Army Chief calls Operation Sindoor an 88-hour trailer

SC terms liquor tetra packs dangerous and deceptive

Jobs cause a possible stock effect



German Goverment lifts arms ban on Israel

India needs good coaches of football: Lothar



Human Sagar passes away



Popular playback singer Human Sagar, who had been admitted to the AIIMS Bhubaneswar Emergency on November 14 in a critical state, passed away at 9:08 pm on Monday. He was 34.

An evaluation revealed he was suffering from multiple life-threatening conditions, including Multi-Organ Dysfunction Syndrome (MODS) with encephalopathy, shock, respiratory failure, acute kidney injury, hepatopathy, thrombocytopenia coagulopathy.

Human Sagar's demise has sent shockwaves through Odisha's music and cultural

Odisha's Rajya Sabha chessboard heats up

BJP sharpens knife; BJD regroups; Congress holds the loker

RAJEEV RATHAN Bhubaneswar

Political stakes are soaring in Odisha as four Rajya Sabha seats from the State will fall vacant in April 2026. These include two held by the Biju Janata Dal's (BJD) Munna Khan and Niranjan Bisi and two by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Sujit Kumar and Mamata Mohanta.

The results of the coming Rajya Sabha elections could significantly shape the balance of power not just in Odisha but also in national politics. The impending contest has triggered intense maneuvering among the State's power players. While the BJP appears poised at the helm, the BJD is plotting its comeback, and the Congress, though numerically disadvantaged, finds itself in a rare position to sway the balance.

According to political observers, this battle is about far more than four vacant seats; it's about control, perception and the future leadership of Odisha's political landscape.

State president Manmohan Samal has emerged as the central figure in the unfolding drama. After steering the party to a resounding victory in the Nuapada bypoll, Samal is being widely touted as the frontrunner for one Rajya Sabha seat. His elevation would not only consolidate the BJP's internal structure but also send out a message from Delhi that Odisha's leadership is being actively reshaped. Talks within the party suggest that Samal's name is being evaluated for dual roles, a seat in the Upper House or the influential Vice-Chairmanship of the State Planning Board, a post that lies vacant and ripe for realignment. His rise, if cemented,

could spell a new era in Odisha BJP's influence, leaving little room for factional rivalry.

Meanwhile, the cast of possible BJP contenders grows from former MP Basant Panda to organisational stalwart Golak Mohapatra, and from former Union Minister Bishweshwar Tudu to ex-minister Dilip Ray, each quietly building momentum in the corridors of power.

On the other end, the BJD, still nursing its wounds after losing power in 2024, sees in this Rajya Sabha election an opportunity to reassert itself. Speculations have reached fever pitch within party ranks that corporate strategist Santrupt Misra or Sujata Rout Karthikeyan, wife of VK Pandian, could emerge as the party's nominees. A Sujata nomination, in particular, would rekindle the debate over Pandian's influence over the

The Congress, despite its modest tally of 14 MLAs, has an unexpected hand to play. Should it choose to collaborate with the BJD, even indirectly, it could alter the arithmetic and deny the BJP a clean sweep though forging such a partnership would require delicate political engineering that has largely been absent in the State's Opposition ranks.

With the BJP commanding 82 MLAs (including three Independents), the numbers indicate a comfortable advantage. Yet, seasoned politicians know that Rajya Sabha elections often hinge not just on numbers but on timing, strategy and betrayals.

As the calendar inches closer to April 2026, Odisha's Rajya Sabha contest is becoming a thrilling political drama, relentless, unpredictable and deeply consequential. This fight will reveal not just who occupies four parliamentary seats but who truly wields power in Odisha as it heads towards a defining phase in its political history.

weapons, including knives and

cleavers, during the opera-

Following the incident, po-

lice reinforcements were de-

Cong demands CM-level talks on Mahanadi issue



RAJEEVV RATHAN Bhubaneswar

Udisha Pradesh Congress Committee president Bhakta Charan Das strongly criticised both the Odisha and Chhattisgarh Chief Ministers for turning the Mahanadi river dispute into a political spectacle while failing to take meaningful action. Referring to their joint by-election campaign in Nuapada, Das said, "If they can share a stage for votes, why can't they sit across the table to secure water for our people?"

Das urged the Odisha Chief Minister to initiate an immediate dialogue with his Chhattisgarh counterpart for a fair and permanent solution to the Mahanadi water crisis, which continues to affect farmers across western Odisha. "This isn't just a political issue; it's about our people's survival. Both governments are using Mahanadi for optics while Odisha runs dry," he said.

Das warned that the Congress would continue to push for legal and diplomatic remedies if Chief Minister-level talk fails to materialise soon. He announced that the party plans to take the Mahanadi issue to national platforms if needed and assured that Congress would keep fighting to ensure Odisha's rightful share

Expressing satisfaction

over the Congress' vote share in the recent Nuapada by-poll, Das alleged widespread misuse of official machinery and money power by the ruling BJP. "Despite the unfair methods used by the BJP, the Congress has emerged stronger. The people are clearly disenchanted with the ruling party's governance," he as-

serted. Das also raised concerns about women's safety, rising unemployment and administrative highhandedness, accusing the BJP government of abandoning real governance. "People want jobs, safety, water and justice; yet, all they are given are speeches and slogans," he said.

City youth missing from b'day party found in SCB

Kin allege loot attempt, kidnap for ransom

PNS Bhubaneswar

After remaining untraceable for more than 16 days, a vouth of Bhubaneswar was found unconscious under mysterious circumstances in the SCB Medical College Hospital in Cuttack on Monday. The youth, identified as

Satyajit Das, a resident of Gandhipadia in Khodha district, is a Plus Three second year student at a college in Madanpur.

Satyajit had come to Bhubaneswar to attend a friend's birthday party, from where he suddenly went missing on November 1. He had been accompanied by a few other friends to take part in the celebration, which was being held at a cafe near the SUM Hospital in the capital city.

His family had filed a complaint with the Bharatpur police, which started a probe.



While it is still unknown as to what transpired in the party and after the event and how he ended up in the hospital, Satyajit's family members have alleged that he was possibly held hostage by miscreants over loot attempt and ransom.

Speculations are rife whether he was drugged and abducted. Police sources said that as per the CCTV footage, Satyajit was last seen on the Chandaka road. The exact turn of events leading to his disappearance would be known after the victim regains consciousness and gives his statement.

Bulldozers raze Bangladeshis' houses in Jagatsinghpur ■ 6 detained, 2 arrested, weapons seized

■ Crackdown on suspects spreads to Kendrapada

KAHNU NANDA / RAJEEV RATHAN Jagatsinghpur / Bhubaneswar

 $T_{ ext{he quiet outskirts of}}$ Beherampur village under the Jagatsinghpur Sadar police station echoed with the roar of bulldozers on Monday as authorities demolished unauthorised settlements allegedly housing suspected Bangladeshi nationals. Ordered by the district Collector, the operation targeted 10 thatched houses illegally constructed on government grazing land in the Tarikund-Dhanipur area.

The demolition followed a late-night police raid on Sunday, during which six people were detained and two women were arrested for failing to provide valid identification documents. The women claimed to be from West Bengal but could not produce any



The alleged house owner, Sikandar Alam, along with more than 10 others, both men and women, managed to flee as the police arrived. The raid turned violent when a group of residents attacked the police, injuring a woman constable. Authorities also seized a firearm and sharp

confirmed that the operation was based on credible intelligence inputs on suspected foreign nationals living illegally in the area. "Some fled during the raid, but their identities are known; we are tracking them," he said, adding that the two arrested women have been produced in court.

In a simultaneous action, the Kendrapada district administration has launched an intensified search for suspected illegal immigrants believed to have fled from Jagatsinghpur. Police have set up checkpoints in key loca-



Rajnagar, Pattamundai and Mahakalapada, verifying Aadhaar cards and inspecting passenger buses. "We are on high alert to prevent any infiltration or escape," said a

Kendrapada police official.

Multiple teams have been

mobilised to trace suspects

who may have crossed district

borders following the

Jagatsinghpur crackdown.

Odisha on Nov 27 Major

PM Modi to visit

announcements expected **RAJEEV RATHAN** Bhubaneswar

rime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to visit Odisha on November 27 in what BJP leaders are calling a "significant visit" loaded with expectations of major announcements for the State.

BJP State in-charge Vijaypal Singh Tomar confirmed the visit while speaking to media on Monday. "Whenever the Prime Minister visits Odisha, he brings something important for its development. This visit too will be no different," said Tomar, hinting that the party has prepared a detailed agenda for the PM's

Tomar highlighted that this would be the seventh time in a year that the Prime Minister is visiting Odisha making it the most-visited State by

Modi in the last 12 months. "This reflects his continuous priority and commitment to the people of Odisha, particularly its youth," he said.

As preparations kick off for the PM's visit, all eves are now on November 27 with the BJP expected to use the opportunity to unveil key initiatives and strengthen its development narrative in the State. Commenting on the

party's victory in the Nuapada by-poll, Tomar attributed it to the "successful 16 months of governance" under the BJP, which he termed a reflection of public trust.

Meanwhile, the BJP is also set to fill vacant posts of chairpersons in various Boards and Corporations. Tomar informed that a list has been prepared and will be announced once approved by the central leadership. However, he clarified that there are no immediate plans for a Cabinet expansion in the State.

SCU seizes 400-gram drug in Bhubaneswar

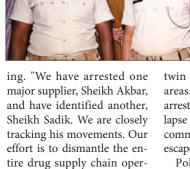
One arrested

RAJEEV RATHAN Bhubaneswar

The Special Crime Unit (SCU) of the Bhubaneswar-Cuttack Commissionerate Police on Monday seized 400 grams of brown sugar valued at Rs 40 lakh and arrested one

The accused, identified as Sheikh Akbar from the Sahadevkhunta police station in Baleswar district, was taken into custody during a targeted raid. Police said the seizure is part of a larger crackdown on drug trafficking networks operating in the region.

Commissioner of Police Suresh Dev Datta Singh, said the SCU has also identified another key suspect, Sheikh Sadik, who remains abscond-



ating in and beyond Bhubaneswar," Singh said. He added that the arrest is expected to significantly weaken the drug network in the

twin cities and surrounding areas. "Once Sheikh Sadik is arrested, the network will collapse to a large extent. We are committed to ensuring no one escapes the law," Singh stated.

Police sources confirmed that the seized contraband was likely sourced from interstate drug networks and destined

for distribution across vari-

ous urban pockets. The SCU

is investigating the financial trail and communication links to identify other individuals involved. Further raids are likely as

the SCU intensifies efforts to curb the rising drug menace. Coordination with other district police units has also been stepped up to ensure the complete breakdown of the trafficking network.

Census 2027 already begins in Odisha Pre-Test launched with

digital, geotagging features **RAJEEV RATHAN** Bhubaneswar

he Directorate of Census Operations, Odisha has initiated a Pre-Test for House Listing and the Housing Census marking the first step towards the Census of India 2027. Conducted under the Office of the Union Ministry of Home Affairs Registrar General & Census Commissioner, the Pre-Test is being carried out in close coordination with the State Government.

The exercise is currently underway in 20 revenue vil-

lages under Tentulikhunti tehsil in Nabarangpur district and 44 revenue villages in Thakurmunda tehsil of Mayurbhanj district. Additionally, it covers Ward No 22 of the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation and Ward No 17 of the Cuttack Municipal Corporation. The field operations began on November 10 and will continue till November 30, 2025.

Trained enumerators are visiting every household in the selected areas to assign house numbers and collect detailed housing information. This Pre-Test phase serves as a crucial step in refining the tools and methodologies that will be deployed during the fullIn a significant shift, the

upcoming census will be digitally-driven for the first time. The Census of India will integrate digital data collection and introduce a Self-Enumeration (SE) Portal enabling individuals to submit household information online. Every house will also be geotagged using a Digital Layout Mapping App, ensuring increased accuracy and faster processing of census data.

Odisha Census Operations Director Nikhil Pawan Kalyan said, "The Census is the backbone of developmental policymaking. With digital tools and public participation, we are shaping a smarter

and more efficient dataset for the future. The cooperation of citizens is fundamental to the success of this exercise."

Enumerators, acting under the supervision of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, India, will gather information on housing conditions, access to amenities and household assets. This data is critical for informed planning and policymaking at both State and national levels.

The directorate has appealed to residents of the selected regions to extend full cooperation to the field teams and local administration as they undertake this vital national exercise.

'Prosperous Odisha, Golden Odisha' campaign

Launched by CM at Brahma Kumaris golden jubilee

RAJEEV RATHAN Bhubaneswar

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi inaugurated a "Prosperous Odisha, Golden Odisha" campaign during the golden jubilee celebrations of the Brahma Kumaris Institute held at the Janata Maidan here on Monday.

Describing the organisation's 50-year journey as a "path of spiritual awakening and selfless service", Majhi lauded the Brahma Kumaris for their contributions to moral and emotional wellbeing. "This journey is not merely a passage of time but a movement uplifting humanity," he said.



Majhi emphasised that adopting a spiritual lifestyle fosters simplicity, humility and prudent use of natural resources. He praised Brahma Kumaris' senior teacher Sister BK Shivani calling her a widely-respected figure in India's spiritual landscape due to her "renunciation and service".

The Chief Minister highlighted the organisation's role in combating depression, addiction and emotional distress through programmes focused on stress management and emotional balance. He also acknowledged their work in empowering women and instilling social values.

Expressing optimism, Majhi said, "The golden jubilee will become the catalyst for a global movement, carrying the message of world peace from Mount Abu to New York and Nairobi to London." The State Government, in partnership with Brahma Kumaris, aims to bring "meaningful and positive change" to society.

Majhi underscored the relevance of Raj Yoga and meditation in improving governance. "When the administration functions with empathy, trust deepens and the moral fabric of society strengthens," he noted, reaffirming the government's goal to make Odisha prosperous and developed by 2036.

Law, Works and Excise Minister Prithviraj Harichandan, speaking at the event, commended the Brahma Kumaris for five decades of social reform and peace-build-

The event was also attended by Bhubaneswar Ekamra MLA Babu Singh, former minister Arabinda Dhali, Sister BK Shivani, Dr Banarasi Bhai, Shaktiraj Bhai and Gita Didi from the Brahma Kumaris Bhubaneswar branch.

Interview of the week

Aim is to make OUAT pivotal for Odisha's agri growth, food security



SUGYAN CHOUDHURY

r Pravat Kumar Roul is currently working as the Vice-Chancellor Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT) for a second term. A star alumnus of OUAT, he was the Managing Director of APICOL. He has 29 years of teaching experience and has guided nine Ph.D. scholars besides publishing 24 books to his credit. He has also contributed research articles in peer-reviewed national and international journals. As an edu-administrator, he has carved a niche for himself by touching muds and leaving them all gold.

In an interview to *The Pioneer*, Dr Roul spoke to Sugyan Choudhury by sharing his vision and vista how to catapult the OUAT to further heights of glory. What is your vision for further enriching OUAT?

As an alumnus of this distinguished institution, I consider it ooth an honour and a duty to lead the OUAT towards transformative progress in agriculture. As India's second-oldest and only fully-integrated farm university, OUAT stands uniquely positioned to build national excellence across academics, research, technology extension and governance. We provide education in seven core disciplines, prioritising modern curricula, experiential learning and skill development. Our research focus spans climate-resilient farming, biotechnology, AI, precision agriculture and conservation of indigenous resources. Through technology extension, we ensure that scientific innovations reach the field, empowering farmers, especially smallholders and women. Administratively, we emphasise digital governance, transparency and participatory decision-making. My goal is to cultivate academic excellence, ethical leadership and public service so that OUAT becomes a driving force in Odisha's agricultural growth and food security.

What are the plans on OUAT's

global trade negotiations? India's cautious approach to genetically-modified (GM) crops nighlights the need to balance scientific progress with ecological safety, public health and seed sovereignty. Aligned with this, OUAT is advancing GM-free, climate-resilient alternatives, especially millets, central to Odisha's biodiversity, nutrition and smallholder livelihoods. The university focuses on bio-fortified, droughttolerant, and pest-resistant millet varieties using conventional breeding and marker-assisted se-



DR PRAVAT KUMAR ROUL

lection, steering clear of transgenic methods. It also promotes seed banks and participatory breeding to conserve indigenous germplasm and strengthen farmer control.

By driving climate-smart, GMfree research and collaborating with ICAR, CGIAR, IITs and global partners, OUAT supports India's stance in trade negotiations that demand biosafety, traceability and sustainability. These efforts aim to protect Odisha's seed sovereignty while advancing India's leadership in sustainable, GM-free agriculture.

How can Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) strengthen Odisha's farm economy and how is OUAT taking steps for this transformation?

Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) can shift agriculture from subsistence to a dynamic, technology-driven, market-oriented sector. OUAT has adopted a collaborative innovation model that brings together private industry, agri-startups and development agencies to strengthen Odisha's agricultural value chain from production to processing and marketing. Through its Agri-Business Incubation Centre (ABIC) and Agri-Innovation and Entrepreneurship Cell, OUAT nurtures start-ups in precision farming, food processing, mechanisation and agribiotech, promoting technology commercialization, private investment and rural employment. MoUs with industries and FPOs further support value addition, post-harvest management and agro-enterprise creation. By combining research expertise with private sector efficiency, OUAT is building resilient supply chains that ensure better price realisation for farmers. Its PPP strategy is rooted in technology transfer, entrepreneurship and inclusive innovation, advancing Odisha towards a self-reliant, sustainable farm economy.

How is OUAT's network using on-farm seed banks and mini-kits to preserve 50+ indigenous millet

landraces in Koraput? Koraput, designated a national "millet hub" under the Shree Anna Abhiyan (SAA), showcases how traditional knowledge and scientific methods can jointly conserve agrobiodiversity. OUAT, through its KVK network and the Nutri-Crop Research Station at Berhampur, has strengthened the millet ecosystem by supporting onfarm conservation, participatory seed production and decentralised seed distribution. Communitymanaged seed banks set up by OUAT's KVKs in Koraput and nearby districts help preserve indigenous millet landraces, main-

tain varietal purity and enable farmer-to-farmer seed exchange. Mini-kits of high-quality local varieties further promote traditional cultivation with modern practices.

To curb genetic erosion, OUAT blends scientific characterisation, germplasm documentation and in situ conservation with tribal knowledge under the OUAT-ICRISAT millet project. This year, the Koraput Research Station and KVK Malkangiri have been tasked with producing and multiplying LVRC-released finger millet landraces like Kundra Bati, Laxmipur Kalia, Malyabanta Mami and Gupteswar Bharati. This approach links conservation with livelihood support through niche marketing and value addition. Overall, OUAT's KVK network

strengthens Odisha's leadership in climate-resilient, GM-free, biodiversity-based food systems and ensures seed sovereignty for tribal communities. Could you please explain how

OUAT helped preparing SOP of Govt. of Odisha for women farm-

OUAT has served as a key knowledge partner in drafting the Odisha Government's SOP for testing and validating farm equipment designed for women farmers. Since most tools are built for men, OUAT ensured the SOP incorporates gender-sensitive design parameters, safety norms, and performance standards aligned with women's anthropometric needs. Its Farm Machinery and Power Engineering Department, along with AICRP on Ergonomics and Safety in Agriculture and ICAR institutes, has conducted studies on ergonomics, energy use and drudgery among women performing tasks like transplanting, weeding and harvesting. Based on these studies, OUAT has developed and fieldtested gender-friendly tools such as lightweight weeders, adjustable sickles, and improved seeders. Through trainings, demonstrations and participatory design workshops across KVKs, the university promotes these innovations, advancing inclusive mechanisation and improving productivity and occupational health for rural women.

Could you tell us how OUAT is using AI for agri-intelligence plat-

OUAT recognises the potential of AI and ML to strengthen datadriven agricultural research, extension and policy. With Odisha's diverse agro-climatic zones, AI tools are being integrated for crop health monitoring, yield forecasting, precision nutrient management, and climate-specific advisories. OUAT, with ICAR and tech partners, is developing an AIbased app for pest and disease detection using image analytics and sensors along with AI-assisted weather advisory models. Collaborations with IIT Bhubaneswar, OCAC and Neophyte Ambient Intelligence aim to build an Odisha-specific Agri-Intelligence Platform using remote sensing, GIS and machine learning. These efforts seek to create a digitally-empowered ecosystem that delivers AI-driven benefits to

'Aatmanirbhar Bharat is a national pledge'

Savs BIP State president Samal

RAJEEV RATHAN Bhubaneswar

B_{JP} State president Manmohan Samal on Monday reaffirmed the party's commitment to the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Sankalp Abhiyan, calling it a "pledge to empower society and the nation". He urged party workers to build a people-centric movement rooted in self-reliance to help India become a developed nation by 2047.

Speaking at a review meeting here, Samal said the campaign launched from Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya's birth anniversary on September 25 and concluding on December 25, the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee has evolved into a nationwide movement promoting Swadeshi and discouraging the use of foreign-made goods.

"This is not just a campaign; it is India's second struggle for economic independence," Samal said. "Prime Minister Modi's call for Aatmanirbhar Bharat has inspired millions to adopt indigenous products as a matter of pride and duty."

ଆମୁନିର୍ଭ୍ର ଭାରତ ସ୍ଥ୍ର ଅଭିଯାନ

The BJP, along with several other voluntary organisations, is actively promoting the campaign through various initiatives. These include constituency-level gatherings with women, youths, entrepreneurs and professionals, Swadeshi fairs, Sankalp Rath Yatra and a house-tohouse outreach promoting local products. Schools and colleges are being engaged through Swadeshi pledge drives. Addressing the party's district and State leaders, Samal stressed that the campaign must not only raise awareness but also lead to behavioural change supporting India's economic growth and

Bus owners threaten strike from

Oppose move to give police wider powers for vehicle check

RAJEEV RATHAN Bhubaneswar

 Γ he All Odisha Bus Owners' Association (AIOBOA) on Monday warned of a State-wide strike from December 1 to protest the government's proposal to grant police additional powers to conduct motor vehicle checks.

AIBEA general secretary Debendra Kumar Sahu said the government's move has sparked

widespread concern among bus operators, who fear harassment and undue penalties from overreach by police once these powers are formalised.

"Nearly 40 years ago, similar powers were withdrawn due to rampant corruption and misuse. Since then, vehicle checks have been conducted without direct police interference," Sahu said. He added that the government's present plan could reinstate the very issues the transport industry fought to eliminate decades ago.

Under Section 184 of the Mo-

tor Vehicles Act, enforcement actions against rash and negligent driving are permitted, including checks on helmets, seat belts and triple riding which bus operators have supported as road safety measures. However, Sahu alleged that police are gradually expanding their authority beyond such safetyrelated checks, which he termed "deeply concerning".

The AIOBOA had submitted a memorandum to Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi in June urging him to reconsider the proposal. On July 8, commercial vehicle drivers, under the Odisha Drivers' Mahasangha, held a State-wide 'steering down protest' over the same issue. The agitation was later withdrawn out of respect for President Droupadi Murmu's visit to Odisha on July 14.

The association will hold a general board meeting on November 25 to finalise its course of action. However, the AIOBOA reiterated that if the government officially empowers police to enforce vehicle checks, passenger bus services across Odisha would be suspended from December 1.

Police launch cyber safety awareness drive



16 Cyber Raths cover urban, rural areas

RAJEEV RATHAN Bhubaneswar

In a bid to combat rising cybercrimes, the Odisha Police has rolled out a State-wide Cyber Safety Awareness Campaign featuring 16 mobile 'Cyber Raths' equipped with LED video panels. The vehicles are traversing both urban and rural areas to educate people, especially students on cyber threats and digital safety practices.

The campaign was launched on October 18 by Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi at the Kalinga Stadium, where he flagged off the fleet of Cyber Raths. The initiative has expanded across all 33 police districts drawing participation from lakhs of citizens in rallies, seminars, workshops and public meetings.

Focused on key cyber threats such as fraudulent phone calls, OTP and UPI scams, sextortion, loan app fraud and social media blackmail, the campaign is using visual demonstrations and practical advice to empower people. Police emphasised that cyber safety is a fundamental right and shared responsibility in today's digital age.

In several districts, police units have organised walkathons, awareness rallies, quiz contests and street plays with the help of local artists. Schools, colleges and public spaces are hosting special workshops, and mobile vans are screening awareness videos on how cyber frauds occur and how to prevent them. Social media outreach and student-led initiatives are further amplifying the message. Citizens are engaging in interactive sessions sharing their perspectives and learning about safety measures through platforms that resonate with local audiences.

DAV forerunner Patnaik's birth anniv held



At DAV, Kalinga Nagar

PNS Bhubaneswar

The DAV Public School, Kalinga Nagar celebrated the 98th birth anniversary of its founder chairman and one of the forerunners of DAV movement in Odisha Late Er BC Patnaik in its premises on Novem-

In a meeting organised on this occasion, Principal Balaram Mahapatra and teachers offered their floral tribute as a mark of their respect to the great lover of institutions. In his address to the gathering, the Principal highlighted the sincerity, dedication of late Patnaik and related the audience

about his remarkable contributions in bringing up the DAV institutions of Odisha and in giving them their present status.

As a sacred spark, a holy Hawan was organized in the school premises. A Creative Writing competition was conducted where 26 participants from 13 DAV Schools of Odisha participated.

In English category Pratiksha Mishra of LR DAV bagged 1st position and Sai Satyajit Das of DAV SCB Medical bagged 2nd position. In Odia category Siddhi Shibani of DAV Public School, Kalinga Nagar bagged 1st position and Tanmay Das of DAV Public School, Nimapara bagged 2nd position. The winners were felicitated with certificate and memento.

research agenda to strengthen Odisha's seed sovereignty amid

key persons

RAJEEV RATHAN Bhubaneswar

he Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has intensified its probe into the Odisha Police Sub-Inspector (SI) recruitment scam and is set to question seven key accused, including alleged mastermind Shankar Prasti and his asso-

ciates Muna Mohanty, Loknath Sahu, Arvind Das, Sagar Gowda and Suresh Nayak.

The agency has registered a formal case and is examining documents previously seized by the Crime Branch. Sources said the CBI has requested detailed records from the Odisha Police Recruitconcerning the tender process linked to the ITI-based examination system. Investigators are probing the timeline of the tender award and whether proper oversight was maintained. Mobile phones, laptops and other electronic devices confiscated during the Crime

ing analysis at the State Forensic Science Laboratory. The agency is awaiting forensic reports, which are expected to provide critical digital evidence.

Officials indicated that once the court grants permission, the CBI would interrogate the accused either

in custody or within jail premises. Several job aspirants, previously arrested but later released on bail, may also be questioned. The intensified probe aims to uncover the full scope of the recruitment scam, which has triggered public concern over the transparency and integrity of police examinations in Odisha.

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 advised and requested to verify and seek appropriate advice to satisfy themselves about the veracity of any kind of advertisement before esponding 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 advertisements

Printed and published by Sarada Prasanna Nanda for and on behalf of CMYK Printech Ltd., 1067, Nayapalli, Bhubaneswar-751012. Tel: 0674-2560272. Fax: 0674-2560355. e-mail: orissapioneer@gmail.com. Printed at WEBLINE, D-2/19, Sector-A, Zone-D, Mancheswar Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010. Executive Editor Deepak Kumar Jha. Resident Editor: S.P. Nanda. RNI Regn. No. ORIENG/2007/22475. AIR SURCHARGE of Re. 1.00 East: Calcutta, Ranchi, North: Leh West: Mumbai & Ahmedabad South: Bangalore & Chennai. Central: Khajuraho, Delhi Office:- 201-205, 208-210, 2nd Floor, Pratap Bhawan 5, B.S.Z. Marg, New Delhi-110002 Phone: 011-46035729, 011-69342500. Lucknow Office: 4th Floor, Sahara Shopping Centre,

invitation, accuses dist admn of exclusion

RAJEEV RATHAN Cuttack

Cuttack's iconic Bali Yatra may have concluded, but the controversies surrounding it continue to escalate. What started with confusion over the venue and ultimately settled by a High Court order allowing the fair at the Upper Bali Yatra ground has now spiralled into a bitter dispute over alleged mismanagement Municipal Corporation (CMC).

