of 2,593 stocks advanced while 1,593 declined and 170 remained unchanged on the BSE.

In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi, Japan's Nikkei 225 index, Shanghai's SSE Composite index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng index settled in positive territory.

European markets were quoting higher. US markets ended mostly higher on Thursday.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, dipped 0.05 per cent to USD 61.25 per barrel.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth ₹2,020.94 crore on Thursday, while Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) bought stocks worth ₹3,796.07 crore, according to exchange data.

On Thursday, the Sensex climbed 426.86 points or 0.51 per cent to settle at 84,818.13. The Nifty went up by 140.55 points or 0.55 per cent to 25,898.55.

Mexico's tariffs to hit India's auto, electronics exports: Experts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
New Delhi

A decision of Mexico to increase tariffs will severely hit India's exports of automobiles, auto components, electronics, metals and chemicals to the South American country, experts say.

For India, the measures affect nearly three-quarters of its USD 5.75 billion exports to Mexico in FY 2025, fundamentally altering the commercial logic of accessing the Mexican market, they said.

Mexico's Senate approved the new tariff measure on December 11, 2025, and it has since been cleared by both chambers of Congress.

The higher duties will take effect on January 1, 2026. Under the decision, Mexico will impose steep import tariffs - ranging from about 5 per cent to as high as 50 per cent on a wide range of goods from countries that do not have free trade agreements with Mexico, including India, China, South Korea, Thailand and Indonesia.

"Automobiles and auto components, India's largest export segment to Mexico, will be among the worst affected," think tank GTRI said.

Passenger vehicles, with exports of USD 938.35 million in FY2025, face a tariff increase from 20 per cent to 35 per cent, sharply eroding price competitiveness in a market increasingly shaped by USMCA (US-Mexico-Canada Agreement) sourcing rules, the Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said.

It added that the impact is even more severe for auto components, which accounted for USD 507.26 million in exports.

"Tariffs rise steeply from 10-15 per cent to 35 per cent, disrupting India's deep integration into Mexico-based automotive supply chains that serve the US market. Motorcycles, another Indian stronghold with exports of USD 390.25 million, see

duties increase from 20 per cent to 35 per cent, threatening volumes, margins and brand presence for Indian manufacturers," GTRI Founder Ajay Srivastava said.

Sharing similar views, Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) Director General Ajay Sahai said Mexico's decision to impose tariffs of up to 50 per cent on imports from India is a matter of concern, particularly for sectors like automobiles and auto components, machinery, electrical and electronics, organic chemicals, pharmaceuticals, textiles and plastics.

"Such steep duties will erode our competitiveness and risk disrupting supply chains that have taken years to develop," Sahai said, adding that this development also underlines the little urgency for India and Mexico to fast-track a comprehensive trade agreement.

The GTRI also said that the electronics and machinery sector faces an equally sharp setback.

Smartphones, which recorded USD 284.53 million in exports to Mexico in FY2025, earlier entered the country duty-free. "From January 2026, they will face a 35 per cent tariff, effectively shutting the Mexican market for Indian handset exports," it said.

It added that industrial machinery, India's second-largest export category to Mexico at USD 547.99 million, will see duties rise from 5-10 per cent to 25-35 per cent, significantly raising landed costs and curbing demand for Indian capital goods in price-sensitive segments.

Further, it said in metals, the tariff shock is particularly punitive.

Aluminium exports worth USD 383.28 million face duties increasing from 5-10 per cent to 25-35 per cent, weakening India's competitiveness against regional and USMCA-based suppliers, Srivastava said.

Shoppers in US say this is the season for inflation, an AP-NORC poll finds

ASSOCIATED PRESS
Washington

This holiday season isn't quite so merry for American shoppers as large shares are dipping into savings, scouring for bargains and feeling like the overall economy is stuck in a rut under President Donald Trump, a new AP-NORC poll finds.

The vast majority of US adults say they've noticed higher than usual prices for groceries, electricity and holiday gifts in recent months, according to the survey from The Associated Press-NORC Centre for Public Affairs Research.

Roughly half of Americans say it's harder than usual to afford the things they want to give as holiday gifts, and similar numbers are delaying big purchases or cutting back on nonessential purchases more than they would normally.

It's a sobering assessment for the Republican president, who returned to the White House in large part by promising to lower prices, only to find that inflation remains a threat to his popularity just as it did for Democrat Joe Biden's presidency. The poll's findings look very similar to an AP-NORC poll from December 2022, when Biden was president and the country was grappling with higher rates of inflation. Trump's series of tariffs have added to inflationary pressures and generated anxiety about the stability of the US economy, keeping prices at levels that many Americans find frustrating.

The president has insisted there is "no" inflation and the US economy is booming, as he expressed frustration that the public feels differently.

"When will people understand what is happening?" Trump said Thursday on Truth Social. "When will Polls reflect the Greatness of America at this point in time, and how bad it was just one year ago?"

Most US adults, 68 per cent, continue to say the country's economy is "poor," which is unchanged from December 2024, before Trump returned to the presidency.

Americans are feeling strained as they continue to see high prices: White House officials plan to send Trump barnstorming across the country in hopes of bucking up people's faith in the economy before next year's midterm elections. But the president this week in Pennsylvania defended the price increases tied to his tariffs by suggesting that Americans should buy fewer dolls and pencils for children. His message is a jarring contrast with what respondents expressed in the poll, even among people who backed him in the 2024 election.

Sergio Ruiz, 44, of Tucson, Arizona, said he is using more buy now, pay later programs to spread out over time the expense of gifts for his children. He doesn't put a huge emphasis on politics, but he voted for Trump last year and would like to see lower interest rates to help boost his real estate business. He believes that more Americans having higher incomes would help to manage any affordability issues.

"Prices are up. What can you do? You need to make more money," Ruiz said.

The poll found that when they do shop, about half of Americans are finding the lowest price more than they would normally. About 4 in 10 are dipping into their savings more than at other times.

Democrats are more likely than Republicans to say they're cutting back on expenses or looking for low prices, but many Republicans are budgeting more than usual as well. About 4 in 10 Republicans are looking for low prices more than they usually would, while a similar share are shopping for nonessential items less than usual.

Views are largely similar to when Biden was president: People felt similarly dismal about holiday shopping and the economy when Biden was president in 2022. Inflation had spiked to a four-decade high that summer. Three years later, inflation has eased substantially, but it's still running at 3 per cent, a full percentage point above the Federal Reserve's target as the job market appears to have entered a deep freeze.

The survey indicates that it's the level of prices — and not just the rate of inflation — that is the point of pain for many families. Roughly 9 in 10 US adults, 87 per cent, say they've noticed higher than usual prices for groceries in the past few months, while about two-thirds say they've experienced higher prices than usual for electricity and holiday gifts. About half say they've seen higher than normal prices for gas recently. The findings on groceries and holiday gifts are only slightly lower than in the 2022 poll, despite the slowdown from an inflation rate that hit a four-decade peak in the middle of that year.

Consumer spending has stayed resilient despite the negative sentiments about the economy, yet Trump's tariffs have caused changes for shoppers such as Andrew Russell. The 33-year-old adjunct professor in Arlington Heights, Illinois, said he used to shop for unique gifts from around the globe and buy online. But with the tariffs, he got his gifts locally and "this year, I only bought things that I can pick up in person," he said.

Russell, who voted Democratic in last year's election, said he worries about the economy for next year. He thinks the investment in artificial intelligence has become a bubble that could burst, taking down the stock market.

Little optimism about an economic rebound in 2026: Few people expect the situation to meaningfully improve next year — a sign that Trump has done little to instill much confidence from his mix of tariffs, income tax cuts and foreign trips to attract investments. Trump has maintained that the benefits from his policies will begin to snowball in 2026.

About 4 in 10 US adults expect next year will be economically worse for the country. Roughly 3 in 10 say conditions won't change much. Only about 2 in 10 think things will get better, with Republicans being more optimistic.

The belief that things will get better has slipped from last year, when about 4 in 10 said that 2025 would be better than 2024.

FROM THE WORLD

NEPAL

PM inducted 4 new ministers

Nepal's PM Sushila Karki on Friday inducted four new ministers in her cabinet, bringing the strength of the council of ministers to 14. President Ramchandra administered the oath of office and secrecy to the four newly appointed ministers of the interim Government at a ceremony in the Office of the President. The newly appointed ministers are Shraddha Shrestha, Madhav Chaulagain, Rajendra Singh Bhandari and Kumar Ingnam, according to officials at the PM Office. Shraddha has been appointed as the Minister for Women, Children and Senior Citizens, Madhav has got the portfolio of Forest and Environment, while Rajendra Singh Bhandari got the portfolio of Labour and Social Security, and Kumar Ingnam has got the portfolio of Land Management, Cooperatives and Poverty Alleviation.

PAKISTAN

5 cops injured in TTP attack

At least five policemen were injured after Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) terrorists attacked a police checkpost in Pakistan's northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, officials said. The incident took place on Thursday night. The terrorists targeted the Shaikh Landak police checkpost, located within the Havaid police jurisdiction in Bannu district. A statement released by the spokesperson said that Fitna al Khawarij terrorists attacked the post late on Thursday night. Fitna al Khawarij is a term the state uses for terrorists belonging to the banned TTP. The statement said that police personnel showed courage, bravery and acted in a timely manner, managing to repel the attack. The exchange of fire continued for three hours between the attackers and the police.

Thailand's Parliament dissolved amidst border clash

ASSOCIATED PRESS
Bangkok

Thailand's Parliament was dissolved Friday for new elections early next year as the country engaged in deadly fighting with Cambodia.

Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul dissolved the House of Representatives after getting approval from King Maha Vajiralongkorn, whose endorsement became effective Friday with its publication in the Royal Gazette.

Anutin had signalled the move with a Facebook post late Thursday saying: "I'd like to return power to the people." The election must be held 45 to 60 days after the royal endorsement, a period during which Anutin will head a caretaker Government with limited powers that cannot approve a new budget.

The move comes at a tricky political moment, as Thailand is engaged in large-scale combat with Cambodia over a longstanding border dispute.

Anutin has been prime minister for just three months, succeeding Paetongtarn Shinawatra, who served only a year in office before losing office over a scandal that erupted out of a previous round of border tensions. Anutin won the September vote in Parliament with support from the main opposition People's Party in exchange for a promise to dissolve Parliament within four months and organise a referendum on the drafting of a new constitution by an elected constituent assembly. The party, which runs on progressive platforms, has long sought changes to the constitution, imposed during a military Government, saying they want to make it more democratic.

Evacuees siting on the ground as they take refuge in Banteay Menchey provincial town AP

The issue of constitutional change appeared to trigger the dissolution, after the People's Party prepared to call a no-confidence vote Thursday. That threat came after lawmakers from Anutin's Bhumjaithai Party voted in favour of a bill to amend the constitution that the opposition party felt ran against the spirit of the agreement they had reached in September. The People's Party holds the largest number of seats in the House of Representatives and is seen as the main challenger to Bhumjaithai. As news of the pending dissolution circulated late Thursday, its leaders said they hoped Anutin would still honour the agreement to arrange a constitutional referendum. Anutin served in Paetongtarn's former Government but resigned from his positions and withdrew his party from her coalition Government as she faced controversy over a phone call with Cambodia's Senate President Hun Sen in June. Paetongtarn, daughter of former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, was suspended from office ahead of the July fighting, after being found guilty of ethics violations over the politically compromising call.

With Thailand now again engaged in heavy combat against Cambodia, Anutin has embraced an aggressive military posture to appeal to nationalistic public sentiment, and has said Thailand will keep fighting until its sovereignty and safety are guaranteed. After the five days of border fighting in July, US President Donald Trump pushed the two countries to agree on a ceasefire by threatening to withhold trade privileges from them.

Trump has vowed again to make peace between them after widespread fighting flared up again this week. If he employs the cudgel of high tariffs on Thai exports should Thailand fail to comply with his peacemaking effort comply, it could cause serious damage to its already sluggish economy.

Trump said twice this week that he expects to speak by phone with the Thai and Cambodian leaders, expressing confidence that he would persuade them to stop the fighting. Anutin on Friday confirmed that he is scheduled to speak with Trump on Friday night, saying he would brief him on the latest situation along the border.

As of Thursday, about two dozen people had been reported killed in this week's fighting, while hundreds of thousands have been displaced on both sides. The Thai military estimates that 165 Cambodian soldiers have been killed, though no number has been officially announced by Phnom Penh.

"Anutin has capitalised on the renewed border tensions with Cambodia to portray himself as a leader willing to take a nationalist, hard-line stance in defending Thailand's sovereignty and territorial integrity," commented Napon Jatusripitak, director of the Centre for Politics and Geopolitics at Thailand Future, a Bangkok-based think tank.

