

From resurgence to renaissance: Bihar's march toward a new era

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PIONEER IN SHORT

DATA PROTECTION LAW UNVEILED

The Government of India has unveiled the Digital Personal Data Protection Rules 2025, to be implemented in phases over 12-18 months. The rules aim to empower citizens with greater control over their personal data, protect privacy, and prevent misuse, including spam calls and unauthorised access to digital content. Immediate implementation covers certain provisions, while others—such as registration of consent managers, notices from data fiduciaries, and detailed processing norms—will roll out gradually. A Data Protection Board will oversee compliance and levy penalties for breaches, with fines up to Rs 250 per breach and graded penalties to safeguard small businesses. The rules align with the 2017 Supreme Court judgment recognising privacy as a fundamental right, while also requiring citizens to provide accurate, verifiable information and avoid frivolous complaints. Certain exemptions apply, including legal enforcement, overseas data consent, financial default investigations, and selected government-backed schemes. The framework represents a key step in strengthening digital privacy in India.



NEW US BILL AIMS TO END H1-B

Congresswoman Marjorie Taylor Greene announced plans to introduce a bill aiming to eliminate the H-1B visa program entirely, including its pathway to US citizenship, requiring holders to return to their home countries upon visa expiration. Greene described the program as “fiddled with fraud and abuse” and blamed it for displacing American workers over decades. Her proposed legislation would allow a limited exemption for medical professionals, capping visas at 10,000 per year, which would be phased out over ten years to build a domestic pipeline of doctors and nurses. Greene emphasised restoring the visa’s “temporary” intent, stating foreign workers should eventually return home.

BUMRAH STARS AS SA FALTERS

Jasprit Bumrah's brilliant bowling turned India's bold four-spinner gamble into a stunning display as South Africa were bowled out for 159 on Day 1 of the first Test in Kolkata. Despite a promising 57-run opening stand, South Africa collapsed to 102 for ten in 45 overs, with Bumrah taking 5/27 and Mohammed Siraj adding crucial strikes. Kuldeep Yadav (2/29) and Axar Patel (1/21) contributed key wickets, exploiting the pitch's variable bounce and spin. India ended the day at 37/1, with KL Rahul (13) and Washington Sundar (6)** cautiously reducing the deficit in front of a 36,000-strong crowd.

MY win in Bihar

ASHOKE RAJ ■ Patna/New Delhi

The decisive majority of BJP-JD (U) alliance in the Bihar polls signals a shifting political equation — from the traditional Muslim-Yadav (MY) base to *Mahila*-Youth support.

The result was the culmination of a carefully managed campaign that blended communication, seat distribution and building a voter coalition broader than anything the State has seen in decades.

High enthusiasm among women and first-time voters, combined with a re-energised JD(U), powered the NDA's appeal

PK'S BIG LEAP AND HARD FALL

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Patna

Poll strategist Prashant Kishor's Jan Suraa Party (JSP) failed to open an account in the Bihar Assembly polls, even though it contested all the seats in its debut electoral fray. A majority of the JSP candidates in 238 constituencies also forfeited their security deposit.

Positioned as a revolutionary third alternative to the ruling NDA and the Opposition INDIA bloc, the party, floated by the former political strategist, failed to galvanise votes in its favour, despite a high-pitched campaign and raising pressing issues such as unemployment, migration and dearth of industries.

In many seats, the party's vote count was less than the NOTA (None of the Above) category. Kishor had earlier asserted his party would either be on the top or at the bottom in the seat tally, but that there is no middle ground in the Bihar polls.

The 47-year-old had launched the party, with much fanfare, about a year ago, after a “pada yatra” that saw him marching across the length and breadth of Bihar over several months.



Voters showing their inked finger in Patna in the first phase of polls PTI

around the double-engine leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Nitish Kumar.

Concerns about CM Nitish

Victory against lies and *jungle raj*: PM Modi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday vowed to throw out *jungle raj* from West Bengal and said that just as river Ganga flows to Bengal through Bihar, this victory has cleared the path for the BJP's victory there also. Addressing party workers and

supporters at the BJP headquarters, Modi said the Congress has become *Muslimleegi Maowadi* Congress — MMC and will witness a big split soon.

In a swipe at the top Congress leadership, he said some *naamdars* within the party are drowning everyone with them.

During his address, PM

slogans such as *Bihar ka matlab Nitish Kumar* reinforcing his identity as the State's most experienced administrator.

The JD(U)'s negotiated seat parity with the BJP signalled an equal partnership and boosted confidence among undecided voters. Nitish's long record on infrastructure, welfare expansion and governance beyond caste lines played a crucial role in consolidating swing communities that had drifted in previous cycles.

In contrast to earlier elections marked by friction and last-minute realignments, the NDA went into this contest with one of its cleanest seat-sharing

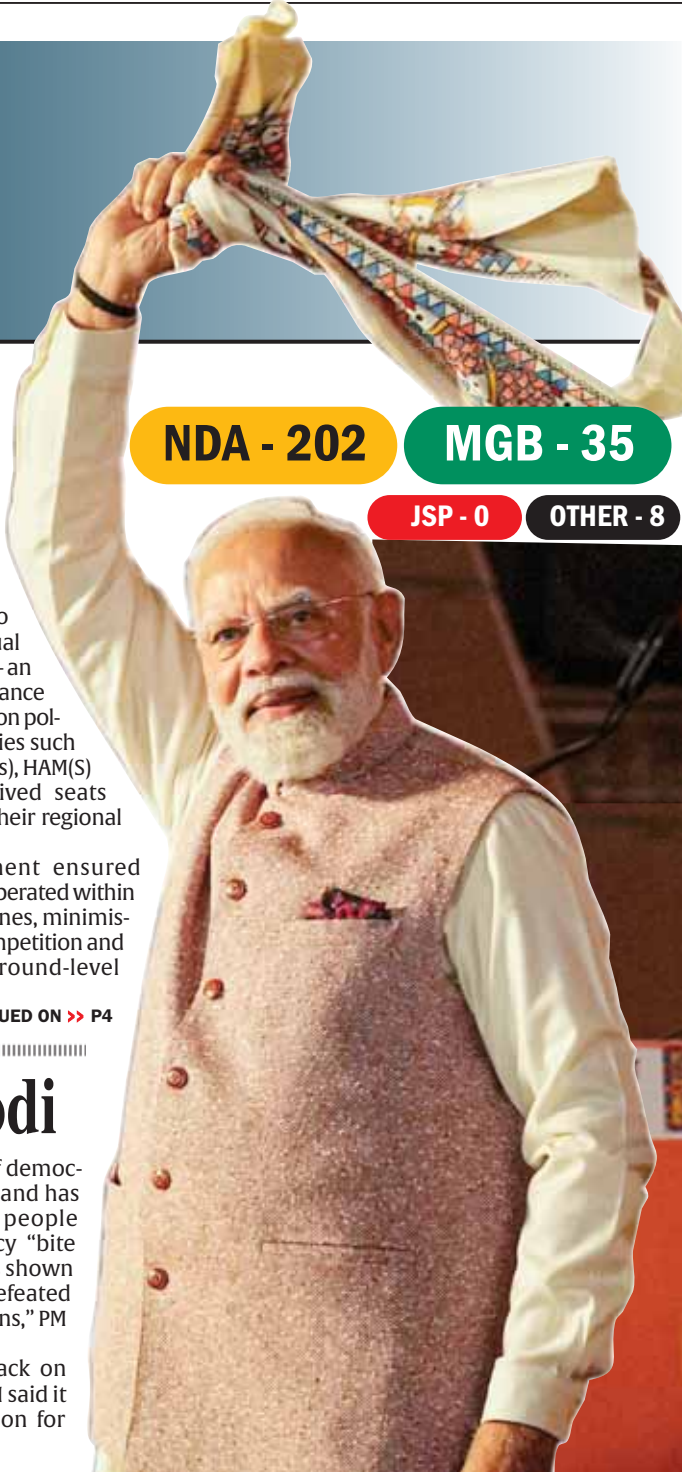
arrangements.