Public discontent gained momentum days after the event closed following mishaps including a doll exhibition accident, delays in stall allocations and chaos during the finale featuring singer Shreya Ghoshal. The city's intellectual circles and the CMC now accuse the district administration of arrogance and exclusion.

In a blistering statement at his residence inside Barabati Fort, Cuttack Mayor Subhas invitation letter, symbolising what he called the "shredding of CMC's dignity." "They invited outsiders and ignored elected representatives," Singh alleged, claiming his name and those of other officials were deliberately omitted from official communica-

Singh also accused organisers of disrespecting the CMC Commissioner by placing him "below the stage" during events, unlike previous years where municipal leaders shared equal stature

warnings were ignored, and this year the CMC was excluded from planning and ex-

BJD Corporator Bikash Ranjan Behera echoed these concerns. "Earlier, the CMC managed sanitation, stall allocation and crowd control. This time, the administration cut us out and the chaos shows it," he said, also pointing to mismanagement during Ghoshal's finale performance.

The clash raises serious concerns about coordination between administrative bodies.

Cuttack Bali Yatra ends, controversy begins Ticket sales for India-SA T20 from Dec 1

CM orders foolproof arrangements RAJEEV RATHAN Cuttack

ricket enthusiasts across Odisha can gear up as ticket sales for the India-South Africa T20 match at Barabati Stadium in Cuttack will commence from December 1, announced Odisha Cricket Association (OCA) Secretary Sanjay Behera on Monday. While online sales will betickets will be available at six counters from December 5. Affiliated clubs and associations can collect their allotted tickets on December 3

The OCA is yet to announce the total number of tickets available for both modes. The match, scheduled for December 9, is expected to attract capacity crowds.

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi recently chaired a high-level review

tions. Recalling last year's floodlight failure during the India-England game, Majhi instructed officials to address technical vulnerabilities and ensure "error-free execution".

"This is a globally-watched event. Every aspect from power backup to security must be flawless," Majhi stressed.

He also directed officials to remain vigilant in view of the recent explosion in Delhi

PNS Paradip

of the 150th anniversary of

Vande Mataram, India's

iconic national song that has

inspired generations and

played a vital role in the free-

dom movement. The

programme honoured the

song's enduring legacy of

The event was led by Chair-

unity and national pride.

and called for enhanced security protocols, smooth ticketing, efficient crowd management and coordination among departments. He emphasised the need for comprehensive medical and emergency response arrangements at the venue.

With the countdown underway, the Odisha Police and the district administration are gearing up to ensure a safe, smooth and memorable sporting spectacle at

the Barabati Stadium.

PPA holds 150th year of Vande Mataram

In Ganjam

Murram, sand smuggling: 10 vehicles seized



PNS Chhatrapur

Acting on information about illegal transportation of murram and sand in some vehicles under Chamakhundi Police Station limits, a joint raid was conducted by Chhatrapur Tehsil, Chamakhundi Police, and the Mining Department near the road in front of Parala Me-

According to Mining Department official Deepak Jena, five murram-laden vehicles and five sand-laden vehicles were seized during the raid. The forms shown by the vehicle drivers during the inspection were found to be duplicate, the mining official in-

All the seized vehicles have been kept under detention at the police station.

Host of events mark OPGC's Foundation Day

The Odisha Power Generation Corporation Limited marked its 42nd Foundation Day on November 14 with a vibrant two-day celebration at IB Thermal Power Station

Festivities began with the unfurling of the OPGC flag by Director (Operations) Anjana Ranjan Dash, in the presence of Senior VP (Operations) Sukanta Mohapatra, Senior GM (HR) Subhashish Mukherjee, department heads, employees and their families.

A spirited mini-marathon followed in three categoriesemployees, ladies, and children-flagged off by the Director (Operations) at 7:20 am from the helipad. Over 600 participants joined the run.

The winners were felicitated with gold, silver, and bronze medals by Director (Operations), Senior VP (Operations), and Ladies Club president Sangita Dash.

A plantation drive at the helipad and a blood donation camp at IB Thermal Hospital were also organized in collaboration with the Red Cross.

Managing Director Kedar Ranjan Pandu addressed employees via video conference from the corporate office, extending warm Foundation Day wishes.

The evening saw a grand celebration at the helipad

ground, inaugurated with a ceremonial lamp-lighting by senior officials. The Director (Operations) dedicated OPGC's growth to the hard work of past and present employees. A special video on OPGC's journey featured greetings from OPGC Chairman and Principal Secretary, Energy Vishal Kumar Dev, the Managing Director, Director-Finance, and Director-Operations. A lively fete was inaugurated, with stalls by employees, families, local SHGs,

and outside agencies. The night concluded with a captivating musical performance.

Day two featured an exhibition cricket match between OPGC veterans and young employees at Rajiv Gandhi Ground, followed by an exhibition football match between Associates and OPGC employees.

The celebrations wrapped up with a colourful cultural evening presented by employees, ITPS Ladies Club members and school children.

man, Paradip Port Authority, PL Haranadh in the presence he Paradip Port Authorof DIG, NEZ-3, CISF Mundali ity (PPA) observed the first Headquarters, Sumant Singh. phase of the commemoration

> As part of the programme, awards were presented to school students who excelled in the Vande Mataram debate competition conducted by the PPA. The competition encouraged young participants to reflect on the spirit of patriotism and express their

chanical College. NITR Prof feted with ISAE Medal



Pradhan (Professor at the Department of Food Process Engineering, NIT Rourkela), has been awarded the "ISAE Commendation Medal for Professional Achievements (2025)" in recognition of his valuable contributions to the field of Processing, Dairy, and Food Engineering.

The prestigious award was presented during the 59th Indian Society of Agricultural Engineers (ISAE) Annual

Convention and International Symposium, held at ICAR-Central Institute of Agricultural Engineering (CIAE).

Adding to the honour, Prof Pradhan also delivered a keynote lecture on the topic "Processing and Value Addition of Millets through Non-Thermal Processing."

Prof Pradhan's field of expertise includes Food Engineering and Value Addition using Non-Thermal Technology, and Post-Harvest Processing of Non-Timber Forest Products and Millets.

Odisha Pavilion marks strong presence at IITF

Deputy CM highlights 'Odisha Vision 2036

RAJEEV RATHAN Bhubaneswar

eputy Chief Minister Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo visited the Odisha Pavilion at the 44th India International Trade Fair (IITF) in New Delhi on Monday, calling it an impressive blend of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat" and "Aatma Nirbhar Bharat" vision and Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi's ambitious "Odisha Vision 2036."

The fair, underway at Bharat Mandapam from November 14 to 27, offers a vibrant platform for Odisha to showcase its heritage, rural innovation and investment potential. "Odisha is globally known for its handicrafts, but

In Jajpur

with police

PNS Jajpur

Lodges complaint

A woman excise constable

posted in Jajpur district has

levelled serious allegations of

mental harassment and char-

acter assassination against



said Singh Deo after engaging with rural artisans and entrepreneurs.

He added that Odisha's focus ranges from agriculturebased products to industrial expansion creating a host of direct and indirect employment opportunities. He also praised the creative display of traditional crafts, modern de-

Woman excise constable

alleges harassment

signs and themed installations at the pavilion.

Singh Deo later visited the Ministry of Power Pavilion, where discussions centered around Odisha's potential in capacity expansion, renewable energy integration and adoption of cutting-edge green technologies. He highlighted the State's commitment to sustainable energy sources, including hydropower, solar and other green alternatives

The Deputy CM also interacted with agricultural experts and farmers at the Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Pavilion, emphasising the role of innovation in strengthening India's rural economy.

The Odisha Pavilion has emerged as a major attraction at IITF 2025, presenting a compelling narrative of cultural continuity and economic transformation.

Venu Gopal new PPA Dy Chairman



■ Venu Gopal, former Secretary of Visakhapatnam Port Authority (VPA), assumed charge as the Deputy Chairman of Paradip Port Authority (PPA) on Monday.

Venu Gopal began his career at the Visakhapatnam Port in 1995 as Assistant Personnel Officer (Class-I) and went on to serve in multiple key roles across several departments.

In 2019, he was posted as Secretary, Deendayal (Kandla) Port Authority. Prior to this, he was In-Charge Secretary at Visakhapatnam Port Author

ity from 2014 to 2018. In 2020, he was transferred back to Visakhapatnam Port Authority as Secretary.

During his tenure as Secretary at VPA, Shri Venu Gopal played a pivotal role in planning and executing several notable initiatives and events.

The officers and employees of the PPA warmly welcome Venu Gopal and wished him success in his new assignment.

117 blood units collected at Paradip camp



Organised by Jawaharlal Nehru Trust

PNS Paradip

A mega blood donation camp was organised by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru Trust, on Friday at the Port Club premises in Nuabazar, Paradip.

The camp was held to commemorate the birth anniversary of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

The event was inaugurated by chief guest, Chairman of Paradip Municipality Basanta Kumar Bishwal. Among the distinguished guests were Vice President of JSW BK Sinha, Additional Vice President SK Pattnayak, Deputy Traffic Manager of Paradip Port Narayan Mishra and noted

writer Haramani Mahapatra. A total of 117 units of blood were collected during the camp. The organisers extended heartfelt gratitude and appreciation

The event was coordinated and managed by the Trust's key members, including chief advisor Niranjan Nayak, Trustees Kedar Bishwal, Dhruba Charan Mahapatra, chairman Saroj Kumar Pradhan and Trinath Mohanty, Jyoti Ranjan Das,

The trust acknowledged the collaborative efforts of the volunteers and supporters, reaffirming its commitment to community welfare and spreading awareness on the importance of voluntary blood donation.

to all the donors for their invaluable contribution.

> In her complaint, the victim alleged that the accused persons have been subjecting her to continuous mental torture. She further alleged that a few staff members even went to her rented house and attempted to assault her. After receiving no satisfac-

tory response despite reportamong others. ing the matter to the Excise Superintendent and senior officials, she approached the local police station and filed a written complaint.

She alleged that was threatened withdrawal of the complaint against one Biswajit

Sahoo. When she denied, they threatened to suspend her. Later, they even assaulted her, she alleged. However, the Excise Super-

intendent denied the allegations, terming them baseless. He stated that the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) had already visited the constable's residence for inquiry and a formal investigation was underway. Once the committee submits its report, the truth will be clear, the Excise Superintendent said.

"The constable levelled sexual harassment accusations against one Biswajit Sahoo, posted at the district office. Sahoo worked here for 14 years as a Data Entry Operator. The complainant demanded an ICC inquiry into the matter. The matter is under investigation," said Jajpur Excise Superintendent Dibya Kishore Tandel.

PMIS placement drive held at UCCIL

A significant placement drive under the Prime Minister's Internship Scheme (PMIS) was conducted at the premises of the Utkal Chamber of Commerce and Industry Limited (UCCIL) here.

Sourabh Raha, a senior official of the Registrar of Companies, Cuttack, is overseeing the programme coordination, ensuring its effective rollout. The drive aimed to connect

eligible youth with internship opportunities offered by India's top companies under the flagship zcentral government initiative.

The PMIS, a key initiative of the Government of India launched on October 3, 2024, is rapidly gaining momentum in its goal to bridge the gap between academic education and industry requirements for young Indians.

The scheme, announced in the Union Budget 2024-25, is designed to tackle youth un-



employment by offering one crore paid, 12-month internship opportunities over the next five years.

the programme are placed in India's top 500 companies, The PMIS targets Indian providing them with invalucitizens aged 21 to 24 who are able hands-on work experinot currently engaged in fullence and essential skill devel-

time employment or full-time

education. Interns selected for

Financial support for the interns is a significant component of the scheme. Each intern receives a monthly stipend of Rs 5,000, with Rs 4,500 contributed by the government and Rs 500 by the par-

ticipating companies. Furthermore, a one-time grant of Rs 6,000 is provided to cover incidental expenses. Interns are also covered under government insurance schemes, including the PM Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana. Eligible youth can apply by registering on the official PMIS Portal

pminternship.mca.gov.in. The UCCIL premises served as a central hub for the event, reflecting the active role of industry bodies in supporting the Central government's skill development and youth

empowerment agenda. President, UCCIL Dr Prabodh Mohanty is actively supporting the PMIS placement drive.

Ex-Murugappa Group Chairman passes away

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA New Delhi

Arunachalam Vellayan, former Chairman of the Murugappa Group and Chairman Emeritus of Coromandel International, died on Monday after a prolonged illness.

Vellayan (72) passed earlier today after a prolonged illness. He is survived by his wife Lalitha Vellayan, his sons Arun Vellavan and Naravanan Vellayan, and grandchildren, the Murugappa Group said in

For several decades, he provided strategic direction across diversified businesses of the group, helping expand and enhance its reputation as one of India's most respected conglomerates.

He served on the boards of various companies in the Murugappa Group, including as chairman of Coromandel International Ltd and EID



Arunachalam Vellayan

He also served on the boards of companies, such as Kanoria Chemicals & Industries Ltd, EXIM Bank and Indian Overseas Bank, the statement said.

Vellayan also led various industry and trade organisations, including Southern India Chamber of Commerce, Fertiliser Association of India, Sugar Association, and All India Manufacturers

He was the Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Institute Management, Kozhikode (IIM-Kozhikode).

An alumnus of The Doon School, Shriram College of Commerce, Aston University, UK, and University of Warwick Business School, UK, Vellayan was also honoured with Doctor of Science (Honoris Causa) by the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University and Aston University, UK.

Karnataka to unveil IT, startup, space policies at BTS 2025 PIONEER NEWS SERVICE The Karnataka Government

will unveil three policies-IT policy, startup policy, and space technology policy—at the upcoming Bengaluru Tech Summit (BTS) 2025, officials said on Monday.

The 28th edition of BTS, organised by the Department of Electronics, IT and BT and Software Technology Parks of India (STPI), will be inaugurated by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in the presence of Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on November 18. Speaking at the curtain-

raiser, which was held on Monday, Minister for Electronics, IT/BT and Rural Development Priyank Kharge said, "We are glad to reaffirm that the Bengaluru Tech Summit has grown into a truly global innovation platform, fostering discovery and development across the entire technology spectrum—from information technology and biotechnology to deep tech, space, and sustainability."

Privank added that this

year, the government has organised 'The Future Makers Conclave' at BTS, a high-energy gathering of nearly 10,000 founders, investors, and innovators aimed at shaping the next wave of entrepreneurship.

"The conclave is a flagship meet designed to deliver tangible value for all participants in the startup ecosystem-from budding entrepreneurs and early-stage founders to seasoned entrepreneurs looking to scale up," he said.

"Every attendee will leave with concrete takeaways, whether in capital access, pilot projects, business tools, mentoring, visibility, or networks," he added.

N Manjula, Secretary, Department of Electronics, IT & BT, said, "We will be unveiling three policies, reaffirming Karnataka's deep tech commitment. The space technology policy will be launched during BTS, along with the third version of the IT policy and the second version of the startup



recently approved the Karnataka Space Technology Policy and the Information Technology Policy for 2025-30, offering extensive financial and non-financial incentives to accelerate investments, strengthen innovation, and expand the state's tech footprint beyond Bengaluru. On November 6, the cabinet approved the Karnataka Startup Policy 2025-30, with a total outlay of Rs 518.27 crore over five years, aiming to establish up The Karnataka cabinet to 25,000 startups, including

10,000 from clusters outside Bengaluru.

According to a statement, BTS 2025 will feature 10 focused conference tracks, including IT and DeepTech, Electro-Semicon, Digi Health & Biotech, India-USA Tech Conclave, and Global Collaboration and Startup Ecosystem. Sub-tracks include AI Universe, Defence & SpaceTech, Finverse, and Women in Leadership.

"The summit will bring together over 50,000 visi-

1,000 investors, 15,000 atten dees, 500 speakers, and 1,000 exhibitors," the statement said.

"It will host over 80 knowledge sessions, more than 5,000 curated meetings, and welcome participants from 60 countries and all 30 states and Union Territories of India," it added. Themed 'Futurise', the three-day summit will bring together notable speakers, including ISRO Chairman V Naravanan. Amardeep Singh Bhatia, Secretary of DPIIT, and Abhishek Singh, Additional Secretary of MeitY.

BTS 2025 will also feature specialised platforms such as Investor Connect, allowing startups to engage directly with leading investors and industry leaders, and Mentor Connect, which provides one-on-one mentorship with experienced domain experts.

"These platforms aim to catalyse meaningful connections, capital access, and strategic guidance for the next generation of innovators, including more than tors," the statement said.

NMCG clears research, pollution-control projects

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi

The National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) said on Monday that it has approved a series of major research and infrastructure projects aimed at strengthening scientific river management and accelerating pollution abatement efforts across the Ganga basin.

the 67th executive committee (EC) meeting of the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) chaired by its Director General Rajeev Kumar Mital with a strong focus on datadriven planning, climate resilience and rejuvenation of both the Ganga and Yamuna

Senior officials from the Department of Water Resources and states participating in the mission attended the meeting, which placed emphasis on research-led

studies that will deepen scientific understanding of the Ganga basin, from monitoring Himalayan glaciers and creating a digital twin of the Ganga to SONAR-based riverbed surveys, managed aquifer recharge through paleochan-nels, and digitisation of historic geospatial maps, an official statement said.

Officials said the projects mark a shift toward integrating advanced modelling, artificial intelligence (AI) tools and high-resolution datasets into long-term river restoration. As part of the major pollution-abatement measures, the committee approved a ₹361.86 crore project to intercept and divert drains and construct new sewage treatment plants (STPs) for cleaning the Mahananda River in Siliguri, West Bengal.

The project, which includes 25 interception and diversion (I and D) structures, two STPs with capacities of 27 MLD and The EC cleared several 22 MLD, and an extensive network of rising mains and pumping stations, will be implemented under a hybrid annuity-based public-private partnership (PPP) model.

To support Yamuna rejuvenation in Delhi, the EC also cleared the conveyance of treated sewage from the coronation pillar STP to the river.

The plan involves tapping untreated flows from the Jahangirpuri drain, building new pumping stations, laying rising mains and RCC channels, and installing truss bridges for drain crossings to ensure safe discharge of treated effluent, the state-

Among the key research approvals, the EC sanctioned a ₹3.98 crore study by the National Institute of Hydrology, Roorkee, on glacier retreat and melt-runoff changes in the Upper Ganga Basin, including risks linked to flash floods and glacial lake outburst floods.

It also approved a high-

resolution SONAR-based bathymetric survey covering 1,100 km of the Ganga from Bijnor to Ballia, aimed at improving sediment management and environmental-flow assessments.

A ₹242.56 lakh project on managed aquifer recharge paleochannels . Ganga-Yamuna Doab region was cleared to enhance groundwater security between Kaushambi and Kanpur.

The committee additionally approved ₹3.31 crore for developing a Digital Twin and Water Cycle Atlas for the Ganga basin, and ₹2.62 crore for creating a geospatial database of historical maps to track long-term changes in river morphology and floodplains.

Looking to expand public outreach, the EC sanctioned the 'Youth for Ganga, Youth for Yamuna' initiative to engage over 2.5 lakh students across 200 Delhi-NCR schools.

NCW flags lapses in RG Kar probe

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Kolkata

The parents of the rapedmurdered RG Kar Medical College trainee doctor were among 43 complainants who appeared before the National Commission for Women (NCW) during a mass hearing, Jansunwai', held here on Monday to address cases of atrocities against women.

On the sidelines of the first day of the two-day session, NCW member and eminent doctor Archana Majumdar said that the commission would continue to stand by survivors and their families as they "keep knocking on every door for justice" and wait for months or years for redress.

"Everyone knows what happened to the woman in the RG Kar case. Her helpless parents are being treated like shuttlecocks by the state authorities. They pleaded

Everyone knows what happened to the woman in the RG Kar case. Her helpless parents are being treated like shuttlecocks by the state authorities. They pleaded before the NCW, and we believe it is our responsibility to ensure they get real justice

- ARCHANA MAJUMDAR, NCW MEMBER

before the NCW, and we believe it is our responsibility to ensure they get real justice. We had sent our members for inspection to visit the place of occurrence. As only one person has been arrested, there is merit in their argument," she said.

Majumdar added that the parents were unhappy with the pace of the investigation.

Expressing dissatisfaction over the state police's communication with the NCW she said, "They (police) never upload this case on the portal. I had two virtual hearings with two Deputy Commissioner-rank officials two-three months ago, but they could not give any substantial update. "At an earlier virtual

hearing on the RG Kar case, seven points were asked and recorded and police promised to look into these points. However, no action taken report (ATR) has been initiated based on the flagging of these points and they are not providing us documents requested by me stating the case is sub-judice," the NCW member said.

"Police should not be to harass people and make them move from one place to another. I am not generalising, but this has been the instances. Even the mother of the deceased woman was beaten during a march to Nabanna a year after the incident. That complaint has also been lodged with us, but there has been no action by police so far," she said.

attitude of police in many

Majumdar said the NCW has scheduled another hearing on the RG Kar case in 15 days, involving the parents, police and investigating agencies."The issues should not be skipped. We are very serious. Even if the matter is sub-judice before the Calcutta High Court, what can be done within the parameters of law must be done," she said.

The father of the victim medic, after meeting Majumdar, said, "We are yet to get any satisfactory reply from police related to several issues. The CBI has also let us down. Let's see what reply Kolkata Police furnishes after 15 davs.'

Congress slams BJP, MNS for hate-filled politics

The Congress on Monday said it will not compromise on its ideology and warned that the "divisive and hate-filled politics" of the BJP and MNS are harmful to Mumbai's social harmony and development.

The party announced it will contest the upcoming BMC elections independently while seeking support from like-minded groups. 'The Congress will not

compromise on its ideology; the divisive and hate-driven politics of the BJP and MNS are harmful for Mumbai," party spokesperson Sachin Sawant said at a press conference.

"To focus on Mumbai's real issues, it is essential for Congress to contest inde-



pendently. Congress is committed to development with a human face," he added. Sawant said the party remains firmly committed to constitutional values such as democracy, justice, equality and secularism, adding the Congress' ideology

stands in sharp contrast to what he described as the attempt by the BJP-RSS to divide people on the basis of religion, caste and language.

"The BJP is trying to polarise Mumbai by raising issues such as the possibility of a Muslim mayor and

healthcare, education, housing and pollution. Such rhetoric disturbs the social atmosphere and affects the city's long-term growth," Sawant said. Slamming the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS), Sawant said the Rai Thackeray-led party's politics in the name of Marathi pride has created fear and hostility in the past.

Sawant pointed to incidents of violence against taxi drivers, hawkers and iob seekers from other states. and said statements by MNS chief Raj Thackeray on loudspeakers and aggressive slogans threaten Mumbai's multicultural fabric.

"Mumbai continues to face basic civic challenges

addressing core civic con- clean drinking water, waste cerns like roads, water, management, better public toilets, quality schools affordable housing and a corruption-free administration. Parties focused on religion, caste or language have failed to address these issues," he said. He added that Mumbai has always welcomed people from across Maharashtra and the rest of the country, and targeting 'outsiders" often ends up hurting locals as well.

"The Congress is contesting independently to provide clean, transparent and equitable governance. The current system is handing over the city's land and resources to a select few. The Congress' aim is to ensure development that is inclusive and humane," Sawant asserted.

BJP's Nuapada bypoll victory due to workers' effort, says CM Majhi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Bhubaneswar

Rejecting BJD and Congress' allegations of "vote chori", manipulation and booth rigging, Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Monday said the BJP registered a "historic" victory in the

Nuapada bypoll due to the

tireless efforts of party

workers, unity among leaders

and a flawless strategy. Addressing a meeting, Majhi thanked party workers and leaders for playing a crucial role in ensuring the victory of BJP candidate Jay Dholakia by a margin of over 83,000 votes.

"We are thankful to the people of Nuapada. I will

soon visit the district and personally convey my gratitude," he said.

Recalling earlier years when, according to him, the BIP did not even have polling booth agents in several areas, the chief minister said, "We learned from defeats and reviewed our mistakes. That is why the BJP is successful today.

Accusing the Opposition of spreading misinformation, Majhi said, "Both the BJD and Congress attacked us with lies, fearing defeat. They used abusive words like 'vote chori' and 'beiman' (traitor). But their lies did not work, and the people of Nuapada gave them a befitting reply.'

He claimed that an action

like 'Operation Sindoor' was executed in Nuapada, which,

he said, "gave rich dividends" Majhi asserted that the bypoll results had "changed the political landscape" of Odisha." Now Congress says it lost because of a 'Bibhishan' (one who helps the enemy) and that action will be taken against him. If they do so, the party – which has 70 per cent 'Bibhishan' - will be completely destroyed." he remarked.

The chief minister said BIP workers, leaders, MLAs, MPs and ministers worked in coordination throughout the campaign. "The ministers, MLAs and MPs deployed in the area will now prepare a list of local problems. All issues will be resolved," he added.

Harvana was carved out of

Referring to Panjab

Punjab on November 1, 1966.

University, Chandigarh, Saini

said that the Haryana govern-

ment wishes to contribute to

it. If some colleges of Haryana

get affiliated to the Panjab

University, it will benefit both

the university and the stu-

Notably, Punjab Chief

Minister Bhagwant Mann had

recently recalled that over

two years back, he took a

stand against a proposal of

affiliation of Haryana col-

leges with Panjab University,

saying the Chandigarh-based

university has always been

connected with Punjab's

Saini, while touching upon

dents of Haryana, he said.

J&K Deputy CM claims PDP contested Budgam bypoll with BJP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Baghpat

Jammu and Kashmir Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary on Monday attacked PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti, alleging that her party contested the Budgam assembly bypoll with the BJP.

Choudhary's remarks came days after opposition PDP candidate Aga Syed Muntazir won the bypoll on November 14, defeating ruling National Conference Aga Mehmood.

Speaking to reporters here, he said, "One day, Mehbooba ji speaks in the favour of the BJP, and another day she speaks against it. First, Mehbooba ji should decide whether she is with the BJP or against it."

Referring to the recent bypoll in Budgam, Choudhary said that Mehbooba-led PDP contest-



ed the election with the BJP. The J&K deputy CM also claimed that the PDP is in a dilemma and is unable to draw the line.

He also said that attempts were made to misguide the voters. "At times, the voters

get misguided." "But the voters never cast votes on the basis of violence in the country or the situation which Pakistan

wants to create in India.

People are intelligent, and

they know about their voting rights," he said. Choudhary also said that

a promise was made by the Centre that the statehood of J&K will be restored soon. "The people of Jammu

and Kashmir are hoping that the prime minister and the home minister will fulfil their promises. Jammu and Kashmir, which was divided and made a Union Territory, will get back its lost status of a state," he said.

Punjab must remember sacred traditions of Gurus: CM Saini

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Chandigarh

Punjab must remember the sacred traditions of the Gurus while addressing water disputes, Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Monday said, pointing out that the state is not receiving its full share of water from the neighbouring state due to the nonconstruction of the SYL canal.

Saini was speaking at the 32nd meeting of the Northern Zonal Council in Faridabad's Suraikund which was chaired by Union Home Minister Amit Shah. During the meeting, Saini said that sustained cooperation between states is extremely important for the progress of the nation.

By pooling our resources, sharing knowledge and adopting each other's best practices, we can turn the vision of 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' into reality, he said. Saini said Haryana has

resolve of 'Viksit Bharat 2047'. According to a Haryana government statement, Saini

said while discussing key agenda items that proper arrangements must be ensured for supplying each state its rightful share of

Haryana has consistently been giving Delhi more water than its own share. However, due to the non-construction of the SYL canal, Haryana is not receiving its full share of water from Punjab. Once Haryana receives its rightful share of water through SYL, Rajasthan will also get its due share, he said.

Saini said that Punjab is the land of Gurus, the sacred soil where Bhai Kanahaiya served even enemy soldiers on the battlefield by giving them water. Through the Council, he urged Punjab to remember the great traditions of the Gurus while addressing the water dispute.

made several successful Notably, Bhai Kanahiya, who was a disciple of Guru efforts in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Teg Bahadur, carried a



'mashk' (leather pouch filled

with water) on his shoulder in a battle in Anandpur Sahib and served water to the wounded without any discrimination.