Accused Charlie Kirk killer makes court appearance

ASSOCIATED PRESS
Provo

The 22-year-old Utah man charged with killing Charlie Kirk made his first in-person court appearance on Thursday as his attorneys push to further limit media access in the high-profile criminal case.

A Utah judge is weighing the public's right to know details in the prosecution of Tyler Robinson against his attorneys' concerns that the swarm of media attention could interfere with his right to a fair trial.

Robinson's legal team and the Utah County Sheriff's Office have asked Judge Tony Graf to ban cameras in the courtroom.

Prosecutors have charged Robinson with aggravated murder in the September 10 shooting of the conservative activist on the Utah Valley University campus in Orem, just a few miles north of the Provo courthouse. They plan to seek the death penalty.

Robinson arrived in court with restraints on his wrists and ankles and wearing a dress shirt, tie and slacks. He smiled at family members sitting in the front row of the courtroom, where his mother teared up and wiped her eyes with a tissue. Robinson's father and brother sat next to her. The defendant had previously appeared in court via video or audio feed from jail.

A coalition of national and local news organisations, including The Associated Press, is fighting to preserve media access in the case.

Graf has already made allowances to protect Robinson's presumption of innocence before a trial, agreeing that the case has drawn "extraordinary" public attention. Graf held a closed hearing on October 24 in which attorneys discussed Robinson's courtroom attire and security protocols.

Under a subsequent ruling by the judge, Robinson is allowed to wear street clothes in court during his pretrial hearings but must be physically restrained due to security concerns. Graf also prohibited media from filming or photographing Robinson's restraints after his attorneys argued widespread images of him shackled and in jail clothing could prejudice future jurors.

Bilawal calls Imran Khan Pharaohs of their time

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Lahore

Pakistan People's Party chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari has called incarcerated former prime minister Imran Khan and ex-ISI chief Gen Faiz Hameed "pharaohs" of their time saying he welcomes his (Hameed) jail term.

Former Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) chief Faiz Hameed was sentenced to a 14-year jail term on Thursday after being convicted on four counts related to violating secrecy laws, engaging in political activities, misuse of authority and causing harm to others. "This is a historic verdict. I welcome it," Bilawal said. "In my political career, I witnessed two pharaohs -- one is Imran Khan and the other Gen Faiz Hameed. Imran Khan as prime minister threatened the opposition leaders and sent many to jail and he even targeted women leaders like Faryal Talpur and Maryam Nawaz.

"Today both are reaping what they had sown," Bilawal said and added Gen Faiz, who was "so intoxicated" by power that he violated his oath and targeted politicians, media owners, businessmen and others.

The PPP chief advised Khan and Gen Faiz to seek forgiveness for their crimes from God. "Both should seek mercy from God. This should be a message that such mistakes must not be repeated by anyone," he said during an event at Chiniot district, about 200 kilometres from Lahore. Khan and his party, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), on the other hand have been accusing the incumbent military establishment of openly interfering in politics, stealing its mandate of last year's general elections and engineering court verdicts against its leaders.

Bulgarian Parliament approves PM Rosen resignation

ASSOCIATED PRESS
Sofia

Bulgarian Parliament on Friday approved the resignation of the coalition Government of Prime Minister Rosen Zhelyazkov amid nationwide anti-corruption protests, and weeks ahead of the country's scheduled euro zone entry.

Protesters, many of them young Bulgarians, have been protesting in the tens of thousands across the nation for weeks. The direct trigger was a proposed budget for next year that would have increased taxes and social security contributions to finance more state spending. The deeper cause, however, was rising anger over a perception of widespread corruption among the political elite, and a sense that a lack of justice prevails for regular citizens. The protests and the fall of the 9th Government in five years underlined the political instability in the country as it plans to join the common European currency. The 240-seat chamber voted 127-0 to accept the resignation. The Cabinet will continue performing its duties until a new Government is elected.

Prime Minister Rosen Zhelyazkov announcing that Bulgaria's Government resigns following mass protests, at the Bulgarian Parliament in Sofia AP

Zhelyazkov's minority Government survived six votes of no confidence since it was appointed in January, but this time the large turnout of protesters on the streets changed the game.

The prime minister announced his resignation on Thursday saying it was a direct response to the growing public pressure and that the demand for the Government to step down had become impossible to ignore. "Vox populi, vox Dei," Zhelyazkov said, using a Latin expression meaning "the voice of the people is the voice of God."

In a next step, President Rumen Radev must now give the biggest group in parliament the chance to form a new Government. If that fails, the second-largest grouping will get a chance before the president chooses a candidate. If all attempts fail — which is likely — Radev will appoint a caretaker Cabinet until a new election is held.

Political analysts expect that another election — which would be the eighth since 2021 — would likely produce another deeply fragmented parliament with difficulty forming a stable Government.

Indian High Commission in Singapore opens OSC to help women

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Singapore

The High Commission in Singapore has opened a One Stop Centre (OSC) as part of the Government's scheme to support Indian women in distress overseas. The initiative has been taken under the Indian Government's Sakhi One Stop Centre scheme, marking a major step in extending women-centric welfare initiatives overseas.

"The establishment of 'One Stop Centre' at the High Commission of India in Singapore will provide a comprehensive support system to Indian (national) women in distress," High Commissioner Shilpak Ambule told on Friday.

"As part of this initiative, assistance would be extended to distressed Indian women to cover legal, medical and other expenses," he said.

> THE CENTRE WILL OFFER INTEGRATED SUPPORT SERVICES INCLUDING LEGAL AID, MEDICAL ASSISTANCE, PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELLING

The centre will offer integrated support services including legal aid, medical assistance, psychological counselling, temporary shelter, and emergency response for women facing physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, or economic abuse. Located within the High Commission's premises, the OSC aims to create a safe, accessible environment where women can seek help without stigma or delay.

A dedicated 24x7 helpline (+65 8716 5521) and email (osc.Singapore@mea.Gov.In) will provide round-the-clock access to assistance.

The initiative is supported by India's Ministry of External Affairs and funded through the Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF). Similar centres have been launched in Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Toronto, Canada. By integrating emergency care, counselling, and legal guidance under one roof, the One Stop Centre aims to empower women, reaffirming India's commitment to protecting its citizens abroad and promoting gender equality through action and compassion, the High Commission said.

Washington floods sweep away homes, families stranded

ASSOCIATED PRESS Mount Vernon

Days of torrential rain in Washington state has caused historic floods that have stranded families on rooftops, washed over bridges and ripped at least two homes from their foundations, and experts warned that even more flooding expected Friday could be catastrophic.

Washington is under a state of emergency and evacuation orders are in place for tens of thousands of residents. Gov Bob Ferguson on Thursday urged everyone to follow evacuation instructions as yet another river neared record levels.

"I understand that many in our state have experienced significant floods in the past," he said on the social platform X. "However, we're looking at a historic situation."

About 78,000 residents of a major agricultural region north of Seattle were ordered to evacuate the floodplain of the Skagit River, which was expected to crest Friday morning.

The floods were impacting large parts of the state, with several bridges flooded and some major roads inundated or washed out. Some roads had no alternate routes and no estimated reopening time, including a large part of state Route 410.

A landslide blocked part of Interstate 90 east of Seattle, with photos showing vehicles trapped by tree trunks, branches, mud and standing water. In the north near the US-Canada border, the cities of Sumas, Nooksack and Everson were evacuated after being inundated. The border crossing at Sumas was closed and Amtrak suspended trains between Seattle and Vancouver, BC.

Sumas Mayor Bruce Bosch said much of the city has been "devastated" by the high waters just four years after a similar flood.

The Snohomish River surged nearly a foot (30 centimetres) higher than its record Thursday in the picturesque city that shares its name, while the Skagit River rose just above its record Thursday night in Mount Vernon, according to the National Water Prediction Service. Earlier Thursday, the Skagit just missed its previous record as flooding surged through the mountain town of Concrete.

The waters stopped just short of getting inside Mariah Brosa's raised riverfront home in Concrete, but the raging river still slapped debris against her home and totalled her fiancé's work car, she said.

"I didn't think it would come this high," she said. Flooding from the Skagit has long plagued Mount Vernon, the largest city in Skagit County with some 35,000 residents. Flooding in 2003 displaced hundreds of people.

A floodwall that protects downtown passed a major test in 2021, when the river crested near record levels. Water was at the foot of the floodwall as of late Thursday morning, Mayor Peter Donovan said.

In nearby Burlington, officials hoped dikes and other systems would protect their community from catastrophe, said Michael Lumpkin, with the police department. Authorities across Washington state in recent days have rescued people from cars and homes after an atmospheric river soaked the region.

Noem defends Trump's immigration policies

ASSOCIATED PRESS Washington

Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem defiantly defended the Trump administration's hard-line immigration policies on Thursday during a House committee hearing, portraying migrants as a major threat faced by the nation that justifies a crackdown that has seen widespread arrests, deportations and a dizzying pace of restrictions on foreigners. Noem, who heads the agency central to President Donald Trump's approach to immigration, received backup from Republicans on the panel but faced fierce questioning from Democrats – including many who called for her resignation over the mass deportation agenda. The secretary's testimony was immediately interrupted by protesters shouting for her to stop Immigration and Customs Enforcement raids and "end deportations."

Chileans are divided on presidential runoff

ASSOCIATED PRESS Santiago

Ask many Chileans how their country fared in the past several years and they'll describe a descent into disaster: Venezuelan gangs surged across porous borders, bringing unprecedented kidnappings and contract killings to one of the region's safest nations. A social uprising unleashed violent chaos on once-sleepy streets. An economy long vaunted for its rapid growth sputtered into a stall. These are the voters who hope to elect their country's most right-wing president since its military dictatorship on Sunday. Former lawmaker José Antonio Kast, 59, they argue, can bring back the simple, stable life that Chileans lost to rising crime, uncontrolled migration and left-wing excesses. Kast's rival in this runoff presidential election is their worst fear: a communist.

India invites US industries to partner in country's AI journey

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Washington

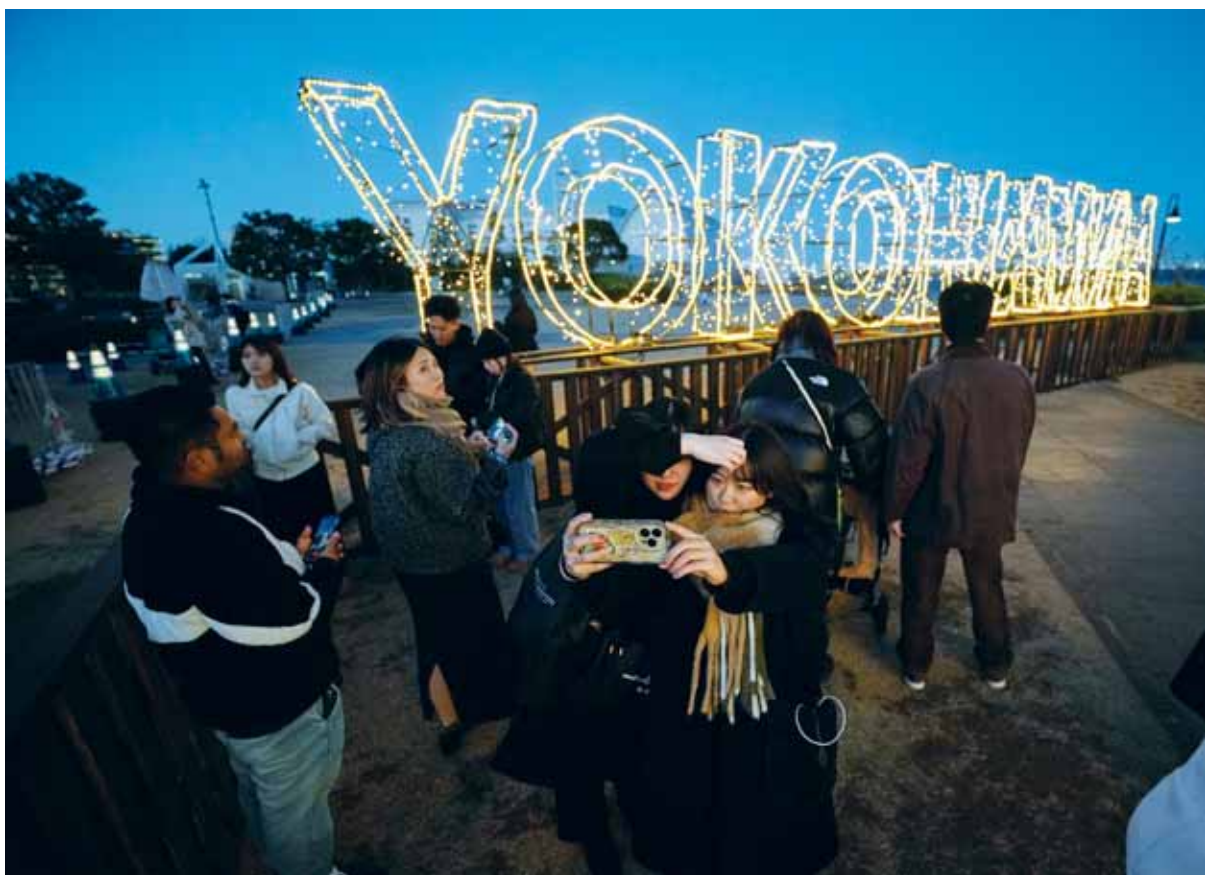
Indian Ambassador Vinay Mohan Kwatra invited US industries to become valuable partners in India's AI journey at a roundtable, ahead of the 'India AI Impact Summit 2026' scheduled to be held in New Delhi in February. The Ambassador shared insights on how India's AI Mission, designed to create a robust framework for AI development in India, and the upcoming summit are shaping global norms for responsible, inclusive, and innovation-driven AI, the organiser of the roundtable, DGA-Albright Stonebridge Group, said on social media on Thursday.