The BJP and JD(U) agreed to contest an equal 101 seats each — an uncommon balance in Bihar's coalition politics — while allies such as LJP (Ram Vilas), HAM(S) and RLM received seats that matched their regional influence.

This alignment ensured every partner operated within its strongest zones, minimising internal competition and maximising ground-level coordination.

CONTINUED ON >> P4

NDA - 202 **MGB - 35**
JSP - 0 **OTHER - 8**



Phoenix soars in Patna

RAJESH KUMAR ■ New Delhi

What was seen as a litmus test of his political relevance instead reaffirmed him as Bihar's Phoenix — a leader repeatedly rising from near — defeat, tested on endurance and trust. For Nitish Kumar, who has governed the State for nearly two decades, this election became a measure of both endurance and trust.

A buoyed Kumar, thanked people of the State for giving a landslide victory. “People of the State have expressed their confidence in our Government by giving us a landslide mandate in the polls. For this, I bow to all the esteemed voters of the State, and express my heart-

felt gratitude and thanks,” Nitish posted on social media. He also thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his continuous support to the NDA government in the state and congratulated other NDA alliance partners Chirag Paswan, Jitan Ram Manjhi and Upendra Kushwaha.

Once celebrated as *Sushashan Babu* for steering Bihar out of what was often called the era of *jungle raj*, Kumar has in recent years faced voter fatigue and criticism over his unpredictable political alliances. Yet, the latest verdict reveals a complex electoral faith that prizes governance and delivery over coalition arithmetic.

CONTINUED ON >> P4

Verdict redraws Bihar's power equations

ABHINAV KUMAR JHA
■ Patna

A wave of decisive mandates, many with margins exceeding 50,000 votes, has strengthened the NDA, especially the BJP and the JD(U), while leaving the RJD to defend shrinking territory and explain significant defeats of top leaders.

In constituency after constituency, NDA leaders and high-profile debutants pulled ahead early and widened their leads. The BJP's most formidable showing came from Samrat Choudhary, Bihar's Deputy Chief Minister and a key OBC face of the party. His sweeping victory in Tarapur, by 45,843 votes, reaffirmed his expanding clout within



NDA supporters celebrating the alliance's victory in Bihar polls PTI

the NDA. With 1,22,480 votes, Choudhary's performance cements his position as one of the most influential leaders shaping the party's trajectory in Bihar.

His colleague and fellow Deputy Chief Minister Vijay

Kumar Sinha added to the party's strength map by winning Lakhisarai with 24,940 votes, backed by a solid 1,22,408 votes polled. Sinha's win signals that his command over the constituency remains intact,

despite the fierce challenge posed by the Opposition.

The BJP paired such senior victories with the rise of compelling new entrants. Maithili Thakur, a cultural icon and first-time candidate, clinched Alinagar by 11,730 votes, showing that the party's strategy of fielding fresh faces resonated powerfully with youth and first-time voters.

In Siwan, Bihar's Health Minister Mangal Pandey delivered one of the RJD's most stinging defeats by ousting Speaker Awadh Bhari Chaudhary by 9,370 votes. Given Chaudhary's long legislative presence, the loss marks a symbolic collapse of the RJD's hold in a sensitive political zone.

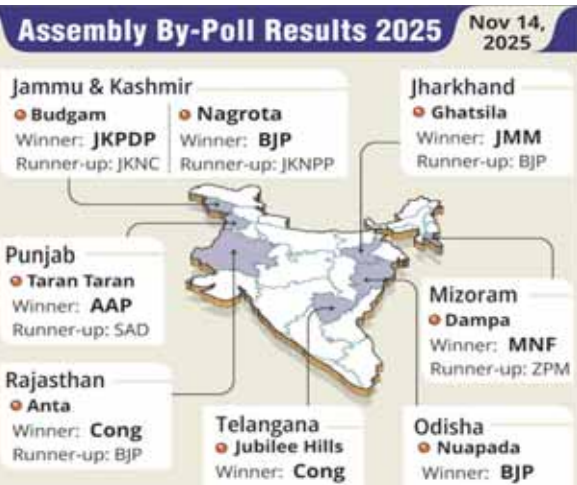
CONTINUED ON >> P4

Bypolls deliver setbacks to ruling parties

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Jaipur/Jammu/Hyderabad

Ruling parties lost four of the eight seats where Assembly bypolls were held with the Congress bagging one seat in BJP-ruled Rajasthan and the PDP handing the National Conference its first ever defeat in its stronghold of Budgam in Jammu and Kashmir.

BJP won the Nagrota seat in J&K and Mizoram's main Opposition party, Mizo National Front (MNF), retained the Dampa



Assembly seat with its candidate R Lalithangliana defeating Vanlalsailova of the ruling Zoram People's Movement by a margin of 562 votes.

Bypolls were also held in Anta (Rajasthan), Ghatsihila (Jharkhand), Jubilee Hills (Telangana), Tarn Taran (Punjab) and Nuapada (Odisha). In Odisha's Nuapada, BJP's Jay Dholakia beat Ghasi Ram Majhi of the Congress by a huge margin of 83,748 votes. Jay is the son of late BJD MLA Rajendra Dholakia, whose death necessitated the bypoll.

CONTINUED ON >> P4

RJD wins votes, loses Bihar polls

RAJESH KUMAR
■ Patna/New Delhi

Tejashwi Yadav-led RJD was routed in the Assembly polls despite securing a higher vote share than both the BJP and JD(U).

Projected as the INDIA bloc's next chief minister, Tejashwi, however, salvaged some pride by retaining his Raghopur seat. Yet, the RJD's defeat shows that voters not only rejected the alliance but also largely dismissed its campaign.

Contesting 143 seats in the 243-member Assembly, the



Lalu Yadav's family posing for pictures after casting their votes PTI

RJD has so far secured a 22.84 per cent vote share — 1.94 percentage points more than

the BJP and 3.91 points more than the JD(U).

CONTINUED ON >> P4

The strategist in the shadows who turned Bihar whispers into a mandate

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA
■ Patna

When Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar appointed Sanjay Kumar Jha as the national working president of JD (U), many within and outside the party questioned the decision. With no dynastic background Jha was seen by critics as a risky choice. Yet, Nitish remained resolute. As the NDA celebrates a resounding win in the 2025 Bihar Assembly elections, Jha's unconventional leadership stands vindicated.

Throughout the campaign, Rajya Sabha MP and now a force to reckon in Bihar politics, Sanjay Jha was subjected to

relentless personal and political attacks. From being branded an agent of the BJP to being accused of plotting a merger of the JD (U) into the saffron party, the Opposition painted him as a usurper.

Jha never took the bait. He remained composed, reiterating his unwavering loyalty to Nitish Kumar and steering clear of personal mudslinging. “Every decision is being taken with the Chief Minister's full consent,” he would calmly assert in interviews, subtly shifting the spotlight back to JD(U)'s collective leadership.