Saini also said that water is a shared resource and keeping it clean is the collective responsibility of all states. Recalling that rivers are revered as mothers in Indian culture, he specifically mentioned the Yamuna and assured that Haryana is making every effort to keep the project in its territory the river clean.

but Punjab, which launched Notably, the SYL canal issue the work in 1982, shelved it.

has been a bone of contention between the two states for the past several years. The canal was conceptualised for the effective sharing of water between the two states from the Ravi and Beas rivers. The project envisages a

214-kilometre canal, of which a 122-kilometre stretch was to be constructed in Punjab and the remaining 92 kilometres in Haryana. Haryana has completed

legacy and heritage. other issues at the meeting, said that ensuring the safety

of children is everyone's responsibility. With the implementation

of the three new criminal laws in Haryana, cases under the POCSO Act are being disposed of more swiftly, he

Commitment to development helps us win elections: PM



Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said the Bihar election results have sent a clear message to all state Governments that their development policies will determine the future of their parties, whether they belong to "left, right or centre".

1.36 lakh devotees visit Sabarimala as season opens

Over 1.36 lakh devotees have completed darshan at the Lord Ayyappa Temple since the hill shrine opened on Sunday evening for the 'mandala-makaravilakku' pilgrimage season. The auspicious first day of the Malayalam month of 'Vrischikam' marks the start of the annual season. Nearly 55,000 pilgrims arrived for darshan on the opening day alone, ADGP S Sreejith said on Monday



Statue of former six-time CM Virbhadra unveiled in Shimla



Public Works Minister Vikramaditya Singh on Monday unveiled the statue of former six-time CM of Himachal Pradesh Virbhadra Singh in Shimla district's Rohru. The minister said that it were the efforts of Virbhadra that shaped the development of Rohru as well as the entire state.

Congress stands united, would not split: Robert Vadra

businessman husband of Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi on Monday ruled out any potential split in the Congress in the wake of the drubbing received in the Bihar assembly elections, and asserted unity among party leaders and the Opposition bloc. "Whatever the PM says....There will be no split in the Congress. Everyone in the Congress and the Opposition alliance is united," Vadra



Regional strength along with national progress is Govt's clear goal: Amit Shah



Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Haryana CM Nayab Saini during the 32nd Northern Zonal Council meeting in Faridabad on Monday

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE Faridabad

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday said the Modi Government's goal is very clear — regional strength along with national progress and India's global leadership in every field.

Addressing the 32nd meeting of the Northern Zonal Council here, Shah also said that all states should work in mutual coordination to resolve water resource management and waterrelated problems.

'Our goal is clear — regional strength along with national progress and India's global leadership in every field, which will lead us towards the creation of a great India,"

Chief Ministers Nayab Singh Saini (Haryana), Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu (Himachal Pradesh), Bhagwant Mann (Punjab), Bhajan Lal Sharma (Rajasthan), Rekha Gupta (Delhi), Omar Abdullah (Jammu and Kashmir), Punjab Governor and Administrator

of Chandigarh Gulab Chand Kataria, Lieutenant Governors Manoj Sinha (Jammu and Kashmir), V K Saxena (Delhi) and Kavinder Gupta (Ladakh) attended the meeting, officials said. The Home Minister said

poverty is being eradicated and employment is increasing through cooperation, agriculture and fisheries.

Referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's *mantra* of Sahkar Se Samriddhi (Prosperity through Cooperation), he said the coopera-

PUNJAB CM REITERATES CLAIM ON CHANDIGARH, PU

Faridabad: Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Monday reiterated state's claim over Chandigarh, Panjab University and river waters before Union Home Minister Amit Shah at the 32nd meeting of the Northern Zonal Council here. Mann also advocated genuine federal structure in the country at the meeting chaired by Shah.

Flagging the issues, the Chief Minister said the Constitution clearly demarcates areas in which the Union and the states have to function to exercise their respective authority. Unfortunately, there has been a trend towards centralisation of authority in the past 75 years, he said.

Pleading for handing over Chandigarh to the state of Punjab, Mann said that the Rajiv-Longowal Accord, signed on July 24, 1985, between then prime minister Rajiv Gandhi and Sant Harchand Singh Longowal, reaffirmed that Chandigarh will be transferred to Punjab.

However, Mann bemoaned that despite all promises, Chandigarh was not transferred to Punjab, which has "bruised the psyche of every Puniabi". He said that the Centre's recent attempts to restructure the Panjab University's governance have been seen as interference in Punjab's rights and to its state identity and autonomy.

tive sector holds immense potential for employment.

He said that only through growth in employment especially self-employment along with Gross Domestic Product (GDP) can the country realise the dream of a devel oped India

Shah said the GDP alone is not an indicator of a country's prosperity; true prosperity is achieved only when every individual rises above the poverty line.

He said the Ministry of Cooperation has initiated 57 measures across the country to strengthen the sector. These include computerisation of Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS), establishment of three new national-level cooperative societies, and the setting up of Tribhuvan Sahkari University, he said.

The Home Minister said the original spirit and the role of zonal councils is advisory, but in the last decade, they have been accepted as action-oriented platforms and have delivered results.

Army Chief warns Pakistan, calls Operation Sindoor an 88-hour trailer

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi on Monday warned Pakistan, saying Operation Sindoor was an '88-hour trailer' and next time it will be taught to behave responsibly with a neighbour.

Giving this stern message, he also said the situation in Jammu and Kashmir has improved significantly since the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019.

Making these assertions in his address at the Chanakya Dialogue, the Army chief listed the lessons learnt from Operation Sindoor and highlighted how the action and capabilities of the armed forces gave a reality check to the hostile neighbour.

"Operation Sindoor was just a trailer which ended in 88 hours. We are prepared for any circumstances in future. If Pakistan gives a chance, we will teach it how to behave responsibly with a neighbouring nation," he said.

On lessons learnt from the operation, General Dwivedi underlined three main points — integration between forces, ensuring proper supplies for a drawnout battle, and ensuring decisions are taken at every level of the command chain.

"Whenever some operation happened we learn from it, this time too we



Chief of the Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi speaks during the Chanakya Defence Dialogue in New Delhi on Monday

learned things. One of the things we learned was that the decision we have very less time to take any decision, and take a decision at every level on time," he said.

The Army chief stressed on integration among the forces, "because today's battles are multi-domain".

"Just the army cannot fight a battle, everyone has to fight together," he said, mentioning the air force and navy.

"We also cannot say how long a battle will last even today. This time we fought for 88 hours; next time it could be four months too or even four years. Looking at that, do we have enough supplies and weapons to fight that? If we do not have, then we need to prepare for that," he added.

Talking about how India has "set a new normal" after

on April 22, he said, "When a country encourages statesponsored terrorism, it becomes a matter of concern for India. India talks about progress. If someone creates obstacles in our course, then we will have to take some action against them. When we talk about the new normal, we have

said that talks and terror

the Pahalgam terror attack

can't go together.' General Dwivedi added "All we are asking is to adopt a peaceful process, which we will cooperate with. Until then, we will treat terrorists and their sponsors alike." He further highlighted the security situation in Jammu and Kashmir, saying that there has been a decline in terrorist incidents in the area following the abrogation of Article 370. "After this, political clarity

MP expands dog vaccination to protect tigers

GIRISH SHARMA ■ Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh has intensified disease-prevention measures around its flagship tiger landscapes, launching an expanded vaccination campaign for stray and community dogs to curb the spread of Canine Distemper Virus (CDV) and seven other infectious diseases that pose a direct threat to big cats. Forest officials confirmed

that the drive has already begun in multiple districts and will continue in phases across buffers and wildlife corridors. The initiative covers villages

and settlement zones around Panna Tiger Reserve (PTR). Kuno National Park and other sensitive habitats where domestic and wild carnivores frequently interact. The objective is clear: reduce the reservoir of canine infections that can spill over into tiger and leopard populations, undermining conservation gains achieved over two decades.

The forest department's renewed urgency stems from a history of CDV-linked incidents. In 2015, the Indian Veterinary Research Institute in Bareilly confirmed CDV in tissue samples from a deceased big cat in Panna. Subsequent years brought new warnings. In 2024, a tiger



tent with CDV. Surveillance teams also detected viral signatures among stray canids and small wild carnivores in adjoining landscapes, highlighting a dangerous disease pathway connecting villages, buffer zones and protected

Officials said this year's drive is the most comprehensive yet. Unlike previous rounds, which largely focused on CDV and rabies, the current campaign covers eight diseases including distemper, parvovirus, adenovirus, leptospirosis and rabies - offering broader protection to both domestic animals and wildlife. The vaccination strategy uses a mix of parenteral injections for community dogs and baitbased delivery for freeroaming strays. During earlier efforts, more than 1,200 vaccine baits were deployed in buffer areas; the new campaign is expected to exceed that number substantially.

Deputy Director of Panna Tiger Reserve Mohit Sood told The Pioneer that the initiative is central to safeguarding the State's big cat populations. "Domestic dogs are the primary disease reservoir in landscapes where villages and forests overlap. If we want to protect tigers, we must first secure the health of dogs living around them," Sood said, adding, "Even a single CDV outbreak in a tiger corridor can undo years of conservation work. This campaign gives us a critical shield against that risk."

Canine distemper is a highly contagious viral infection that affects the respiratory, gastrointestinal and neurological systems of dogs, foxes, jackals and large felids. While it poses no danger to humans, it spreads quickly through direct contact, contaminated food or water and aerosol droplets. When contracted by tigers or leopards, CDV can cause fatal damage, neurological impaired hunting ability and rapid population decline particularly in small or reintro-For Madhya Pradesh, where

tiger numbers are stabilising and new populations are being nurtured in Panna, Satpura and Kuno landscapes, disease pressure remains a critical management concern. Officials emphasise that vaccination is only one component of a wider biosecurity strategy. Continuous surveillance, community awareness, reporting networks and regular sampling of wild carnivores are all part of the department's integrated approach.

Sood said the PTR has already mapped out high-risk corridors, including areas where domestic dogs follow villagers into forest edges or scavenge near water sources used by wildlife. "We are prioritising zones where interaction is highest. The success of this programme depends not just on vaccination numbers but on closing transmission loops between villages and the forest," he said.

Bengal Governor Bose leads bomb squad to search at Raj Bhavan

SAUGAR SENGUPTA

In a daylong drama hitherto unheard off in Bengal, State and central security forces including bomb disposal squads on Monday conducted a thorough search operation inside the Governor's House in Kolkata following orders from Governor CV Ananda Bose.

Bose's order came after Trinamool Congress MP Kalyan Banerjee accused him of harbouring criminal elements from the BJP and supplying them with arms and ammunition to commit violence in the

The Governor personally led the live-broadcast search operations inside the colonial Raj Bhavan his official residence after all the staff of the Governor's House were

asked to live the campus. At the end of the twohour search operation the Governor said "the honourable MP (Kalyan Banerjee) had alleged that I harbor criminals and supply them with guns and bombs... this was



A security officer conducting searches at Raj Bhavan in the presence of West Bengal Governor CV Ananda Bose in Kolkata on Monday

required since I want to establish that the accusation made against me is baseless and false. I will certainly take legal action against (Banerjee)," even as sources in his office said Bose was contemplating legal steps besides writing a letter to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla.

Banerjee poked fun at the entire incident calling it a "childish affair," wondering whether anyone would keep the bombs while conducting the

"This is a childish affair . Will anyone keep bombs in his house when he calling the police to search one's house?... He is doing all this to draw the attention of (Home Minister) Amit Shah... his marks have gone down before Amit Shah... he wants them to increase them... He could even have called the American President or even the FBI," Banerjee

When told that the Governor was planning to write to Speaker Om Birla

Banerjee welcomed the move saying, "a Governor's affairs cannot be discussed inside the House ... but let him do that ... if he does so then it will give us an opportunity to have a debate on the Governor ... all the political parties will leap up this opportunity ...I am ready to go to jail 50 times for speaking against someone like him... because he always acts

In a previous transaction Bose said in reference to Bihar elections that elections should be based in Bengal, "on the ballot, not the bullet... a transition which is required urgently in the state," leading Banerjee to advise the Governor to first stop providing shelter and arms to the BIP's criminals.

like a sidekick of the BJP."

"First, tell the governor not to shelter the BJP's criminals in Raj Bhavan. He is keeping offenders there, giving them guns and bombs, and telling them to attack Trinamool workers. Let him stop this first," the MP said calling Bose an "incompetent Governor" who was acting like a "servant of the BJP."

Protest erupts in Kolkata over teachers' job scam

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ Kolkata

With the State elections barely six months away there was more trouble for the Mamata Banerjee Government with a new 'variety' of recruitment scam exploding in its face.

Thousands of school job seekers on Monday descended on the streets demanding cancellation of just conducted school services examinations where additional ten marks were allotted for experience to the candidates who had lost their jobs after serving for about ten years following a SC order in the cash-for-job case.

These teachers were appointed in the now-cancelled 2016 panel where genuine and tainted candidates could not be separated by the SSC despite repeated Court orders. About 26,000 teachers lost their jobs and had to sit for a new recruitment examination - following the Supreme Court order along with the new candi-

dates. However, in the new scheme of things the SSC allowed additional ten marks to the dismissed teachers for experience. Even as thousands of examinees descended on the streets jamming the SSC building some said, "this is a strange scheme that the Government has designed, while full marks is 70 of which 10 is given for academics and 60 for MCQ tests, many of us have scored 70 out of 70 but strangely the candidates from the previous panel are getting 75 out of total 70 marks on account of the 10 marks they have been pre-allotted for 'experience' ... this is a complete anomaly.

The BJP and the Left promptly lapped up the issue saying they would back the job seekers as "this is a new scam this Government has started to hoodwink the SC many tainted teachers have found their way in the new merit list despite the Court order that no tainted person should be allowed to appear in the exams.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Rampur (UP)

Less than two months after he was released from Sitanur iail. SP leader Mohammed Azam Khan went back behind bars on Monday when a court convicted and sentenced him to seven years' imprisonment in a 2019 case related to obtaining two PAN cards using different dates of birth.

The special MP-MLA court here also sentenced Azam Khan's son Abdullah Azam to seven years' imprisonment in

the same case. After the sentencing, Khan was taken from the Rampur

court to the district jail under heavy security. While being taken to prison, he said, "What is there to say now? It

is the court's decision.' Asked about the court awarding a seven-year sentence each to him and his son, the 77-year-old leader replied, "It is fine. If they have consid-

ered me guilty, they have given the punishment." Delivering the verdict, Special Magistrate (MP/MLA Court) Shobhit Bansal held both father and son guilty after examining documentary evidence and witness

testimonies, Prosecution

Officer Rakesh Kumar

Maurya, who represented

the prosecution along with advocate Swadesh Sharma, told reporters. The veteran SP leader was

Azam Khan son, Abdullah convicted in dual PAN card case

released from the Sitapur jail on September 23 after 23 months. Before this, he was in jail for 27 months.

According to the prosecution, Khan's seven-year jail term has been decreased by the number of days already spent in judicial custody in this case.

Maurya also said the prosecution would review the

judgment and may consider filing an appeal if it feels the punishment is inadequate. Asked whether Azam Khan

and Abdullah would be taken

into custody following the conviction, Maurya responded, "Yes, absolutely". The case was lodged in

2019 at Rampur's Civil Lines police station by BIP leader Akash Saxena under IPC sections 420 (cheating), 467 (forgery of valuable security), 468 (forgery for cheating), 471 (using forged document) and 120-B (criminal

School certificates.

conspiracy). According to the prosecu-For cheating under Section tion, Abdullah obtained a PAN card from the Income Tax Department mentioning January 1, 1993 as his date of birth, which matched the date in his school and High

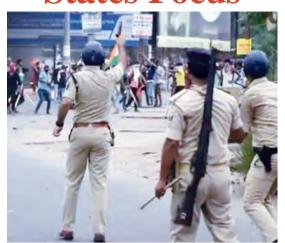
The same date was also used in the records of his State Bank of India account operated by him.

The court held that Abdullah had procured the forged PAN card "in conspiracy with his father" and submitted it in official records.

Maurya said the court awarded varying prison terms under different sections of the IPC.

420, the court sentenced both accused to three years' simple imprisonment along with a fine of ₹10,000, with an additional three months' imprisonment in case of non-payment.

States Focus



HARYANA BOOSTS ANTI-TERROR GRID AFTER MODULE BUST

Haryana DGP OP Singh on Monday said the anti-terrorism apparatus in the state's National Capital Region has been further strengthened, a week after a "white collar" terror module was busted with the recovery of explosives mainly from Faridabad.

He underlined that alert citizens can play an important role in the fight against terrorism by becoming the eyes and ears of the police.

The director general of police (DGP) said central intelligence agencies, Delhi Police, and police officers from Uttar Pradesh engaged in anti-terrorism operations attended a meeting held in Faridabad on Sunday.



DEFENCE SECRETARY VISITS CENTRAL SECTOR POSTS

Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh, undertook a comprehensive visit to forward locations in the Central Sector from November 15 to 17, defrence ministry said. At Pithoragarh, the Defence Secretary was briefed on major operational matters by the General Officer Commanding, Uttar Bharat Area and Commander 119 (I) Infantry Brigade Group on operational aspects. During his visit to Navidang, he interacted with the concerned Battalion Commanders and Chief Engineer Project Hirak of the Border Roads Organisation (BRO). They apprised him on operational aspects and the progress of critical border infrastructure projects aimed at enhancing strategic mobility and strengthening National security. During the visit, the Defence Secretary was accompanied by Director General Border Roads (DGBR).

Quarry collapse death count climbs to six in UP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Five more bodies have been recovered from the rubble of a stone quarry that collapsed in Uttar Pradesh's Sonbhadra district, taking the death toll to six, an official said on Monday.

District Magistrate, Sonbhadra, BN Singh said the bodies were recovered on the intervening night of Sunday and Monday.

"One body was recovered in the night. The deceased was identified as Indrajit (30), a resident of Panari, Obra. The other deceased persons have been identified as Santosh Yadav (30), brother of Indrajit, Ravindra Nanak Ramkhelavan (32) and Kripashankar."

The body of Raju Singh (30) was recovered on



Uttar Pradesh minister and local MLA Sanjeev Kumar Gond, who visited the spot in the Billi Markundi mining area after the col-

lapse on Saturday evening, said, "Around a dozen labourers might be trapped under the debris".

General of Police (ADG), Varanasi Zone, Pivush Mordia on Sunday said clearing the rubble is taking Additional Director time due to presence of

Sonbhadra Superintendent of Police (SP) Abhishek Verma had said that they were informed about the incident around 4.30 pm on Saturday at Obra police station.

The caller said several workers were buried under debris after a portion of a stone quarry operated by Krishna Mining Works collapsed.

The police have booked the owner of Krishna Mining Works and his business partners, Madhusudan Singh and Dilip Keshari, both residents of Obra, on the complaint of Chhotu Yadav — a resident of Parsoi Tola who said his two brothers were trapped under the rubble, the SP said.

The three accused are yet to be arrested. Samaiwadi

Party's Robertsganj MP, Chotelal Kharwar, alleged that the mafia in collusion with local police.

"There is a possibility that 12 to 15 people are trapped under the stones. Tribals are being killed in many ways, and large-scale illegal mining is being carried out in this area. One or two such incidents occur every month in this region, but how the mining mafia manages everything

remains unknown," he said. Illegal mining is being carried out in collusion with the police and administrative officials, the MP alleged.

Kharwar claimed he was stopped by the police from meeting the kin of the trapped mine workers.

He also demanded ₹50 lakh in compensation for the victim's family and a Government job for each family.

ECI orders special revision of Assam voter list, final roll on February 10, 2026

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

The Election Commission of India on Monday ordered 'Special Revision' of electoral rolls in Assam and the final

voter list will be published on

February 10, 2026.

According to instructions issued by the poll panel for the Chief Electoral Officer of Assam, January 1, 2026 will be the qualifying date for the state to carry out the Special

According to officials, the Special Revision stands somewhere between the annual special summary revision and the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. "It is in a way an upgrade of special summary revision... Instead of enumeration forms, Booth-Level Officers will verify electors on a pre-filled register," a senior functionary explained.

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma welthe Election

undertake Special Revision of the electoral rolls in the state and assured the Government s full cooperation.

"The Govt of Assam wel-Election comes the Commission of India's decision to undertake a Special Revision of the electoral rolls with 01.01.2026 as the qualifying date," the Chief Minister posted on X.

"This will help ensure clean, updated and accurate electoral rolls for all eligible citizens. Assam will extend full cooperation to the @ECISVEEP to complete

and time-bound manner," he added.

According to the schedule, the door-to-door verification will take place from November 22 to December 20. The integrated draft electoral roll will be published on December 27 and the final roll on February 10 next year.

For field verification, the booth level officers (BLOs) will be given a pre-filled BLO register containing the details of existing electors in their respective part for a house-tohouse field visit.

unit for conducting the underlined.

house-to-house survey and to get the said details verified or corrected from the elector or the head of the household.

It said the details of D-Voters (doubtful voters) will not be included in the register, as no verification is required in their case.

D-Voters are a category of voters in Assam who are disenfranchised by the Government on account of their alleged lack of proper citizenship credentials. D-Voters are determined by special tribunals under the Foreigners Act, 1946, and the person declared as a D-Voter is not given a voter card.

All related particulars, such as name, age and photograph, of the D-Voters will be carried forward to the draft electoral roll without any change.

Any modification, including removal or deletion, will be done "upon receipt of an order from the competent Foreigners' Tribunal or an The household is the basic appropriate court of law", it

Election Commission to open

its eyes. Despite our repeat-

ed requests, the Commission

decided to conduct SIR at a

time when the local body

election had already been

Joseph said the party

would approach the Supreme

Court against the SIR process.

By considering the 2002

voters' list, even I don't have

voting rights. Several political

leaders will not figure in the

voters' list. The Government

of India and the Election

Commission are eliminating

announced," he said.

SIR, alleges BLO-BDO nexus PRESS TRUST OF INDIA was "misleading BLOs regarding dead and shifted voters", and that in

Suvendu slams TMC over

Kolkata

Senior BJP leader Suvendu Adhikari on Monday criticised the TMC Government over the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, alleging a "deep nexus involving a section of BLOs and BDOs" aimed at helping the Trinamool Congress "sabotage" the Election Commission's efforts to weed out "fake voters, illegal migrants".

Addressing a press conference at the state BIP headquarters, Adhikari said the SIR exercise had triggered "panic" within the TMC, prompting "abusive comments and open threats", and accused the administration of resisting the EC's scrutiny.

Keeping the focus on Bengal, he alleged that the revision process had been met with hostility ever since enumeration began.. The Chief Minister and

her party colleagues "began hurling abuses", including remarks such as "we will tie them up to a tree", and Mamata Banerjee publicly objected to 1,000 Booth Level Officers being trained by the Election Commission 'without her consent", he

The Leader of Opposition in West Bengal Assembly alleged systematic attempts to derail the process on the ground. claiming a "close nexus between I-PAC, some BLOs

and certain BDOs". He said the Tamluk BDO North 24 Parganas district, the SIR in-charge was "forcing BLOs to distribute forms even at vacated addresses". He urged the West Bengal Chief Electoral

Officer (CEO) to open a helpline as "many BLOs are not providing enumeration forms for political reasons".

BLOs must report death and shifted voters as 'unaccounted" on the BLO app, he insisted, demanding that all withheld forms be delivered within 48 hours "so that not a single legal voter is left out".

He claimed the BJP had submitted a list of 13.25 lakh "fake voters" and alleged that in 20 Assembly constituencies, 50 to 150 "death voters" were found in each booth. Reiterating the party's position on citizenship, he said: "Legal refugees will be given CAA citizenship. Infiltrators will

have their names deleted" He claimed falsification of birth certificates was being facilitated by "some BMOHs and pradhans" and urged the poll panel

to act. The EC, he said, should cross-check burial ground records, data from the 'Samabyathi' app and pension rolls to determine the "actual number of

death voters". "A fair voter list must come out. Free and fair elections are what the people of Bengal demand,"

BLOs boycott SIR work across Kerala after officer's suicide

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Thiruvananthapuram

The Special Intensive Revision George was handed over to (SIR) exercise in Kerala was affected across the state on Monday as Booth-Level Officers (BLOs) boycotted work following the suicide of an officer allegedly due to work strain.

Aneesh George (44), a BLO in Payyannur, Kannur, was found hanging at his house on Sunday. Family members and residents alleged that he took the extreme step because of work-related pressure linked to the SIR exer-

Various trade unions of

State Government employ-

ees, including the Action

Council of State Government **Employees and Teachers and** the Joint Committee of Teacher Service Organisations, held protests at the Chief Electoral Officer's office in Thiruvanathapuram and district collectorates, demanding that authorities refrain from exerting excessive pressure on BLOs and

Kerala NGO Association also staged protests across the state, demanding that SIR proce-

consider postponing the SIR.

dures be stopped to prevent

Meanwhile, the body of his relatives after the postmortem on Monday. George's family reiterated that he had been under severe work pressure related to the SIR. "He did not even get time to have food and sleep properly. He was under severe strain to complete work assigned as part of the SIR exercise," Saiju, George's brother-inlaw, told reporters.

Saiju added that George was frequently contacted by senior officers for updates. "Seeing the severe workload. George's father told him not to worry even if he loses his

Leader of Opposition VD Satheesan said that a preliminary probe indicated that the role of CPI(M) workers in George's suicide should also be examined.

'We came to know that George was threatened after a Congress booth-level agent accompanied him for enumeration," he alleged. He also alleged that both the BJP and CPI(M) were attempting to keep traditional Congress voters off the rolls. "While the BJP is implementing SIR with



Kerala Government employees stage a protest outside the ECI office over the alleged stress-induced suicide of a Booth Level Officer involved in the Special Intensive Revision in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala on Monday

forward in Kerala. We will oppose it strongly, legally and politically," he said.

Satheesan urged the state Government and the Election Commission of India (ECI) to ensure the safety of BLOs and conduct a thorough investigation.

"A majority of BLOs are women. There are around 700–1,200 voters in a booth,

ill intent, CPI(M) is carrying it and BLOs have to visit each house multiple times to meet targets in a short period," he

> Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) president Sunny Joseph said a telephonic conversation by George revealed that he was threatened by CPI(M) workers for accompanying Congress booth-level agents during enumeration.

"The conversation revealed that CPI(M) threatened to file a false complaint against George, accusing him of distributing Congress pamphlets at houses. Apart from work strain, this political threat led to his suicide," Joseph said. He added that the Congress party fully supports the protesting BLOs.

"We hope that the protest by BLOs will compel the

the basic democratic rights of citizens," he alleged. The Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) has also decided to approach the Supreme Court seeking a

postponement of the Social

Impact Register (SIR) process.

IUML leader PK Kunhalikutty said the SIR was being carried out in haste, which raised doubts about the exercise.

"The procedures that must be conducted with care are being rushed. Even Rahul Gandhi had raised suspicion in Bihar. Why this rush?" he asked.

CPI(M) leader EP Jayarajan denied the allegation that party workers had threatened George.

Bank Centre located on

During her visit, she

inspected the facility,

reviewed its services, and

interacted with children

suffering from thalassemia.

She also announced finan-

cial assistance of ₹11 lakh for

Addressing the gathering,

Sector-10 Kadipur Road.

Ex-maoists, victims unite to run café in Bastar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

Jagdalpur (Chhattisgarh)

Men and women, who once lived through conflict, either as victims of Naxal violence or as former members of the banned Maoist movement, have come together to run a café in Chhattisgarh's Bastar district. Surrendered cadres who have returned to the mainstream and victims of Naxal violence are employed at the 'Pandum Café' in Jagdalpur, in a joint effort towards reintegration and

social healing, officials said. Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai on Monday inaugurated the Pandum Café at the

Poona Margham Complex in Police Lines, set up by the police and district administration under the state Government 's Surrender and Rehabilitation Policy, an official statement said.

Sai said the café symbolises the positive socio-economic transformation underway in Bastar and aims to provide a dignified and sustainable livelihood to those who have renounced violence.

'Pandum Café reflects hope, progress and peace. Those working here, victims as well as surrendered cadres, are now moving forward on the path of peace," he said.

The staff have been trained

in hospitality, café operations, hygiene, food safety and entrepreneurship. As per the statement, Sai

interacted with the café team members, including Fagni from Narayanpur, Pushpa Thakur and Birendra Thakur from Sukma, and Ashmati and Premila Baghel from Bastar, and wished them success. Several workers shared emotional accounts of rebuilding their lives.