"Had an engaging conversation on India's AI Goals and AI Impact summit with industry representatives at a round table organised by the Albright Stonebridge Group. Invited US industries to become valuable partners in India's AI journey," Kwatra posted on social media. Several industry, academic, and philanthropy leaders joined the discussion held in Washington, DC.

The role of companies in supporting India's AI transformation through compute infrastructure, indigenous capability development, and workforce and talent initiatives was also highlighted at the discussion. The Indian envoy also held discussions with Rep Yvette D Clarke, Chair of the Black Caucus, and appreciated her perspective on advancing India–US collaboration."Had a productive meeting with @RepYvetteClarke, Chair of the House @TheBlackCaucus and a steadfast supporter of strong India-US relations.

Appreciated her perspective on advancing India–US collaboration in the AI space, including data privacy and data security," Kwatra posted. The India-AI Impact Summit 2026 will be held in New Delhi on February 19-20, focusing on the principles of 'People, Planet, and Progress'.

The Summit, announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the France AI Action Summit, will be the first-ever global AI summit hosted in the Global South.



People visiting the Christmas Market at Yokohama Red Brick Warehouse in Yokohama near Tokyo AP

Radical leader shot in Bangladesh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Dhaka

A youth leader of a right-wing cultural group and a candidate at the February 12 general elections was on Friday shot at by unidentified gunmen in Bangladesh capital. Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus expressed deep concern over the shooting and serious injury of Sharif Osman Hadi, spokesperson of Inqilab Manch, and said the incident is "completely unacceptable."

The Inquilab Mancha was on the forefront of a campaign to disband deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina's Awami League.

Police said three assailants on a motorbike shot Hadi as he initiated his election campaign at central Dhaka's Bijoynagar area — from where he stood as an independent candidate — in the afternoon.

"Osman Hadi was shot at 2:25 pm in front of DR Tower on Box Culvert Road at Bijoynagar. We have initially learned that three assailants on a motorcycle shot him and fled the scene," a spokesman of Dhaka police said.

Hadi was rushed to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH).

"His (Hadi's) condition is critical. He has been provided a life support system. The bullet remained inside his head," Prothom Alo newspaper said, quoting DMCH director Brigadier Mohammad Asaduzzaman as saying.

Chief Adviser Yunus expressed deep concern over the shooting incident and asked the authorities concerned to bring the perpetrators under the law soon. "Such a violent attack in an election environment is completely unacceptable and a deeply regrettable incident for the country's peaceful political atmosphere," Yunus said in a statement.

The Chief Adviser gave strict instructions to the law enforcement agencies to conduct a swift and comprehensive investigation to identify and bring all those involved in the attack to justice, the state-run news agency Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS) said. The Inquilab Mancha emerged as a rightwing cultural and pressure group in August 2024 after a student-led violent protest in July and August toppled the then prime minister Sheikh Hasina's Awami League government.

The incident occurred a day after the election commission announced the polls schedule saying the 13th parliamentary election would be held on February 12. The Inquilab Mancha was on the forefront of a campaign to disband Awami League. Yunus-led interim government disbanded Hasina's party in May this year disqualifying it from contesting the polls.

The group spearheads a campaign to arrest "all terrorists" of the disbanded Awami League from central to grassroots levels and ensure security of the "July warriors".

KHALEDA PLACED ON VENTILATOR SUPPORT

Dhaka: Former Bangladesh prime minister Khaleda Zia's health condition has deteriorated and she was placed on ventilator support, doctors said."Her breathing difficulties increased, her oxygen level fell, and carbon dioxide levels rose," according to a statement on Thursday by the chief of the medical board cardiologist Shahabuddin Talukdar.

It said the 80-year-old former premier was previously being treated with "High Flow Nasal Cannula and BiPAP support, but as there was no improvement, she was placed on elective ventilator support to give rest to her lungs and other vital organs." The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) chairperson has been undergoing treatment at Dhaka's Evercare Hospital since November 23 for multiple health complications. The statement said the three-time premier was kept under round-the-clock medical watch by a team of local and foreign specialists, as several of her vital organs continue to be under severe stress. "Her kidney function has stopped completely, and she is undergoing regular dialysis," the board said, adding she currently needed blood transfusions.

KPK CM alleges Imran Khan subjected to mistreatment in jail

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Peshawar

Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province Chief Minister Muhammad Sohaib Afridi on Friday alleged that former prime minister Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi are being subjected to mistreatment in jail.
Afridi's comments came after he was denied permission to meet incarcerated Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan for the 10th time by the Adiala jail administration on Thursday. Addressing a meeting of the Provincial Cabinet, Afridi said that despite the harsh winter, basic necessities and warm clothing were not being provided to the detained couple. The Chief Minister said that the use of water cannon against Imran Khan's sisters was "shameful," adding that the provincial government strongly condemned such "unjust and inhumane behaviour." Khan, 73, has been in Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi since August 2023 in multiple cases.Speaking to mediapersons on Thursday, Afridi said that it was strange that an elected chief minister was not being allowed to meet his party's founding chairman despite court orders to the contrary. He warned that both the federal and Punjab government leadership would face consequences once the PTI returned to power at the Centre. Afridi said efforts had been underway for the past three years to "minus Imran", but all such attempts had failed.

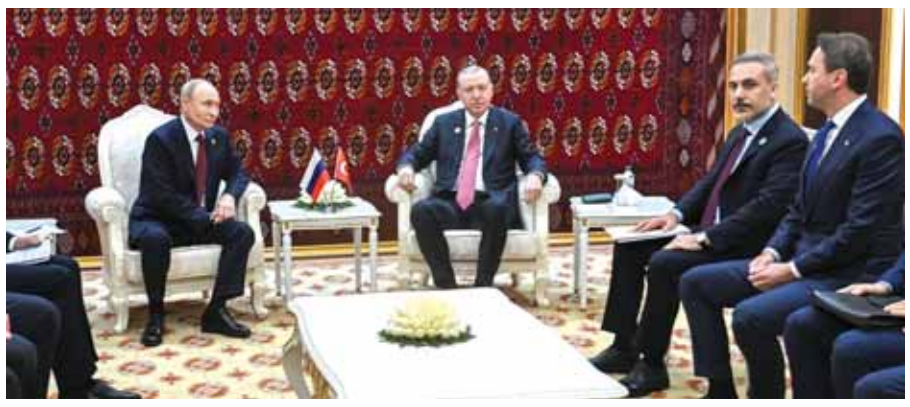
Japan lifts tsunami advisory after 6.7 magnitude quake

ASSOCIATED PRESS
Tokyo

Japan on Friday lifted a tsunami advisory after a 6.7 magnitude earthquake shook the country's northeast, according to the Japan Meteorological Agency. The quake occurred off the east coast of Aomori prefecture, in the north of Honshu, the main Japanese island, at a depth of 20 kilometres at 11:44 am local time, JMA said. The advisory was lifted about two hours later. There were no immediate reports of serious damage or injuries. Friday's quake followed a 7.5 magnitude earthquake earlier this week in the north that caused injuries, light damage and a tsunami in Pacific coastal communities. At least 34 people were injured in that quake on Monday off the coast of Aomori, the northernmost prefecture of Japan's main Honshu island. A tsunami more than 2 feet (0.6 metres) above tide levels was measured in Kuji port in Iwate prefecture before all tsunami advisories were lifted. Power was knocked out for hundreds of homes but was mostly restored Tuesday morning.

Russian police, National Guard to stay in Donbas: Kremlin

ASSOCIATED PRESS
Kyiv



Russian President Vladimir Putin and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan attending a meeting on the sidelines of an international forum in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan AP

A senior Kremlin official says that the Russian police and National Guard will remain in eastern Ukraine's Donbas to oversee the prized industrial region, even if a peace settlement ends the nearly four-year war — a possibility that is likely to be rejected by Ukrainian officials as US-led negotiations drag on.

Moscow will give its blessing to a ceasefire only after Ukraine's forces have withdrawn from the front line, Kremlin adviser Yuri Ushakov said in comments published Friday in Russian business daily Kommersant.

Ushakov told Kommersant "it's entirely possible that there won't be any troops (in the Donbas), either Russian or Ukrainian" in a postwar scenario. But he said that "there will be the National Guard, our police, everything necessary to maintain order and organise life."

For months, American negotiators have tried to navigate the demands of each side as US President Donald Trump presses for a swift end to Russia's war and grows increasingly exasperated by delays. The search for possible compromises has run into a major obstacle over who keeps Ukrainian territory that Russian forces have occupied so far. Since Moscow's 2014 illegal annexation of Crimea and the seizure of territory in the east by Russia-backed separatists later that year, as well as land taken after the full-blown invasion was launched on February 24, 2022, Russia has captured about 20 per cent of its neighbour. Ukraine says its constitution doesn't allow it to surrender land. Russia, which illegally annexed Donetsk and three other regions illegally in 2022, says the same.

Ushakov said that "no matter what the outcome (of peace talks), this territory (the Donbas) is Russian Federation territory."

On Thursday, Trump compared the negotiations to a very complex real estate deal. He said that he wants to see more progress in talks before sending envoys to possible meetings with European leaders over the weekend. In October Trump said the Donbas region will have to be "cut up" to end the war. In recent months, Russia's army has made a determined push to gain control of all parts of Donetsk and neighbouring Luhansk, which together make up the valuable Donbas region.

Its slow slog across the Ukrainian countryside, using its significant advantage in troop numbers in a corrosive war of attrition, has been costly in terms of casualties and losses of armour. Although outnumbered, Ukrainian defenders have held firm in many areas and counterattacked in others.

Belarus leader hosts US envoy as he seeks to improve his country's ties with the West

ASSOCIATED PRESS
Minsk

Authoritarian President Alexander Lukashenko on Friday hosted a US envoy for talks in the Belarus capital of Minsk, the latest step in the isolated leader's effort to improve ties with the West.

Lukashenko met with US special envoy for Belarus John Coale, according to state news agency Belta and the presidential press service. The press service said the talks would continue Saturday. The last time US officials met with Lukashenko, more than 50 political prisoners were released and brought to Lithuania. Overall, Belarus released more than 430 prisoners since July 2024 in what was widely seen as an effort at a rapprochement with the West. A close ally of Russia, Minsk has faced Western isolation and sanctions for years. Lukashenko has ruled the nation of 9.5 million with an iron fist for more than three decades, and the country has been sanctioned repeatedly by Western countries — both for its crackdown on human rights and for allowing Moscow to use its territory in the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

Lukashenko's rule was challenged after a 2020 presidential election that kept him in power, when tens of thousands of people poured into the streets to protest a vote widely seen as rigged.

In an ensuing crackdown, tens of thousands of people were detained, with many beaten by police. Prominent opposition figures either fled the country or were imprisoned.

Five years after the mass demonstrations, Lukashenko won a seventh term in an election that the opposition called a farce.

More recently, however, Belarus has begun to free some political prisoners to try to win favour with the West. Since Donald Trump returned to the White House this year, Lukashenko has released dozens of prisoners, including key dissident figure Siarhei Tsikhanouski — the husband of exiled opposition leader Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya. His release came after a visit to Belarus by US envoy Keith Kellogg.Trump spoke to Lukashenko by phone in August after one such release and even suggested a face-to-face meeting in what would be a big victory for the Belarusian leader, who has been dubbed "Europe's Last Dictator."

Danish intelligence report warns of US military threat

ASSOCIATED PRESS Copenhagen

The United States is using its economic power to "assert its will" and threaten military force against friend and foe alike, a Danish intelligence agency said in a new report. The Danish Defence Intelligence Service, in its latest annual assessment, said Washington's greater assertiveness under the Trump administration also comes as China and Russia seek to diminish Western, especially American, influence. Perhaps most sensitive to Denmark – a NATO and European Union member country, and a US ally – is growing competition between those great powers in the Arctic. US President Donald Trump has expressed a desire to see Greenland, a semiautonomous and mineral-rich territory of Denmark, become part of the United States, a move opposed by Russia and much of Europe.