Behind this stoicism was a leader deeply engaged in the nuts and bolts of electioneer-



Sanjay Jha (centre) with Nitish Kumar and Lalan Singh WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

ing. Jha oversaw ticket distribution with an eye not just on caste equations but on local credibility and performance. Bypassing conventional templates, he chose fresh faces and pragmatic alliances that reinvigorated JD(U)'s presence at the grassroots. His strategy focused on showcasing Bihar's two-decade-long development journey under Nitish Kumar and laying out a vision for the next five years - industrial hubs in every district, better job opportunities, and steps to curb outmigration.

Where others got mired in rhetoric, Jha stuck to results. Whether in media debates or on the campaign trail, his

message remained clear: development, not distraction, was the agenda. That disciplined messaging helped neutralise the opposition's barbs, including concerns around Nitish Kumar's health.

In many ways, Jha epitomised a new kind of political operative—measured, modern, and mission-driven. While Nitish Kumar remains the face of the mandate, Jha has emerged as the silent architect of the NDA's success in Bihar. As votes are counted and verdicts analysed, his rise from a low-profile loyalist to the party's strategic spearhead marks a turning point in Bihar's political narrative.

BJP claims victory in Bihar polls due to development works

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Dehradun

The Bharatiya Janata Party State president Mahendra Bhatt claimed that the development works in Bihar by the ‘double-engine’ government under its chief minister Nitish Kumar ensured a victory in the elections. He said that the electoral win secured on the “development formula” will be replicated by BJP in Uttarakhand.Chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami and other party



workers celebrated the victory at the party's State office here on Friday. Bhatt said, “The people of Bihar once again re-

jected jungle Raj and supported development and public welfare policies. The women, youths, the poor, businessmen, workers and the elderly, along with other sections of society cast their votes on the basis of the work done by the double-engine government,” Bhatt said.

Dhami said that the people of Bihar had once again rejected nepotism and jungle Raj along with the lies, rumours and negative politics played by the opposition there. The people of Bihar have supported good governance once again, he said. “Our double-engine governments have been consistently winning elections in the States and we have been winning the trust of the people repeatedly,” he said.Responding to a question

regarding Uttarakhand, the CM said that the people will teach a lesson to the Congress in Uttarakhand and other States where elections are to take place. Interacting with party workers earlier, Dhami said that the people of Bihar have proven once again that development-based politics is their first choice. “The major victory of the National Democratic Alliance in the Bihar Vidhan Sabha elections is a result of the deep faith the public has in Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The public opinion shows that the State wants a stable government, better governance and consistent progress. The Mahagathbandhan's defeat clearly shows that Bihar completely rejects nepotism and politics based on rumours and disinformation. The choice of the people has been guided by development, good governance and transparency. This victory is also due to the hard work of the party workers,” Dhami said.

MH Dehradun organises diabetes awareness programme

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Dehradun

Diabetes awareness programme was organised on the occasion of the World Diabetes day at the auditorium of Military Hospital, Dehradun on Friday.

Lieutenant Dhanya delivered a lecture on diabetes, its symptoms, risk factors and its long-term complications such as kidney disease, nerve damage, heart problems and vision loss. She highlighted the importance of early diagnosis and proper management to prevent serious

outcomes. Dietician Neha gave detailed information on healthy dietary practices, emphasising balanced nutrition, portion control, the importance of fibre-rich foods, and reducing the intake of sugar and refined carbohydrates. She also guided the soldiers on practical meal planning for diabetes prevention and control.

A special role play was performed by Lieutenant Abhinav and his team, demonstrating common

lifestyle mistakes and the correct measures for effective diabetes management. The interactive presentation helped the soldiers understand the importance of physical activity, regular blood sugar monitoring, and consistent medical follow-up.

A total of 80 personnel attended the event and gained valuable information on diabetes prevention and healthy living. A small health awareness exhibition was also set up for the troops.

Youth loses 1.53 lakh after clicking fake delivery link

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Dehradun

A 21-year-old youth became a victim of cyber fraud after clicking on a fake parcel delivery link. The victim, Ayush Uniyal, from Dehradun received an SMS purportedly related to a parcel delivery. As soon as he clicked the link, Rs 1,53,293 was deducted from his bank credit card. Ayush informed his bank and got his card blocked, but by then the money had already been withdrawn. On realising that he had been scammed, he approached the Cyber Crime Police Station and filed a complaint. In his complaint, he mentioned that the fraud was planned and appeared to be operated at an international level. He also submitted the suspicious link used in the fraud. Based on his complaint police have registered the FIR and started the investigation in this matter. According to him this incident took place on October 22.

IN BRIEF

PNG Govt College celebrates golden jubilee year

RAMNAGAR: The golden jubilee celebrations of PNG Govt College, marking the completion of 50 years, were held with the enthusiastic participation of the teachers, staff, students and alumni. Addressing the programme, the local MLA Diwan Singh Bisht urged the students to have dedication to achieve a goal. Former students recounted the journey of the college through challenges. They mentioned that the college had started with limited resources. The principal, M.C.Pandey was among those who addressed the commemorative programme.

All Saints’ College students visit school under Daan Utsav

NAINITAL: The students of All Saints’ College visited the Government Primary School, Mallital and distributed toys, tuck packs, and stationery items among the children under Daan Utsav. The students then shared a midday meal prepared from grains collected during a charity event previously organised by All Saints’ College. During the event, the students interacted with the children and motivated them about the importance of education. Lauding the visit, the principal of All Saints’ College, Anjana Richards said that education became meaningful when it became a means of service. Six students of All Saints’ College were present in this service visit.

KU holds 2-day research methodology training programme

NAINITAL: A two-day research methodology training programme, sponsored by MERU Soft Component and organised by IQAC under the PM-USHA Abhiyan, was held at Kumaun University, Nainital. Among the dignitaries present at the inaugural session were the director, IQAC and dean, Academics, Santosh Kumar; director, DSB campus, Neeta Bora Sharma and programme coordinator, Ritesh Shah. While Santosh Kumar stressed on the researchers’ understanding methodology, ethics, and a scientific approach for fruitful and internationally acclaimed research, Sharma stated that the quality of research determines the identity of an institution in higher education. In the first session, a professor of JNU, New Delhi, Arun Kharat provided detailed training to researchers on the entire process of literature review. He explained that preparing a systematic and critical literature review requires intensive reading, concentration and systematic note-taking. He also emphasised the use of ICT and digital technologies in research. During the event, a professor of IIT Roorkee, Tarun Sharma described research as a process of knowledge creation while presenting a simple and clear explanation of the philosophical dimensions of research methodology.

SCPCR urges CM to appoint nodal officer for child rights protection

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Dehradun

The chairwoman of the State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (SCPCR), Geeta Khanna, informed that a letter has been sent to chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami in which she has asked for the appointment of a nodal person to ensure the strong protection of children's rights in all schools across the State. She also called for the issuance of necessary guidelines regarding the compulsory singing of Vande Mataram in schools. This proposal was made on the occasion of Children's Day, the 25th anniversary of the State and the completion of a decade of the Juvenile Justice Act (JJ Act), as well as the 150th anniversary of Vande Mataram, she said. Further, Khanna participated virtually in a district-level one-day programme on Friday, organised by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) in Tehri. During the event, she emphasised the crucial role of parents and stakeholders in safeguarding childhood, highlighting the importance of making children's lives easier to protect them from addiction, loneliness and depression and to foster their intellectual development. She stressed that children should not be treated as mini adults and should be allowed to enjoy their childhood. Khanna informed that a workshop on sensitisation and awareness on child rights will be held on November 15, during which various departments—such as Education, Health, Police, Women and Child Development and the Labour department—will present reports on their respective subjects. Additionally, the commis-

sion will conduct a coordination meeting on November 20, attended by all relevant stakeholders, including the Women Empowerment and Child Development (WECD) Department, Child Welfare Committee, Probation Department, and the Juvenile Justice Board (JJB). All departments have been directed to submit action-taken reports and progress updates from

previous meetings. She added that the Commission is committed to establishing effective coordination among all departments to ensure the rights, safety, protection and overall development of every child in the State, with the goal of making Uttarakhand a child-friendly State.