"We lived in darkness in the past. Today, serving society through this café feels like being reborn. Replacing explosives with coffee and earning through honest work has given us dignity," the release working at the café as saying. Another staff member said the initiative has enabled them to support their families

and "dream of a respectful

quoted a former Maoist cadre

"We thought returning to the mainstream would be difficult, but the training and trust shown to us changed everything. Working alongside victims of violence has given us a chance to correct our past and contribute to

peace," another colleague said. Officials said the café is being developed as a sustainable socio-economic model and may pave the way for similar rehabilitation initiaHaryana to begin work on 400-bed hospital PIONEER NEWS SERVICE Gurugram

Haryana Health Minister Kumari Aarti Singh Rao on Monday announced that the construction of a state-ofthe-art 400-bed hospital in Gurugram will begin soon. The state Government is preparing to invite tenders for the project.

She added that provisions for an additional 200 beds will also be incorporated during the construction phase to allow future expansion. The minister was speak-

plant at the Rotary Blood

the Health Minister said that the Government is committed to strengthening Gurugram's healthcare infrastructure.

the Rotary Club.

As part of this initiative, 30 new Urban Arogya Centres will be established across ing at the inauguration certhe district. She added that emony of a solar power the state recently recruited

1,100 doctors to improve

HARYANA HEALTH MINISTER VISITED THE FACILITY, MET **THALASSEMIA** PATIENTS, ANNOUNCED ₹11 LAKH AID FOR **ROTARY CLUB**

healthcare services, and more appointments will follow in the coming months.

Highlighting progress in social indicators, she noted that Haryana's sex ratio has shown significant improvement in recent years and expressed gratitude to the public for their support in

Earlier in the day, the minister also inaugurated an ultrasound machine at Sohna Civil Hospital and a digital X-ray machine at Farrukhnagar Civil Hospital. Speaking at the event,

achieving this milestone.

Gurugram MLA Mukesh Sharma praised the Health Minister, calling her a sensitive and decisive leader who prioritises the concerns of citizens and ensures timely

He said the steps being taken by the minister are directly benefiting lakhs of people across the state by strengthening healthcare



Your Trusted Management **Advisory**

www.transglobeadvisors.in



SC orders status quo on **CPI's flagpoles on Tamil** Nadu public land



The Supreme Court (SC) on Monday agreed to hear a plea filed by the Communist Party of India challenging a Madras High Court order for the removal of permanent flagpoles of political parties from public places in Tamil Nadu. A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta issued notices to the Tamil Nadu Government and others, seeking their responses on the plea and directed that status quo be maintained. The Madras High Court had upheld the order passed by its single judge directing all political parties and community and religious organisations to remove within 12 weeks permanent flagpoles erected by them at public places across Tamil Nadu.

The CPI has approached the Court against the High Court's Full Bench order of August 13. CPI submitted that the sweeping directions issued by the High Court amounted to "impermissible judicial legislation" and violated Articles 19(1)(a) and 19(1)(c). The CPI has further said that the High Court issued its directions without hearing political parties.

Karisma Kapoor shifts stand on Sunjay Kapur's will, alleges forged signatures

The legal battle over late industrialist Sunjay Kapur's will took a dramatic turn as the complainant's counsel, representing Karisma Kapoor and her children, abruptly shifted their stance in court. After Senior Advocate Rajiv Nayar, appearing for Priya Kapur, described their claims as "bogus and baseless," the plaintiffs have now pivoted from saying "there was no Will" to alleging "forged signatures."

Delhi High Court has sought the response of Priya Kapur, the wife of late Sunjay Kapur, on a plea by the children of actor Karisma Kapoor, seeking inspection of the original of the alleged will of their father. Joint Registrar (Judicial) Gagandeep Jindal issued notices to Priya Kapur and Shradha Suri Marwah, the executor of the alleged will, on the plea and asked them to file their replies within three weeks. The matter has now been listed for December 16. In the earlier hearing, Nayar had stated clearly: "A Will cannot be called fake because of spelling errors and they haven't even disputed Sunjay





SC terms liquor tetra packs dangerous and deceptive

What is this — a juice packet? Should liquor in tetra packs be permitted at all? the Supreme Court wondered on Monday, noting that such packaging was "dangerous" and deceiving, as it heard a trademark dispute between two liquor giants of the country.

After a counsel produced the tetra packs of both companies, pointing out the similarities in branding of their products, a bench of Justices Surya Kant and Joymalya Bagchi expressed surprise that the Government had allowed liquor to be sold in such packets and said it was a "serious issue".

The bench was hearing a trademark dispute between John Distilleries Pvt Ltd, which sells the product 'Original Choice' whisky and Allied Blenders and Distilleries Pvt Ltd, which produces product 'Officers Choice' whisky.

The Supreme Court appointed former Supreme Court judge L Nageswara Rao as mediator to settle the dispute amicably between both the liquor firms, which command a major share in the country's whisky market.

When senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for John Distilleries Pvt Ltd, pro-



duced the tetra packs of both the companies to the bench, Justice Kant said, "What is this packet? Juice." Rohatgi said that these are tetra packs of whisky, which are one of the highest-selling products in Karnataka.

The bench said, "Should this at all be permitted. We think this is very dangerous. It can be taken to schools or colleges by the students in their bags. Parents can be easily deceived."

Justice Kant said this was the first time in his life he was seeing liquor in tetra packs and remarked, "How did the

kinds of packets. If someone public interest litigation, we would like to examine.'

Rohatgi and senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, appearing for Allied Blenders and Distilleries Pvt Ltd, said that there are other brands also in the market and Governments are only interested in earning revenue from the sale of these products.

Justice Bagchi said the Governments are trading on

the health of the people. "Just understand how process at the earliest.

much tons are wasted on health because of earning revenue... Trading on the health of the people," Justice Bagchi said.

Rohatgi said, "This is how it is. Your lordships may look at this issue later, I have

urgency involved, the mediator may take up the matter on a priority basis and make an endeavour to conclude a settlement

no difficulty. The bench, while requesting Justice (retd) Rao to act as mediator, said that having regard to the nature of

Former Govt secretary seeks SC-monitored probe into Anil Ambani-RCOM bank frauds

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

A public interest litigation (PIL) has been filed before the Supreme Court seeking a court-monitored investigation alleging a massive banking fraud involving Reliance Communications (RCOM), its group entities and its founder Anil Ambani. The petition is filed by EAS Sarma, former Secretary to the Government of India. The petitioner said that that the CBI FIR and ED's case cover only a fraction of the wrongdoing. The agencies are not investigating the roles of bank officials and regulators despite detailed forensic audits and independent reports pointing to widespread fraud, it states.

and diversion of funds has been judicially affirmed by a decision of the Bombay High Court. According to the petition, RCOM and its subsidiaries — Reliance Infratel and Reliance Telecom received loans amounting to ₹31,580 crore between 2013 and 2017 from a consortium of banks led by State Bank of India (SBI).

The plea states that a forensic audit commissioned by SBI allegedly revealed substantial diversion of funds, including thousands of crores used to repay unrelated loans, transfers to related parties, investments in mutual funds and fixed deposits that were immediately liquidated and complex

confirmed as closed, raising concerns of fabrication of financial statements, said the PIL. It is claimed that several shell entities and dubious corporate structures — such as Netizen Engineering and Kunj Bihari Developers were allegedly used to siphon and launder loan funds. It highlights instances where subsidiaries were used to write off large liabilities through sham preferenceshare arrangements, alleged-ly causing losses of over

₹1,800 crore. The petitioner asserts that these findings demonstrate a deliberate, systematic effort to disguise losses, conceal diversion of public funds and manipulate financial reportcircular routing of money to ling. A central grievance raised with negative net worth and The petition filed though disguise evergreening of in the petition is the nearly devalued securities worth noted lawyer Prashant loans. The audit also noted five-year delay by SBI in acting over ₹4,000 crore without Bhushan says that the transactions recorded from upon the forensic audit adequate basis.

2020. The bank filed its complaint only in August 2025, which the petitioner claims gives rise to a prima facie inference of "institutional complicity." As officers of nationalised banks are treated as public servants under the Prevention of Corruption Act, the petitioner argues that their conduct must be examined as part of the investigation.

The petition also places reliance on subsequent forensic audits and investigations involving other Ambani-led entities. It refers to findings relating to Reliance Capital, which allegedly advanced nearly ₹16,000 crore in inter-corporate deposits to subsidiaries

SC seeks replies from Centre, others on plea to check airfares

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE New Delhi

The Supreme Court (SC) on Monday sought responses from the Centre and others on a plea seeking binding regulatory guidelines to control the "unpredictable fluctuations" in airfare and ancillary charges imposed by private airlines in India. The Supreme Court agreed to hear the petition filed by social activist S Laxminarayanan, who has sought to establish a robust, independent regulator that ensures transparency and passenger protection across the civil aviation sector.

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta issued notices to the Centre. the Directorate General of Civil Aviation the Airports Economic Regulatory Authority of India seeking their responses on the plea and posted the matter for hearing after four weeks. Senior advocate Ravindra Srivastava and advocates Charu Mathur and Abhinav Verma appeared for the petitioner in the matter.

The plea claimed that all private airlines have, without any credible justification, reduced the free check-in baggage allowance for economy class passengers from 25 kg to 15 kg, "thereby converting what was earlier part of the ticketed service into a new revenue stream". It said the "new policy of permitting only a single piece for checkin and the absence of any rebate, compensation or benefit to passengers who do not avail themselves of check-in baggage demonstrates the arbitrary and discriminatory nature of the measure". The petition said that currently, no authority has the power to review or cap airfares or ancillary fees, allowing airlines to exploit consumers through hidden charges and unpredictable pricing.

The plea said the "unregulated, opaque and exploitative conduct of airlines manifesting in arbitrary fare hikes, unilateral reduction of services, absence of on-ground grievance redressal and unjustified dynamic pricing algorithms directly infringes upon citizens' fundamental rights to equality, freedom of movement and life with dignity".

It said the absence of regulatory safeguards results in arbitrary fare hikes, especially during festivals or weather disruptions, which disproportionately harm poor and last-minute travellers. The plea said the wealthier few can plan and book in advance, while economically weaker citizens are forced to buy tickets at the peak of surge pricing. "This inequality in access and opportunity strikes at the heart of Article 14 and Article 21," it said.

While Article 14 of the Constitution deals with equality before law, Article 21 pertains to the protection of life and personal liberty.

It said the State must ensure fare regulation and implement price-capping mechanisms to protect this constitutional guarantee, while claiming that ticket prices for air travel can double or even triple within hours due to opaque, algorithm-driven dynamic pricing mechanisms adopted by the airlines.

The plea cited reports about fare surge during the Maha Kumbh pilgrimage or in the aftermath of a crisis such as the Pahalgam terror incident and sought a direction to the concerned authorities to forth with enforce the provisions of the Bharatiya Vayuyan Adhiniyam, 2024, the Aircraft Rules, 1937 and the civil aviation requirements to ensure fair, transparent and nonexploitative domestic air passenger services.



Lexster Lead Dialogue on Global Arbitration Ecosystem in Dubai

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ New Delhi/Dubai

A substantive panel discussion examining the complexities of multi-party and cross-border disputes in mega project arbitration took place on November 14, during the recently concludedDubai Arbitration Week 2025 organised by the Dubai International Arbitration Centre. The event, co-hosted by Lexster Law LLP and Agrawal Law Associates, drew together leading legal practitioners and adjudicators from across the globe. Lexster Law LLP also served as a Gold Sponsor of Dubai Arbitration Week 2025.

The distinguished panelists included Justice Sanjiv Khanna (Former Judge of the Supreme Court of India), HE Essam Al Tamimi (Chairman, Al Tamimi and Company), Mukul Rohatgi (Former Attorney General of India), Anne K Hoffmann (International Arbitrator, Hoffmann Arbitration), Soraya Corm-Bakhos (International Arbitrator, Corm-Bakhos Arbitration) and Mahesh Agarwal (Managing Partner, Agarwal Law Associates).

The discussion was moderated by Shantanu Agarwal (Managing Partner, Lexster Law LLP) and Saurabh Seth (Counsel, Delhi High Court).

Conceptual Clarity in Contractual Structures

Justice Sanjiv Khanna opened the discussion by addressing a fundamental challenge in contemporary mega project disputes: the need for precise conceptual frameworks when analysing interconnected contractual arrangements. He underscored the necessity of distinguishing among a group of contracts, a composite contract and a group of companies — distinctions that remain critical to resolving jurisdictional and substantive disputes.

Justice Khanna further identified multi-party issues such as consolidation, joinder, parallel proceedings and nonsignatory participation as requiring



Soraya Corm-Barkhos, Former Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna, Mahesh Agarwal, Saurabh Seth

principled and coherent judicial approaches. He attributed a significant proportion of contemporary disputes to inadequate contractual drafting, emphasising that careful anticipation of intercontractual dependencies at the drafting stage remains the most effective preventive mechanism.

India-UAE Relations and Legal Institutional Development

HE Essam Al Tamimi addressed the historical and ongoing partnership between India and the United Arab Emirates, acknowledging the substantial contributions of Indian legal professionals to the UAE's institutional and economic development. He characterised this relationship as

foundational to the nation's progress over several decades. Highlighting recent legal reforms, Al Tamimi identified the establishment of common law courts within DIFC and ADGM as exemplary institutional innovations that have enhanced investor confidence by incorporating international adjudicatory standards and robust enforcement

mechanisms. He noted that the UAE's evolution from a non-signatory to the New York Convention in 2006 to a host iurisdiction for approximately 82 international law firms demonstrates how institutional modernisation attracts global legal talent without diminishing the competitive position of domestic

India's Evolving Arbitration Jurisprudence

Mukul Rohatgi reflected on the transformation of India's arbitration landscape over recent decades. Under the 1940 Arbitration Act, he observed, disputes were comparatively straightforward, lacking the multi-party contractual structures and multi-seated proceedings characteristic of contemporary

The economic liberalisation of 1993 catalysed a marked shift, introducing complex contractual ecosystems where disputes frequently fragment across multiple arbitral seats and parallel proceedings. Rohatgi highlighted the practical impediments arising from this



fragmentation: non-signatory parties typically resist consolidation, preferring parallel arbitrations under distinct contractual arrangements.

This fragmentation often results in protracted litigation through successive court levels before substantive arbitration can commence - a process consuming several years. Rohatgi advocated for unified adjudication mechanisms, proposing that a single composite tribunal could provide the holistic oversight necessary for coherent resolution in complex infrastructure projects involving several parties.

Procedural Coordination and Award Consistency

International Arbitrator Anne K Hoffmann examined the escalating frequency of multi-party arbitrations and the procedural challenges they present. She identified numerous complications that emerge prior to tribunal formation, emphasising that uniform arbitration clauses — particularly regarding seat

selection, appointing institution and tri-

bunal composition — are instrumental in facilitating consolidation. Hoffmann cautioned that divergent arbitration provisions across related contracts create substantial coordination difficulties and heighten the risk of inconsistent

She advised counsel to coordinate evidence and submissions comprehensively across related proceedings to mitigate award discrepancies, noting that evidentiary support for claims remains critical regardless of whether full consolidation has been achieved.

Dispute Resolution Architecture in Mega Projects

Soraya Corm-Bakhos provided a systematic analysis of the multi-tiered dispute resolution frameworks typical of large infrastructure projects. She identified the structural complexity introduced by numerous underlying contracts including construction agreements, joint venture arrangements and layered dispute resolution protocols — which frequently require exhaustion of pre-

arbitral procedures before arbitration

commences. Corm-Bakhos noted that the enforceability of such preliminary steps as mandatory conditions precedent often remains contested, generating jurisdictional disputes. She observed that mediation, though frequently posi-tioned as an initial step, proves substantially more effective once parties have exchanged pleadings and expert evidence, at which point they gain realistic perspectives on case viability and settlement prospects.

Contract Design as the Foundation of Dispute Prevention

Mahesh Agarwal emphasised how contractual interdependencies generate cascading disputes across jurisdictions. He identified a fundamental tension between party autonomy — a cornerstone of arbitration — and the procedural coordination necessary for coherent dispute resolution.

While major arbitral institutions have increasingly developed consolidation mechanisms, Agarwal noted that Indian arbitration law currently lacks equivalent statutory provisions, although Indian courts have demonstrated progressive jurisprudential development in related areas.

He concluded by emphasising that strategic contract formulation — particularly standardisation of arbitration clauses, seat, governing law, arbitral language and procedural choices remains the most effective preventive approach, with the drafting stage determining success or failure in achieving coordinated resolution frameworks.

Drawing a diverse audience of over 120 in-person attendees and more than 500 virtual participants, the session reflected India's growing engagement with international arbitration networks. The event is an important step towards deepening collaboration between Indian firms like Lexster Law and Agarwal Law Associates and global law firms and advancing India's ambition to become a global arbitration hub.





Gen Z rage ignites Mexico's streets

Mexico's future stability hinges on rebuilding trust and enforcing accountability; without this, Gen Z will refuse to accept the status quo

Gen Z's rage knows no bounds. It is spreading across the world like wildfire, and the latest country to witness their fury is Mexico. Protests are not new to Mexico, but this time they are being led by Gen Z. The country is seeing serious demonstrations directed against those in power. Pirate-skull flags, meme-driven mobilisation, and the hallmarks of Gen Zled protests are now ubiquitous.

The outrage is directed at President Claudia Sheinbaum. Issues of misgovernance and high-handedness have made young people restless, driving them onto the streets. The situation is volatile, and the country is in turmoil, with tensions growing by the day. What sparked these protests was the assassination of Carlos Manzo, the reformist mayor of Uruapan in Michoacán, who was fighting organised crime and was gunned down at a public Day of the Dead event on November 1. Manzo had dared to challenge entrenched cartels, sending security forces deep into their mountain strongholds. His killing proved that even the most determined public servants can be silenced with impunity. The outrage surrounding Manzo's murder quickly crystallised into a larger revolt against a state seen as weakening under the weight of corruption, violence, and institutional fatigue.

While the protests began under the banner of "Generation Z Mexico" - a group claiming to be non-partisan and independent – the demonstrations soon drew people from all walks of life. What unified them was a shared exasperation with a country where the Government bows to powerful cartels. Scenes from Mexico City mirrored those observed in neighbouring countries - Nepal and Bangladesh - with protesters storming palaces and official buildings. Riot police responded with tear gas. Stones flew across Zócalo's historic square. The state's display of force only deepened public anger, as reports emerged of police chasing and beating young demonstrators. For her part, President Sheinbaum has accused right-wing parties of infiltrating and amplifying the unrest, using social media bots to inflate turnout.

Some Gen Z influencers, wary of political co-option, withdrew their support. Meanwhile, voices like former President Vicente Fox and billionaire Ricardo Salinas Pliego openly endorsed the protests, further complicating the question: is this truly a youth-led uprising, or an oppositionengineered storm riding on public frustration? These protests bring Mexico's dilemma to the fore. While the outrage is real and the corruption systemic, the political narratives surrounding the demonstrations risk overshadowing the core issue: Mexico's persistent failure to protect its citizens from criminal violence. If the unrest fizzles out, the underlying issues will continue to simmer – until the next tragedy triggers yet another eruption. But if it evolves into a sustained nationwide movement, as seen in Nepal or Bangladesh, Sheinbaum's Government could face significant pressure to resign, followed by a period of anarchy and chaos that Mexico can ill afford - much like what unfolded in Bangladesh.

Constitutionalised coup d'état in Pakistan

Under the cloak of constitutional legitimacy, Munir has consolidated absolute, lifelong control over the armed forces, nuclear command, and the country's institutional architecture, while civilian leaders remain nominal figureheads



BHOPINDER SINGH

While taking over Pakistan through Martial Law in 1958, Field Marshal Ayub Khan proclaimed, "I have no intention of perpetuating martial law. As soon as conditions permit, a democratic system suited to the genius of our people will be introduced." However, he did not restore the pre-1958 parliamentary democracy. Instead, he prolonged his stay for as long as he could physically sustain (11 years), and then handed over to yet another military general, Yahya Khan. Later, General Zia-ul-Haq also claimed after his military takeover in 1977, "I have no intention of staying in power a day longer than is necessary. Elections will be held in October 1977." He too suffered convenient amnesia and continued for over 11 years before dying mysteriously in an air crash. Later, General Pervez Musharraf was to make a similar promise in his inaugural address following a coup: "I have no political ambitions. I will restore true democracy in this country." He too ruled for nine years until he was forcibly removed.

Today, Pakistan is yet again caught in a vortex of militaristic manipulation that amounts to the usurpation of complete power, albeit under the cover of constitutional ratification. Following the footsteps of militaristic overreach as initiated by the first self-appointed Field Marshal, Ayub Khan, the current, similarly self-appointed Field Marshal, Asim Munir, has tightened his vicelike grip over the Pakistani narrative via the infamous 27th Amendment to the Pakistani Constitution. Herein, besides doing away with the post of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CICSC), and instead anointing himself also as the Chief of Defence Forces (CDF-thereby controlling even the Navy and the Air Force), the Field Marshal will be granted permanent immunity from prosecution for life and will retain the rank and privileges for life. He also gets to choose the army-based Commander of the National Strategic Command, thereby retaining the vital levers over the critical nuclear wherewithal. Effectively, the Field Marshal has privileged his absolute control over all major elements of governance for life, with no accountability.

But, unlike the ham-handed coup d'états of the past, the five-star Field Marshal Asim Munir has been far more guarded, wily, and surreptitious in his takeover approach. By empowering himself beyond questioning, he has effectively ensured that he and subsequent military chiefs have the protective cover of the Pakistani Constitution to rule de facto, without any official responsibility, as the ceremonially seniormost and highest posts of the executive will ostensibly be held by the civilian President and



TODAY, PAKISTAN IS YET AGAIN CAUGHT IN A VORTEX OF **MILITARISTIC MANIPULATION THAT** TANTAMOUNT TO **USURPATION OF** COMPLETE POWER, ALBEIT, UNDER THE **COVER OF CONSTITUTIONAL**

RATIFICATION

The writer, a military veteran, is a former Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Puducherry

dailypioneer

@LtRajputs

bhopinder-singh

the Prime Minister, respectively. For all practical purposes, the well-established principle in a participative democracy — that the military is subservient to the civilian governmentremains a farcical pipedream.

The remit of the 27th Amendment also simultaneously destroys the powers of other institutions of authority, ie, the Supreme Court, the last remaining vestige of checks and balances, as that too would be brought under the will of the executive powers (which in any case will always remain beholden to the military "establishment"). Therefore, the courts could be expected to be populated by "friendly judges" who will do the bidding of the gov-

ernment, thereby curbing independent and unbiased decisions. With all such suppression of the institutions of checks and bal- The pioneer government and allow free and fair elections, Imran Khan would ances, and the concurrent valorisation of the Pakistani "establishment", the Field Marshal will have

the final say on all matters of governance. Already, the Field Marshal is making surreal

dashes from Washington DC to Riyadh to Ankara, making some extraconstitutional pitches — for example, the images of the Field Marshal brandishing and pitching rare metals in a suitcase to a clearly excited Donald Trump. This led Asim Munir to earn the dubious honour of Donald Trump calling him "my favourite Field Marshal." This further signals the approval of the Pakistani constitutional coup d'état by the United States of America, and the obliging sheikhdoms will merrily toe the same line.

The only other key player in the Pakistani cal-

culus, ie, the Chinese, would also be more than happy to let the Field Marshal run the show, as he would remain their most effective bet to protect the Chinese investments in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

The unnatural and unhappy alliance between the two erstwhile political rivals, ie, Pakistan Muslim League - Nawaz faction (PML-N) and Pakistan People's Party (PPP), would meekly continue with the current coalition arrangement, as their own disrepute in the eyes of the masses, and the parallel popularity of the incarcerated leadership of Imran Khan's Tehreek-e-Insaaf (PTI), will be an exis-

tential fear. It is a fact that, should the Pakistani military pull the rug from the current coalition coalition would remain pliant, beholden, and subservient to

the will of Field Marshal Asim Munir. Thus, with little or no opposition to their

operational mandate, given the constitutional cover, the absence of any political opposition, and the acquiescence of all international stakeholders, Field Marshal Asim Munir will rule with utter immunity and impunity.

With plausible deniability for any wrongdoing (for which the civilian government will bear the blame), the democratic government in Pakistan will run Pakistan in theory, not in practice, as all roadblocks for a coup d'état-like situation favouring the Pakistani military are in place.Democracy in Pakistan will exist only in name.

PIC TALK



People take part in a rowing competition on the Hooghly River, in West Bengal

DIGITAL EXPERIENCE

o instagram.com/dailypioneer film linkedin.com/in/The Pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com

f facebook.com/dailypioneer 🛮 🛇 @TheDailyPioneer

The silent paycheque cage we choose daily



SAKSHI SETHI

ND OPINION THE PIONEER

Modern society has perfected the art of imprisonment so gracefully, so tastefully — that most people never realise they are trapped. Today's cage does not clang with metal bars. It arrives instead as a gentle digital message: "Your salary has been credited." A monthly lullaby that pacifies ambition far more effectively than any medieval fortress

Walk into any workplace and you will witness a quiet, universal contradiction. Teachers shaping future citizens, doctors delivering hope, engineers building the digital tomorrow, bankers balancing economies, designers sketching dreams, and service workers handling tempersall moving in unison towards the same destination: the pay-

In the 1990s, thousands of children in Bihar were sent

to distant boarding schools simply to escape the con-

merely to secure routine clerical posts through bribes,

while millions studied under lanterns and petromax

lamps, desperately trying to break free from the suffo-

cation of the so-called jungle raj. Corruption, favouritism,

contractor mafias, and the collapse of institutional

authority dragged the state backwards by decades.

Ordinary citizens lived with fear, helplessness, and

uncertainty, forcing an entire generation to migrate in

Today, many of those who once fled Bihar have built

Families were compelled to part with ancestral land

cheque. It is a golden leash, polished with benefits, bonuses and just enough comfort to keep its wearers

The trap begins innocently. A young graduate steps into the workforce brimming with energy, ready to change the world. Fast-forward a few years, and that same individual now bargains for leave like a petitioner seeking royal mercy and plans life around the date their salary appears in the bank. Passion slowly dissolves between monthly bills, EMIs, and rising expenses. Consider the teacher — once a torchbearer of imagination — now drowning in paperwork, circulars, and administrative drudgery. They may dream of pursuing research or writing books, but the monthly credit alert leans in and whispers, "Not practical." In corporate corridors, the employee stares at the clock as though it were a countdown to freedom.

Their ergonomic chair becomes a throne of captivity; their KPIs rise as their enthusiasm falls. The doctor among society's noblest professionals, is caught in the same web. Between legal pressures, night shifts, and hospital targets, the paycheque slowly transforms from a reward into a sedative. Nurses, standing through double shifts, carry identical smiles for comfort and survival. Service industry workers-hotel staff, retail clerks, flight attendants — move through demanding shifts, their uniforms serving as armour against unreasonable customers and shrinking

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

patience. Even the creative class is not spared. Writers churn out content for algorithms rather than artistry. Designers compress their vision to fit client whims. Musicians teach on weekends to subsidise the passion that cannot reliably pay rent. Sooner or later, every dreamer bows before the billing cycle.

This is capitalism's most refined psychological trick-not coercion, but dependence. A system that persuades individuals that stepping outside is reckless, irresponsible, or foolish. The paycheque does not merely compensate; it conditions. It trains people to accept mediocrity, stomach unfair workloads, and exchange spontaneity for predictability.

Meanwhile, society glorifies this captivity, praising the "stable job" as the pinnacle of adult life. We applaud those who sacrifice weekends and answer emails at midnight, calling it dedication. But exhaustion is not honour, and captivity is not commitment. Almost everyone carries a private dream — a café on a quiet street, an art studio, a research degree, a sabbatical, a life where Monday does not feel like punishment. Yet each time it surfaces, the dutiful paycheque asks, "Who will pay the bills?" And the dream retreats. The modern cage may be invisible, but its bars-routine, fear, and comfort-are not unbreakable. A cage loses its power the moment someone realises the door was open all along.