Germany summons Russian ambassador over cyberattacks

ASSOCIATED PRESS Berlin

Germany summoned Russia's ambassador on Friday following accusations of sabotage, cyberattacks and election interference, an official said. The German Government has also accused Moscow of perpetrating disinformation campaigns. "The goal of these Russian cyber and disinformation attacks is clear: It is to divide society, stir up mistrust, provoke rejection, and weaken confidence in democratic institutions," German foreign ministry spokesperson Martin Giese said. "This targeted manipulation of information is one of a wide range of activities by Russia aimed at undermining confidence in democratic institutions and processes in Germany," he said during a government news conference. German officials have previously accused Russia of hybrid warfare attacks to destabilise Europe.

PROSPECT

Orunodoi has led to socio-economic empowerment of women: CM Himanta

TONY DAS ■ Guwahati

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday launched the third phase of the Orunodoi scheme in the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR), stating that the financial support initiative has significantly contributed to the socio-economic empowerment of women across Assam.

The scheme, which provides a monthly financial grant of ₹1,250 to beneficiary families, was rolled out for five districts of BTR, covering 4.12 lakh families initially. The launch, held at Bodofa Nwgwr in Kokrajhar, was delayed in BTR due to the BTC elections, having already been implemented in other parts of the State on October 7.

Sarma, after discussions with BTC Chief Hagrama Mohilary, informed that the scheme will ultimately benefit around 4.5 lakh women in BTR. This includes 1,20,854 beneficiaries in Kokrajhar, 60,676 in Baksa, 60,545 in Chirang, 61,578 in Tamulpur and 1,09,034 in Udalguri.

"Currently, 38 lakh women in Assam have been brought under the ambit of Orunodoi," the Chief Minister Stated, adding that the direct benefit transfer (DBT) of ₹1,250 on the 10th of every month has enhanced their socio-economic status.

He also announced that a special gift will be provided to all Orunodoi beneficiaries across Assam on January 1. Furthermore, from January 1, essential commodities (lentils, sugar and salt), currently supplied by the State Governmentat ₹117 per kg, will be provided at Rs 100 per kg.

Sarma also Stated that women in BTR will receive cheques of ₹10,000 under the Mukhya Mantri Mahila Udyamita Abhiyan (MMUA) by January 20. The Chief Minister added that a scheme similar to "Nijut Moina" for college-going girls would be announced on January 1.

Finance Minister Ajanta Neog, PHED Minister Jayanta Mallabaruah, BTC Chief Hagrama Mohilary, MLAs Rabiram Narzary, Lawrence Islary, Jiron Basumatary, former minister Pramila Rani Brahma, along with several dignitaries and senior officials were present on the occasion.

IRFC '2.0' era begins; targets ₹60,000 cr sanctions

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Marking the beginning of what he termed the "IRFC 2.0 era," Indian Railway Finance Corporation's CMD Manoj Kumar Dubey on Friday outlined a long-term strategic vision for the Navratna CPSE at its 40th Foundation Day Celebration, declaring that IRFC is firmly positioned to cross ₹60,000 crore in sanctions by Q3.

He said that this achievement signals the organisation's strong fundamentals, disciplined financial architecture and renewed strategic focus, setting the tone for the next phase of IRFC's growth story. Addressing the delegates comprising serving and retired Indian Railway Accounts Service officers, Dubey said, "Forty years is not just a milestone for IRFC; it is a testament to the trust this institution has earned through discipline, stability and an unwavering commitment to national development. As we look ahead, our shared ambition is to elevate IRFC to even greater heights over the coming years, backed by sound fundamentals and a future-ready strategy."

He further highlighted that the organisation is set to exceed its internal business targets for the year. "We are moving decisively towards crossing ₹60,000 crore in sanctions by Q3. This reflects the confidence our partners place in us, the expanding role of IRFC in the national financing landscape and the growing capex appetite across the railway ecosystem," Dubey noted.

The Foundation Day also featured a technical conclave attended by Aparna Garg, Member Finance, Railway Board, who acknowledged IRFC's critical role in empowering the financial strength of Indian Railways over the past four decades. Her presence underscored the deep institutional partnership between IRFC and the Railway Board in driving forward India's infrastructure priorities.

IRFC CMD Manoj Kumar Dubey extending a courtesy visit to Railway Board Member Finance Usha Venugopal on the occasion of IRFC's Foundation Day on Friday

At the celebrations, NP Srivastava, former CMD of IRFC, was honoured with the title Legend of IRFC for his foundational contributions to the organisation and to the wider railway financing ecosystem. His stewardship was recalled as an era that shaped IRFC's institutional culture, strengthened its financial architecture and laid the groundwork for its rise as a globally recognised infrastructure financing institution.

Reflecting on the organisation's legacy, Dubey said, "IRFC stands tall today because of the values, discipline and vision seeded by its leaders and carried forward by every member of this fraternity. As we celebrate 40 years, we honour not just our achievements but also the people who shaped them. The recognition bestowed upon NP Srivastava is a tribute to a legacy that continues to inspire this institution."

Sessions at the conclave highlighted IRFC's evolving role in rolling stock financing, its expanding participation in allied sectors and the corporation's growing global benchmarks in efficiency and governance. The evening concluded with a cultural programme featuring renowned singer and composer Papon, whose performance added warmth, emotion and a celebratory spirit to the land mark occasion.

DG (BrahMos), DRDO Dr Jaiteerth R Joshi takes over as President of ISNT

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Dr Jaiteerth R Joshi, Director General (BrahMos), DRDO and CEO and MD, BrahMos Aerospace, stands tall as one of India's most distinguished scientific leaders - a visionary whose clarity of purpose, depth of knowledge and unwavering commitment to national technological advancement have made him a transformative force in the field of Non-Destructive Evaluation (NDE).

Dr Joshi has championed innovation with remarkable foresight and precision. His leadership has fortified India's defence capabilities through the seamless integration of advanced materials, cutting-edge NDE technologies and rigorous scientific standards. His contributions have not only strengthened mission-critical systems but also set new benchmarks for reliability, safety and excellence across defence platforms.

Today as he assumes the prestigious role of President of the Indian Society for Non-Destructive Testing (ISNT), Dr. Joshi enters history as the first DRDO scientist in four decades to be entrusted with this honour.

This milestone is a reflection of both his towering professional stature and the profound respect he commands within the NDE community. Over the years, Dr Joshi's sustained contributions to the NDE arena have significantly elevated India's capabilities - fostering research, nurturing talent and promoting global standards.

His work has bridged science, engineering and real-world application, reinforcing NDE as a critical pillar of national infrastructure and defence integrity.

In recognition of his exemplary service, scholarly excellence and transformative impact, he is conferred the Honorary Fellowship of ISNT - one of the highest accolades bestowed by the society.

This honour not only celebrates his past achievements but also heralds the continued leadership he will bring to the organisation in the years ahead. Dr Jaiteerth R Joshi's journey exemplifies dedication, intellect and visionary leadership. His elevation as President of ISNT, along with the conferment of Honorary Fellow, stands as a proud moment for the scientific community and a beacon of inspiration for future generations. On this occasion, he delivered Dr Baldev Raj Memorial lecture on "Role of Materials and NDT in any Defence Operation".

Dr Jaiteerth R Joshi, DG (BrahMos), DRDO and CEO & MD, BrahMos Aerospace receives the Honorary Fellowship of ISNT during an event in Mumbai on Dec. 11, 2025. Dr Joshi took charge as the President of ISNTon Dec. 12. 2025

NDMC Vice-Chairman Chahal visits Virender Akhara to boost wrestling talent

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

In line with Prime Minister Modi's vision for sports, athlete empowerment, and strengthening India's global sporting excellence, NDMC Vice-Chairman Kuljeet Singh Chahal visited the renowned Virender Akhara in Chhara village, Jhajjar, Haryana. The akhara is one of India's leading wrestling training centres, where young athletes prepare for national and international championships.

Head coach and Arjuna Awardee Virender Dahiya and Dushyant Lather were present during the visit, along with a large group of trainees. Wrestlers shared their experiences with Chahal, highlighting how training at Virender Akhara is giving them a strong foundation and international-level exposure.

During the interaction, Kuljeet Singh Chahal said India continues to excel in sports because of its young population and the government's increased focus on developing sporting talent. He emphasised that sports build character, instil discipline and keep youth away from negative influences.

Chahal personally met several young wrestlers, motivating them to stay focused, work hard and remain dedicated to achieving success at the national and global levels. He also praised the coaches and the akhara's management team for nurturing talent and offering world-class training facilities.

IRCTC launches meal trials to elevate on-board dining experience

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

In a significant move aimed at transforming the on-board dining experience for rail passengers, the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Ltd (IRCTC) has initiated Proof of Concept (PoC) meal trials across select Vande Bharat and Amrit Bharat trains.

The initiative was announced on December 11, 2025, marking a decisive shift in the corporation's approach to catering, which is currently serving nearly 16.50 lakh meals daily across the Indian Railways network, said a IRCTC Press release.

Positioned as a "Paradigm Shift" in service quality, the PoC aims to bring evident improvements to the entire catering chain from kitchen infrastructure and meal production to transfer and on-board service.

Notably, IRCTC is experimenting with de-linking meal production from meal service by onboarding reputed branded food and beverage operators, including industrial kitchens, restaurant chains and flight caterers. The effort seeks to provide passengers with fresher, more hygienic and restaurant-quality meals.

The trials are being rolled out on several newly introduced trains, including Train Number: 20101/20102 - Nagpur–Secunderabad Vande Bharat Express by M/s Haldiram's (Nagpur) and Elior (Secunderabad), Train number: 14047/14048 Delhi–Sitamarhi Amrit Bharat - M/s Touch Stone Foundation (Delhi).

Passengers have already responded positively to the enhanced meal offerings, particularly the inclusion of diverse regional delicacies. IRCTC Stated that insights gathered from the ongoing trials will help shape future improvements and potential expansion of upgraded catering services for travellers nationwide.

ORISSA SPONGE IRON & STEEL LIMITED
CIN: L27102OR1979PLC000819
Regd. Office: OSIL House, Gangadhar Meher Marg, Kiiti Bhubaneswar – 751024
Corporate Office: 1203-12014, Chiranjiv Tower, Nehru Place, New Delhi - 110019
Site: P.O. Palaspanga, Dist. Keonjhar – 758 031, Odisha
E-Mail: corporate@orissasponge.com ; **Website:** www.orissasponge.com , **Tel:** +91 11-43742000

POSTAL BALLOT NOTICE AND REMOTE E-VOTING INFORMATION

The members of **"Orissa Sponge Iron & Steel Limited"** ("the Company") are hereby informed that in compliance with the provisions of Section 108 and 110 of the Companies Act, 2013 ("the Act") read with Companies (Management and Administration) Rules, 2014, read with General Circular No. 14/2020 dated April 08, 2020, 17/2020 dated April 13, 2020, 22/2020 dated June 15, 2020, 33/2020 dated September 28, 2020, 39/2020 dated December 31, 2020, 10/2021 dated June 23, 2021 and 20/2021 dated December 08, 2021, 3/2022 dated May 05, 2022 and 11/2022 dated December 28, 2022, General Circulars No, 20/2020 dated May 05, 2020, 09/2023 dated September 25, 2023 issued by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs ("MCA Circulars") and and other applicable provisions including any statutory modifications or re-enactment thereof for the time being in force and as amended from time to time, a Postal Ballot Notice ("Notice"), seeking consent of the members on the resolution as set out in the said Notice has been send electronically to the members whose e-mail address are registered with the Depository Participants/ Registrar & Share Transfer agent i.e. Skyline Financial Service Private Limited ("RTA"), as on Friday, December 05, 2025 **(Cut-off Date).** The dispatch of the said notice through e-mails has been completed on Friday, December 05, 2025.

The Postal Ballot Notice ("Notice") is available on the website of the Company at https://orissasponge.com/docs/Postal%20Ballot%20Notice%20Dec%2025.pdf and on the website of the National Securities Depository Limited ("NSDL") at www.evoting.nsdl.com .

Members holding shares either in physical form or dematerialized form, as on the Cut-off date i.e Friday, December 05, 2025, may cast their vote electronically on the business item set out in the notice of the Postal Ballot dated Monday, December 08, 2025, through electronic voting system (remote e-voting) of National Security Depository Limited ("NSDL").