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS

PUBLIC NOTICE

The general public is informed that I have changed my name from HARSH JAISINGH to HARSH KUMAR JAISINGH and in future I should be known as HARSH KUMAR JAISINGH S/o Virender Kumar Jai Singh. Address : P1-48, Vardman Projects Jurs Colony, Jwalapur, Haridwar.

A sale deed, document no. 2304, registered on pages 281 to 306 of Book no. 1, Volume 5711, at serial no. 2304, dated 14.03.2014, is lost somewhere. Rajkumar s/o Late Shri Jai Singh resident of GMS Road, Kanwali, District Dehradun, Uttarakhand. Kindly contact if someone found these documents mentioned above, Adv. Silesh Singh-9897702025

The general public is informed that in my education certificate my mother's name is wrongly written as Manju Rani correct name of my mother is Manju Devi. Rajesh Kumar S/o Babu Lal R/o Gali no. 4 Azad Nagar Yamunanagar Haryana 135001

The general public is informed that in my son's education certificate my name is wrongly written as Vijay Singh Rawat my correct name is Vijay Singh. Vijay Singh S/o Balwant Singh Rawat R/o Ayudh Vihar Shiv Mandir Upper Garhwal Colony Raipur Dehradun Uttarakhand 248008

मैंने निजी कार्यों से अपना नाम MOHD SAURAB से बदलकर MOHD SOHRAB कर लिया है। जो मेरे आधार कार्ड नं. 439008393540 व पेन कार्ड नं. ABUP3773M में भी दर्ज है। भविष्य में मुझे MOHD SOHRAB S/o MOHD ISLAM के नाम से जाना पहचाना व पुकारा जाए। MOHD SAURAB (मौजूदा पुराना नाम) S/o MOHD ISLAM निवासी-253/1, सती मौहल्ला रुड़की जिला-हरिद्वार उत्तराखण्ड।

मेरे आधार कार्ड नं. 693701834990 में त्रुटिवाश मेरा घरेलू नाम चिराग कुशवाह (CHIRAG KUSHWAHA) दर्ज हो गया है जबकि मेरा वास्तविक नाम देव कुशवाह (DEV KUSHWAHA) है जोकि मेरी हाई स्कूल की माकशीट जिसका अनुक्रमांक संं 25014830 में भी दर्ज है। भविष्य में मुझे देव कुशवाह (DEV KUSHWAHA) पुत्र सतीश कुमार के नाम से जाना पहचाना व पुकारा जाए नि. 22/23 साईं घाम कॉलोनी गियर शिव मंदिर दादपुर गोविंदपुर हस्तिार उत्तराखण्ड।

PUBLIC NOTICE
The said original sale deed of Land Account No. 25, Khasra No. 208Gh measuring 26.22x35=917 sq. ft. i.e. 85 sq. m. situated in Mouza Manduwala, Pargana Pachhadun, Tehsil and District Dehradun, is duly registered in Book No. 1, Volume 2949, pages 361 to 384, serial number 1062, dated 31.01.2014 in the Sub-Registrar's Office, First, Vikasnagar, which is lost somewhere. Dharmendra Singh, son of the late Shri Brijpal Singh, resident of 134/1, I Block, Divya Vihar, Dharampur, District Dehradun, Uttarakhand. Kindly contact if someone found these documents mentioned above with me Adv Krishan Swaroop Saini, M.No.-9412152108

GENERAL NOTICE
I, Rajindra Kumar Ahuja, son of the late Shri Ishwar Das Ahuja (biological son of the late Shri Jetha Nanda), resident of 43/86 Ansari Marg, Dehradun, Uttarakhand, hereby declare that my adoptive father and mother had no children and that I inherited their property, Old No. 43 Machhli Bazar and Old No. 43/86 Ansari Marg, New No. 132/86 Ansari Marg, after the death of my adoptive father and mother through their will. My name is mentioned as Rajendra Kumar, S/o- Shri Jetha Nand, which is the same person's name, and my name is listed as the owner & duly mutated in government records. I am selling this property to Shri Rahul Sharma, S/o- Shri B.L. Sharma, R/o- 2, Anand Chowk, who is purchasing the property by taking a loan from SMCG India Home Finance Co. Ltd. If anyone has any objections, please contact the address below. Rajinder Kumar Ahuja, 43/86 Ansari Road, Dehradun, 9897129312. Sharnmi Tandon (Advocate) 981/654 Satya Vihar, Ballupur Road-1, Vijay Park, Dehradun, Mobile No.- 9897006975

NOTICE
It is informed to the general public that the residential plot whose total area is 1849 square feet i.e. 171.84 square meters is part of Khasra No. 201 M. situated in Mouza Makhampur Mahmood Alam Mustahkam Andar Hadood Seema Nagar Panchayat Bhagwanpur Pargana Tehsil Bhagwanpur District Haridwar, related to the previous deed dated 13/01/2003 document No. 254 which has been done by Mrs. Alkauri wife of late Sharif Ahmed in favour of Mr. Mehboob Ahmed son of Mr. Hussain Baksh, Which has been lost somewhere please give it to my advocate Mr. Gulshan Kumar Advocate Chamba No. 120 Tehsil Roorkee 9837651527 within 7 days of receiving it. Mrs. Hasena wife of Mr. Kumari resident of village Sikrocha Pargana Tehsil Bhagwanpur mobile number 827317883

PUNJAB & SIND BANK
Zonal office, 30-Mohabewala, I & S Building, Saharanpur Road, Dehradun-248002

CORRIGENDUM
SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES
The sale notice, for sale of immovable properties of **Branch: Rajpur Road, Borrower: M/s Creative Home Comfort** was published on **20.10.2025 in The Pioneer** (English edition) under Sarfaesi act. The e-auction for the aforesaid Properties dt. **19.11.2025** stands cancelled." The other terms and conditions will remain the same.

Date: 14.11.2025 **Authorized Officer,**
Place: Dehradun **Punjab & Sind Bank**

ADITYA BIRLA CAPITAL
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Registered Office : Indian Rayon Compound, Veraval, Gujarat - 362 266.
Corporate Office : 12th Floor, R Tect Park, Nirton Complex, Near Hub Mall, Goregaon (East) Mumbai-400 063, MH.

DEMAND NOTICE
UNDER SEC 13(2) OF THE SECURITISATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT, 2002 ("THE ACT") READ WITH RULE 3 OF THE SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES, 2002 ("THE RULES")
On account of the amalgamation between Aditya Birla Finance Ltd. and Aditya Birla Capital Ltd. vide the Scheme of Amalgamation dated 11.03.2024 duly recorded in the Order passed by the National Company Law Tribunal - Ahmedabad on 24.03.2025, all SARFAESI actions initiated by Aditya Birla Finance Ltd. in relation to the mortgaged property mentioned, stands transferred to Aditya Birla Capital Ltd., the amalgamated company.
Accordingly the undersigned being the Authorized officer of **Aditya Birla Capital Limited (ABCL)** under the Act and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) of the Act read with the Rule 3, issued Demand Notice(s) under Section 13(2) of the Act, calling upon the following borrower(s) to repay the amount mentioned in the respective notice(s) **within 60 days** from the date of receipt of the said notice. The undersigned reasonably believes that borrower(s) is / are avoiding the service of the demand notice(s), therefore the service of notice is being effected by affixation and publication as per Rules. The contents of demand notice(s) are extracted herein below:
In connection with the above, Notice is hereby given, once again, to the said Borrower's / Legal Heir(s) / Legal Representative(s) to pay to **ABCL, within 60 days** from the date of the respective Notice(s), the amount indicated herein below against their respective names, together with further interest as detailed below from the respective dates mentioned below in column (d) till the date of payment and / or realisation, read with the loan agreement and other documents / writings, if any, executed by the said Borrower's. As security for due repayment of the loan, the following Secured Asset(s) have been mortgaged to **ABCL** by the said Borrower's respectively.