The writer is an educator and a councillor

RTI SAFEGUARDS DIMINISH UNDER NEW DPDP RULES

Although the original provisions of the RTI Act struck a careful balance between privacy and transparency while incorporating essential safeguards, the recent Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) amendment has unfortunately stripped away these protections without addressing the serious shortcomings that remain in the

The notification of the DPDP rules on November 14, 2025 has deepened these concerns. Over time, the RTI framework has been weakened by unwarranted amendments, excessive executive control, and increasingly restrictive judicial interpretations. Since its enactment, repeated efforts seem aimed at diluting its spirit and obstructing meaningful public access to information. In any democracy, the right to seek

essential to maintaining transparency, openness and accountability. A system of governance cannot endure if citizens are deprived of the power to question those in authority. As Justice V R. Krishna Iyer observed with characteristic clarity: "A government which functions in secrecy not only violates democratic decency, but also buries itself with its own burial." The DPDP amendment's erosion of RTI safeguards is a troubling setback for participatory governance

and access information is

By narrowing transparency instead of strengthening it, citizens are left with fewer tools to hold power accountable. Protecting democratic values now requires an urgent restoration of a robust RTI framework

R SIVAKUMAR | CHENNAI

stable, successful lives across India and abroad. As they look at their screens and witness these election results, a quiet, meaningful smile emerges. This moment represents far more than the defeat

search of dignity and opportunity.

Bihar's people claim their victory

stant fear of kidnapping.

of a political family or an entrenched legacy. It signifies the triumph of the ordinary Bihari who suffered injustice, endured humiliation, and persevered with unbroken hope. This is genuine victory — the victory of people who refused to allow despair to dictate

AYUSHMAN PANDEY | LUCKNOW

India's defeat demands serious reflection

Apropos the report "India's spin gamble backfires as South Africa wins first Test" (November 17). India's sobering defeat in the opening Test at Eden Gardens demands rigorous introspection. Being bowled out for 93 while chasing a modest 124 is not a routine collapse; it exposes deeper problems regarding selection, application, and temperament. After failing to chase 147 at Wankhede last year. India have again faltered on a surface that required patience rather than misplaced aggression. The absence of accountability is particularly troubling. With Shubman Gill injured, the team effectively fielded only four specialist batters, relying excessively on all-rounders still adapting to Test cricket's mental demands.

Questionable bowling management let South Africa extend their lead, with puzzling choices such as underbowling Kuldeep Yadav and ignoring Washington Sundar altogether. Bavuma and Bosch showed the value of discipline — something India's middle order sorely lacked. The collapse, marked by loose strokes from Pant, Jurel, and Axar, stood in stark contrast to South Africa's composed approach. Unless India confront these recurring flaws with clarity and resolve, such defeats will continue to overshadow their home dominance. SANJAY CHOPRA | MOHALI

Geopolitics drives tariff reversal

Apropos the editorial "Trump's agri tariff rollback signals reset" (November 17). The reversal of United States tariffs on a broad range of Indian agricultural products $\,$ represents a moment when geopolitical strategy and domestic pressures have intersected. For Indian farmers and exporters, especially those dealing in spices, tea, coffee, and processed foods, the move restores a long-awaited sense of stability and fairness. It also acknowledges India's reputation for reliable, high-quality exports and the extensive networks that sustain them.

However, the timing indicates that Washington's decision is driven not merely by diplomatic goodwill but also by rising food prices, voter discontent, and electoral urgency. In that sense, this softening of tariffs is less a benevolent gesture and more a recognition that punitive measures often damage supply chains and political relationships. The key question now is whether this shift will lead to a more predictable and durable trade environment.

India must seize this opportunity to strengthen quality standards, diversify its agricultural export base, and push for consistent long-term clarity. A thoughtful approach on both sides could convert a short-term tactical move into a genuinely stable partnership.

A MYILSAMI | COIMBATORE

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



Pakistan: The making of a new military state

The meteoric rise of Field Marshal Asim Munir — Pakistan's second-ever field marshal — marks more than another chapter in the country's long cycle of military dominance. His ascent signals a deeper institutional shift, merging state authority with an overt Islamic ideological framework and reshaping the core architecture of Pakistan's power structure





NILANTHA ILANGAMUWA

While Pakistan and Bangladesh wrestle with their fragile relationship under the interim government led by Yunus, the International Tribunal is set to deliver its verdict on Monday, November 17, formally exposing the alleged "sins" of Sheikh Hasina's rule. Hasina may face the harshest consequences imaginable, and her potential extradition from India threatens to inflame political passions for years, while social tensions are likely to spiral, carrying dangerous regional implications. Yet, amid this chaos, the most alarming development is the meteoric rise of Field Marshal Asim Munir, Pakistan's secondever field marshal, who now operates above the law, consolidating power with an audacity that recalls the darkest chapters of Pakistan's military past. The country appears to be repeating the cycles of power seen under the late Field Marshal Ayub Khan, with the civilian leadership increasingly marginalised as the military consolidates authority. Munir's ascent is more than symbolic; it is an institutional shift, codified through the 27th Constitutional Amendment, which enshrines military supremacy in Pakistan's legal architecture while weakening judicial oversight and eroding democratic norms.

Pakistan's trajectory under Munir bears echoes of historical precedent. As Ayub Khan recounted in his autobiography, military intervention was repeatedly justified as a stabilising force in times of perceived political chaos. Yet, as history demonstrates, Pakistan's oscillation between military dictatorship and fragile civilian governance has rarely delivered sustainable reform or economic development. The CIA's declassified analysis of Pakistan in the 1970s warned that "the military, while professionally competent, is inherently prone to internalising ideological and political objectives beyond its remit," prescient words that resonate alarmingly today under Munir. Whereas past army chiefs, even Musharraf, attempted to balance professional military traditions with political ambition, Munir is pursuing an explicitly ideological agenda, transforming the Pakistani armed forces into a force fighting for Islam as much as for the nation.

This shift is no longer subtle. The Pakistani



ISLAMABAD'S PORTRAYAL OF proxies. In Munir's own words, the mili-AN INDIAN-**BACKED INSURGENCY IN** ITS WESTERN PROVINCES. **ALONG WITH** EFFORTS TO FOSTER A **BANGLADESH-**PAKISTAN AXIS, RISKS **TRIGGERING** UNPRECEDENTED **CRISES IN**

The writer is a columnist

@ilangamuwa1

tic politics. Pakistan's foreign The Pioneer SOUTH ASIA policy, historically fixated on **SINCE 1865** India, is increasingly inter-

warfare.

twined with efforts to construct regional alliances that challenge New Delhi's influence. Reports suggest that Islamabad is exploring deeper cooperation with Dhaka under the interim government, ostensibly to counterbalance Indian ambitions. The Financial Times noted that Munir, along with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, has been actively courting powers such as China, Saudi Arabia and even the United States, while simultaneously framing

defence establishment under Munir has

institutionalised terms like Fitna al-

Khawarij and Fitna al-Hindustan, brand-

ing insurgents in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

and Balochistan as heretical or Indian

tary must confront these "internal threats"

through a religious lens, positioning

Pakistan as the protector of the Muslim

Ummah while simultaneously framing

domestic conflicts as extensions of historic

Islamic struggles. By co-opting centuries-

old concepts from early Islamic history,

Munir projects an image of Pakistan as a

state under siege from both heretical inter-

nal actors and a hostile external India.

While the rhetorical appeal resonates with

sections of the Pakistani populace, it

dangerously blurs the line between

counter-insurgency and ideological

The implications of Munir's

rise extend far beyond domes-

ports like Pasni as sites for foreign investment. Yet, beneath this geopolitical manoeuvring lies a darker reality: the potential proliferation of Islamist extremist organisations nurtured under the guise of strategic alignment. Pakistan's track record demonstrates the inherent danger of weaponising ideology for political leverage, a pattern that has repeatedly generated instability both internally and across the region.

The Pakistani military's Islamisation under Munir recalls the ambitions of General Zia-ul-Haq, whose coup in 1977 dismantled democratic institutions and laid the foundations for a deeply Islamist state. Analysts such as Makhdoom Ali Khan have remarked: "What General Zia-ul-Haq may have dreamt of, and what General Pervez Musharraf could not achieve, will

soon be an accomplished fact.' Munir, a Hafiz-e-Quran, has emphasised the religious legitimacy of military campaigns, framing them as moral and

ideological imperatives. The creation of a constitutional backdoor through the 27th Amendment formalises his authority, grants him lifetime protection and the Field Marshal rank, and establishes the Chief of Defence Forces as the paramount military authority, effectively sidelining civilian oversight.

The judiciary, meanwhile, is being systematically curtailed. The Federal Constitutional Court (FCC) assumes con-

stitutional primacy over the Supreme Court, while the Supreme Court is relegated to civil and criminal appellate functions. Senior counsel have observed that the SC is now left "with a limited jurisdiction of deciding ordinary civil, criminal, and statutory appeals", effectively reducing it to a "Supreme District Court". Tariq Mehmood Khokhar warned that the FCC is "empowered by disempowering the Supreme Court", consolidating both military and executive control over constitutional interpretation. Dawn reported that these reforms have been lauded by supporters as a forward-looking model, vet for sceptics, they represent an erosion of checks and balances that has long been the only bulwark against authoritarian overreach.

Meanwhile, Pakistan's economy remains precarious. According to the Financial Times, despite claims of investment inflows and resource wealth, the country continues to struggle with a poverty rate above 25 per cent, low capital formation, and a foreign investor climate undermined by historical instability.

The military's deepening involvement in business, combined with ideological militarisation, may further deter meaningful economic reform. Muhammad Aurangzeb, Pakistan's finance minister, has acknowledged the "existential issue" of growth that barely matches population increase, raising questions about the sustainability of Munir's ambitious geopolit-

ical and domestic projects. The potential consequences for the region are profound. Islamabad's portrayal of an Indian-backed insurgency in its western provinces, along with efforts to foster a Bangladesh-Pakistan axis, risks triggering unprecedented crises in South Asia. Munir's rhetorical framing of conflicts as a defence of Islam may embolden extremist organisations both domestic and transnational, increasing the likelihood of cross-border terrorism. The May 2025 four-day conflict between India and Pakistan, during which Munir publicly credited the ceasefire to Donald Trump and even nominated him for a Nobel Peace Prize, highlights the unpredictable consequences of a militaryled foreign policy driven by ideology rather than strategic calculation.

As reports suggest, Munir's elevation to Field Marshal and Chief of Defence Forces cements his unassailable position, giving him autonomy over the military and, by extension, significant influence over Pakistan's foreign relations. Critically, Pakistan is not an exception in the history of militarisation.

From Ayub Khan to Musharraf, every military takeover has promised stability, reform or modernisation, yet invariably delivered repression, economic mismanagement and heightened regional tension. Historical lessons prove that the militarisation of state institutions often generates the opposite of the intended outcomes: weakened governance, erosion of civil society and the proliferation of extremism. The current trajectory under Munir suggests a repeat of these patterns, now intensified by the infusion of ideological rigour and constitutional legitimacy.

However, one cannot disregard that India's hegemonic ambitions, regional arrogance, and strategic failures further complicate the equation. New Delhi's insistence on projecting influence over Bangladesh and Nepal, combined with its self-assured posturing vis-à-vis Pakistan, contributes to an environment in which Islamabad is incentivised to consolidate internal authority and project power externally.

Yet history demonstrates that attempt ing to create strategic depth through ideological militarisation or cross-border alliances often backfires. As TS Eliot's words might suggest, this transformation is not occurring "with a bang but with a whimper", yet the consequences are likely to reverberate loudly across the subcontinent for decades.

Red Fort blast in Delhi: A wake-up call to reshape strategies on a real-time basis



ANIL ANAND

Transparency is certainly not the hallmark of the Narendra Modi government. This is true in its normal functioning, when there is ample elbow room to take the countrypersons into confidence. And when it comes to crunch situations such as the Delhi blasts at the threshold of Lal Qila-the symbol associated with India's freedom and the podium for Independence Day celebrations-the word transparency goes for a toss.

The heinous act of blasts that claimed 13 innocent lives has shaken Delhi. Why so? Because it has ruptured the decade-long peace which the national capital had been enjoying.

It has also raised serious questions about the claims made by the authorities concerned, including the Prime Minister and the Home Minister, that terror acts — particularly with focus on Kashmir — had been stubbed out and that terrorism in all its formats was gasping for its last breath. A terror strike in the heart of Delhi, that too near a strong national symbol such as Lal Qila, accompanied by disturbing reports of about 2,000 kilograms of high-grade explosives having been recovered in the National Capital Region (NCR), barely 20 kilometres from the seat of power, certainly worries these authorities and forces them into a real-time-based appraisal of the entire situation, rather than indulging in high-octane claims. The terror attack, which, as per the claims of the competent authorities, has a Kashmir link and has taken place after the restoration — after six years — of the 'Durbar Move' (shifting of the capital on a six-month basis from Jammu, the winter capital, to Kashmir, the summer capital, and vice versa) on intense public pressure, particularly from Jammu, the stronghold of the BJP a development related to the dilution of Article 370 on August 5, 2019 — has put the ruling dispensation's credibility at stake.

Touted as a panacea for all the ills plaguing Jammu and Kashmir, including the onslaught of terrorism, the government's claims justifying the constitutional developments in Jammu and Kashmir, including its division and demotion to two Union Territories, have been exposed by the terror attack. It should compel the Modi government to think afresh on the entire gamut of policy governing not only Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh but also national security as a whole.

Notwithstanding the near fool-proof security network, Delhi, being the national capital and power centre, has always been a target for Punjab, Kashmir, or North-East-centric terrorist groups seeking to challenge the powers that be. The latest



The Pioneer

act of terrorism — as the Union Cabinet has declared it — is meant to throw a gauntlet and challenge the might of India at its very power centre. There is no doubt that this must have set the political leadership and the security apparatus thinking about its fallout, emerging challenges, and countervailing strategies.

The biggest lesson and in fact the eye-openerfor the ruling BJP should be not to mingle its political agenda with issues related to national security. The political agenda or ideological issues are, most of the time, not in consonance with either the ground realities or the situational challenges.

Lesson one that the government should draw from the Lal Qila blast is that the ruling dispensation must function on a real-time basis to tackle serious issues. Transparency is the key

word in adopting such an approach, accompanied by taking the nation into confidence to prevent speculation and kite-flying. The problem becomes even more complicated, as is the case presently, when the higher quarters onto only undermine the country's multi-cultur-

in the government seek refuge in leaking "sourcebased" stories.

Why not come upfront? That is in the interest of the nation. Otherwise, speculations can lead to complications and provide ample space for anti-India forces to fish in troubled waters. Not only the government but the media should also refrain from running or writing such stories despite professional compulsions and tight timelines to meet. Lesson two is that, as far as possible, the political and ideological agenda should be separated from the national agenda. Issues such as national security and its offshoots-such as Kashmir and the North-East-should not be viewed entirely from a political perspective. A case in point is the fledgling situation prevailing in Manipur and the ruling BJP at the Centre again indulging in political permutations and combinations to reinstall its government in the state despite public opinion to the contrary.

The same spirit prevailed when the Narendra Modi government hurriedly brought the State Reorganisation Bill to Parliament in 2019 to change the constitutional status of Jammu and Kashmir. In a first-of-its-kind development in independent India, a state was demoted to a Union Territory, and all democratic rights, including the people's right to elect their own local government, were curtailed. Be it Manipur, Jammu and Kashmir, or Ladakh, public sentiment should remain at the centre of any policy formulation. Ignoring or suppressing this sentiment is always fraught with dangerous consequences. This has been witnessed in the past, and the Delhi blast of 2025 is a warning in that direction.

Lesson three — and nothing new about it-is that in situations like Jammu and Kashmir, the external and internal dimensions of the issue, though intertwined, have to be viewed through different prisms on a real-time basis. Otherwise,

there is a danger of falling into the trap of external forces inimical to India's interests.

Lastly, lesson four is that no act of terrorism should be viewed through the prism of religion. Doing so will

al and multi-religious harmony, which is already under severe strain, but will also provide a platform for anti-India forces. A democratically elected government has no option but to avoid sitting on self-professed laurels if these are not in consonance with the ground realities. A realtime-based assessment-accepting both success and failure-and avoiding a "might is right" approach should be the positive way forward. The answer does not always lie in the jugglery of statistics, which the current ruling dispensation excels at, but in accepting the ground reality and reshaping strategies accordingly. The disturbance of urban calm in multi-cultural Delhi should act as an immediate eve-opener. Transparency-to substantiate the claims of busting terror networks and recovering a huge quantity of explosivesshould be the buzzword to avoid speculation and the resultant confusion.

The writer is a political and national affairs analyst



A new age of global warfare

The Pioneer



BALRAJ MEHTA

Discussing the Russia-Ukraine war — or even the tragic events in Gaza — has become so routine that the very act of analysing them feels almost mundane. Yet this normalisation of brutality hides a far more discomforting truth. Beneath the surface of daily headlines and geopolitical commentary lies the unsettling reality that the world, despite the existence of the United Nations and numerous international institutions, remains a jungle where might still prevails

The global order, weakened by the arrogance of a few powerful nations and the passivity of many others, is decaying from within. It now stands in desperate need of a structural reset. The Ukraine conflict, in particular, has rewritten many assumptions about modern warfare. The kinetic dimensions of this war have already reshaped global understandings of how battles will be fought in the years ahead. These tactics and technologies are being studied intensely and will eventually be applied with even greater precision and coordination. In many ways, we are witnessing a new phase of the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) — one in which artificial intelligence has just made its

An RMA marks a fundamental transformation in the way wars are conceived and executed. It is driven by

advances in science and technology, by organisational restructuring, and by doctrinal changes that reflect new forms of strategy. An RMA does not simply make militaries more efficient; it propels them into an entirely new sphere of warfare defined by speed, surprise, and unprecedented impact. With cutting-edge tools for command, control, communication, intelligence, and real-time precision targeting, militaries become capable of inflicting decisive blows before an adversary even understands what is unfolding. History offers ample examples of

The induction of railways, telegraphs, steamships, and rifles transformed conflicts from the Napoleonic era to the American Revolution. World War I saw the rise of aircraft, submarines, and machine guns. World War II brought mechanised warfare guided by radio and radar, culminating in the nuclear strikes on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Until recently, the refinement of nuclear weapons, satellites, missiles, encrypted systems, and stealth platforms continued to redefine military posturing. Then,

almost abruptly, came India's own Operation

Sindoor — a turning point that pushed the country to think beyond conventional paradigms. The operation underscored a timeless military truth: nations must prepare for future wars rather than fight the last one. Its swift suspension after four days — having achieved the intended strategic end state against a declared nuclear power - reflected years of preparation for precisely such an offensive.

It was a signal that India has been quietly building new competencies, and that further refinement of these capabilities is not merely desirable but essential. Going ahead, several trends are likely to dominate the future of warfare. Artificial intelligence will play a central role in data synthesis, surveillance, reconnaissance, and autonomous decision-making. UAVs, drones, directed-energy weapons, loitering munitions, and near-undetectable missiles or underwater vehicles will deliver precise and devastating strikes deep inside enemy territory. Cyber warfare will become a preferred tool for espionage, sabotage, and coercion. Trade wars through tariffs, asset freezes, and exclusion from global financial networks — will be wielded with scant regard for treaties. Information warfare will intensify, fuelled by deepfakes and sophisticated propaganda machines.

Even targeted assassinations, social disruptions, and the exploitation of Gen Z vulnerabilities may become instruments of statecraft. For India, achieving mastery across these domains is not optional — it is imperative. Safeguarding national and civilisational interests at this critical stage of our developmental journey demands massive investments in technology, manufactur-

ing, research, and human capital. We will need thousands of bright professionals across R&D, testing, production, and deployment. Encouragingly, many national initia-

tives are already underway. In this context, the new Trump tariffs — seen by some purely as a challenge — could actually be a blessing in disguise. They offer India an opportunity to strengthen domestic ecosystems, retain skilled talent, attract the diaspora, and channel national energy into long-term capability-building. Such moments of recalibration seldom come twice.

Equally important is doctrinal adaptation within the armed forces, coupled with greater alignment among political leadership, bureaucratic machinery, scientific communities, defence establishments, and strategic thinkers. This will require continuous dialogue, deep understanding, and sustained national commitment. An updated and officially declared National Security Strategy — as a single, coherent policy document would be an important and timely step in that direction.

The writer is a Major General

Appzillon™

Al Powered Digital Banking Solutions

WWW.i-exceed.com

BLASÉ CAPITAL

E-GOLD WORLD



You may think that it is the best way to hold gold. Unlike the bullion assets in the bank lockers, there are no bulky and physical bars, coins, and jewellery. In contrast to the gold-based Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs), and derivatives, there is no paper trail. However, there is an assurance and guarantee that you possess a certain amount of gold, which appears in the form of a digital statement. More importantly, whenever you express the wish, the equivalent physical quantity will appear at your doorstep.

Welcome to the world of e-gold, or digital gold, which is being sold by several online platforms as a substitute for physical and paper metal. However, as the stock market regulator, SEBI, and experts warn, this gold can vanish as instantly as it digitally adds to an individual's portfolio. According to a recent SEBI circular, these offerings are "entirely different from SEBI-regulated gold products, as they are neither notified as securities, nor supervised as commodity derivatives." They remain in the nowhere-land of non-

This implies that most unregulated products, digital gold products "function completely outside SEBI's regulatory purview and may carry substantial risks, including counterparty and operational vulnerabilities." There are no legal protections against frauds, or illegalities, and the sellers cannot be convicted. In this shadowy world, the onus is on the buyers. As the SEBI circular warns, "none of the investor protection safeguards available in the securities market will apply to investments made in digital gold, or e-gold." These are products that can leave the

investors out in the cold.

Instead, the regulator recommends that investors who feel the desire to invest in gold need to explore legal avenues that include ETFs, derivatives, electronic gold receipts and, of course, physical gold. The first three can be purchased and sold on the exchanges, are "accessible through SEBI-registered intermediaries, and operate strictly within SEBI's regulatory framework." The fourth is available through government, and private channels, which are allowed to sell them. There is no need for people to go to unregulated platforms.

SEBI's angst stems from the fact that the digital gold products have gained explosive popularity fuelled by instant UPI-based buying, and low entry barriers. There are other advantages too. For example, they are convenient, and accessible. You can invest anytime via a phone, UPI, or broker apps, with no jeweller visits. Gold is anyway the favourite of the Indian household since it acts as an inflation hedge, and reduces market risks. Digital gold, like other legal products, offers instant liquidity, and one can sell immediately at live market prices without searching for the buyers.

The entry amounts are low, or lower than the ETFs, derivatives, and physical gold, since e-gold can be purchased with tiny sums, and in low quantities. The purity of the digital gold, if delivered physically as per demand, is backed by 24-karat 99.9 per cent purity. As mentioned above, the virtual gold is easily convertible into physical coins, bars, or biscuits, with home delivery. There are no worries related to storage. Insured vaults at the platforms' ends eliminate the security and safety risks of storing physical gold.

Except for one overriding and expansive risk. Digital gold can vanish in a poof, as easily as it arrives in a jiffy through a digital statement. Ajay Menon, MD & CEO (wealth management), Motilal Oswal Financial Services, strongly endorses the regulator's concerns. "It may appear attractive when a digital statement claims that 'you own X grams of gold.' However, SEBI has rightly highlighted the risks associated with digital gold. If something goes wrong, there are no regulatory protections. Should the company shut down tomorrow, your gold could simply vanish," he explains.

Moreover, the so-called convenience, ease, accessibility, and liquidity have another component: It is marketed with embedded and significant hidden costs. "You pay three per cent GST at the time of purchase, a 2-3 per cent spread on buy/sell prices, and capital gains tax when you sell. If you request physical delivery, additional delivery and making charges apply," states Menon. The profit margins, thereby, are reduced for the investors. So, do the calculations carefully before plunging into this virtual world.

"Digital gold-related UPI transactions jumped from 50.9 million in January 2025 to 99.8 million in August 2025, a massive behavioural shift," Menon notes. Obviously, the trend is linked to the overall enthusiasm for gold, and gold products. Sandip Raichura, director, PL Capital, offers a perspective on gold price trajectory. "Gold has recovered from a pullback towards what we believe could be a \$4,800 target in the next few months. Our stop loss remains near \$3,550, giving a 2:1 risk-reward at current levels," he says.

Experts like Raichura add that the weakening US economic data may accelerate the trend. "Job losses in October, and multi-year lows in consumer sentiment suggest deeper weakness than what Mr Powell (head of the US Federal Reserve) expected. If the upcoming data confirms this, it may provide another upward impulse to gold prices," he feels. This may further propel the purchase of digital gold, and e-gold, which may exemplify the risks for the investors. SEBI, which has red-flagged several challenges in other areas, is concerned about the possible implications in the future.



Jobs cause a possible stock effect

It is a cause-and-effect that seems quite correlated. Obviously, when you bring two things together, a pattern or trend emerges sometimes because the human mind is wired to find the latter. Thus, often the cause becomes the effect, and vice versa, or correlation is confused with a deeper connect. As the famed Rumi said ages ago, "What you thought was the effect, is but the cause." In a sense, what we consider the end point becomes the beginning for something else. A fruit is the effect of the plant (cause), which is the effect of the roots (cause). More importantly, the gardener tends to the plant (effect) because of the fruit (cause). This can go on and on.

In this context, let us examine the roots of a graph that is viral on social media. A curious and enterprising analyst plotted the rise of the American S&P stock index against new jobs in the US since 2000. He or she found a revealing link. Until 2022-23, the two graphs moved in tandem, like they were conjoined by an umbilical cord. They behave like twins joined at the hips, with each one unable to move out of sync, or get away from each other. When the S&P goes up, so does the creation of new jobs. The opposite happens when the index comes down. Maybe it is the opposite, the rise in jobs is followed by a similar movement in the index, and vice versa.

There can be logical explanations to the trend. For example, one can argue that companies hire more people when the business opportunities are excellent, which leads to higher production, and more profits. In fact, since firms are highly sensitive to costs, they hire only when demand goes up, and benefit from both the shortages, and higher future sales. In both cases, the stock prices either follow the rise in volumes, and profits, or rise earlier in anticipation of the future

positive effects. One can conversely argue that stock valuations go up due to external reasons such as policy changes, lower interest rates, and low inflation, which arms the business owners with money sources (public issues, and loans) that enables them to increase capacities, and hire more people.

However, the individual who traced the original graphs on a single chart, gave it a technological twist. According to him or her, the breaking point, or the catalyst point, when the two graphs begin to diverge from each other, is 2022-23, or the introduction of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in

workplaces. This logic puts the onus on the launch of ChatGPT, The Pioneer which became a routine tool for managers, and executives. Al SINCE 1865 increased productivity through

tech shifts, made many workers redundant, and enabled firms to sack them. This is why stocks flew, as productivity gains earned more profits, but there was a contraction in the creation of new jobs. Technology trumped manual work, firms opted for the former in several jobs, and employees were the ones who buckled under the disruption.

A recent flash survey by CNBC finds that nine out of 10 human resource leaders expect AI to reshape jobs next year, and more than twothirds feel it is "currently having an impact at their firms." More than a sixth contend that half or more than half of the jobs were affected, and half of them think that the impact was less than 50 per cent. In fact, the use and abuse of AI is so rampant that HR leaders plan to reduce workforce just because they "need to cut costs," and the new tech tool is a perfect excuse to do so. Neither inflation, tariffs, reduced demand, or AI's efficiency gains matter. This explains just under 30 per cent expect the headcount to go down in

No one can deny that AI, and ChatGPT, or its competing tools, as is evident from recent workplace experiences, will reduce the need for workers. It will replace several forms of jobs that are routine and repetitive, especially among the entry-level workers. Various estimates contend that globally 300 million jobs will vanish because of the new technology. Yet, there are some who feel that AI will create new jobs, which will require new skills or re-skilling, whose number will be higher than the job losses. Hence, the S&P index, and new job data will

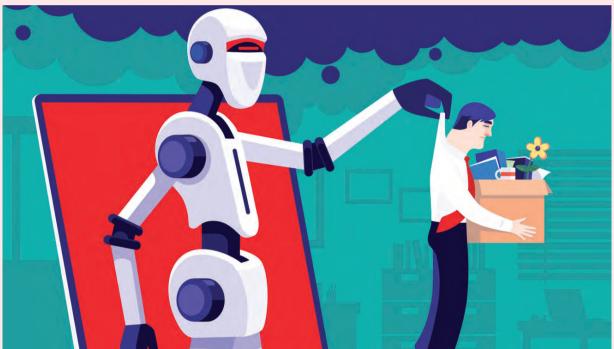
converge in the future. The current trend is a short-term one, and an interim phenomenon. There will be no AI apocalypse at the workplaces, but sections of the

society will get hurt.