The members are further informed that:

a) The special business set out in the notice of the Postal Ballot is to be transacted through voting by electronic means.
b) The remote e-voting begins at 9:00 a.m. (IST) on Monday, December 15, 2025.
c) The remote e-voting ends at 5:00 p.m. (IST) on Wednesday, January 14, 2026.
d) The cut-off date for determining the eligibility to vote by electronic means is Friday, December 05, 2025.
e) The members may note that i) the remote e-voting module shall be disabled for voting and the voting by electronic means shall not be allowed after the date and time mentioned under point 'c' above; and ii) once the vote on resolution cast by a member, the member shall not be allowed to change it subsequently;
f) The manner of remote e-voting for the members holding shares in physical mode or dematerialized mode or who have not registered their email address with the Company/Depository Participant, is provided in the notice of the Postal Ballot as available on the Company's website www.orissasponge.com and NSDL's website www.evoting.nsdl.com .
g) Manner of registering/ updating email address:
   i. Members holding shares in physical mode, are requested to get their email ids registered by writing to the RTA at compliances@skylinerta.com or to the Company at corporate@orissasponge.com along with signed request letter mentioning the name and address of the Member, scanned copy of the share certificate (front and back), self-attested copy of the PAN card, and self-attested copy of Address proof.
   ii. In case shares are held in demat mode, members are requested to register / update their e-mail addresses with the relevant Depository Participant(s)
   iii. Alternatively, members may send a request to evoting@nsdl.co.in for procuring user id and password for e-voting by providing above mentioned documents. The members may also refer the said Notice.
h) In case of any queries, the members may refer to the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for shareholders and e-voting user manual for Shareholders available at the download section of www.evoting.nsdl.com or call on toll free no.: 022-48867000 or send a request to Pallavi Mhatre, Senior Manager, NSDL at evoting@nsdl.com. Further, for any grievance regarding e-voting the members may also write to Mr. Suraj Kumar Thakur at email Id: corporate@orissasponge.com
i) The Company has appointed Mr. Neeraj Jain, Practicing Company Secretary (Membership No. FCS 9599, COP 26163), Properitor of M/s. Neeraj Jain & Associates, Company Secretaries, to act as the Scrutinizer for conducting the Postal Ballot including e-voting process in a fair and transparent manner. The Scrutinizer will submit her report to the Chairman / any other Director / person as may be authorized by the Chairman, on or before Friday, January16, 2026. The results of the voting conducted by Postal Ballot along with Scrutinizer's Report will be made available on the website of the Company at www.orissasponge.com and on the website of NSDL at www.evoting.nsdl.com. Additionally, the results will also be displayed at the Registered Office of the Company.

For **Orissa Sponge Iron & Steel Limited**
Sd/-
Suraj Kumar Thakur
Company Secretary and Compliance Officer

Place: New Delhi
Date: December 12, 2025

IFSEC India 2025 spotlights security and surveillance

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The 18th edition of IFSEC India 2025, organised by Informa Markets in India, opened today at Bharat Mandapam, presenting the country's rapidly advancing security and surveillance ecosystem.

The event brings together senior Governmentofficials, police and defence representatives, enterprise security leaders and top technology innovators to explore next-generation solutions across AI-driven surveillance, IoT-enabled infrastructure, fire safety and integrated command systems.

This year's edition is the largest so far, featuring over 150 exhibitors, more than 350 brands and an expected 20,000 industry visitors. The theme, "Shaping Nations, Securing Futures," highlights India's evolving national security priorities amid digital transformation and urban expansion.

Speaking at the inauguration, senior officials emphasised the need for advanced cybersecurity frameworks. Alok Tiwari of NICSI said cyberattacks on Governmentnetworks have risen nearly sevenfold post Operation Sindoor, underscoring vulnerabilities in ministries and data centres. He also warned that quantum computing could render existing algorithms obsolete by 2028, calling for quantum-resilient security systems.

Smt Padma Jaiswal, Secretary of the UT of Puducherry, noted that cybercrime has grown into a trillion-dollar global threat, urging stronger public-private partnerships to safeguard India's expanding digital economy.

Yogesh Mudras, Managing Director of Informa Markets in India, said the country's electronic security market has grown into a ₹1 lakh crore opportunity, driven by safe-city projects, metro networks, industrial automation and AI-led security infrastructure.

Day 1 also featured panel discussions on corporate security, AI-enabled surveillance and deep-tech innovations, with participation from leading global and domestic firms. The event continues tomorrow with sessions on logistics security, drone-based surveillance and certification standards by MeitY, RBI and Meta.

Mood Indigo 2025 kicks off December 16 at IIT Bombay

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Mumbai

IIT Bombay will host Mood Indigo, known as (MI) 2025, Asia's largest college cultural festival, from December 16 to 18. The event is free for all college students and is expected to attract thousands of attendees from across India and abroad.

Started in 1971 as a small campus event, Mood Indigo has grown into a major festival featuring music, performing arts, fashion and entertainment.

This year's lineup includes singers Sonu Nigam and Dhruv, hip-hop artists Seedhe Maut and Karma, rock and fusion bands Chaar Diwari and Anand Bhaskar Collective, Sufi performer Bismil and EDM artist Romeo Blanco.

Celebrities attending include actors Rakul Preet Singh, Pulkit Samrat, Vicky Kaushal and Jaideep Ahlawat, singer Kavita Seth, comedian Archana Puran Singh and stand-up comic Rahul Subramanian.

"This year, from 16th to 18th December, the campus will come alive for three unforgettable days when thousands of young people from across India (and beyond!) gather to dance harder, cheer louder, try crazier things and make brighter memories than ever before.

This is where legends perform, stars are born and college kids turn into campus celebrities overnight. Mood Indigo is youthful, chaotic, vibrant and absolutely unforgettable," according to a Statement.

Students can register at moodi.org and follow updates on Instagram at @iitbombay.moodi.

Suryavanshi powers India to 234-run win over UAE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Dubai

Vaibhav Suryavanshi

Vaibhav Suryavanshi was at his imperious best while smashing a 171 off 95 balls, powering India to a mammoth 234-run win over hosts UAE in the inaugural match of the U19 Asia Cup on Friday.

The 14-year-old from Samastipur, Bihar, unleashed a stunning display of batting, hitting 14 sixes — the most by any batter in a single innings in the U19 level — en route to his breathtaking innings.

Half-centuries from Vihaan Malhotra (69) and Aaron George (69) further bolstered India's charge as they piled up 433 for 6 in 50 overs. The 400-plus total is India's highest-ever in U19 ODIs and is the highest in the U-19 Asia Cup's history.

In reply, the UAE were never in the contest despite fighting fifties from Prithvi Madhu (50) and Uddish Suri (78 not out), as they could only manage 199/7 in their allotted 50 overs.

Suryavanshi's blistering knock, studded with nine boundaries, is now the second-highest score by an Indian in youth ODIs, behind Ambati Rayudu's unbeaten 177 against England in 2002 and the ninth-highest score by a batter in a men's U19 ODI.

Sent into bat, the young opener looked a class apart as he pummelled the UAE bowlers into submission, racing to his fifty off just 30 balls and bringing up his hundred in only 56 deliveries.

He then shared a 212-run stand with George to completely flatten the hosts' attack. His fiery innings finally came to an end in the 33rd over when he was bowled by spinner Suri.

After his dismissal, the middle-order maintained the tempo, with Vedant Trivedi (38), Abhigyan Kundu (32 not out) and Kanishk Chouhan (28) keeping the runs flowing to take India past the coveted 400-run mark.

Faced with a daunting target, the UAE lost two wickets inside the first four overs, before the quick dismissals of Muhammad Rayan, Ayaan Misbah, and Ahmed Khudadad in the space of nine balls left them tottering at 48 for 5, effectively ending the chase. Suri and Madhu added 85 runs to arrest the slide, but the damage had long been done.

Brief Score:

India 433 for 6 in 50 overs (Vaibhav Suryavanshi 171, Vihaan Malhotra 69, Aaron George 69; Yug Sharma 2/75.

UAE 199 for 7 in 50 overs (Uddish Suri 78 not out, Prithvi Madhu 50; Deepesh Devendran 2/21).

Don't want Shubman to justify his place in team, says Doeschate

BHARAT SHARMA
Mullanpur

Shubman Gill has been guilty of taking too much load on himself since his T20 comeback, and the Indian team wants him to bat as freely as he does in the IPL, said assistant coach Ryan ten Doeschate.

Gill was brought back into the T20 setup with the Asia Cup in September after he led India to two famous Test wins in the drawn five-match series in England.

He replaced Sanju Samson at the top of the order, but runs have not flown from his bat, raising questions ahead of the World Cup at home in February-March.

Speaking to the media after the loss in the second T20 against South Africa, ten Doeschate said Gill needed to loosen up a bit in the shortest format, and he showed signs of that at the back end of the Australia tour last month.

"Taking on the captaincy the way he did in England and how well he led and how much pride he took in that performance, I think an element of that carried over into what he wanted to do in the T20 side," said the assistant coach in response to a PTI query. "So if anything, he was too caring and maybe a little bit too tight. As I said, towards the back end of Australia, the talks were around freeing up a little bit more, trying to relinquish that responsibility, certainly in that capacity where you feel like it is all about you and you really need to justify your place in the team.

"We don't want him to do that. We want him to play as freely as he does during IPL seasons. We believe in his class and we believe he will come good, and the same with Surya (captain too has had an extended lean run)," said ten Doeschate.

The former Netherlands all-rounder also backed Suryakumar, who has not been able to find consistency since taking over as captain last year.

"Surya again is of such quality, and we have high expectations of the players. If you are going to be India's number three, there is pressure on you to score runs.

"There has been a fairly long string of form now where he hasn't got the scores we like. But in isolation, we are certainly not worried about it. Batting at three again, the job we want from him is to go out there and attack.

"Again, he is someone I also thought had a lightbulb moment in Australia. I thought he had been batting really nicely leading into this series as well. As I said, two games we are not worried about, and we are confident that he will come well," said ten Doeschate.

We had a poor night with the ball

India conceded 213 runs in good batting conditions, with the pace duo of Arshdeep Singh and Jasprit Bumrah having an off day, leaking 54 and 45 runs in their four overs, respectively. (*PTI*)

SALIL ARORA'S HUNDRED GOES IN VAIN AS JHARKHAND BEAT PUNJAB

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Ambi (Maharashtra)

Salil Arora made a sparkling 125 for Punjab, but batters fired in unison as Jharkhand scored an impressive six-wicket win in their Super League Group A match of the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy on Friday.

Arora's knock (45b, 9x4, 11x6), in which the hundred came in 39 balls, helped Punjab post a solid 235 for six in 20 overs after getting reduced to 28 for two. Arora punished Sushant Mishra, clobbering the left-arm pacer for three sixes and a four in the final over of the innings to lift Punjab to an imposing total.

The IPL scouts would certainly have noted this outing of Arora, which came four days ahead of next week's mini auction, and he has been included in the Rs 30 lakh group. Arora can double up as a wicketkeeper-batter, but on this day, Punjab skipper Prabhsimran Singh donned the big gloves.

But led by Kumar Kushagra (82 not out, 46b), skipper Ishan Kishan (47, 23b), Anukul Roy (37, 17b) and Pankaj Kumar (39, 18b), Jharkhand hunted down the target in 18.1 overs. Jharkhand made 237 for four.

India's captain Suryakumar Yadav arrive at Kangra Airport ahead of the third T20 international cricket match between India and South Africa, to be held at the HPCA Stadium in Kangra on Friday PTI

Keshav Maharaj to lead Pretoria Capitals in SA20

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Johannesburg

Senior South African spinner Keshav Maharaj was on Friday appointed as the captain of Pretoria Capitals for the upcoming SA20 tournament.

Maharaj, who had captained SA in white ball cricket, has played 40 T20Is in his career, taking 38 wickets. In SA20, the left-arm spinner has taken 27 wickets from 33 matches at an economy rate of 7.3. "One of South Africa's most experienced and respected leaders, Maharaj brings a wealth of international pedigree across formats, along with a proven track record of guiding teams with composure, clarity and intent," the SA20 said in a media release.

"His presence strengthens the balance and direction of the Pretoria Capitals squad as the team heads into the new season," it added.

India slip to 6th in WTC standings after New Zealand's big win against WI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Dubai

India on Friday slipped a rung to sixth position in the World Test Championship standings after New Zealand's comprehensive nine-wicket victory against the West Indies in Wellington propelled them to third place.

Runners-up in the first two WTC cycles, India were placed fifth after they were blanked 2-0 by South Africa at home last month, with New Zealand occupying the sixth position. However, the table saw a major turnaround after the Kiwis' big win in the second Test at Basin Reverse on Friday.

Former champions Australia continue to hold the top position with 100 percentage points (win-loss percentage), with South Africa in second place with 75 percentage points. Sri Lanka (66.67) and Pakistan (50) occupy the fourth and fifth positions, respectively.

New Zealand have so far accumulated 66.67 percentage points, while India has a win-loss percentage of 48.15. India can drop further down to seventh if England stage a comeback against Australia in the Ashes. The Aussies lead the series 2-0 with three more matches to play. India's next assignment is against Sri Lanka in August next year.

With the latest result, New Zealand have also boosted their prospects of a second appearance in the World Test Championship Final.