Sr. No.	Name and Address of the Borrower(s)	Demand Notice Date & NPA Date	Description of Immovable Property	
1.	1. M/s. Dev Bhoomi Traders , Through Its Proprietor, Plot No.-135, Gali No.-8, Mauja-punawas Sthal Nirmal, Block – B, Visthapit Colony Pashulok, Tehsil- Rishikesh, Dehradun-249202.	12.11.2025 & 03.11.2025	All That Piece and Parcel of The Property Bearing Plot No.-135 Having Area Measuring 278.53 Sq. Mtrs. i.e., 333 Sq. Yds. Situated At Mauja-punawas Sthal Nirmal, Block – B, Visthapit Colony, Pashulok, Tehsil- Rishikesh, District – Dehradun and is Bounded as Under- East – 14 Ft. Wide Road, Boundary Measuring 88.2 Ft., West – Others Property, Boundary Measuring 88.2 Ft., North – Property Of Khilailal, Boundary Measuring 34 Ft., South – 16 Ft. Wide Road, Boundary Measuring 34 Ft.	
	2. Mr. Dharam Lal , S/o. Saunu Lal, Plot No.-135, Gali No.-8, Mauja-Punawas Sthal Nirmal, Block – B, Visthapit Colony Pashulok, Tehsil-Rishikesh, Dehradun-249202.			
	M-9536818848 Email –laldhram4@gmail.com	Total O/s. Dues Amt. Rs. 56,19,332.72 as on 11.11.2025		
	3. Mrs. Rajni Devi , W/o. Dharam Lal, Plot No.-135, Gali No.-8, Mauja-punawas Sthal Nirmal, Block – B, Visthapit Colony Pashulok, Tehsil-Rishikesh, Dehradun-249202			
	Loan Ac No. ABDHRST5000000642928			

With further interest, additional Interest at the rate as more particularly stated in respective Demand Notices dated mentioned above, incidental expenses, costs, charges etc incurred till the date of payment and / or realization. If the said Borrower's shall fail to make payment to **ABCL** as aforesaid, then **ABCL** shall proceed against the above Secured Asset(s) / Immovable Property (ies) under Section 13(4) of the said Act and the applicable Rules entirely at the risk of the said Borrower's / Legal Heir(s) / Legal Representative(s) as to the costs and consequences.
The said Borrower's / Legal Heir(s) / Legal Representative(s) are prohibited under the said Act to transfer the aforesaid Secured Asset(s) / Immovable Property(ies), whether by way of sale, lease or otherwise without the prior written consent of **ABCL**. That please note that this is a final notice under Sec. 13(2) of the Securitization & Reconstruction of Financial Assets & Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (54 of 2002). Needless to say, that **ABCL** shall be within its right to exercise any or all of the rights referred to above against the borrower(s) entirely at their risk, responsibility & costs.

Place : Dehradun, Uttarakhand
Date : 15.11.2025
Sd/-
Authorised Officer
Aditya Birla Capital Limited

भारत सरकार
कायदेती कार्य मंत्रालय
त्वरीत कौरीर सगपन वसंकरुण केंद्र (सी.पेसा)
आई.आई.सी.र. वरिडिंग, 7वीं मंजिल,
प्लाट P-6,7,8, से.-5, आई.एच.टी. मनेसर, गुडगाँव,
हरियाणा - 122050.
Email: roc.cpacc@mca.gov.in

Government of India
Ministry of Corporate Affairs
Centre for Processing Accelerated Corporate Exit (C-PACE)
ICA Building, 7th Floor,
Plot P-6,7,8, Sector-5, IMT Manesar,
Gurgaon, Haryana - 122050.
Email: roc.cpacc@mca.gov.in

FORM No. STK –6
PUBLIC NOTICE
[Pursuant to sub-section (2) and sub-section (4) of section 248 (2) of the Companies Act, 2013 and rule 7 of the Companies (Removal of Names of Companies from the Register of Companies) Rules, 2016]
Public Notice:ROC/C-PACE/STK-2/248(2)/2025-26/1403 **Date:** 04/11/2025
Reference:
In the matter of striking off or removal of names of (5) companies in the state of **Uttarakhand** under section 248 (2) of the Companies Act, 2013 in respect of:

S.No.	Work Item	CIN	Company Name
1	AB8717391	U51909UR2020FTOC11556	STAR NOVA INTELLIGENT LOGISTICS EQUIPMENT PRIVATE LIMITED
2	AB7011321	U47912UT2023OPCO15736	YATHARTH ENTERPRISE (OPC) PRIVATE LIMITED
3	AB7229235	U47110UT2024PTCO17418	LUXUS CONSUMERS PRIVATE LIMITED
4	AB8087818	U47912UT2025PTCO19600	ZOLISHA BELLE WORLD PRIVATE LIMITED
5	AB8532847	U63999UT2024PTCO16908	ZORODEAL PRIVATE LIMITED

2. Notice is hereby given that the Registrar of Companies had received applications from the above-mentioned companies under section 248(2) of the Companies Act, 2013 for removal of its/their name(s) from the register of companies either on the ground that they have failed to commence business within one year of their incorporation or on the ground that the company(ies) is/are not carrying on any business or operation for a period of two immediately preceding financial years and has/have not made any application (s) within such period for obtaining the status of a dormant company under section 455 of the Companies Act, 2013 or the company(ies) have obtained the status of dormant company/subscribers to the memorandum have not paid the subscription which they had undertaken to pay at the time of incorporation of a company and a declaration to this effect has not been filed within one hundred and eighty days of its incorporation under subsection (1) of section 10A/ have not been carrying on any business or operations, as revealed after the physical verification carried out under sub-section (9) of section 12, but it/they do not wish to continue its/their registration as companies and have, therefore, requested for removal/strike off of its/their names from the register of companies.
3. Accordingly, the Registrar of Companies proposes to remove or strike off the names of the above-mentioned companies from the Register of Companies.
4. Any person objecting to the proposed removal or striking off name of the companies from the register of companies may send his or her objection to the office address mentioned here above within thirty days from the date of publication of this notice.

Raunak Agrawal
Deputy Registrar
Centre for Processing Accelerated Corporate Exit
CBC 07123/11/0469/2526

SATYAJIT RAY FILM & TELEVISION INSTITUTE, KOLKATA
Deemed To Be University under Distinct Category
(UNDER MINISTRY OF INFORMATION & BROADCASTING, GOVT. OF INDIA)
E. M. BYPASS ROAD, PANCHASAYAR, KOLKATA - 700094

Advt. No.: SRFTI/RECTT/2025-26/008 **Date : 17.10.2025**

EMPLOYMENT NOTICE
Satyajit Ray Film & Television Institute, Kolkata invites applications from the citizens of India for the following engagements on contract basis for Film & Television Institute of India, Itanagar.