This column wants to maintain that there are no causes and effects between AI, job losses, and the stock market index. It is a coincidental correlation. Technology is one of the drivers that drove down jobs. In the post-Covid era, hundreds of millions lost jobs, and a similar number, and more, worked from home. When normalcy returned, firms realised that they could do more with less, more work with less employees. Most of the ones that they had sacked were never recalled. Of the ones who worked from home, many were pressured to work in a hybrid mode, at a lesser salary, and as consultants. Pronto, the workforce was reduced, and the need to hire workers slowed down. Less workers were hired in the next few years.

At the same time, coincidentally, while revenues dipped, profits zoomed during the two Covid years. One of the reasons was the huge reduction in costs, especially manpower, and administrative and other expenses related to the workforce. This jacked up the stock markets, which boomed within weeks and months after the great fall in March 2025 (in India). Expectations in future financials improved, and stock valuations hit the roof, as did the indices. S&P was no exception. The combined effect was that the index skyrocketed, and demand for new jobs tanked. The divergence in the graphs was inevitable, which merely coincided with the launch of ChatGPT. As mentioned earlier, tech did aid the job-cutting process.

One can think of other factors that de-linked the graphs. Firms opted for China+1 strategy to replace China in case of similar disruptions. This implied that unless they were lucky to find locations like India, or the Philippines, which were cheap, they shifted to the expensive Latin America, East Europe, or North Americas. Manpower was more expensive in these regions, and firms chose to spend more on technology, and rely less on labour. Spending on machines was a one-time cost, which gave tax and other breaks. Highcost workers were a regular drain. This contributed to lower hires, even as the stock markets boomed. In fact, such cost controls helped the latter trend.



A Contrarian Investor

Suddenly, the tide has turned against IPOs (Initial Public Offerings). From excited and exulted news about the issues, and how their oversubscriptions reached dizzying heights, which were followed by massive listing gains, the headlines are sober, even depressing. We find events about low subscriptions, as one of the recent IPO was subscribed less than two times. Listing gains have vanished, with premiums in single digits. Many past IPOs that managed great listing gains are being quoted at huge discounts, including prices that are way lower than the offer prices. Now comes another suggestion of a panicinduced future. A new headline screamed

Remember 1987, just to give an example from a not-so-distant period. While the US was awash with mergers, and acquisitions, most of which were leveraged buyouts by managements and hostile predators, India saw a spate of public issues, and rights issues. There was mania among investors to get new shares, whatever may be the company, and whatever may be the valuation. Indian firms changed names, and launched new issues, and investors gobbled them up. Companies raised money through rights issues for no rhyme or reason. Stock manipulations were the key during the rights issues, as promoters surrendered their rights in favour of new and other investors at huge premiums. As the indices go up, as do specific stocks, Grey market ruled as new issues were desired for the potential listing gains, as is

that the past five booms in IPOs were

followed by stock market busts. Ergo, be

prepared for the great global correction in

Within no time, the market crashed in 1987. Leveraged buyouts were washed out, and the rights issues went horribly wrong. During the early 1990s, India witnessed a demonic situation of vanishing promoters. Most of them raised money during the late 1980s, and siphoned it off. After a few years, their offices were empty, watched by a lone guard, there were no plants or factories, and the promoters were nowhere to be found. Investigations ensued, some of the founders were traced, and there were indictments, or convictions. A similar thing happened with the tech and IT firms in India in 2000 during the Ketan Parekh scam, as also in the US, when valuations, IPOs, and public issues ruled. This too was

followed by the dotcom con. One can possibly establish the links between the IPOs and market crashes.

Is this the Initial Panic Omen?



only the brave and risk-takers enter the fray. As they make money, and stocks continue to go up, others join in. This is around the time when promoters decide that this is the best time to raise money, given the high valuations. The IPO frenzy starts, backed by ever-higher indices, which leads to a herd mentality among investors, who cannot afford the already-listed stocks because of the high prices, and join the IPO

gangs and queues. The IPO madness is in full flow, as the indices jump further. Obviously, a bubble forms, expands, and reaches its stretched shape.

It is time for the crash. Although the indices may move up on an average over the next few years, the herd mentality, and madness of the crowd forces an immediate shock. Too much money chasing too few stocks. Prices out of sync with profits. Valuations stretched, and waiting for a pinprick. It is now a matter of a whiff of bad Public issues invariably lag stock price rises. news. Until now, for months, even years,

bad news was discarded, and dumped, and a faint smell of good news was highlighted and celebrated with higher price movements. The opposite happens at the height of the bubble. The moment something seemingly-bad happens, the bottom gives way, floor crashes, and the ceiling dashes into the investors' heads. Only a few escape. The majority is pinned to the ground, buried under the debris of dead hopes, dreams, and desires.

Do not think for a moment that this is unexpected. A few critical voices warn of the impending doom. No one wants to hear them. Although publicly,

the experts goad investors, and scream that everything is fine, they are scared. So are the investors, but do not back away because of the FOMO factor. No one wants to miss out on the fun unless and until they are scarred. The promoters want their IPOs before the crash. Investors want to get in, and get out to benefit from the listing gains. Merchant bankers, investment bankers,

and institutional bankers want to have stakes in the next Google, or Microsoft. Policy-makers do not want to rock the status quo. Economists are oblivious to the crazed environment.

This writer saw this bizarre phenomenon from close quarters in the late 1999, and early 2000 during the dotcom boom in the US. The valuations were as weird as they are now. IPOs were dime-a-day, as startups, and their founders dreamt of racking up valuations of billions of dollars, and becoming billionaires. The discussions at the social gathering, including the New Year's party, was about the hundreds of millions that one made, or will make, and the real estate purchased at ridiculous prices. Yet, every angel investor, venture capitalist, private equity player, founder, and pundit I met spoke about the crash. For the dozens of people interviewed, it was not a matter of if, but when. It will happen, they said, but they did not know when, so they went ahead with what they did. An introduction to one of the post-2008

editions of 'The Great Crash,' a seminal book of John Kenneth Galbraith, explains, "But there is here a basic and recurrent process. It comes with rising prices, whether of stocks, real estate, works of art or anything else. This increase attracts attention and buyers, which produces the further effect of even higher prices. Expectations are thus justified by the very action that sends prices up. The process continues; optimism with its market effect is the order of the day. Prices go up even more. Then, for reasons that will be endlessly debated, comes the end. The descent is always more sudden than the increase; a balloon that has been punctured does not deflate in an orderly

The initial air of the balloon is filled with facts, data, and realistic assumptions. Later, hot air creeps in, as desires, hopes, and optimism engulfs the investors. This turns into smoke, smog, and fog as the herd gathers pace, and runs blindly towards the edge of the mountain, ready to fall off the cliff. At the stages of the hot air, and the great run one witnesses the hundreds of IPOs, with the founders aiming to be the next dollar-billionaires. Everything is crazy, and hazy, and those who can intervene seem to be in a daze.



Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman sat down with The Pioneer's Printer and Publisher Kushan Mitra, Chief Executive Officer Prakash V and J Gopikrishnan and to understand the current business activities and growth plans of The Pioneer media group. She was also invited to be the Chief Guest of The Pioneer India Finance and Innovation Forum (India FIF) that will be hosted in Mumbai from February 25-27, 2026. The event will focus on the core sectors of the economy and will be a space where finance, policy and innovation converge.



GST 2.0, Indo-Japan partnership redraw India's auto industry map

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Lucknow

India's automotive industry, which contributes 7.1% to the country's GDP and nearly half of its manufacturing output, is entering a new growth phase backed by regulatory reform and strong foreign collaboration. The sector produced 28 million vehicles in 2024, up 8 per cent year-on-year, while exports surpassed 4.5 million units, according to a whitepaper by Grant Thornton Bharat and the Indo-Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IJCCI).

Titled "Navigating Change: GST 2.0, Customs, and FTA Impacts on the India-Japan Auto Sector," the report outlines how taxation reform, customs changes, and trade partnerships are reshaping the industry's competitiveness. With USD 43.3 billion in cumulative investments, Japan remains India's fifthlargest foreign investor and a key force in the automotive ecosystem.

The rollout of GST 2.0 in September 2025 has streamlined tax structures and boosted affordability across vehicle categories. Under the revised regime, small cars and motorcycles under 350cc attract 18 per cent GST, down from 28 per cent plus cess, trimming prices by up to ₹1 lakh for select models. Premium vehicles now face a 40 per cent flat rate, while electric vehicles continue at 5 per cent, reaffirming policy support for clean mobility.

Automakers have already recorded a surge in bookings, with the small car **AUTOMAKERS HAVE** ALREADY RECORDED A SURGE IN BOOKINGS, WITH THE SMALL CAR SEGMENT **REPORTING NEARLY 50 PER** CENT GROWTH. THE UNION **BUDGET 2025**

COMPLEMENTED GST CHANGES WITH SUPPLY-CHAIN MEASURES, INCLUDING CUSTOMS DUTY EXEMPTIONS ON LITHIUM-ION BATTERY SCRAP AND CRITICAL MINERALS LIKE LEAD AND COPPER.

segment reporting nearly 50 per cent growth. The Union Budget 2025 complemented GST changes with supply-chain measures, including customs duty exemptions on lithium-ion battery scrap and critical minerals like lead and copper. These steps aim to strengthen domestic manufacturing, secure raw materials, and expand employment in the EV value chain.

"The convergence of GST 2.0 and targeted customs incentives marks a defining moment for India's automotive sector," said Sohrab Bararia, Partner, India Investment Advisory, Grant Thornton Bharat. He noted that the reforms enhance cost competitiveness and reinforce India's position as a manufacturing and export hub for Japanese

The India–Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) and the India-Japan Digital Partnership (IJDP) are also driving collaboration in electric and connected vehicles, as well as AI-led manufacturing. Skill programmes such as the Japan-India Institute for Manufacturing (JIM) and Japanese Endowed Courses (JEC) have trained over 30,000 Indian engineers to Japanese manufacturing standards, creating a talent base for advanced produc-

Trade schemes like MOOWR, EPCG, Advance Authorisation, and RoDTEP continue to underpin export competitiveness by supporting duty-free or concessional imports of capital goods and components.

"There is strong synergy between India and Japan in hybrid and electric vehicles and precision components," said Suguna Ramamoorthy, Secretary General, IJCCI. "Reforms under GST 2.0 and CEPA strengthen R&D and joint production while advancing the Atmanirbhar Bharat vision.

During the first nine months of FY2025, India's car exports to Japan reached USD 616.45 million, while auto component exports stood at USD 171.72 million Industry observers believe sustained policy alignment and India-Japan collaboration will define the next phase of growth, driving competitiveness, technology transfer, and a more sustainable mobility future.

Fitch: Sanctions on Russian oil unlikely to hit Indian oil marketing companies

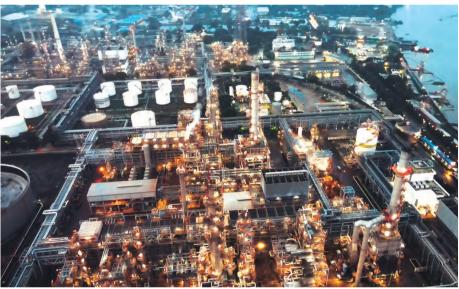
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

US sanctions on Rosneft and Lukoil, along with the EU's ban on refined products derived from Russian crude, are unlikely to materially dent the margins or credit profiles of India's state-run oil marketing companies, Fitch Ratings said.

The ratings agency warned, however, that the eventual impact will hinge on how long the sanctions last and how strictly they are enforced. Russian crude made up about a third of India's oil imports between January and August 2025, and its discounted rates have been a key boost to OMC profitability. Fitch expects the companies to adhere to sanctions, though some refiners may continue sourcing

Traditionally reliant on Middle Eastern oil, India significantly increased its imports from Russia following the February 2022 Ukraine invasion. Western sanctions and reduced European demand made Russian oil available at steep discounts. As a result, India's Russian crude imports surged from under 1 per cent to nearly 40 per cent of its total crude oil

imports in a short span. The US, however, last month imposed sanctions on Russian oil producers Rosneft and Lukoil, who



continue to sell.

"Fitch Ratings believes US sanctions on two of Russia's largest crude oil producers, Rosneft and Lukoil, and the EU's ban on refined imports derived from Russian crude, are unlikely to have a significant effect on the refining margins or credit profiles of our rated Indian oil marketing companies (OMCs)," the

rating agency said in a note. Fitch said sanctions-related disruptions should suppress global demand for products linked to affected crude, widening refined product spreads and helping offset the loss of discounted Russian crude and strong gasoil

accounted for 75 per cent of barrels. Refiners still processoil sold to India. Indian refining Russian crude could ers have stopped buying oil benefit from deeper disfrom them but others can still counts. Abundant spare global crude capacity should also keep a lid on oil prices; Fitch forecasts Brent at USD 65 per cent in 2026, down from USD 70 in 2025.

Private refiners with significant EU exposure may face greater compliance risks, as tracing crude origins becomes more complex once grades are blended. Such firms may shift exports to alternative markets, adjust crude slates or invest in

tighter traceability systems. Indian OMCs posted EBITDA broadly in line with or slightly above expectations in H1 FY26, supported by softer

spreads. Gross refining margins averaged USD 6-7 per barrel, compared with USD 4.5-7 per barrel in FY25.

Fitch expects GRMs to hold near mid-cycle levels of around USD 6 per barrel in FY27, aided by firm domestic fuel demand and high utilisation rates.

A government-approved Rs 30,000 crore support package for Indian Oil, Bharat Petroleum and Hindustan Petroleum in 2Q FY26 will help offset losses from selling subsidised LPG below cost and strengthen liquidity.

Fitch said the Issuer Default Ratings of all three OMCs remain anchored by strong state linkages and a high likelihood of sovereign support if required.

India signs 1-year deal to import 2.2m tonnes of LPG from US

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



The move is seen as an attempt to narrow India's trade surplus with the US - a sticking point for President Donald Trump, who has slapped a 50 per cent tariff on Indian goods entering

"Indian PSU oil companies have successfully concluded a one-year structured contract to import around 2.2 million tonnes of LPG from the US Gulf Coast for the contract year 2026," an official statement said on Monday.

The quantity contracted is close to 10 per cent of India's annual LPG imports and marks the first such structured US LPG contract for the Indian market.

While India is either selfsufficient or has surplus production in most fuels like petrol, diesel and jet fuel, it imports about 65 per cent of its LPG consumption of 31 million tonnes. In 2024, about 90 per cent of the 20.4 million tonnes of LPG imports came from UAE, Qatar, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

It sporadically imported cargos from the US but this is the first time it has entered



into a structured contract. State-owned Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat

Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) will import about 48 very-large gas carriers of LPG in 2026. The supplies will be made by super majors Chevron, Phillips and TotalEnergies Trading SA. India has offered to raise

energy imports from the US as part of the bilateral trade deal that has been under discussions for the past couple of months. New Delhi buys about 8 per cent of its crude oil - the raw material for making petrol and diesel from the US.

In the first half of 2025, India imported about 271,000 barrels per day (bpd) of US crude, up 51 per cent from 180,000 bpd in H1 2024. Scope for raising crude

imports from the US is

limited given that shipments take 45 days sea voyage to reach Indian shores — a period during which ships can make six sorties from

Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri took to X to announce the LPG deal. "A historic first! One of the

the Middle East.

largest and the world's fastest growing LPG markets opens up to the United States," he said.

"In our endeavour to provide secure affordable supplies of LPG to the people of India, we have been diversifying our LPG sourcing. In a significant development, Indian PSU oil companies have successfully concluded a 1 year deal for imports of around 2.2 MTPA LPG, close to 10 per cent of our annual imports - for the contract year 2026, to be sourced from the US Gulf Coast — the first structured contract of US

the country - receiving cooking gas cylinders at just ₹500-550 while the actual cost was over ₹1,100.

LPG for the Indian market,"

benchmark for LPG purchas-

es, he said adding a team from the three PSUs had

visited the US and engaged

in discussions with major US

producers over the last few

months, which have been

consumers — who make up for a third of all LPG users in

He touted poor Ujjwala

concluded now.

This purchase is based on using Mount Belvieu as the

"Government of India incurred the cost of over ₹40,000 crore last year in order to ensure our mothers and sisters did not feel the burden of rising international LPG prices'

The price of LPG for non-Ujjwala users currently is ₹853 per 14.2-kg cylinder.

For the US contract, the pricing shift - using Mount Belvieu as a benchmark – brings greater transparency and global linkage into India's procurement model. For consumers, this diversification strengthens the ability to shield households

from global price spikes. "The Minister emphasised that this new sourcing arrangement for 2026 is another step in strengthening India's energy security while ensuring affordable access to clean cooking fuel for millions of households," the statement added.

Unemployment rate remains steady at **5.2 pc in October: Govt survey**

New Delhi

The rate of unemployment for those aged 15 and above remained steady at 5.2 per cent in October, according to a government survey released on Monday.

Statistics and Programme with a moderate rise in urban Implementation (MoSPI).

The UR was 5.1 per cent in April as per the first PLFS bulletin released in May 2025. The UR among persons of

age 15 years and above remained unchanged at 5.2 females aged 15 years and above declined to 5.4 per per cent between September,



The unemployment rate (UR) was 5.2 per cent in September, 5.1 per cent in August, 5.2 per cent in July and 5.6 per cent in May and June, as per the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) released by the Ministry of

2025 and October, 2025," an official statement said.

According to the statement, a marginal decline in the rural unemployment rate, from 4.6 per cent in September 2025 to 4.4 per cent in October 2025, coupled tributed to overall stability.

UR from 6.8 per cent to 7.0 per cent, resulted in overall stability in the pace of joblessness among persons aged 15 years and above. It stated that UR among

cent in October 2025 from 5.5 per cent observed during September 2025. The drop in UR among rural female, from 4.3 per cent in September 2025 to 4.0

per cent in October 2025. mainly contributed towards the decline in overall female joblessness rate. Among males, the rate of

unemployment remained stable at 5.1 per cent in October 2025 as compared to previous month.

A minor decrease in rural male UR, from 4.7 per cent in September 2025 to 4.6 per cent in October 2025, was offset by a slight uptick in urban male UR from 6.0 per cent to 6.1 per cent during the same period, which con-



India's exports drop 11.8 pc to USD 34.38 bn in Oct

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

India's exports contracted 11.8 per cent to USD 34.38 billion in October, showed government data released on Monday. Imports jumped 16.63 per cent to USD 76.06 billion.

The country's trade deficit stood at USD 41.68 billion during the reporting month. Imports surged due to increased shipments of gold and silver. Gold imports jumped to USD 14.72 bn in the last month

against USD 4.92 bn recorded in the same month last year. The country's exports to the United States declined to USD 6.3 bn in October as against USD 6.9 bn registered in the year-ago month, Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal told reporters here.

During April-October this fiscal, exports increased marginally by 0.63 per cent to USD 254.25 billion. At the same time, imports rose 6.37 per cent to USD 451.08 billion, the commerce ministry data showed.

One-in-four Indian firm surveyed report cyber losses: PwC report

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

Nearly a quarter of Indian enterprises surveyed reported losses exceeding USD 1 million (about ₹8.8 crore) from cyber breaches over the past three years, with the risk particularly high among companies earning USD 5 billion or more in annual revenue.

Cyber budgets are rising, albeit at a cautious pace, with 87 per cent of organisations in India planning to increase their cybersecurity spending over the next 12 months, according to a PwC

report. The PwC 2026 Global Digital Trust Insights survey, based on responses from 138 Indian business and technology executives, found that investment in AI tops budget priorities at 46 per cent, followed by cloud security at 33 per

"...25 per cent of busi-

aging data breach in the past three years cost their organisation at least USD 1 million, with exposure highest among enterprises generating USD 5 billion or

more in revenue (45 per

nesses say their most dam- than 10 per cent—a slight dip from last year's 93 per cent, yet a strong signal of sustained investment. Notably, just over one-third (38 per cent) of these said their budgets would likely increase 6-10 per cent," the



"This year, 87 per cent of leaders of Indian organisations expect their cyber budgets to grow in the coming year, and nearly one-third of them plan to boost spending by more report noted.

More than half (60 per cent) of security leaders are prioritising AI threathunting capabilities, while nearly 47 per cent are focusing on other AI-driven functions such as agentic Al.

FROM THE

Jaffar Express targeted again

The frequently-targeted Jaffar Express passenger train narrowly escaped an explosion in Pakistan's Balochistan province, a day after it resumed operations following nearly a week of suspension due to security concerns. Insurgents targeted the train in the Nasirabad area of the province on Sunday, months after it came under a deadly insurgent attack that left

26 people dead. Suspected insurgents detonated explosives planted on the railway track on the route taken by the Jaffar Express from Quetta to Peshawar. officials said. The explosion caused damage to a portion of the track, but the train escaped without any damage Nasirabad Senior SP Ghulam Sarwar said in a telephonic conversation that security forces reached the area and launched a search for the insurgents.

USA Trump to meet **Mayor Mamdani**

President Donald Trump indicated on Sunday that he plans to meet with New York City's mayor-elect Zohran Mamdani and said they'll "work something out," in what could be a detente for the Republican president and Democratic political star who have cast each other as political foils. Trump has for months slammed Mamdani, falsely labeling him as a communist. He also threatened to deport Mamdani, who was born in Uganda and became a naturalised American citizen and to pull federal money from the city. Mamdani rose from an obscure State lawmaker to become a social media star and symbol of the resistance against Trump during his campaign. He campaigned on an array of progressive policies and a message that was stark in its opposition to the aggressive, anti-immigrant agenda Trump has rolled out in his second White

Ukraine to buy 100 Rafales from France

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Paris

Ukraine on Monday signed a letter of intent to buy up to 100 Rafale warplanes from France, the Ukrainian Embassy and the French president's office said.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and French President Emmanuel Macron signed the document stating that Ukraine is considering the possibility of buying French defense equipment, including Rafale jet fighters, Macron's office said. It did not provide further details.

Zelenskyy was on his ninth visit to Paris since Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022. His talks are meant to strengthen Ukraine's defenses as the country enters another winter under Russian bombardment of its energy infrastructure and other targets.

On Monday morning, Macron and Zelenskyy visited an air base in the Paris outskirts, before heading to the headquarters of a multinational force, dubbed the "coalition of the willing," that France and Britain have been preparing with more than 30 other nations to police an eventual ceasefire in Ukraine.

French officials say the force could be deployed immediately after a ceasefire and would be stationed Sunday that he looked Ukraine and Sweden signed defense assistance to plus missiles.



French President Emmanuel and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy hug after signing an agreement

an effort to help dissuade renewed Russian attacks. Russian President Vladimir Putin has so far rejected troops make creeping gains on the battlefield.

away from the front lines in forward to a "historic deal with France in Paris to strengthen our combat aviation and air defense." He made a stop in Greece on his calls for a ceasefire as his way to France to sign an agreement to supply Ukraine with US liquefied Zelenskyy wrote on X on natural gas. Last month,

an agreement exploring the possibility of Ukraine buying up to 150 Swedish-made Gripen fighter jets over the next decade or more. Ukraine has already received American-made F-16s and French Mirages. France is among major suppliers of

Ukraine, including air defense systems and fighter jets. According to Mandon, Ukraine needs immediate additional air defenses to fend off attacks by Russia, which on average targets the country with about 1,700 drones per week

German Goverment lifts Israel arms ban



German Chancellor Friedrich Merz arriving for the cabinet meeting at the Chancellery in Berlin, Germany

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE Berlin

The German Government said Monday that it's lifting its restrictions on exports of military equipment to Israel, weeks after the ceasefire between Israel and the Hamas militant group. Chancellor Friedrich Merz said in early August that Berlin wouldn't authorize any exports of

military equipment to Israel that could be used in Gaza "until further notice." That was a response to a decision by the Israeli Cabinet to take over Gaza City. A spokesperson for Merz,

Sebastian Hille, said that the restrictions will be lifted from Nov. 24. "Since Oct. 10. we have had a ceasefire in and it has fundamentally stabilized," Hille told reporters at a regular government news conference. "That is the basis for this decision.'

"We expect everyone to keep to the agreements that were reached - that includes the ceasefire holding, that includes humanitarian aid being provided on a large scale and the process continuing to run in an orderly way, as agreed," he added.

Once the restrictions are lifted, Germany will examine military exports on a case-by-base basis, as is its standard practice with such exports, he said.

Merz's decision in August was a remarkable move by a country that is a particularly staunch ally of Israel. The Israeli foreign minister welcomed its lifting Monday in a post on social network X.

Gunmen abduct 25 girls from school in Nigeria

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Abuja

Gunmen attacked a high school in northwestern Nigeria before dawn on Monday and abducted 25 schoolgirls, police said.

One staffer at the school was killed and another was wounded in what was the latest incident of school abductions in Nigeria's northern region. No group immediately claimed responsibility for the abductions from the boarding school in Kebbi State. According to police, the incident took place at 4.00 am and the girls were abducted from their dorms. The boarding school is in Maga, in the State's Danko-Wasagu area, police spokesperson Nafi'u Abubakar Kotarkoshi said.

The assailants were armed "sophisticated weapons" and exchanged ing the abducted students Haram group abducted 276 fire with guards before and arresting the perpetra-students from Chibok in



team is currently combing suspected escape routes and surrounding forests in a coordinated search and rescue operation aimed at recover-

Kotarkoshi said. "A combined added. This is the latest school abduction in Nigeria's northern region, where armed groups have targeted school children since 2014, when the militant Boko the girls, tors," the spokesperson Borno state. Kidnappings poorly policed region.

have become common in parts of northern Nigeria, where dozens of armed groups take advantage of a limited security presence to carry out attacks on villages and along major roads. Most victims are released only after the payment of ransoms that sometimes run into the thousands of dollars. In March 2024, more than 130 schoolchildren were rescued after spending more than two weeks in captivity in the Nigerian state of Kaduna.

The mass abduction of 276 schoolgirls from Chibok marked the beginning of a new era of fear — with nearly 100 of the girls still in captivity in 2024. Since the Chibok abductions, at least 1,500 students have been kidnapped, as armed groups increasingly find in abductions a lucrative way to fund other crimes and control villages in the nation's mineral-rich but

Landslide kills 6, injures 19 in Vietnam

ASSOCIATED PRESS | Hanoi

A landslide buried a passenger bus on a treacherous mountain pass in Vietnam, killing six people and injuring 19 others, as more heavy rain was forecast into the week. The earth and rocks collapsed onto the bus late Sunday as it was travelling through the Khanh Le pass in the central highlands, State media reported.

The winding, 33-kilometre stretch carved into steep mountainsides is scenic and popular with tourists but prone to landslides in the rainy season.

The landslide crushed the front of the bus, trapping many passengers. Rescuers struggled for hours to reach the scene as heavy rain had also caused landslides on both sides of the pass, cutting off access. Rescue teams were only able to reach the bus after midnight, state media said. The trapped under the debris as 85 centimeters.



bus was carrying 32 people from Vietnam's financial capital, Ho Chi Minh City and was travelling from Da Lat in Vietnam's central highlands to the coastal city of Nha Trang.

The injured passengers were taken to a nearby hospital. State media said two of the dead bodies were still

the treacherous terrain hindered the work. Heavy rain is pounding

central Vietnam, which earlier was hit hard by Typhoon Kalmaegi. Rainfall through Wednesday is expected to reach 30-60 centimeters in parts of central Vietnam, with some areas likely to exceed

US absence threatens South Africa's G20 legacy: Experts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Johannesburg

Although South Africa has said the G20 Leaders' Summit in Johannesburg this weekend will continue despite the absence of the US, there may be longer-term consequences for the host nation, experts have cautioned. US President Donald Trump announced earlier that there would be no US participation at the Summit, citing allegations of white farmer genocide and illegal expropriation of land from them by the Government. Both the South African Government and white leaders have rejected these allegations as being false.