The Black Caps' bowlers did the damage on the third day at Basin Reserve, with Jacob Duffy's five-wicket haul helping the hosts dismiss the West Indies for just 128 in their second innings.

Shadab to prove fitness ahead of T20 World Cup

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Karachi

Keen to reclaim his place ahead of the T20 World Cup, experienced Pakistan allrounder Shadab Khan is eyeing the Big Bash League to prove his form and fitness after being sidelined for nearly six weeks due to a chronic shoulder injury.

The 27-year-old, who was appointed vice-captain earlier this year, underwent surgery in London for the recurring issue and has been out of international action since.

"Australia is one of the toughest places to play any level of cricket, and if I can reproduce form and prove my fitness, I think it will go a long way in convincing the selectors I am ready for international cricket again," Shadab, who will be playing for Sydney Thunder, said during a virtual media talk.

The spin all-rounder noted that it was the first time that so many Pakistani players were appearing in the Big Bash League, which begins on Sunday.

"It has created a lot of interest because, remember, we lost in the final of the 2022 World T20 Cup in Australia. Plus, there is a very big Pakistani and Asian expatriate community in Australia," he said.

Shadab said while Pakistani players regularly compete in the Pakistan Super League and domestic tournaments at home, playing against each other in a foreign league would be fascinating.

Babar Azam, Shaheen Shah Afridi and Muhammad Rizwan are all appearing in the Big Bash for the first time, while Shadab, Hasan Ali and Haris Rauf have played in the league in the past.

If we start judging Gill after two T20I games, then we have a problem: Nehra

KUSHAN SARKAR
New Delhi

Gujarat Titans head coach Ashish Nehra is not amused by the snap judgments being passed on skipper Shubman Gill's form, cautioning that writing him off after a couple of outings in the volatile T20 format reflects the growing tendency of arriving at quick conclusions.

Gill, who made a comeback to the T20I set-up as vice-captain during the Asia Cup, has totalled 181 runs in the last 10 games at a strike-rate below 140. Nehra, who has watched Gill from close quarters as the GT head coach for the past two seasons, was asked whether he is worried, considering that IPL is three months away. "Forget three months, had IPL been three weeks away, I (still) wouldn't be worried. Because you are talking about a format like T20. And only two matches have been played against South Africa, if I am not wrong," Nehra, the former fast bowler known for straight shooting, replied to a query from PTI during an interaction with a select group. Nehra feels that the fundamental problem with criticism in India is reaching a conclusion on the basis of numbers alone.

"This is our problem. In such a fast-paced tournament format, whether it's international cricket or IPL, if a player like Shubman Gill is judged after not coming good in two to three matches, then it will be difficult," Nehra said. In his inimitable style laced with sarcasm, Nehra said if one reckons that change is needed, there are many options are there to be tried.

"You have a lot of options if you want to see. You can remove Abhishek Sharma and Shubman Gill, and you can open with Sai Sudharsan and Ruturaj Gaikwad," Nehra said, and his dig at critics wasn't lost on anyone.

"If you want to remove them (Sai and Ruturaj), you can open with Washington Sundar and Ishan Kishan. So, you have a lot of options.

"Now, if you lose 1 or 2 matches, if the stats of the so-called batsmen or bowlers are not good and if you talk about changing them, then it will be difficult," Nehra batted with full force for Gill.

Washington is a batter who can play anywhere

Washington Sundar played only six games for the Titans last season because of a set combination, but Nehra did drop hints that if fit, the Tamil Nadu man would be used way more this time. Washington's role in the Indian team has created a lot of confusion as to whether he is more of a batting all-rounder or a specialist spinner who is also a capable batsman. (*PTI*)

You never know what you have until you've lost it: de Kock on reversing international retirement

BHARAT SHARMA
Mullanpur

Quinton de Kock has got his hunger back to win games for South Africa, feels fitter than ever and is batting as if he never spent time away from international cricket. His sublime 90 off 46 balls in the second T20I against India was a testament to the left-hander's renewed purpose in playing for the country again. In the age of power-hitting, de Kock relies on conventional strokeplay and makes batting look effortless. The 32-year-old had retired from ODIs after the 2023 World Cup and had not played the shortest format since the loss to India in the 2024 T20 World Cup final until October.

De Kock is now back playing white-ball cricket and says the time away from the game actually allowed him to realise what he was missing out on.

"I think before my retirement, I was losing my hunger to win games for this team. That time away just brought back my hunger. I was telling the guys, I don't think I've ever felt this way," de Kock spoke in depth about his reasons for an international comeback. "Before, when you're young, you're trying to just play to score runs and impress. I feel now that there's a renewed energy where I'm not just playing. I'm playing to win every game with renewed energy."

De Kock said he had lost his motivation after going through the grind of international cricket day in and day out. "Before, it would be hard to wake up and go play for the team again. Especially when you play a series over and over where you've played India multiple times, home and away. Over time, I was getting sick of it. I was looking for a new challenge, and I wasn't getting it.

"Now coming back, I feel like this is actually what I missed. Everyone knows, you never know what you have until you've lost it. Now coming back, there's a renewed energy where I feel I can play much longer than what I thought previously," said the elegant left-hander.

Now that he has found the drive to excel for his team in white-ball formats, is there a possibility for a return to Test cricket?

"You are not the only one who has asked me this, but as of now, it's a straight no," de Kock said on a lighter note. The opener said his decision to reverse retirement was taken after due deliberation, and the break was needed for him to rekindle his love for the sport.

"It wasn't a decision that I just woke up and had. I think over time, the more breaks I had, the more I felt ready to come back. I'd already played in international cricket for more than a decade.

"When I left, I was quite exhausted from international cricket. So, my break, I still feel, was much needed. So when I came back now, I've got a lot of energy, I feel I can put back towards the team.

"I've always said to coach, to Shooks (Shukri Conrad), I want to play as long as I can now. I don't think I could have had that mindset if I carried on playing. I think I would have finished my career earlier. Now I feel I can prolong my career. I feel fitter than ever. Mentally also, I'm not exhausted," said the stylish batter.

Considering he had played the game long enough, de Kock said adjusting to the current demands of the game was not tough.

It was pretty easy, coming back as a batsman. Because I was doing it quite a bit before, I knew what it took in order to be an international cricketer again. (*PTI*)

Although every possible care and caution has been taken to avoid errors or omissions, this publication is being sold on the condition and understanding that information given in this publication is merely for reference and must not be taken as having authority of or binding in any way on the writers, editors, publishers, and printers and sellers who do not owe any responsibility for any damage or loss to any person, a purchaser of this publication or not for the result of any action taken on the basis of this work. All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent court and forums in Lucknow only. Readers are advised and requested to verify and seek appropriate advice to satisfy themselves about the veracity of any kind of advertisement before responding to any contents published in this newspaper. The printer, publisher, editor and any employee of the Pioneer Group's will not be held responsible for any kind of claim made by the advertisers of the products & services and shall not be made responsible for any kind of loss, consequences and further product-related damages on such advertisements.

Printed and Published by Kushan Mitra for and on behalf of CMYK Printech Ltd., 4th Floor, Sahara Shopping Centre, Faizabad Road, Lucknow-226016 and Printed at The Indian Express Pvt Ltd., C-26 Amausi Industrial Area, Nadarganj, Lucknow. Executive Editor Deepak Kumar Jha, Resident Editor Vijay Prakash Singh. RNI No. 2016/57. Lucknow Telephones: EPABX: 4036600 Fax: 2345582. Allahabad Office: (0532) 2420818, 2421018, 3290460. Kanpur Office: (0512) 2304006, 2304416. Varanasi Office: (0542) 2414294, 2414295. Delhi Office: 100K, Milap Bhawan, 8/A, Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, New Delhi-110 002, Phone: 011-40110455. Corporate Office:- 201-205, 2nd Floor, Pratap Bhawan 5, B.S.Z. Marg, New Delhi-110002 Phone: 011-46035729, 011-69342500.

India lose 1-2 to Spain in FIH Junior Women's World Cup

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Santiago

India ended a disappointing 10th in the FIH Junior Women's Hockey World Cup after being handed a 1-2 defeat by Spain in their final classification match .

Kanika Siwach (41') was the sole goal-scorer for India, while Natalia Vilanova (16') and Esther Canales (36') netted one each for Spain at the Centro Deportivo de Hockey Cesped in the 9th/10th place playoff.

It was a cagey yet entertaining first quarter as Spain were through on goal with only the goalkeeper to beat but India's Nidhi heroically stepped out and made two back-to-back saves to keep the scores level.

In the 14th minute, Spain were awarded the first penalty corner of the match, which was again denied by Nidhi. In the early moments of the second quarter, Spain launched a quick counterattack as Sara Carmona Ramos dribbled skill-fully around the circle and played a pass inside, successfully deflected by Natalia Vilanova (16') into the net to claim the lead.

India had a couple of bright chances in the following minutes but Spain hardly made any mistakes and didn't give any penalty corner to maintain their advantage.

In the 36th minute, India had a brief moment of celebration as Sonam did well to intercept a pass and score with a powerful strike. However, the goal was cancelled after Spain took a successful video referral.

Unfortunately for India, in the same minute, Spain won and converted a penalty corner, thanks to a flick from Canales as they increased their advantage to two goals.

In the 41st minute, India won two successive penalty corners as Siwach beat the Spanish goalkeeper with her strike and delivered a goal for India to reduce the deficit and conclude an eventful third quarter. In the last quarter, India upped the intensity, pushed ahead in numbers and gave it their all to create maximum chances and test Spain's goalkeeper.

They came extremely close to scoring again as Ishika unleashed a powerful backhand shot that beat the goalkeeper. However, it was stopped by a defender on the goal-line, denying India the equaliser. Thereafter, Spain fell back and ensured they defended their slim lead till the clock ran out.

Messi's GOAT India Tour set to dazzle

TAPAN MOHANTA
Kolkata

A vendor sells Argentine footballer Lionel Messi's jerseys ahead of his visit to the city as part of the 'G.O.A.T. India Tour 2025' in Kolkata PTI

Argentine superstar Lionel Messi's long-awaited return to India, after a magical maiden visit back in 2011, will be high on glitz but low on actual football, promising a spectacle that may not recapture the raw sporting frenzy that once shook the Salt Lake Stadium here.

His artistry in a competitive match will be missing this time. It would be quite unlike 2011 when more than 85,000 fans packed the stadium, some even perched on terrace edges, to watch Argentina edge Venezuela 1-0 in a FIFA friendly.

The eight-time Ballon d'Or winner is not scheduled to play serious football on the 'G.O.A.T. India Tour 2025'. It is a fully promotional, and commercially-curated event which will begin on Saturday here and wind up on Monday in New Delhi.

Yet, for a city that once worshipped Maradona, Pele, dazzled Dunga and embraced Ronaldinho, the arrival of Messi even without football is unmissable because Kolkata cannot ignore him.

The organisers have opened 78,000 seats at the Salt Lake Stadium with ticket prices going up to ₹7,000 for his 45-minute appearance on Saturday morning, raising questions on whether the city will respond with the same unrestrained passion.

Messi will spend less than 72 hours in India but will traverse four metropolis — Kolkata, Hyderabad, Mumbai and Delhi — in what has increasingly begun to resemble a high-profile roadshow involving chief ministers, corporate heavyweights, Bollywood celebrities and even a scheduled meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

India's Test and ODI captain Shubman Gill, a self-confessed Messi admirer, is also expected to meet him after the Dharamshala T20I on December 14.

Messi's last appearance in India remains etched in memory when on September 3, 2011, he danced past defenders, mesmerised with his left-footed grace and triggered waves of ecstasy in a packed stadium.

Though he didn't score, fans left believing they had witnessed greatness.

High on glamour quotient

The highlight of the tour will be a 45-minute philanthropic fashion event in Mumbai on Sunday, featuring Messi, his long-time strike partner Luis Suarez and Argentina midfielder Rodrigo De Paul.

"There will be celebrity models, cricketers, Bollywood celebrities, millionaires, founders. Tiger and Jackie Shroff, John Abraham among others," said Satadru Dutta, sole promoter of the tour. Suarez will also feature in a Spanish music show.

The organisers have requested Messi to bring "some memorabilia" of his trophy-winning 2022 World Cup campaign which will be auctioned during the Mumbai leg. The Mumbai event at Wankhede Stadium will be preceded by a Padel Cup at the CCI. (*PTI*)

From small towns to world stage: The fearless young brigade of Indian Hockey

MONA PARTHSARATHI
Chennai

A cherished inheritance, a platform to fetch a job or quite simply a leap of faith — every member of India's World Cup bronze-winning junior men's hockey team has a different take to offer on what the sport means to them. But what binds this under-21 bunch together is the dream of an Olympic medal for the country.

And that ambition has grown manifold after they fought their way to a podium finish at the World Cup ending India's nine-year wait for a medal at the showpiece.