Sl.No.	Name of the Position	No. of Post	Remuneration
1)	Professor (Direction)	01 (one)	Rs. 138072/-
2)	Professor (Screen Writing)	01 (one)	Rs. 138072/-
3)	Professor (Screen Acting)	01 (one)	Rs. 138072/-
4)	Associate Professor Screenplay Writing	01 (one)	Rs. 119424
5)	Associate Professor Cinematography	01 (one)	Rs. 119424
6)	Associate Professor Sound Recording & Design	01 (one)	Rs. 119424
7)	Associate Professor Professor PFT	01 (one)	Rs. 119424
8)	Associate Professor (Screen Acting)	01 (one)	Rs. 119424
9)	Assistant Professor Direction	01 (one)	Rs. 99936
10)	Assistant Professor Screenplay Writing	01 (one)	Rs. 99936
11)	Assistant Professor Animation	01 (one)	Rs. 99936
12)	Assistant Professor Screen Acting	01 (one)	Rs. 99936
13)	Assistant Professor Theatre Arts	01 (one)	Rs. 99936
14)	Assistant Professor Art Director	01 (one)	Rs. 99936

For details, log on to www.srfti.ac.in
CBC 22107/12/0020/2526

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Dehradun

continue in the border areas of the State and special vigil should be done in the areas near the international border. Bagauli directed that ANPR cameras should be installed in all the border areas and other sensitive places so that the tracking and monitoring of the suspected vehicles is done in a more

The Home secretary directed the officers to intensify checking at important tourist spots and focus on

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Dehradun

UPNL workers. He further stated that if Congress forms the government in Uttarakhand, it will ensure that the workers get their full rights in all departments. He also promised that permanent jobs will be given after their government comes to power.

UPNL workers federation State president Vinod Godiyal said that the protest entered its fifth day on Friday. He said that the workers are demanding equal rights and equal pay. He added that the UPNL workers have been in regular touch with the government. Godiyal expressed hope that the government will accept their demands soon. He also said that the workers will continue the protest peacefully till a final decision is made.

The workers said that they are determined to get their demands fulfilled by the government. They stated that they will not give the government any chance to delay or ignore the issue. They also said they are ready to continue the fight till their demands are met. Workers from different districts are reaching Dehradun every day to join the protest.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Dehradun

verify facts through authentic news channels and sources. Clinical neuropsychologist Dr Sona Kaushal Gupta added, "Just as a physical diet plays an important role in an individual's life, an emotional diet is also important. Unfortunately, the emotional diet of people has been negatively affected due to false narratives and rumours circulated on social media. Our emotional well-being is influenced by what we see and hear; thus, exposure to false rumours can harm people's mental states. I recommend that instead of believing everything they encounter on social media, individuals should seek information from credible government sources and avoid repeatedly watching negative videos."

Residents, along with experts, expressed their concern about the rise in false narratives that proliferate across social media. Vishakha Dimri said that she has personally witnessed a significant increase in false videos and rumours. She said that such misinformation indirectly affects the minds of residents, fostering fear related to various tragedies and disasters. Dimri said that action should be taken against those responsible for spreading rumours. Professor Neeraj Khattri from IMS Unison University in Dehradun stated that AI-generated videos propagating false news and misinformation spread rapidly on social media. He emphasised that such misinformation can easily influence society, generating fear and anxiety among individuals. Khattri suggested that people should not rely solely on social media for information, but instead

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Dehradun

dedicatedly for overall development of the area. He said a medical college is being constructed in Pithoragarh at a cost of over Rs 750 crore and a multipurpose hall has also been constructed at the Sports College at a cost of Rs 34 crore.

He announced that a stadium in Berinag will be constructed at a cost of Rs 28 crore. The CM said that a 50-bed critical care block is also being constructed at Pithoragarh Medical College at a cost

The CM assured that the State government is working

jana. To enhance connectivity in Pithoragarh, the expansion of Naini Saini Airport is progressing at a rapid pace. He added that a sum of Rs 450 crore has been approved for the project and the land acquisition process is underway.

Dhami said that the State government is providing employment and self-employment opportunities for the youngsters and the recruitment process has been transparent.

Earlier in the day the CM participated in the National Unity Padyatra.

MLAs Harish Dhami and Bishan Singh Chuphal and others attended the programme.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Dehradun

The Special Task Force (STF) in a joint operation with Doiwala police and the Anti-Narcotics Task Force (ANTF) arrested a drug peddler with 105 grammes of heroin. The value of the seized contraband is reported to be

on Friday morning in the Doiwala area of Dehradun.

During the investigation, Rahul told the police that he brought the heroin from a man named Rashid in Bareilly using a cab booking mobile app. He said that he used to sell the drug in small quantities to college students and other people in and around Dehradun to earn a profit.

According to STF officials, this is the third major action by the STF in just one week under the Drug-Free Devbhoomi

about Rs 31.50 lakh.

The arrested accused has been identified as Rahul, a native of Bijnor district of Uttar Pradesh. The operation was carried out by the authorities

Mission 2025. The action was taken on the instruction of STF senior superintendent of police Navneet Singh Bhullar. He has directed the ANTF to remain alert in all districts of

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Dehradun

To enhance services, the Information Technology Development Agency (ITDA) is working on a unified software solution for water billing and additional facilities. This software will be utilised for public services by both the Peyjal Nigam and Uttarakhand Jal Sansthan (UJS), the secretary (Appraisal) at UJS Maanesh Semwal said.

Semwal said that UJS has had a software system in place since 2011, allowing residents of the State to conveniently pay their water bills and apply for new connections, among other functionalities. However, with the introduction of the Jal Jeevan Mission, many new connections have been established in the State. As a result, numerous connections have transitioned to Peyjal Nigam, which is also responsible for collecting revenue through water bills from consumers. Considering this, the authorities have decided to develop a new joint software system for the UJS and Peyjal Nigam, enabling residents to pay their bills, apply for new connec-


tions and access additional services. He said that there are 10 lakh connections associated with the Peyjal Nigam, whereas the UJS has seven lakh connections for the same purpose.

The software has been in development for the past three months. It is currently complete but undergoing testing and trials. The system is expected to be implemented and available to customers during the next billing cycle, he said.

Semwal further added that the software will be accessible to customers through the government website.

Additionally, this software will benefit customers in many ways, as it will serve as a single-window system. Customers will be able to pay their bills from anywhere and apply for connections without having to visit the offices. Common service centre facilities and other services will also be available, he said.

PUBLIC NOTICE



Registered Office: ICICI Bank Tower, Near Chaki Circle, Old Padra Road, Vadodra- 390007

Corporate Office: ICICI Bank Towers, Bandra-Kurla Complex Mumbai - 400051.

GOLD AUCTION & INVITATION NOTICE

The Borrower(s) mentioned below was/were issued a notice to pay off the outstanding amount towards the Loan availed against gold ornaments, from ICICI Bank Limited.

Due to failure in repayment of dues, auction of the pledged gold ornaments will be conducted. In case of a deceased borrower, all the Terms and Conditions will be applicable to the respective legal heir(s).

Loan A/C No.	Borrower Name	Auction Branch Address	Auction Date
192405000850	Mohammad Sajid	ICICI Bank Ltd., Bhitoria No.1, Bisht Ohara, Near Primary School, Kaldungi Road, Haldwani, Nainital Dist., Uttarakhand- 263139	26-Nov-2025

The auction will be conducted at the address/es & on the date/s mentioned above in the table. Time: 3.00 P.M. - 6.00 P.M.