President Cyril Ramaphosa confirmed on Friday that the G20 Leaders' Summit will proceed as planned on November 22-23, despite the US absence. "President Trump has decided not to come, and he's pulled out all

PRESIDENT CYRIL **CONFIRMED** THAT THE G20 LEADERS' SUMMIT WILL PROCEED AS PLANNED ON NOVEMBER 22-23, DESPITE THE US **ABSENCE**

the US representatives. But we have said that boycott politics never work," Ramaphosa said on the sidelines of an event here. The summit will go on.

We are not going to stop because they are not here. We will continue and we will take fundamental decisions on matters that affect the people of the world," Ramaphosa said, adding that nearly 40 other Heads of State and Government will be at the Summit.

However, analysts and researchers believe that the US absence may have a

Africa, especially relating to finance and development.

"The US sponsors most of the international initiatives, like climate change. They use a huge amount of money for the operation of the United Nations and other financial institutions like the World Trade Organisation," Dr Nampula Mphahlele, a researcher on South African foreign policy, told the local daily The Star. "If the US is boycotting (the G20), then it sends a strong message of the future of multilateralism and how the G20 is going to operate moving forward," Aphahlele said.

She said that it was unlikely South Africa would lose its G20 seat, given that a country's inclusion is voted on by members and not just by one person or country. However, the US might continue excluding South Africa from certain activities, as invitations are often required to

broader impact on South attend G20 meetings, such as the finance ministers' meeting and the working groups. Dr Noluthando Phungula, an international relations expert from the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, told the newspaper that Trump's decision was sending a message through an effective exercise of soft power. 'This is evident in the absence of the Argentinian president, who has also declined the invitation and has cited that he will send a representative," she said.

According to her, the boycott speaks to deeper tensions between Pretoria and Washington and is sure to impact trade and diplomatic relations. "It also has implications for those countries that are associated with the US. As you saw, Argentina is currently receiving financial support from the US, so obviously it has to be seen to be standing in solidarity with the US," she said.



Air Force officials during the bilateral air exercise Garuda 25 between Indian Air Force and French Air and Space Force

Singapore Minister warns of rising AI-enabled extremism

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Singapore

Extremist groups use AI to amplify the reach and sophistication of radical content, making it difficult for young minds to distinguish truth from manipulation, a Singapore minister said on Monday. Speaking at a seminar, acting minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs Faishal Ibrahim said that Artificial Intelligence (AI) has also featured in several youth self-radicalisation cases in the multi-racial city-state. Extremist groups now use Al to create persuasive propaganda and even impersonate trusted voices, Faishal was quoted as saying by The Straits Times newspaper. He said that the reach and sophistication of racial content can be enhanced with Al, making it more difficult for younger people to distinguish truth from manipulation.



ICC prosecutors seek life sentence for Janjaweed leader

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ The Hague

Prosecutors at the International Criminal Court(ICC) on Monday asked for a life sentence for a leader of the feared Janjaweed militia convicted of playing a major role in a campaign of atrocities committed in the Sudanese region of Darfur more than 20 years ago – including ordering mass executions and bludgeoning two prisoners to death with an ax. "You literally have an axe murderer before you," prosecutor Julian Nicholls told judges in The Hague as Ali Muhammad Ali Abd-Al-Rahman, also known as Ali Kushayb, looked on. Last month, Abd-Al-Rahman was convicted of 27 counts, including mass murders and rapes, for leading Janjaweed militia forces that went on a campaign of killing and destruction in 2003-2004. It was the first time the court had convicted a suspect of crimes in Darfur.

Sheikh Hasina: The rise, reign and ruin of Bangladesh's Iron Lady

For nearly two decades. Sheikh Hasina's name moved with the pulse of Bangladesh, sometimes steady, sometimes storm-tossed.

To her supporters, she is the architect of a modern, developing Bangladesh; to her critics, she was an autocrat whose appetite for power blinded her to the cries of the streets.

Few, however, could have imagined that the very tribunal the 77-year-old deposed Prime Minister once created to try hardened war collaborators would one day place her in the dock.

On Monday, when the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) pronounced the death sentence against Hasina in absentia, it marked the most dramatic turn yet in the story of the world's longest-serving female head of Government.

Hasina was born on September 28, 1947, in Tungipara in the then East Pakistan, into a family that would come to define Bangladesh's identity. Her father, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, led Bangladesh to independence with India's help in 1971 and became its founding father.

She studied at the University of Dhaka, earning a master's degree in Bengali literature and became deeply engaged in student politics. In 1968, Hasina married nuclear scientist MA Wazed Miah, whose low-profile. scholarly life stood in contrast to the turbulence of Bangladeshi politics. Wazed



Police use stun grenades to disperse protesters gathering outside the demolished residence of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Bangladesh's former leader and the father of the country's ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina following the verdict against her in Dhaka, Bangladesh

remained a steady presence in Hasina's life until he died in 2009 at the age of 67. They have a son, Sajeeb Wazed Joy and a daughter, Saima W azed Putul.

Hasina's political destiny hardened after the August 1975 military coup, in which her father, mother, three brothers, and several other family members were assassinated. She and her vounger sister Rehana survived only because they were abroad.

Minister Indira Gandhi, granted her asylum. After six years, in May 1981, Hasina returned to Bangladesh, where she was elected in absentia as the general secretary of the Awami League.

When Hasina returned in 1981 to lead the Awami League, she found her rival already waiting: Khaleda Zia, widow of slain President Ziaur Rahman.

The 'Battling Begums', as they came to be known, India, under then Prime fought electoral and ideological wars that defined Bangladesh's politics for more than three decades.

Hasina first became Prime Minister in 1996, defeating Zia in a fiercely contested election. She lost power in 2001 but returned with a landslide in 2008, beginning, what her critics say, a long stretch of dominance.

Under her leadership, the Awami League swept the 2008 general election; the 2014 election, which was boycotted by Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP); and the 2018 election, giving Hasina one of the world's longest tenures for a female leader. During her premiership. Bangladesh saw rapid economic growth, major infrastructure achievements like the Padma Bridge, and advances in poverty reduction. The country

also became a global

garment powerhouse under

her watch.

But the accolades came

clampdowns on dissent, curbs on the media, arrests of opposition leaders and the expansion of state security powers. In 2024, student-led demonstrations, which initially erupted in protest over quotas in Government jobs for children of independence war veterans, later exploded into a nationwide uprising against Hasina's regime.

The crackdown that followed unleashed spirals of violence, ultimately ousting alongside accusations of Hasina from power and

PROTESTERS NEAR MUJIBUR RAHMAN'S HOUSE

Dhaka: Security agencies used batons and fired tear gas on Monday to disperse protesters who tried to demolish the house of deposed premier Sheikh Hasina's father and Bangladesh's founder Sheikh Muiibur Rahman in the capital. "Several stun grenades were used to disperse the protesters,' Masud Alam, deputy commissioner of Ramna Division Police, was quoted as saying by the Daily Star newspaper. The paper reported that several protesters and security personnel were injured during the baton-charge and brick-hurling clashes.

Muiibur Rahman, fondly called Bangabandhu, was killed in a military coup on August 15, 1975, along with most of his family members including his 10-year-old voungest son, Sheikh Russell, A large part of Rahman's private residence, which was

forcing her to flee to India.

Following Hasina's ouster,

the interim Government led

by Muhammad Yunus recon-

stituted the ICT, once her

instrument for prosecuting

war criminals, to bring

charges of crimes against

humanity related to the 2024

A UN rights office report

estimated that up to 1,400

people were killed during

last year's student protest

between July 15 and August 15

during what came to be

known as the July Uprising, as

her Government ordered a

crackdown against her.

turned into a museum, was levelled following the ouster of the Awami League regime of Hasina last year.

On Monday, Hasina was sentenced to death in absentia by a special tribunal for "crimes against humanity" over her Government's brutal crackdown on student-led protests last year.

Even before the verdict was announced, a large group of protesters tried to move two excavators towards Dhanmondi 32, where Rahman's house is located. They were stopped by security personnel, who used batons to disperse protesters. the paper said. Some protesters regrouped near Square Hospital on Panthapath, where law enforcers fired several rounds of tear gas

Traffic on Mirpur Road in Dhaka and the surrounding areas was suspended, and most shops in the neighbourhood were closed

sweeping security crack down. On Monday, after months of proceedings she never attended, the tribunal handed down the unthinkable: Hasina, four-time Prime Minister and political heir of

Bangladesh's founding leader,

was sentenced to death. Now, in exile in India, Hasina, often dubbed the 'Iron Lady' of Bangladesh, watches from across the border as the nation she helped build, and often ruled with a firm hand, grapples with the legacy her rise and

Outrage in Israel: Netanyahu to oversee October 7 probe

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

After repeated delays, Israel's Government has agreed to launch an investigation into the Government failures that led to the Hamas-led attack on October 7, 2023, that triggered the war in Gaza.

But questions about the investigation's independence drew accusations Monday that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is trying to evade personal responsibility in the worst attack in Israel's history.

Israel has traditionally appointed an independent state commission of inquiry, led by a retired judge, following major Governmental failures. Netanyahu has resisted calls for such an investigation into the October 7 failures, saying only that he would answer all questions when the war is over. In Sunday's decision, he said the ceasefire that went into effect on October 10 allows the Government to start the investigation.

His Cabinet approved the formation of a wateredmittee." Netanyahu will oversee the makeup of the team governing the inquiry, in effect putting him in charge of the probe. More details about the inquiry are to be announced in 45 days.

Public criticism

Israel's opposition leader, Yair Lapid, called the decision insulting to the victims of October 7 and to the hundreds of soldiers who have died in the war. "The Government is doing everything it can to run from the



truth and evade responsibility," Lapid said.

The Government is "establishing a commission that will investigate itself," noted the Movement for Quality Government in Israel, which is critical of Netanyahu. "This is not an investigative commission, this is a cover-up commission." In the October 7 attack, Hamas-led militants killed some 1,200 people and took over 250 others hostage. Nearly 500 soldiers have been killed in fighting since then, while Palestinian health officials say over 69,000 Palestinians have been killed in Israel's retaliatory offensive against Hamas. According to a poll by the Jerusalem-based think tank Israel Democracy Institute last month, nearly three-quarters of the public

commission of inquiry. Even among Netanyahu's right-wing base, 68 per cent favoured an independent commission. The survey questioned 1,000 people and had a margin of error of

support a fully independent

3.1 percentage points. Thousands of people demonstrated on Saturday night in Tel Aviv, many calling for an independent probe. Netanyahu, who is on trial for corruption charges

unrelated to the war, says Israel's judiciary has too much power and has asserted that an independent inquiry would not have "the broadest possible public support." "The only way to ensure public trust in the work of the commission is broad agreement regarding the composition of the commission," he said.

The Israeli military and other security bodies have conducted a number of investigations into their failures on October 7. But the new investigation also will look at Governmental decision-making and assumptions that created the conditions for the attack to occur.

Many security figures have said that Netanyahu's attempt to overhaul the country's judicial system, which triggered mass demonstrations and public divisions before the war, sent a message of weakness that encouraged Israel's enemies to attack.

Netanyahu rejects the accusations. Many Israelis believe the mistakes of October 7 extend beyond the military, and they blame Netanyahu for what they view as a failed strategy of deterrence and containment in the years before the attack.

Bangladesh's tribunal sentences ex-home minister Kamal to death for crimes against humanity

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Deposed Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's aide, former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, was on Monday sentenced to death in absentia by a tribunal for crimes against humanity during last year's student uprising.

The International Crimes Tribunal-Bangladesh also sentenced former inspector general of police Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun, who turned state witness, to five years of imprisonment in the

same case. Delivering the Former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal

the confiscation of all his movable and immovable properties in favour of the State. Kamal, who is believed to be living in exile in India, was tried in absentia. The prosecution said the former home minister "played a central role" in coordinating the 2024 crackdown. Mamun, who is in custody, pleaded guilty during the proceedings and became a State witness. His cooperation, the tribunal noted, "substantially aided" the prosecution in establishing the chain of

death sentence against

Kamal, the tribunal ordered

Jaishankar arrives in **Russia on** three-day visit

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Moscow

External Affairs Minister S laishankar on Monday arrived in Russia on a three-day visit to attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Heads of State Council meeting.

At the airport, Jaishankar was received by Indian Ambassador Vinay Kumar and Alexei Pavlovsky, Director of the Second Asian Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia.

Later in the day, he will hold talks with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. They are expected to discuss bilateral, regional and international issues, including cooperation within the SCO, BRICS, the UN, and the G-20, State-run TASS news agency reported.

Ethiopia confirms 3 Marburg virus deaths ASSOCIATED PRESS

Addis Ababa

Ethiopia on Monday confirmed three deaths from the Marburg hemorrhagic virus that has been detected in an area neighbouring South Sudan.

Health Minister Mekdes Daba said Ethiopia's Government, which declared a Marburg outbreak on Friday, had conducted tests in 17 suspected cases in the country's south. The outbreak was reported in the Omo region.

The minister said there were no active cases but the Government was taking preventive measures.

A team from the World Health Organisation and the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention has been dispatched to support with testing and outbreak control. South Sudan's health ministry on Sunday issued a public health advi-



sory to residents of four counties to wash their hands frequently and avoid contact with bodily fluids to prevent the spread of the virus. Africa CDC Director-General Jean Kaseya last week called the outbreak a concern because South Sudan has a "fragile health system."

Like Ebola, the Marburg virus originates in fruit bats and spreads between people through close contact with the bodily fluids of infected individuals or with contaminated surfaces, such as soiled bedsheets. Without treatment, Marburg can be fatal in up to 88 per cent of people who fall ill.

Symptoms include fever, muscle pains, diarrhoea, vomiting and, in some cases, death from severe blood loss. There is no authorised vaccine or treatment for Marburg.

Marburg outbreaks and individual cases have in the past been recorded in Rwanda, Equatorial Guinea, Angola, Congo, Kenya, South Africa, Uganda and Ghana, according to WHO.

fall has left behind. YUNUS HAILS **VERDICT AGAINST SHEIKH**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Dhaka

HASINA

Bangladesh's Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus Monday hailed a special tribunal's verdict against deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina and her aide, saying the ruling affirmed a fundamental principle — "no one. regardless of power, is above the law.'

The International Crimes Tribunal-Bangladesh (ICT-BD) sentenced 78-year-old Hasina and her former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal to death in absentia for "crimes against humanity" during last year's student uprising.

Hasina has been living in India since she fled Bangladesh on August 5 last year in the face of the massive protests. She was earlier declared a fugitive by the court. Kamal is also believed to be in India.

"Today, the courts of Bangladesh have spoken with a clarity that resonates across the nation and beyond. The conviction and sentencing affirm a fundamental principle: no one, regardless of power, is above the law,"

Yunus said in a statement. Yunus had assumed charge as the chief advisor of the interim Government last year in August, three days after Hasina fled to India after the massive protests toppled her 16 year regime.

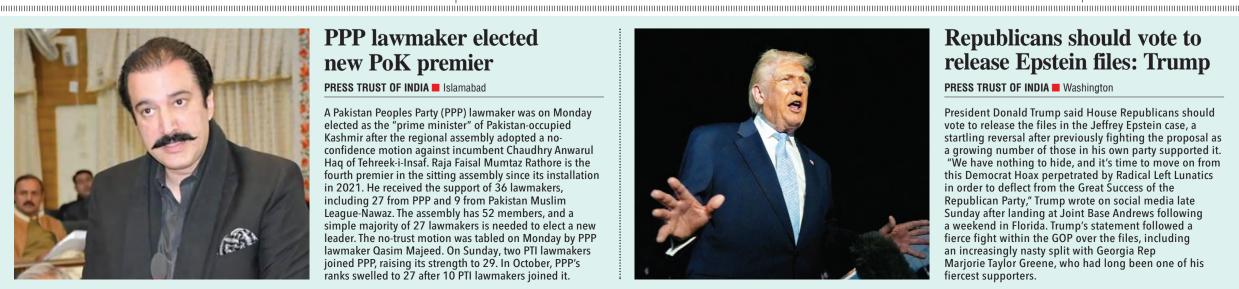
Commenting on the verdict, Hasina denied the charges as "biased and politically motivated" and said the judgment has been made by a "rigged tribunal" established and presided over by an "unelected Government with no democratic mandate".



PPP lawmaker elected new PoK premier

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Islamabad

A Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) lawmaker was on Monday elected as the "prime minister" of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir after the regional assembly adopted a noconfidence motion against incumbent Chaudhry Anwarul Haq of Tehreek-i-Insaf. Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore is the fourth premier in the sitting assembly since its installation in 2021. He received the support of 36 lawmakers, including 27 from PPP and 9 from Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz. The assembly has 52 members, and a simple majority of 27 lawmakers is needed to elect a new leader. The no-trust motion was tabled on Monday by PPP lawmaker Qasim Majeed. On Sunday, two PTI lawmakers joined PPP, raising its strength to 29. In October, PPP's ranks swelled to 27 after 10 PTI lawmakers joined it.



Republicans should vote to release Epstein files: Trump

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Washington

President Donald Trump said House Republicans should vote to release the files in the Jeffrey Epstein case, a startling reversal after previously fighting the proposal as a growing number of those in his own party supported it. "We have nothing to hide, and it's time to move on from this Democrat Hoax perpetrated by Radical Left Lunatics in order to deflect from the Great Success of the Republican Party," Trump wrote on social media late Sunday after landing at Joint Base Andrews following a weekend in Florida. Trump's statement followed a fierce fight within the GOP over the files, including an increasingly nasty split with Georgia Rep Marjorie Taylor Greene, who had long been one of his fiercest supporters.

▼ PROSPECT



Meghalaya CM Conrad K Sangma inaugurates the new Jengia Police Station building in West Garo Hills

Sri Chaitanya Academy marks 51st test prep centre

Sri Chaitanya Academy – an Infinity Learn initiative, focussed on delivering outcome-based learning at scale, has proudly announced the launch of its 51st Test Prep Centre, marking its 1st Centre in the city of Noida.

With this expansion, the Institution brings its proven academic model, experienced faculty and integrated test-preparation approach to students in the NCR region. Ujjwal Singh, Founding CEO of Infinity Learn by Chaitanya, added," We are excited to bring Chaitanya's proven pedagogy to learners in Noida.

Personalised guidance, cutting-edge technology and a focus on conceptual clarity are at the core of our educational model, driven by our motto, 'Baccha Seekha

Establishing our first Academy in Noida represents an important step in our mission of shaping future-ready learners across the country.

NHAI publishes updates on bidding for 55 projects

State-owned NHAI published details of 55 National Highways projects, spanning around 2,269 km with a combined capital cost of ₹1,19,359 crore for which bids have been invited on its website, an official statement said on Monday. The statement further said by proactively disclosing this information on the public platform to bidders and other stakeholders, NHAI aims to promote transparency in its project award process that will include public disclosure of approval and clearance related details. This initiative will ensure a level-playing field for all bidders and will help to enhance public private partnerships, more clarity in processes as well as lesser disputes and litigation, it added.

According to the statement, the project information will be updated every two weeks on the NHAI website, sharing approval and clearance details publicly. The information will help establish clear status of the project, leading to a realistic bidding and timely awarding of the projects, the statement said. It will also provide real-time access to upcoming opportunities and information on projects where bids have been invited, encouraging broader participation from the contractors and developers.

IRFC to set up India's first SCOT lab with precision healthcare

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE New Delhi

Institute Technology,Madras and Indian Railways Finance Corporation (IRFC) have set up country's first Single Cell Omics Translational (SCOT) research laboratory, officials said on Monday.

Equipped with state-of-theart instrumentation, the SCOT lab will facilitate early diagnosis, disease prognosis, biomarker discovery and drug screening across a spectrum of diseases — including cancer, cardiovascular, infectious, inflammatory, metabolic and other non-communicable diseases, they said.

IRFC is providing a CSR grant of ₹10.83 crore to establish this lab, which will be located in the Department of Medical Sciences and Technology (DMST) at IIT Madras. The facility is designed to accelerate research in single-cell biology, drug discovery, biomarker identification and



translational healthcare innovation. "Our collaboration with IRFC marks an important milestone in accelerating India's journey in drug discovery and precision medicine.

The state-of-the-art SCOT Research Laboratory will greatly enhance our ability to develop solutions for India's capabilities in early diagnostics, targeted therapeutics and next-generation health-

care innovation," IIT Madras Director V Kamakoti said.

Looking forward to highimpact outcomes from the lab, Usha Venugopal, Member (Finance), Ministry of Railways, said the inauguration of the SCOT Research Lab is a welcome step towards building stronger capabilities in medical research.

"The support extended through IRFC's CSR funding

better therapies.

will aid studies that have the potential to improve early diagnosis and develop

This collaboration shows how institutions can work together for larger national goals. I am hopeful that the facility will contribute to knowledge, innovation and better health outcomes in the years ahead," Venugopal said.

> policymakers to consider excess holdings of Government securities and state development loans as infrastructure and housing investments, pointing out that Governments deploy the funds for the same purpose. At present, insurance companies have been able to take their investments in housing and infrastructure to just over 9 per cent as against the 15 per cent mandate, he said.

from GST to enable insurers claim ITC' premium of over ₹5 lakh.

'Exempt life insurance

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE Mumbai

LIC Managing Director Ratnakar Patnaik on Monday pitched for exempting life insurance sector from Goods and Services Tax as it would help insurers claim input tax credit. Patnaik also welcomed

the Government's decision to eliminate the Goods and Services Tax (GST) on all individual life and health insurance premiums, effective September 22, 2025. "My small request will be...It is zero taxation. Can it be GST exempt? That will help us to have some input tax credit (ITC) in place," Patnaik said, while speaking at CII Financing Summit here. In August, the GST Council resolved to cut GST to zero without putting it under the GST exempt category. Under the latter, companies like LIC can benefit by way of saving on operational costs through benefits on the ITC front.

Patnaik also appealed

He also appealed to the Government for a review into the three-year-old policy of taxing maturity proceeds for policies with "Is it time to upgrade or

revise upwards to up to Rs 10 lakh, the maturity proceeds should be tax free, so that we can get some good policies and mop up good funds," he said.

He affirmed LIC's support for investing in developmental purposes for the country through investments in corporate bonds and government securities.

Meanwhile, speaking at the same event, NSE's managing director and chief executive Ashishkumar Chauhan said the rules Governing foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) have become too tough over the vears and India is making such investors uncomfortable with the amount of information being sought.

"The amount of information we ask for is very very intrusive. Many of them do not want to give that information. And so, they are staying away," Chauhan said. He also said that "we need to standardise the way to look at market volumes and shirk the tendency to present data in such a way that India is seen as the largest

or biggest.' "We think we are the largest market in derivatives, (but) we are by far not," he said, adding that on premium terms, trading on stock options in the US alone is five-times more than India every month and sometimes the single scrip of Tesla does more.

"Once we have the right statistics, we will have the right policy coming out,"



LIC managing director Ratnakar Patnaik



Sankardey's iconic Vrindayani Vastra to Assam

REC Shines at 7th edition of **Future of Legal and Compliance Summit** and Awards 2025

PIONEER NEWS SERVICER New Delhi

REC Limited, a Maharatna Public Sector Enterprise under the Ministry of Power and a leading NBFC, proudly emerged as a front-runner in legal and compliance excellence at the prestigious 7th Edition of the Future of Legal and Compliance Summit and Awards 2025, held on November 14,2025.

Demonstrating its unwavering commitment to innovation and excellence in a progressive, tech-driven environment, REC secured top honours in three distinguished categories:



 Best Legal Technology Implementation of the Year. · Compliance Innovation of

• Compliance Team of the Year.

The accolades were received by REC's representatives, Dinesh Kaushik (GM), Rajeshwar Valaboju (DGM) and Chander Mohan Sharma (DGM), who accepted the awards on behalf of the organisation.

These recognitions further strengthen REC's position as a thought leader in the legal and compliance domain, as the organisation continues to set new industry benchmarks through technology integration, strategic innovation and robust Governance frameworks.

Assam's promise: Government tribute and healing efforts for Zubeen Da



HIMADREE CHUTIA

My musical journey across genres continues every day, but today the melody carries a quieter note. Life after Zubeen Da, a man far more than a pop star to Assam, feels different and many of us are still learning to navigate that silence. His songs lived in weddings, protests, Bihu nights, heartbreaks and moments of healing, even in the familiar crackle of an old family radio.

His passing has touched people of all ages: children sensing the change, teenagers sharing memories online, adults revisiting the comfort his music once brought, and elders mourning a cultural anchor.

A Cultural Wave That Continues

Zubeen Da's passing abroad triggered a landslide of emotion at home: thousands on the streets, candlelit vigils, playlists on loop and heartfelt tributes. For many, his music wasn't just something to listen to; it was something to live with. Losing him feels like losing a part of ourselves. The release of Roi Roi Binale, his final movie, on October 31 added another layer of emotion. The film broke box — office records, with pre-dawn screenings from 4:25 am in Guwahati. Theatres became spaces of reflection and mourning, where audiences, family, friends and colleagues watched him alive, expressive and effortless on screen.

Grief and celebration intertwined as people wept, laughed and at times shouted "Joi Zubeen Da!", a tribute to the joy and talent he shared with generations. I have yet to watch it myself; it seems it will take courage, knowing how my loved ones and colleagues have flocked to theatres every day since its release.

Tributes and Blood-Donation Drive

Preparations for what would have been his 53rd birthday on November 18 have further united Assam. The



Chief Minister, Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma announced a large-scale blooddonation drive, with camps at 53 locations across the state to symbolise Zubeen Garg's age.

Members of the BJP, AGP, BPF and UPPL will participate, alongside ministers joining in their districts. These initiatives, along with tribute programmes and memorial events, aspire to celebrate his life while bringing communities together.

From Sorrow to Alarm: Mental-**Health Concerns**

Since Zubeen Da's passing, worrying patterns have emerged: extreme reactions among devoted fans, at least one attempted suicide, rumours and a fake post-mortem report circulating widely, which was immediately fact-checked by Assam Police and nonstop news cycles reopening emotional wounds. Experts warn that sudden loss can trigger anxiety, depressive symptoms, panic attacks, insomnia and unhealthy grief.

Children, teens and adults are vulnerable: children sense tension without fully understanding it; teens and young adults, tied emotionally to icons, are overwhelmed by heavy online mourning; adults and older listeners relive personal losses Zubeen Da's music once soothed. Those already struggling with mental-health vulnerabilities are at particular risk. Schools, colleges, local authorities and community groups are encouraged to provide safe spaces, structured gatherings and music-sharing circles.

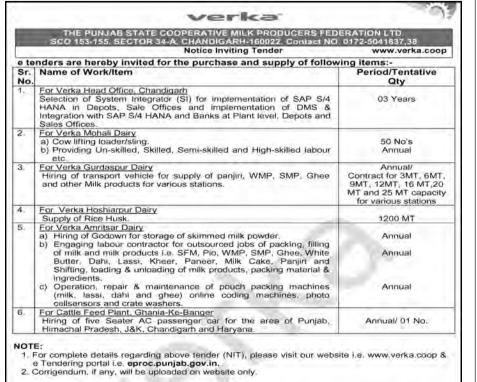
Families are urged to watch for signs of distress and seek professional help if needed.

A Promise from the State

In the aftermath, the Chief Minister announced measures balancing tribute and accountability. Assam observed three days of mourning and Zubeen Da's mortal remains were placed at Arjun Bhogeswar Baruah Sports Complex for public homage. A second autopsy was ordered, a Special Investigation Team formed and a judicial commission set up. The Government declared a holiday in Kamrup (Metro) and blacklisted the festival organiser linked to events preceding his final days. A permanent memorial, Zubeen Kshetra, is being developed on a 10-bigha plot in Sonapur with guidance from his family and cultural representatives.

The state has pledged its GST share from Roi RoiBinale to the Kalaguru Artiste Foundation to help flood victims, support medical treatment of artistes and assist needy students. Through tribute, transparency, and community care, Assam honours Zubeen Da while supporting healing, ensuring his legacy inspires generations to come. The music may have paused, but Assam's collective responsibility to care, remember and celebrate the life of a cultural icon has only just begun.