In the process, they assured hockey watchers that the inevitable and upcoming transition period in the senior team would not be as turbulent as is being anticipated.

Every player comes from a different world and is shaped by adversity which is unique to his story of grit and hope.

For 21-year-old captain Rohit from Dabra village in Haryana, even eating a simple meal was once a battle. A facial fracture during a practice game against the senior team last year left him nearly immobile for months, enough to make him wonder if he would ever play again.

"Those few months were so difficult that even eating and drinking became painful," Rohit told 'PTI Bhasha' on the sidelines of the Junior World Cup here.

"At one point, I thought I wouldn't be able to play again. But once I returned to hockey, I felt I couldn't stop. I wasn't afraid anymore. Now I want to play for the senior team and win World Cup and Olympic medals. We hope this bronze inspires more boys to take up hockey."

In Sundargarh, Odisha, which was once India's hockey nursery, 19-year-old Anmol Ekka was born in a village of barely 3,000 people.

After losing his mother early, he was raised by his maternal grandparents, and it was in their village that he found the sport that changed his life.

"Everyone in my village played football. But when I moved in with my grandparents, I started playing Hockey which was very popular there. After shifting to a hostel, I realised I could work hard and play for the country," said the full-back, who is a Birendra Lakra fan.

His performance in the bronze medal match against Argentina marked him as one of the standout players of the tournament.

Another product of Sundargarh, 21-year-old midfielder Roshan Kujur, grew up playing on grass fields before stepping on astro turf. His inspiration is Olympian Manpreet Singh, the man he hopes to emulate at the senior level.

"There are many grassroots tournaments in my village and we used to play on grass. I became a midfielder watching Manpreet Singh from childhood, however I never imagined playing for India," he added.

In Pathankot, Punjab, goalkeeper Princedeep Singh found his calling after leaving football behind.

He trained at the Cheema Academy and wore the iconic No. 16 jersey, which once belonged to the great P R Sreejesh who is now his coach. He did Sreejesh and his team proud with a superb performance in the shootout against Belgium in the quarterfinals.

A Cristiano Ronaldo fan, who unwinds with Sidhu Moosewala songs, Princedeep said he never lost belief even when the team was trailing Argentina by two goals for three quarters in the bronze medal play-off.

"We just told each other that we had to play for one another, it was our last junior tournament. The crowd support pushed us further. We're not afraid of any team and can beat anyone on our day," he said.

For Manmeet Singh, hockey runs in the family.

The 20-year-old mid-fielder from Verowal in Tarn Taran, Punjab is the nephew of Olympian Akashdeep Singh and grew up in a home where mistakes on the field meant a dressing down not just from coaches but family too. "My father was in the army and played hockey at the national level. Uncle Akashdeep is an Olympian and another uncle represented Punjab Police. If I make an error, everyone points it out," he said.

After five months of preparation in Bengaluru, Manmeet now longs to go home. "I want to eat Sarson da saag and makki di roti made by my mother. It's been so long."

From Ghuman Kalan village in Punjab, 20-year-old forward Dilraj admits he didn't take hockey seriously at first. But his mother's sacrifices gave him purpose.

"My father wasn't well, and my mother sold her earrings to buy my first goalkeeping kit. Sometimes I didn't even have money to travel for tournaments. Today every time I take the field, there is a flashback in my mind about her sacrifices," he said. "I want to give my mother a better life and bring glory to the country."

Uttar Pradesh's a 21-year-old drag-flicker Shardanand Tiwari closed out the first phase of his young career by scoring a crucial goal against Belgium like he had in the 2021 Junior World Cup. "We beat Belgium by one goal in Bhubaneswar in 2021 and I scored then. In 2023, I fell sick before leaving for the tournament in Kuala Lumpur. This time I was lucky, and I am happy I could score an important goal in the quarterfinal." "I keep chanting God's name in my mind. I am confident I will score when the opportunity comes," he said. (*PTI*)

Vinesh Phogat returns from retirement

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
New Delhi

Star Indian wrestler Vinesh Phogat on Friday announced that she would be coming out of retirement to take another shot at an elusive Olympic medal at the 2028 Los Angeles Games as the "the fire never left" her and was merely buried under "exhaustion and noise". The 31-year-old had walked away from the sport after the heartbreak of the Paris Games last year.

यूनियन बैंक ऑफ इंडिया Union Bank of India
A Government of India Undertaking

Regional Office : C.P.O. 4/4, 2nd Floor, Keshavpuram, Kalyanpur, Kanpur
Head Office : 239, Vidhan Bhawan Marg, Nariman Point Mumbai

SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES | Date of e-Auction : 30-12-2025

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable assets under the securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 Read with Proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rule, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the secured creditor, the constructive possession of which has been taken by the authorized officer of **Union Bank of India** (Secured Creditor), will be sold on **"As is Where is," "As is What is," and "Whatever there is"** on the date mentioned below, for recovery of dues as mentioned hereunder to Union Bank of India from the below mentioned Borrower(s) & Guarantor(s). The Reserve Price & the Earnest Money Deposit or also mentioned hereunder.

Branch Name : Swaroop Nagar • Address : 7/135, Mandakini Plaza, Swaroop Nagar, Kanpur, Branch Head : Shri Santosh Gupta • Mob.: 7799345504

Borrower : Shri Vishal Kumar Gupta & Smt. Komal Gupta, Both R/o Flat No. F-3, House No. 20/119, Chatai Mohal, Kanpur.
O/s Amount as per Demand Notice : **Rs. 11,35,750.80** + Intt. + Other Charges
Property : Flat No. F-3, 1st Floor, Shri Shivdham Apartment, House No. 20/119, Chatai Mohal, Kanpur Nagar. **Owner of Property :** Shri Vishal Kumar Gupta and Smt. Komal Gupta. **Area :** 67.35 Sq. Mtr. & Undivided Share Land 16.78 Sq. Mtr., **Bounded : North-** House No. 20/125, **South-** Flat No. F-4, **East-** Flat No. F-2, **West-** House No. 20/201 & 20/199.
Date & Time of E-Auction : 30-12-2025 at 12:00 Noon to 5:00 pm
Reserve Price : Rs. 15,49,000/-, Earnest Money to be deposited Rs. 1,54,900/-. For detailed terms and condition of the sale, please refer to the link provided in https://www.unionbankofindia.co.in// english/TendelViewAllAuction.aspx

Borrower : Sri Bharat Singh S/o Sri Beche Lal & Smt. Amisha W/o Sri Bharat Singh, Both R/o: House No. 48-A/2, Dabauli, District-Kanpur. **Guarantor :** Sri Shiv Kumar Sahu S/o Sri Babu Lal, R/o: House No. 85/29, Bansh Mandi, Laxmi Purwa, Kanpur Nagar
O/s Amount as per Demand Notice : **Rs. 18,12,027.80** + Intt. + Other Charges
Property : Residential Land & Building Situated at Plot No. 32, Aarazi No. 125, Mauza-Khandepur, Kanpur. **Owner of Property :** Sri Bharat Singh S/o Sri Beche Lal, **Area :** 171.38 Sq. Mtr., **Bounded : North :** 4.57 Mtr. Road, **South :** Plot of Sri Ram Prakash Pandey, **East :** Plot of Sri Dabbu Pandit, **West:** 9 Mtr. Road. **Date & Time of E-Auction :30-12-2025 at 12.00 Noon to 5.00 pm**
Reserve Price :Rs. 22,38,000/-, Earnest Money to be deposited Rs. 2,23,800/-. For detailed terms and condition of the sale, please refer to the link provided in https://www.unionbankofindia.co.in// english/TendelViewAllAuction.aspx

Borrower : Shri Ram Krishna Vishwakarma S/o Shri Ram Kripal Vishwakarma, R/o C-283, Barra-8, Sector-B, Kanpur Nagar.
Property : House Situated at Part of Aarazi No. 313, Near Karam Yogi Inter College, Shastri Chauk, Main Road, Barra-6, Kanpur Nagar. **Owner of Property:** Shri Ram Krishna Vishwakarma S/o Shri Ram Kripal Vishwakarma, **Area :** 153.63 Sq. Mtr. **Bounded : North-** Plot on Aarazi No. 313 of Shri Ram Kripal, **South-** Part of Aarazi No. 313, **East-** Part of Aarazi No. 313, **West-** 45 Mtr. Wide Road.
O/s Amount as per Demand Notice : **Rs. 17,54,341.75** + Intt. + Others Charges, **Date & Time of E-Auction : 30-12-2025 at 12.00 Noon to 5.00 pm**
Reserve Price : Rs. Rs. 42,30,000/-, Earnest Money to be deposited Rs. Rs. 4,23,000/-. For detailed terms and condition of the sale, please refer to the link provided in https://www.unionbankofindia.co.in// english/TendelViewAllAuction.aspx

Branch Name : Kidwai Nagar • Address : 133/164 M-Block Kidwai Nagar, Kanpur, Branch Head : Shri Gaurav Shukla • Mob. : 7376818973

Borrower : Shri Kamal Kishore Shukla S/o Shri Visheshwar Shukla & Smt. Mamta Devi Shukla W/o Shri Kamal Kishore Shukla, Both R/o : H. No. 308, Duda Colony, Panki, Pankh Bahadur Nagar, Distt. Kanpur (Old) and Residential H. No. E-1/308, Ratanpur Extension Part-2, Panki, Kanpur Nagar (New). **Guarantor :** Shri Ram Khilawan S/o Shri Jhabbu Lal, R/o : EWS 110/876, Ratanpur Panki, Kanpur.
O/s Amount as per Demand Notice : **Rs. 7,92,067.00** + Intt. + Other Charges
Property : Residential House No. E-1/308, Ratanpur Extension Part-2, Panki, Kanpur Nagar, **Owner of Property :** Smt. Mamta Devi Shukla W/o Shri Kamal Kishore Shukla. **Area :** 30 Sq. Mtr., **Bounded:** North-6 Mtr. Road, South- Plot No. B-1/36, East-Plot No. E-307, West-Plot No. E-309,
Date & Time of E-Auction : 30-12-2025 at 12.00 Noon to 5.00 pm
Reserve Price : Rs. 11,74,000/-, Earnest Money to be deposited Rs. 1,17,400/-. For detailed terms and condition of the sale, please refer to the link provided in https://www.unionbankofindia.co.in// english/TendelViewAllAuction.aspx

Branch Name : Uttaripura • Address : G.T. Road, Uttaripura, Kanpur Nagar, Branch Head : Shri Anurag Tiwari • Mob.: 8336917035

Borrower : M/s Aasiyan Poultry Farm, Proprietor : Shri Shakir Ali S/o Shri Masuk Ali, R/o : Village Sunahuda, Post Ghanshyampur, Tehsil Bilhaur, Distt. Kanpur Nagar, **Guarantor :** Smt. Rasulan W/o Shri Masuk Ali, R/o : Village Sunahuda, Post Ghanshyampur, Tehsil Bilhaur, Distt. Kanpur Nagar, O/s Amount as per Demand Notice : **Rs. 15,08,084.45** + Intt. + Others Charges
Property : Non Agriculture Property at Arazi Plot No. 401, Area 0.09204 Hectare, Plot No. 402 Area 0.225 Hectare, Plot No. 403, Area 0.164 Hectare, Total Area 0.4810 Heactare, 1/4th Share of Total Area ie 0.1203 Hectare, Situated at Village Sunahuda, Tehsil Bilhaur, Distt. Kanpur Nagar . **Owner of Property :** Smt. Rasulan W/o Shri Masuk Ali, **Bounded -North :** Part of Arazi No. 401 and 404, **South :** Chak Road, **East :** Part of Arazi No. 403, **West :** Part of Arazi No. 402, **Date & Time of E-Auction : 30-12-2025 at 12.00 Noon to 5.00 pm**
Reserve Price : Rs. 16,93,000/-, Earnest Money to be deposited Rs. 1,69,300/-. For detailed terms and condition of the sale, please refer to the link provided in https://www.unionbankofindia.co.in// english/TendelViewAllAuction.aspx

Branch Name : Akbarpur • Address : Ward No. 4, Gandhi Nagar, Akbarpur, Kanpur Dehat, Branch Head : Shri Anshul Kumar • Mob. : 9918501362

Borrower : M/s Nirmla Enterprises, Proprietor : Smt. Mala Devi W/o Shri Ajay Kumar, R/o : Village Karchal, Post Parsauli, Distt. Kanpur Dehat. **Guarantor :** Shri Ajay Kumar & Shri Atul Kumar, Both S/o Shri Harnam Singh, Both R/o : Village Karchal, Post Parsauli, Distt. Kanpur Dehat. O/s Amount as per Demand Notice : **Rs. 11,46,771.88** + Intt. + Other Charges
Property : Residential Gata No. 1004, Situated on Min. Khata No. 489 at Rania, Tehsil Akbarpur, Distt. Kanpur Dehat. **Owner of Property :** Shri Ajay Kumar S/o Shri Harnam Singh, **Area :** 210 Sq. Mtr., **Bounded :** North- Plot of Munia & Seller, South- Plot of Seller thereafter Plot of Sanjay Pandey, East- Road 15 Ft. Wide, West- House of Ram Autar & Harish Chandra.
Date & Time of E-Auction : 30-12-2025 at 12.00 Noon to 5.00 pm,
Reserve Price : Rs. 12,28,000/-, Earnest Money to be deposited Rs. 1,22,800/-. For detailed terms and condition of the sale, please refer to the link provided in https://www.unionbankofindia.co.in// english/TendelViewAllAuction.aspx