Please note that if the above auction information is incomplete, the same will be reconducted by the Bank without any prior notice.

Interested parties may visit the above-mentioned Branch/es for the detailed Terms and Conditions of the auction

Date : 15.11.2025

Place : Nainital

Sincerely, Sd/- Authorised Signatory

For ICICI Bank Limited

<i>IICI Home Finance</i> Corporate Office: IICI Home Finance Company Limited, IICI HFC Tower, Andheri - Kurla Road, Andheri (East), Mumbai - 400059, India									
Branch Office: 1st floor, Ashirwad Tower, Model Colony, Near Ranipur Mor, Haridwar- 249407.									
[See proviso to rule 8(6)] Notice for sale of immovable assets									
E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.									
Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the Possession of which has been taken by the Authorized Officer of IICI Home Finance Company Ltd., will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is", as per the brief particulars given hereunder;									
Sr. No.	Name of Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrowers/ Guarantors/ Legal Heirs, Loan Account No.	Details of the Secured asset(s) with known encumbrances, if any	Amount Outstanding	Reserve Price / Earnest Money Deposit	Date and Time of Property Inspection	Date & Time of Auction	One Day Before Auction Date	SARFAESI Stage	
(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)	(H)	(I)	
1.	Ankur Singhal (Borrower) Sharad Kumar, (Co-Borrower) Sulekha Singhal (Co-Borrower) LHHAWR LAn No. LHHAWR00001597004	- A Residential House On Plt No. 986 Situated At Moh Choudhariyan Kasba Jhabareda Ander Hadud Nagar Panchayat Jhabareda Pargana Manglor Tehsil Roorkdee Distt Haridwar Haridwar - Haridwar Uttaranchar- 249403	Rs. 35,38, 399.10/- November 12, 2025	Rs. 44, 46,000/- Rs. 4,44, 600/-	December 09, 2025 11:00 AM- 03:00 PM	December 16, 2025 02:00 PM- 03:00 PM	December 15, 2025 Before 05:00 PM	Symbolic Possession	
2.	Munni, (Borrower) Vikas Kumar (Co-Borrower) Lan No. LHHWR00001513133 & LHHWR00001513134	19 Plot No 19 Khadra No 97 Situated At Gram Gavilvali Pargana Nisajal, Tehsil And District Haridwar Haridwar 249401 19 Haridwar Uttaranchar- 249403	Rs. 16,54, 732/- November 12, 2025	Rs. 35, 62,290/- Rs. 3,56, 229/-	December 09, 2025 11:00 AM- 03:00 PM	December 16, 2025 02:00 PM- 03:00 PM	December 15, 2025 Before 05:00 PM	Symbolic Possession	

 UTTARAKHAND POWER CORPORATION LIMITED (A Govt. of Uttarakhand Undertaking) Victoria Cross Vijeta Gabar Singh Bhawan, Kanwal Road, Dehradun, Tel. No. 0135-2763672-75, tender website: www.uktenders.gov.in							
Uttarakhand Power Corporation Ltd, Dehradun invites e-tender of following work, as detailed below :-							
Sl. No.	Name of the Work	Tender Specification No.	Earnest Money (in Rs.)	Cost of tender document including GST (in Rs.)	Last date & time of online request for Tender and Submission of tender in online & offline mode	Due Date of opening of Technical bid	Due Date of opening of Financial bid
1	Special M & R Work of Non-Residential Building at V.C.V. Gabar Singh Urja Bhawan Campus Dehradun.	04/EE(CM)/2025-26	95000.00 In favour of Executive Engineer (HQ), UPCL, Dehradun	2360/-In favour of Executive Engineer (HQ), UPCL, Dehradun	28.11.2025 upto 17.00 hrs	29.11.2025 at 11.00 hrs	To be notified later
2	Construction of Tin Shed At Type-I & II Residential Building At VCV Gabar Singh Urja Bhawan, Dehradun	05/EE(CM)/2025-26	65000.00 In favour of Executive Engineer (HQ), UPCL, Dehradun	2360/-In favour of Executive Engineer (HQ), UPCL, Dehradun	28.11.2025 upto 17.00 hrs	29.11.2025 at 11.30 hrs	To be notified later
For further details please visit website www.uktenders.gov.in or contact on 9410393084 & 9897939179. No.: 721/EE(CM)/UPCL/A-2 Date : 14.11.2025							
						Superintending Engineer (HQ)	

<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>केनरा बैंक (A Govt. of India Undertaking)</p> </div> <div style="margin-left: 20px;"> <p>सिंडिकेट Syndicate</p> </div> </div>	<p>Branch:- Dehradun, (18515)</p>	<p>DEMAND NOTICE</p>			
<p>NOTICE ISSUED UNDER SECTION 13(2) OF THE SECURITISATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT 2002,</p>					
<p>The borrower, co-borrowers and guarantors mentioned below has availed credit facilities From Canara Bank, Dehradun and secured by way of mortgage of under mentioned property. As the borrower / Co-Borrower / Guarantor failed to adhere to terms and conditions of respective loan agreements and had become irregular and classified as NPA as per RBI guidelines. The bank intends to enforce the said properties mortgaged by you and issued demand Notice under registered post / speed post which were not served. Hence this publication is issued. Hereby borrower / co-borrower / Guarantor are called upon to pay the amount mentioned below with contractual rate of interest, costs, charges etc thereon within 60 days from the date of this publication, failing which the undersigned will be constrained to initiate proceedings u/s 13(4) of the SARFAESI act against the mortgaged property mentioned below to realize the amount due to Canara Bank, Dehradun (18515) Branch, Dehradun. Further you are prohibited U/s 13(13) of the said act from transferring the said secured asset either by way of sale / lease or otherwise. The Borrower's attention is invited to provisions of Sub-section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.</p>					
S. No.	Name of Branch/ Borrower/Guarantor	Details of Mortgaged Property	Nature of Loan/s	Date of Demand Notice	Amount Due As Per Demand Notice
1.	Branch: Dehradun, (18515) Mr. Pradeep Tiwari (Borrower)/R/o Ramesh Chand Tiwari, Tiwari Niwas Bhaktiyana Srinagar Pauri Garhwal, Srinagar Lansdone, Pauri Garhwal, Uttarakhand-246174, Mrs. Poonam Tiwari (Co-Borrower) W/o Pradeep Tiwari Tiwari Niwas Bhaktiyana Srinagar Pauri Garhwal, Srinagar Lansdone, Pauri Garhwal, Uttarakhand-246174, Mr. Ramesh Chand Tiwari (Guarantor), R/o Satya Prasad Tiwari H.No. 1238, Kail Mata Mandir Amber Market, Karnal, Haryana-	All that Vacant piece land measuring 183.15 Sq. Mts. situated in the project "NAVADA HEIGHTS" In Village Badripur Dehradun Forming Part of Khassra No. 404 of the said Village Badripur, Pargana Parwa Doon, District Dehradun, demarcated in the layout of the project as Plot number 82. Bounded and buttled as under: East: 7.5 Mts, wide road, side measuring 9 Mts, West: Plot No. 65, side measuring 9 Mts, North: Plot No. 81, side measuring 20.35 Mts, South: Plot No. 83, side measuring 20.35 Mts, Name of Title holder: Mr. Pradeep Tiwari S/o Ramesh Chand Tiwari	Canara Mortgage Canara Home Loan Secure Date of NPA 06.11.2025	11.11.2025	Rs. 63,66,100.19 (Rs. Sixty Three Lakh Sixty Six Thousand One Hundred Nineteen Paise Only) As On 11.11.2025 +Interest W.e.f. 09.11.2025 + Expenses - Recoveries After 11.11.2025 (if Any) in the loan A/c No. 164003439144 Rs 1,47,156.00 (Rs. One Lakh Forty Seven Thousand One Hundred Fifty Six Only) As On 11.11.2025 + Interest W.e.f. 25.10.2025 + Expenses - Recoveries After 11.11.2025, (if Any) in the loan A/c No. 164003546230
Dated: 14.11.2025		Palace: Dehradun	Authorised Officer, Canara Bank		

IN FOCUS



President Droupadi Murmu interacts with a student on the occasion of Children's Day, at the Rashtrapati Bhavan Cultural Centre, in New Delhi

Rail Ministry prioritises staff training amid safety concerns

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ New Delhi

The Railway Ministry has advised its zones to focus on staff training and fill faculty vacancies, as it took note of recent reports of parliamentary committees on safety issues that flagged gaps in periodic induction, refresher and promotional training of personnel.