Writer is J.I.O., Directorate of Information and attached as PRO to the Chief Secretary



General Manager (Purchase)

1018/12/2025-26/5055

Assembly Speaker Thomas A. Sangma Inaugurates Meghalaya Pavilion at IITF 2025 in New Delhi

BRIEFLY

INDIA NEEDS GOOD COACHES OF FOOTBALL: LOTHAR



Only best coaches can produce good football players and India will need to bring in legends and former players of the game to train their coaches, says German football legend Lothar Matthaus.

Matthaus said India, the world's most populated country, cannot be in a situation where it does not play in the football World Cup while smaller countries like Cape Verde make it to the global event.

"You get good footballers only when they learn from the best coaches. India needs good coaches to produce better footballers," Matthaus, a member of Germany's 1990 World Cup-winning team, told the media here on Sunday. "A good teacher makes a good student. And when you have a bad teacher, or a bad professor, you don't get good students. To start, you bring the legends, ex-players and reputed coaches to India to teach your coaches. Then these coaches can help the new generation of players. You have to start this at the school level." Matthaus cited the example of Cape Verde, which will play in next year's World Cup despite having only a million people as their population.

PAIGE GRECO, PARALYMPIC **GOLD MEDALIST, DIES AT 28**



Australian cyclist Paige Greco, a Paralympic gold medalist, has died. She was 28.

A joint statement by the Australian Paralympic Committee and Australian cycling federation said that Greco "passed away in her Adelaide home after experiencing a sudden medical episode" on Sunday. "Paige meant everything to us," her mother Natalie Greco said." Her kindness, her determination and her warmth touched our family every single day. She brought so much joy and pride into our lives, and the pain of her passing is something we will carry forever. "While we are devastated by her loss, we are incredibly proud of the person she was and the way she represented Australia."

Lad, Thakur shines as Mumbai dominate in Ranji

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Siddhesh Lad's career-best 170 and skipper Shardul Thakur's three-wicket burst underlined Mumbai's domination as the hosts reduced Pondicherry to 43 for 4 after piling up 630/5 declared on Day Two of their Ranji Trophy Elite Group D clash on Monday.

Thakur struck twice in first three balls and returned 3/17, following up on a minute-amile fifty earlier in the day as his side left Pondicherry staring at a mountain to climb. The visitors are trailing by 587 runs in the first

Thakur cleaned up Neyan Kangayan (0) in the first ball of the innings and trapped Paras Ratnaparkhe (0) in the third, while having Anand Singh Bais (5) caught behind in a fiery spell with the new ball on a flat wicket here at the Wankhede Stadium.

Earlier, Lad struck his 13th first-class hundred, his third of the season and second on the trot to make 170 off 285 balls with 19 fours and four sixes as Mumbai made merry on a batting-friendly pitch Pondicherry attack.

Akash Anand (107 not out) notched up his third FC ton in nine matches, but India batter Sarfaraz Khan missed out, falling for a 113-ball 67 (6x4s, 1x6s). Thakur smacked a characteristic 32-ball 56 with four sixes and three fours before retiring hurt. While putting on 160 runs for the fourth wicket with fifty-run mark like batters do

Sarfaraz, Lad was in his elements, scoring runs on both sides of the wickets. Hitting

two sixes each over long-on

and long-off, he also pierced

gaps at will to carve out a

flawless innings. Lad consolidated Mumbai's hold on the game as he added another 110 runs for the fifth wicket with Anand against an exhausted Pondicherry attack, who had each of their five bowlers including skipper Sagar Udeshi giving away more than 100 runs.

Sarfaraz took off his helmet and celebrated crossing the

after making tons, but poked on one outside off to be caught behind, having batted well for his maiden halfcentury of the season.

Mumbai did not take the foot off the pedal as Anand and Thakur then tore apart a tiring Pondicherry attack, adding 100 runs off only 68 balls in their bid to bat out the rivals.

Thakur was severe on anything short and wide while smacking powerful sixes on the leg side. Anand cracked eight fours to make 107 not out off 122 balls.

bowlers provided they were able to make the effort, while praising Pondicherry spinners for their efforts.

"There is enough help for everyone, for pacers and even for spinners. If you bat well, you have value for strokes also. It's a wicket where if you bend your back as a bowler, you have help throughout the day. That is what we aim to do," he told media.

In Jammu, hosts Jammu and Kashmir took complete control of the clash against Hyderabad by extending their overall lead to 324 runs.

Anand said there is enough in the Wankhede track for the stumps were drawn with Yadav (130) and Kunal Singh Rathore (102) hit triple figure

570/7 declared against Delhi. Delhi were 8 for no loss when stumps were drawn, trailing by a massive 562 runs.

At the Amtar Cricket Ground in Nadaun, Himachal Pradesh were 37/1 after Chhattisgarh declared their first innings at a massive score of 585 for six, following centuries from Anuj Tiwary (162), Amandeep Khare (101 not out), Mayank Verma (112) and Sanjeet Desai's 84.

Brief Scores:

At Mumbai: 630/5 in 147 overs (Musheer Khan 84, Akhil Herwadkar 86, Siddhesh Lad 170, Sarfaraz Khan 67, Akash Anand 107 not out, Shardul Thakur 56 retd hurt; Sabhay Chadha 2/146) lead Pondicherry 43/4 in 12 overs (Mohit Kale 13 not out; Shardul Thakur 3/17, Tushar Deshpande 1/7) by 587 runs.

At Jammu: Jammu and Kashmir 170 & 275/4 in 71 overs (Qamran Iqbal 50, Abdul Samad Samad 77 not out, Kanhaiya Wadhawan 82 not out; Rakshan Readdi 2/56) lead Hyderabad 121 by 324 runs.

At Rajsamand: Rajasthan 570/7d in 161 overs (Sachin Yadav 130, Kunal Singh Rathore 102, Mahipal Lomror , Kartik Sharma 120; Simarjeet Singh 3/81) lead Delhi 8/0 in 4 overs by 562 runs.

At Nadaun: Chhattisgarh 585/6d in 158 overs (Ayush Pandey 59, Anuj Tiwary 162, Sanjeet Desai 84, Mayank Verma 112; Mayank Dagar 2/124) lead Himachal Pradesh 37/1 in 11 overs by 548 runs.

India finishes third in shooting championships

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Olympian Gurpreet Singh came agonisingly close to becoming the world champion in men's 25m Centre Fire Pistol event but eventually got a silver after losing on inner 10s to Ukraine's Pavlo Korostylov at the Olympic Shooting Range

This was Gurpreet's second individual medal in the World Championships. the first also being a silver won back in 2018 at Changwon in the 25m Standard Pistol event. Yann Pierre Louis Fridrici of France won the bronze here.

total of 13 medals, including three gold, six silver and four

bronze behind China. The Chinese team mustered 12 gold, seven silver and two

South Korea secured seven gold, three silver and four bronze medals to end third in the overall stand-

Gurpreet shot a total of 584-18x over two days of competition in the precision and rapid stages, while Korostylov shot 29 inner 10s and a perfect score of 100 in the final rapid round to edge away with the gold

The Indian shooter, who was placed ninth after the precision stage with a score of 288-8x (95,97,96), bounced India thus ended their back on the second day to World Championship cam-shoot a brilliant score of 296paign in third place with a 10x (98,99,99) in the rapid stage to clinch the silver

Reddy's maiden ton boosts Andhra against Jharkhand

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Jamshedpur

Opener Abhishek Reddy weathered a potent Jharkhand bowling attack by scoring a timely unbeaten century as Andhra made a strong bid to overhaul the hosts' first-innings total on day two of the Ranji Tropy Group A match on Monday.

Iharkhand, whose innings folded up at 328 in 112.3 overs early during the day, saw themselves sweating and grimacing at stumps after 31-year-old Reddy struck his maiden century (103 not out off 156 balls) to guide Andhra to 224 for 2.

Andhra need just 104 runs to take the first-innings lead Nadu this season, came up umphant on the back of



with eight wickets still intact. Reddy, who has struck back-to-back half-centuries against Odisha and Tamil

with a valuable century knock just when his team needed stability at the top against a side that has emerged tri-

opener Qamran Igbal

(50), Abdul Samad (77 not

out) and Kanhaiya Wadhwan

(82 not out) hitting their half-

on the first day where 16

wickets fell, J&K produced a

tidy effort with the bat to gain

complete control of the

game against Hyderabad

who have not lost a game so

Hosts Rajasthan were bol-

stered by centuries from

Mahipal Lomror (128 not out)

and Kartik Sharma (120) on

the second day after Sachin

Having taken 49-run lead

centuries.

far this season.

some brilliant bowling from Sahil Raj and Rishi Raj. Reddy, who started his

domestic career with Karnataka way back in 2015, took almost a decade to score his maiden century.

He shared a 94-run stand for the opening wicket with India Test keeper-batter Srikar Bharat (51) before batting stoutly with Shaik Rasheed (58) for a 122-run stand for the second wicket to put Andhra in a strong position.

Relying heavily on his ground strokes, Reddy struck 11 boundaries and just one maximum as Andhra made a strong bid to dislodge Jharkhand from the No.2 spot on the points table.

Sinner beats Alcaraz to retain ATP Finals title before his home fans

ASSOCIATED PRESS

The final installment of the "Sincaraz" rivalry for 2025 went to Jannik Sinner.

The second-ranked Sinner beat top-ranked Carlos Alcaraz 7-6 (4), 7-5 for the ATP Finals trophy on Sunday in the sixth meeting this year between the two players who are dominating men's tennis.

Sinner defended the title before his home Italian fans for only his second victory over Alcaraz this year after also beating the Spaniard in the Wimbledon final.

"It was an incredible season," Sinner said. "To finish it this way, before my Italian fans, is very special for me.' Alcaraz had already

secured the year-ending No. 1 ranking and was contesting his first final at the event for the year's top eight players.

Alcaraz still leads his career meetings with Sinner, 10-6.

Sinner and Alcaraz have met in the last three Grand Slam finals. Alcaraz beat Sinner in a fifth-set tiebreaker to win the French Open; Sinner gained a measure of revenge at Wimbledon; then Alcaraz again came out on

top at the U.S. Open. They also clashed this vear in the Italian Open final (won by Alcaraz) and the Cincinnati Open final (won



by Alcaraz when Sinner retired due to illness).

"I hope you are going to be ready for next year because I will be ready to hopefully play more finals against you," Alcaraz said during the trophy ceremony.

To which Sinner added that he hopes they have "great, great battles ahead of us.' Sinner also won the

Australian Open — beating Alexander Zverev in the final so he and Alcaraz each won two majors this year. In all, Alcaraz has won

six majors and Sinner has St. SinnerAlready early in

the first set, the pro-Sinner crowd chanted its customary "Ole, Ole, Ole, Ole; Sin-ner, Sin-ner."

One fan even held up an

image of Sinner depicted as a saint.

Sinner saved a set point at 5-6 in the tight first set with a big second serve that Alcaraz couldn't return. Then the Italian took control of the tiebreaker by running down a drop shot and responding with a lob that led to an overhead put

"I'm extremely happy with how I handled the situation," Sinner said of saving the set point.

Added Alcaraz, "He came up with a second serve 185-190 kph (115-118 mph) that surprised me.'

Alcaraz's thighAlcaraz had his right thigh treated by a trainer on two occasions and got it wrapped after

the first set.

much, to be honest, because I could run well," Alcaraz said. Alcaraz broke Sinner's serve in the opening game of the second set but Sinner then evened it at 3-3.

Sinner then got the crowd going again in the next game when he won a long rally and held his finger to his ear — signaling for more noise inside the Inalpi Arena.

Sinner broke Alcaraz again to close it out when the Spaniard missed a backhand wide - then fell down to the court on his back in relief.

"It was a huge emotion," said Sinner, who was banned for three months earlier in the year after settling a doping case.

Alcaraz led 28-25 in winners but also had more unforced errors, 26-24.

Sinner said he wanted to improve his serve after the loss to Alcaraz at the US Open and he led 8-5 in aces but also had five double-faults to Alcaraz's none.

It was Sinner's 10th straight win at the finals stretching back to his loss to Novak Djokovic in the 2023 final. What's more is that Sinner hasn't lost a set in that stretch.

Sinner also extended his winning streak on indoor hard courts to 31 matches.

In the doubles final, Harri Heliovaara and Henry Patten beat Joe Salisbury "Didn't affect me too and Neal Skupski 7-5, 6-3."











. POWER GENERATION COMPANIES (IPP & CPP) **IRON & STEEL INDUSTRIES**

MSMES

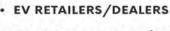
HOTELS

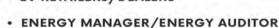
 IT INDUSTRIES COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

DOMESTIC PROSUMERS HOSPITALS

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS







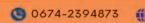
EV CHARGING STATION

PM SURYA GHAR VENDORS

ARCHITECTURAL FIRMS AND GREEN BUILDING / ECBC CONSULTANTS

ENERGY DEPARTMENT

OFFICE OF THE ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF (ELECTRICITY)-CUM-PRINCIPAL CHIEF ELECTRICAL INSPECTOR (ODISHA) POWER HOUSE SQUARE, UNIT-V, BHUBANESWAR TEL. NO.0674-2394873, FAX: 2391255/ 2391024





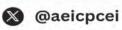


SCAN TO DOWNLOAD FORMS

FORMS ARE AVAILABLE ON

OUR OFFICIAL WEBSITE

LAST DATE OF SUBMISSION 30/11/2025



The Dioneer Dioneer BHUBANESWAR | TUESDAY | NOVEMBER 18, 2025

Eden turner highlights Gill-Gambhir disconnect

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

The pitch row triggered by India's embarrassing 30-run loss to South Africa while chasing a modest 124 has also opened up a larger question — are young skipper Shubman Gill and coach Gautam Gambhir on the same page on what construes ideal home conditions? The collapse, India's lowest failed chase at home, has left behind deeper fault lines than a dry Eden Gardens wicket can conceal.

lust a month ago, on the eve of the West Indies Test series in Ahmedabad, Gill had been emphatic that the team has moved away from the philosophy of preferring "rank turners"

"...We would be looking to play on wickets that offer both to the batsmen and to the bowlers," Gill had said, outlining a vision of balanced surfaces.

Yet India walked into the series against the reigning World Test champions on a pitch that was the exact opposite of what their captain advocated.

The Eden strip was left unwatered for more than a week and was kept under cover in the evening. The result was a dry, flaky surface that disintegrated from session one in a match that lasted barely eight sessions, producing 38 wickets, with spinners taking 22 and pacers 16. If the team had moved away from rank turners, Eden suggested the opposite. Gambhir was unapologetic and had no qualms declaring that the pitch was exactly what the



Shubman Gill and coach Gautam Gambhir

team management wanted. "If you don't play well this is what happens. There were no demons in the

wicket," he asserted. Ask Aiden Markram, who was undone by a ball from Jasprit Bumrah that leapt from the off-stump line in the first hour of the opening day, or KL Rahul, who was bamboozled by a Marco Jansen delivery that reared up sharply in the fourth innings — and they would disagree.

Gambhir insisted seamers were the ones doing the

won this Test match, you wouldn't even be talking about this pitch," he said in his usual combative style.

The messaging gap, however, is evident. Gill had asked for balance. The coach wanted exactly what transpired. The captain didn't even get to play owing to neck spasms that needed hospitalisation, putting him in doubt for the second Test in Guwahati from November

Gill took no part beyond day 1 owing to the neck spasm sustained while playing a slog-sweep bound-"Ultimately, if we had ary off Simon Harmer. In his

absence, Indian batting displayed neither discipline nor adaptability.

India have now lost four of their last six Tests at home - a trend that has shred the aura of invincibility that the team enjoyed in its backyard.

Under Gambhir, India have eight wins from 18 Tests — four of them have come against lowly Bangladesh and West Indies.

The script here resembled India's 0-3 humiliation against New Zealand at home last year, a series in which Ajaz Patel (11 in Mumbai), Mitchell Santner quent. Historically rich in the WTC campaign now.

(13 in Pune) exposed the side's frailties on turning tracks. That series derailed World Test Championship run, and the Eden defeat now sits in the same bracket. This loss also flipped India's WTC standings. South Africa climbed to third with two wins in three; India dropped to fourth with

in the new cycle. From the moment India landed in Kolkata on Tuesday, the focus was obsessively on the pitch. Meetings with curator Sujan Mukherjee became fre-

just two wins in eight Tests

ing the iconic 2001 Laxman-Dravid miracle - Eden hosted a surface that drew even Harbhajan Singh's ire.

"They have completely destroyed Test cricket. RIP Test cricket," Harbhajan

Cheteshwar Pujara dismissed talk of transition as excuse-making.

"Losing at home cannot be accepted, transition or not," he said.

India had the Test in their pocket at stumps on day two. South Africa were 93/7, effectively 63 ahead, with Temba Bavuma on 29 (78 balls) and debutant Corbin Bosch on 1.

Conditions on a Kolkata morning typically favour seam with cool breeze from the Ganges. Common sense demanded that Bumrah start at the Club House End, where he took a first-innings five-for.

Instead, he was introduced as late as the ninth over from the other end and by then Bosch looked settled. Bayuma had grown roots, and the lead stretched past the psychological 100run mark.

Indian batting implosion It mirrors tactical confusion, and over-curated pitches, without batting depth to sustain it.

After Guwahati — where they now cannot win the series regardless of result -India will not play at home till the Border-Gavaskar Trophy in January 2027.

Before that, they tour Sri Lanka (August) and New Zealand (October next year) and their task is cut out in

Split captaincy wise amid pressure on Gill: Mukund



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA New Delhi

Former India opener Abhinav Mukund believes the pressure on Shubman Gill has reached a critical point as he called for split captaincy in the wake of India's opening Test defeat to South Africa.

With Gill absent in the second innings due to neck spasm. India were bowled out for 93 in their chase of 124. South Africa sealed a 30run win inside three days for their first Test victory in India in 15 years.

"At home, everyone expects India to win - no questions asked," Mukund said on The Great Indian Show Cricket Doordarshan.

Gill suffered the spasm during a slog sweep in the first innings and retired hurt on four as his absence compounded India's batting woes. Gill's workload has also become a topic of

Immediately after leading India to a 2-0 Test series sweep over West Indies at home, Gill flew to Australia to captain the ODI side, also featuring in the T20Is before returning to lead India in the opening Test just four days after the Brisbane T201.

He has been playing nonstop cricket across formats since the IPL and then he was made the Test skipper and led India to a remarkable 2-2 draw in England in a five-match gruelling series.

"I think Shubman has it in him to become an all-format captain, but I don't think India should have an allformat captain anymore," said Mukund, who has played seven Tests.

"Split captaincy is a smart move. Shubman Gill has been given the responsibility to take on the mantle in Tests and he will be under big pressure."

'This is a crucial series," he noted, "and the England series was a big confidence

ANUYA PRASAD, PRANJALI SEAL

AIR PISTOL GOLD

Young Anuya Prasad gave

herself a birthday present while

Pranjali Prashant Dhumal

added to India's joy as the duo

completed a 1-2 finish in the

women's 10m air pistol event

at the Deaflympics, in Tokyo on

Anuya clinched the gold

medal in style, breaking the

Deaf Final World Record

(DFWR) enroute to winning

the top-podium spot, while

Pranjali broke the Qualification

World Record (QWR) on way to

securing a place in the finals. In

men's 10m air pistol, Abhinav

Deshwal, who equalled the

Qualification World Record,

won silver to take India's medal

tally in shooting to seven after

On Sunday, 23-year-old

Dhanush Srikanth, who trains

at Olympian Gagan Narang's

two days of competition.

AND SILVER AT

DEAFLYMPICS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi

Something is wrong if a strong squad is losing at home: Pujara

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA New Delhi

Former India Test batter Cheteshwar Pujara has strongly rejected the notion that India's crushing defeat to South Africa in the first Test at Eden Gardens can be blamed to a transition

Pujara contended that while overseas losses during a rebuilding period can be understood, losing at home — especially with a squad that includes proven first-class performers — is unacceptable.

such as Yashasvi Jaiswal, KL Rahul, Washington Sundar and Shubman Gill as evidence of India's depth and potential in the longer

"I don't agree with the view that India's defeat at home can be attributed to a transitional phase. While it's understandable to face setbacks abroad during a transition period, the current Indian side pos-



sesses ample talent and strong first-class records -- players like Yashasvi Jaiswal, KL Rahul, Washington Sundar, and Shubman Gill have all proven themselves," Pujara told Jio Hotstar.

"If the team is losing in home conditions despite this, it suggests that something else is wrong. Had this match been played on a good pitch, India's chances of winning would've been much higher.'

While India head coach

Gautam Gambhir did not find any fault with the pitch where wickets fell in heap, Pujara said such tracks are not good for India.

"The nature of such wickets reduces our winning percentage and brings the opposition on a level footing. Even an India A team, given the depth of talent, could challenge South Africa at home. So it's not lack of ability. Therefore, blaming transition for this defeat in India isn't justifiable," he said.

No matter who sits out, SA still wins: Rabada

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

South African pacer Kagiso Rabada, who missed the first Test against India here due to a rib injury, is in awe of his team's ability to rebound from setbacks and find a way to win" no matter who is left out.

The reigning World Test Championship winners completed a 30-run win inside three days over India in the opening Test here defending a modest 123 on Sunday. The win, which was their first on Indian soil in 15 vears, gave them an unassailable 1-0 lead in the twomatch series.

"No matter who sits out, we can still find a way to win. (Skipper) Temba (Bavuma) has been crucial for us, but he hasn't played every game. I haven't played this game," Rabada said in a video shared by Cricket South Africa.

Bavuma returned to the playing XI after missing their preceding two Tests in Pakistan, where South Africa bounced back to draw the

"That doesn't matter. Whoever is gonna get out on the field, we believe that they can do the job," Rabada said. The visitors outplayed the

hosts on a dry wicket here with variable bounce and turn. Rabada hailed South Africa's individual performances, including skipper Bavuma's match-winning 55 in the second innings that gave the travelling bowlers something to fight for. "We had a good start in

the first innings with Aiden (Markram) and (Ryan) Rickelton. They set the tone. Marco (Jansen) stood up, Boschi (Corbin Bosch) stood up at crucial times. Everyone chipped in and really, that's the hallmark of what this team is made of," Rabada said.

It remains to be seen if Rabada, who had to undergo multiple scans in the lead-up to the first Test, would be available for the second Test to be played in Guwahati from November

Rabada said the victory in a low-scoring thriller at Kolkata would rank among just the ebbs and flows of



the top three wins for South Africa this season.

"(The victory is) definitely right up there. With the types of wins that we've had this season, it's hard to say, because we've had some pretty epic wins, but this one is definitely (in the) top three," he said.

the game. We found ourselves on the back foot, and then somehow managed to finish on the front foot.

"It was quite nerve-wracking on the side, and I'm just itching to want to get out. I don't know what to say. It's just. It's just, like, an emotional roller coaster, and I'm glad that we finished on the right side," Rabada

'That was typical Test cricket (contest)... I mean,

added.

shooting academy in Hyderabad, had won the 10m air rifle gold. Anuya shot 564 in the qualification round to enter the eight-shooter final placed third, while Pranjali broke the QWR with a brilliant score of 572 to top the preliminary round.

Pat to captain SRH for FIDE World Cup: Arjun draws easy with black pieces third straight IPL season rosy everyday. The PRESS TRUST OF INDIA in the middle game. remaining match Samuel IN THE ONLY OTHER When Wei Yi returned the



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Hyderabad

Australia's premier fast bowler Pat Cummins was on Monday appointed as captain of Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) for third consecutive IPL season.

SRH confirmed Cummins role as leader on its 'X' handle with his pictures without divulging details.

Cummins has officially been ruled out of the first Ashes Test in Perth due to his back injury but he is expected to be ready for the second match in Brisbane. Steven Smith will captain Australia in the opening Test against England which begins on November 21. The second Test in Brisbane begins on December 4.

Cummins took over SRH's captaincy from South African Aiden Markram in 2024 after he was bought by the franchise for a whopping ₹20.50 crore in the 2024 IPL players auction following Australia's success in the World Test Championship and the 2023 50-over World Cup.

Cummins had earlier played for Kolkata Knight Riders and Delhi Capitals in

Panaji (Goa)

Seeking to qualify for the Candidates' event, India's top-rated Arjun Erigaisi walked off with an easy draw with his Chinese counterpart Wei Yi in the first game of the quarterfinals on On what turned out to be

an easy day for Arjun,

Alexander Donchenko finally

realised about things being

German had been on a

dream run which is likely to end now as Nodirbek Yakubboev won an exciting game one with white pieces. If Yakubboev is able to hold the German in the next game to a draw he will be through to the semifinal. For Arjun the opening was

important and it did not pose

any issues. The young Indian

generation is re-writing the

theoretical aspects of the

REMAINING MATCH SAMUEL SHANKLAND OF UNITED STATES ALSO PLAYED OUT A DRAW WITH RUSSIAN ANDREY ESIPENKO

game and Arjun is no exception. As it turned out of a routine Ruy Lopez theory, Arjun equalised with a thematic pawn sacrifice earlier

favour the position was already dead-equal and the players shook hands to split the point in a mere 31 moves. lavokhir Sindarov of

Uzbekistan played out a draw with Jose Eduaordo Martinez Alcantara of Mexico in a well contested game. The Uzbek was never under real threat and could be seen as a potential semifinalist out of this contest. In the only other Shankland of United States also played out a draw with Russian Andrey Esipenko.

Complete results quarterfinals game 1: Javokhir Sindarov (Uzb) drew with Jose Eduardo Martinez Alcantara (Mex); Wei Yi (Chn) drew with Arjun Erigaisi (Ind); Sam Shankland (Usa) drew with Andrey Esipenko (Fid); Nodirbek Yakubboev (Uzb) beat Alexander Donchenko (Ger).

AFFIDAVIT

I, Binayak Prasad Sahu son of late Gobinda Prasad Sahu of village - Chauliasahi, Po-Motiganj, P.S-Town Dist - Balasore, 756 003 declared by this affidavit no 3436, dated 23.10.2025 that now onwards I shall be known BINAYAK PRASAD PRASANNA KUMAR SAHU for all future purposes.

India pins hopes on Satwik, Chirag as Lakshya, Prannoy seek form spots in an otherwise trou-

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Sydney

With India's singles stars still searching for rhythm, the spotlight will once again be on Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty as the top-seeded men's doubles pair eyes its first title of the season at the Australian Open Super 500 starting here on Tuesday.

The Asian Games champi-

ons have been the bright

bled season for Indian badminton, weaving together a Championships bronze and back-to-back runner-up fin-

ishes at the Hong Kong Super 500 and China Masters Super 750. The two, who spent 18 weeks as world No. 1, had slipped to No. 27 in May but fought their way back to No. 3. They will be eager to put together another strong run ahead of the World The Commonwealth

Games champions will open against Chinese Taipei's Chang Ko-Chi and

Bruised by injuries and lean patches but intermittently shining with flashes of brilliance, India's top singles stars, including Lakshya Sen and HS Prannoy, will hope to find the consistent rhythm that has eluded them for much

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (AGRIL.) SOIL CONSERVATION, NORTHERN ZONE, AT/PO-BURLA, SAMBALPUR-768017 e-mail: eenzsc.sambalpur@gmail.com NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement Identification No. 02 /DSC&WD / NZ / 2025-26 Dt. 12.11.2025 ERM and Construction of Non-Residential Buildings Nature of Work Nos. of work Tendered amount in Ra 120 to 210 days Period of completion From 10.00 Hrs. of 19.11.2025 Date & Time of availability of bid document to 17.30 Hrs. of 25.11.2025 in the portal Last date/ time of receipt of original Before 17.30 Hrs. of 29.11.2025 the undersigned Date & Time of opening of bids 11,00 Hrs. of 02.12.2025 onward Executive Engineer (Agril.), Soil Conservation, Northern Zone, Sambalpur, At/Po-Name and Address of the officer inviting bid Burla, Near Planetarium Chowk, Pin-768017 Further details can be seen from the web site www.tendersodisha.gov.in Executive Engineer. (Agril.)