Borrower : Shri Namo Narayan Mishra S/o Shri Barati Lal Mishra & Smt. Poonam Mishra W/o Shri Namo Narayan Mishra, Both R/o : 136, Ashok Nagar, Akabarpur, Distt, Kanpur Dehat **Guarantor :** Shri Mani Gupta S/o Shri Sundar Gupta, R/o : Nayaganj, Akabarpur, Distt. Kanpur Dehat. **Property :** Residential Plot, Situated at Gata No. 208, House No. 136, Ashok Nagar, Tehsil Akbharpur, Distt. Kanpur Dehat. **Owner of Property :** Smt. Poonam Mishra W/o Shri Namo Narayan Mishra. **Area :** 97 Sq. Mtr., **Bounded :** North- Plot of Govind Mishra & Ram Ji Mishra, South- House of Namo Narayan Mishra , East-Open Plot of Namo Narayan Mishra, West- Road of Town Area.
O/s Amount as per Demand Notice : **Rs. 10,17,593.27** + Intt. + Other Charges. **Date & Time of E-Auction : 30-12-2025 at 12.00 Noon to 5.00 pm**
Reserve Price : Rs. 16,30,000/-, Earnest Money to be deposited Rs. 1,63,000/-. For detailed terms and condition of the sale, please refer to the link provided in https://www.unionbankofindia.co.in// english/TendelViewAllAuction.aspx

Borrower : Smt. Sneh Lata W/o Shri Munish Kumar Gupta, R/o : House No. 62, Bhuganiyapur, Tehsil Akbarpur, Distt. Kanpur Dehat, **Guarantor :** Shri Munish Kumar Gupta S/o Shri Satish Chandra Gupta, R/o : House No. 62, Bhuganiyapur, Tehsil Akbarpur, Distt. Kanpur Dehat and Shri Vijay Singh S/o Shri Shiv Narayan, R/o : Village Bhuganiyapur, Tehsil Akbarpur, Distt. Kanpur Dehat.
Property : Land and Building on Plot situated at Part of Gata No. 252 Min/1, Khata No. 00072, Bajrang Nagar, Villlage Salwatpur, Ward No. 12, Nagar Panchyat Akbarpur, Tehsil Akbarpur, Distt. Kanpur Dehat. **Owner of Property :** Smt. Sneh Lata W/o Shri Munish Kumar Gupta, **Area :** 890 Sq. Mtr., **Bounded -** North : Field of Ram Bhajan, South : Part of Arazi, East : Field of Nagendra, West : 10Ft. Kachha Chak Road.
O/s Amount as per Demand Notice: **Rs.18,12,913.88** + Intt. + Others Charges, **Date & Time of E-Auction : 30-12-2025 at 12.00 Noon to 5.00 pm**
Reserve Price : Rs.16,78,000/- , Earnest Money to be deposited Rs.1,67,800/- For detailed terms and condition of the sale, please refer to the link provided in https://www.unionbankofindia.co.in// english/TendelViewAllAuction.aspx

Branch Name : Awas Vikas, Kalyanpur • Address : Kalyanpur, Keshavpuram, Awas Vikas, Kanpur, Branch Head : Shri Ashok Pandey • Mob.: 9838223000

Borrower : Mishra General Store, Address : Arazi No. 1988, Shukhari Vihar, Daheli Sujanpur, Kanpur. **Proprietor :** Shri Arun Kumar Mishra S/o Shri Krishna Chandra, R/o : 201, Bankey Lal Puram, Koyla Nagar, Kidwai Nagar, Kanpur Nagar and Also at 453, Mangla Vihar Pratham, New PAC Line, Kanpur Nagar. **Guarantor :** Smt. Meenu Mishra W/o Shri Arun Kumar Mishra, R/o : 201, Bankey Lal Puram, Koyla Nagar, Kidwai Nagar, Kanpur Nagar and also at Village and Post Kudni, Tehsil Ghatampur, Distt. Kanpur Nagar.
O/s Amount as per Demand Notice : **Rs. 12,09,642.44** + Intt. + Others Charges
Property : Land and Building on Arazi No. 1988 Min, Situated at Mauza Daheli Sujanpur Pargana Tehsil and Distt. Kanpur Nagar. **Owner of Property :** Smt. Meenu Mishra W/o Shri Arun Kumar Mishra, **Area :** 100 Sq. Yards, **Bounded -North :** 60 Ft. Road, **South :** Part of Land No. 1988, **East :** Part of Land No. 1988, **West :** Part of Land No. 1988. **Date & Time of E-Auction : 30-12-2025 at 12.00 Noon to 5.00 pm**
Reserve Price : Rs. 22,58,000/-, Earnest Money to be deposited Rs. 2,25,800/-. For detailed terms and condition of the sale, please refer to the link provided in https://www.unionbankofindia.co.in// english/TendelViewAllAuction.aspx

Borrower : R. S. Enterprsies, Proprietor : Shri Raj Kishore Sharma S/o Shri Ramesh Chandra Sharma, **Address :** EWS-70, Jarauli, Phase-2, Barra, Kanpur Nagar, **Guarantor :** Smt. Radha Rani W/o Shri Raj Kishore Sharma, R.o : EWS, 70, Jarauli, Phase-2, Barra, Kanpur Nagar
O/s Amount as per Demand Notice : **Rs. 16,31,678.00** + Intt. + Others Charges
Property : Premises No. EWS-70, Situated at Phase-2 Jarauli, Barra, Kanpur Nagar,. **Owner of Property :** Smt. Radha Rani W/o Shri Raj Kishore Sharma, **Area :** 36.75 Sq. Mtr., **Bounded -North :** House No. 15, **South :** 6 Mtr. Road, **East :** House No. 69, **West :** House No. 71.
Date & Time of E-Auction : 30-12-2025 at 12.00 Noon to 5.00 pm
Reserve Price : Rs. 17,37,000/-, Earnest Money to be deposited Rs. 1,73,700/-. For detailed terms and condition of the sale, please refer to the link provided in https://www.unionbankofindia.co.in// english/TendelViewAllAuction.aspx

Branch Name : Moolganj Crossing Address : 45/59, Gaya Prasad Lane, Moolgang, Kanpur, Branch Head : Shri Jitendra Kr. Singh Mob.: 9307426320

Borrower : Late Rajeev Kumar through its legal heir Smt. Neetu Srivastava W/o Late Rajeev Srivastava, R/o : House No. 118/296-I, Kashualpuri, Kanpur Nagar. **Guarantor :** Shri Kamal Narayan S/o Shri Puttan Lal, R/o : 1493/1550, Ratanpur Colony, Pankh Bahadur Nagar, Panki Gangaganj, Kanpur. O/s Amount as per Demand Notice : **Rs. 17,24,689.14** + Intt. + Other Charges
Property : Residential House No. 118/296-I, Situated at Kashualpuri, Distt. Kanpur Nagar, **Owner of Property :** Late Rajeev Kumar. **Area :** 41.80 Sq. Mtr., **Bounded:** North-5 Ft. Gali., South- Part of House, East-House No. 118/296-H, West-6 Ft. Gali
Date & Time of E-Auction : 30-12-2025 at 12.00 Noon to 5.00 pm
Reserve Price : Rs. 17,37,000/-, Earnest Money to be deposited Rs. 1,73,700/-. For detailed terms and condition of the sale, please refer to the link provided in https://www.unionbankofindia.co.in// english/TendelViewAllAuction.aspx

Branch Name : Shyam Nagar • Address : PAC Line, Shyam Nagar, Kanpur Branch Head : Shri Ravindra Kr. Arya • Mob. : 8899299688

Borrower : Shri Shiv Prakash Soni S/o Shri Devi Charan and Smt. Rekha Soni W/o Shri Shiv Prakash Soni, Both R/o : EWS House No. 3C-253, Awas Vikas Scheme No. 2, Hanspuram, Distt. Kanpur Nagar. **Guarantor :** Shri Deepak Kumar S/o Shri Chhote Lal Kushwaha, R/o : House No. 3A/267, Awas Vikas Colony, Hanspuram, Naubasta, Distt. Kanpur Nagar.
O/s Amount as per Demand Notice : **Rs. 10,25,722.41** + Intt. + Others Charges
Property : Residential House EWS, 3C-253 Situated at Awas Vikas Scheme No. 2, Hanspuram, Distt. Kanpur Nagar. **Owner of Property :** Shri Shiv Prakash Soni S/o Shri Devi Charan, **Area :** 30.69 Sq. Mtr., **Bounded -North :** Plot No. 3C-254, **South :** Plot No. 3C-252, **East :** 6 Mtr. Road , **West :** Plot No. 3C-245. **Date & Time of E-Auction : 30-12-2025 at 12.00 Noon to 5.00 pm**
Reserve Price : Rs. 14,29,000/-, Earnest Money to be deposited Rs. 1,42,900/-. For detailed terms and condition of the sale, please refer to the link provided in https://www.unionbankofindia.co.in// english/TendelViewAllAuction.aspx

Branch Name : Auraiya • Address : Near Subhash Chowk, Auraiya Bus Stand, Auraiya, Branch Head : Shri Sunit Kr. Mishra • Mob. : 7880640222

Borrower : M/s Mohan Traders, Proprietor : Shri Rishi Pandey S/o Shri Santosh Kumar, **Address :** Brahm Nagar Mohalla, Auraiya, Distt. Auraiya. **Guarantor :** Smt. Gulab Rani W/o Shri Gyan Prakash, R/o : Brahm Nagar Mohalla, Auraiya, Distt. Auraiya.
Property : Residential Land & Building Premises No. 26/947, Situated at Mohalla Brahm Nagar (Near Om Sweet House & Mobile Tower), Auraiya, Distt. Auraiya. **Owner of Property :** Smt. Gulab Rani W/o Shri Gyan Prakash, **Area :** 860 Sq. Ft., **Bounded -**North : House of Smt. Vinita Bhadauriya, South : House of Shri Karuna Shankar Mishra, East : 11 Ft. Wide Road , West : House of Shri Laxmi Kant Dixit.
O/s Amount as per Demand Notice : **Rs. 9,21,442.89** + Intt. + Others Charges , **Date & Time of E-Auction : 30-12-2025 at 12.00 Noon to 5.00 pm**
Reserve Price : Rs. 10,60,000/-, Earnest Money to be deposited Rs. 1,06,000/-. For detailed terms and condition of the sale, please refer to the link provided in https://www.unionbankofindia.co.in// english/TendelViewAllAuction.aspx

Branch Name : Orai Main, Address : Chaturvedi Complex, Kalpi Road, Orai Distt. Jalaun, Branch Head : Shri Vinay Kumar • Mob. : 6306466499

Borrower : Late Seema Nigam Legal Heir W/o Shri Brijesh Kumar Nigam & Shri Brijesh Kumar Nigam, R/o : 448/8, Rajendra Nagar, (Near Nala of Tulsi Nagar) Orai,Distt.Jalaun, **Guarantor :** Shri Rajendra Prasad Saxena S/o Bateshwar Dayal, R/o : 2824, Ram Nagar, Shanti Nagar, Orai, Distt. Jalaun, O/s Amount as per Demand Notice : **Rs. 4,42,000.00** + Intt. + Other Charges.
Property : Land & Building Property Situated at House No.78/1, Mauza Iklashpura, Rajendra Nagar, Orai Distt. Jalaun. **Owner of Property :** Late Seema Nigam Legal Heir W/o Shri Brijesh Kumar Nigam, **Area :** 94.75 Sq. Mtr. **Bounded : North :** Plot of Smt. Malti Devi, **South :** 11 Ft. Kaccha Rasta, **East :** House of Smt. Rani Devi., **West :** Rasta 13 Ft. **Date & Time of E-Auction : 30-12-2025 at 12.00 Noon to 5.00 pm**
Reserve Price : Rs. 9,60,000/-, Earnest Money to be deposited Rs. 96,000/-. For detailed terms and condition of the sale, please refer to the link provided in https://www.unionbankofindia.co.in// english/TendelViewAllAuction.aspx

For Registration and Login and Bidding Rules visit https://baanknet.com

Date : 12.12.2025 **Place : Kanpur / Kanpur Dehat / Auraiya /Jalaun** **Authorized Officer, Union Bank of India**