The ministry, while referring to the reports, said the lack of advanced training of railway employees and a large number of vacancies in training institutes are potentially jeopardising the safety of train movement.

Acting on the recommendations of the parliamentary committees, the ministry wrote to all railway zones, saying that developing an efficient, safety-oriented workforce aligned with future technological require-

ments is of utmost importance.

“It is therefore advised that a robust mechanism be established to effectively monitor training at the induction, refresher, and promotional stages, ensuring that no staff at the field or supervisory level misses the mandatory training at any stage and that all related training data are comprehensively recorded,” the letter said. “Further, necessary steps may be taken to ensure that all sanctioned faculty positions across various training institutes are duly filled,” it added.

The ministry said the Public Accounts Committee on “Derailment in Indian Railways” and the Standing Committee on Railways in their reports have observed gaps in periodic induction, refresher and promotional training.

Anti-terror mock drill in Varanasi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Commandos of the National Security Guard (NSG) along with other agencies on Friday conducted a mock counter-terrorism drill onboard a cruise ship on the Ganga river in Uttar Pradesh's Varanasi, an official statement said.

According to officials, the mock drill, codenamed 'Operation Ganga Guard', was conducted at the Ravi Das ghat.

Five juveniles held for murdering auto driver in Rohini

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Police have apprehended five juveniles, all aged between 15 and 16, for the alleged murder of a 52-year-old autorickshaw driver in Rohini. The victim, Rakesh Kumar, was fatally stabbed during a robbery attempt orchestrated by the group, who sought money to purchase drugs and alcohol. The arrests were made swiftly, and authorities have since recovered a blood-stained

Nabi's house demolished after Delhi blast

MOHIT KANDHARI
■ Jammu

A multi-storey house, belonging to Dr Umar Un Nabi, who allegedly triggered the car blast near the Red Fort Metro station on November 10, was demolished using explosives during the intervening night of November 13-14 in south Kashmir's Pulwama district.

A total of 13 people were killed and 20 others were injured in the terror attack orchestrated by the members of a 'White Collar' terror module.

Investigation into the blast has so far revealed that Umar, a doctor at Al-Falah University in Faridabad, was driving the Hyundai i20 car that exploded near a traffic signal on the Netaji Subhash Marg near Red Fort.

His presence in the car was later confirmed by matching DNA samples found at the blast site and collected from his mother.

To avoid collateral damage in the built-up area, the neighbours and the family members of the terror suspect were directed to shift to safer locations before the house was demolished. The local police authorities have not issued any statement on the demolitions till late evening.

The demolition of his house in Kashmir is aimed at sending a stern message to those backing terrorist activities on Indian soil.

Earlier, homes of local terrorists of Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba—Adil Hussain Thoker of Bijbehara and Aasif Sheikh of Tral and others were razed to the ground after the Pahalgalam terror attack.

Their names figured in the list of local terrorists who were part of the bigger terror module behind the Pahalgalam massacre.

The car blast near Red Fort was triggered within hours after a recovery of



about 2,900 kg of bomb-making material and sophisticated weapons such as assault rifles from Faridabad. This recovery

was made from Muzammil and Shaheen Saeed, doctors and associates of Umar. Both doctors are now in custody and are being ques-

tioned to unravel the conspiracy behind amassing explosives in Faridabad. Investigators suspect that the module linked to Jaish-

e-Mohammed and Ansar Ghazwat Ul-Hind plotted to carry out a much bigger attack, and the Delhi blast was the result of Umar panicking after his associates were arrested.

Reacting to the demolition of Dr Umar Nabi's home, former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister and PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti said the "harshlest recourse" should be taken against those involved in the Delhi blast, "but as per the law".

Srinagar MP Aga Ruhullah Mehdi said that demolishing a home doesn't deliver "punishment", but that it only inflicts collective suffering. "Making an entire family homeless during the harsh winter of Kashmir without evidence/court order, or any law linking them to the incident is an act of cruelty. It doesn't bring justice to the innocent lives that we lost in the terror attack, and it doesn't achieve the ends of justice," he said.

Nitish Kumar posters dominate Patna

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Patna

As the NDA appeared to register a landslide victory in Bihar on Friday, Patna's skyline saw a visual grammar of its own-bold, swaggering and unmistakably centered on one man: Nitish Kumar.

As the NDA's advantage solidified through the morning, freshly minted posters began appearing across the city, leaving no ambiguity about who, in the JD(U)'s telling, remained Bihar's central axis of power.

Outside the chief minister's residence, a massive poster of Nitish Kumar standing beside a crouching tiger, with the tagline 'tiger abhi zinda hai' (the tiger is

still alive), became the first showstopper of the morning. The imagery was not subtle. It was defiant, triumphant, and unmistakably aimed at setting the tone before the numbers settled. Through the day, more posters sprouted across arterial stretches, roundabouts, party offices and neighbourhood corners, as though Patna itself had been cast in a JD(U) production. One declared: 'Humaare Bihar mein ek star, har baar Nitish Kumar' (in our Bihar, there is only one star; every time, it is Nitish Kumar). The design was more striking, a towering image of Nitish, with a smaller photograph of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the backdrop. Another went even

further, stating simply, *Bihar ka matlab Nitish Kumar* (Bihar means Nitish Kumar), a sweeping assertion that sought to blur the line between individual and the state's identity.

Political observers said the visual grammar made the JD(U)'s message crystal clear: In Bihar's political theatre, Nitish Kumar is not just the protagonist, he is the plot. "The line 'Humaare Bihar mein ek star' is not just praise. It is a reminder that whatever the arithmetic at the Centre, Bihar's leadership mantle is that of Nitish ji," a JD(U) worker told a TV channel, pointing to the posters. The timing was even more telling.

Even though the BJP was leading in more seats than the JD(U), the posters

doubled as a calibrated counter to weeks of speculation, fanned by the Mahagathbandhan and pockets of the political commentary that the BJP might project a new CM face after the polls.

Both parties had publicly dismissed the buzz, but the visuals on Friday morning appeared crafted to silence it once and for all.

For the JD(U) cadre, the posters worked as reassurance and assertion in equal measure: reassurance that Nitish was firmly in command, and assertion that within the NDA, hierarchy had its own logic, and Nitish Kumar remained its senior-most partner in Bihar. The visuals appeared almost in lockstep with counting trends.

Mizoram CM vows boost for cooperatives, MSMEs



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Aizawl

Mizoram Chief Minister Lalduhoma on Friday said the government is committed to strengthening cooperative societies and Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME).

Speaking at the 72nd All India Cooperative Week here, Lalduhoma said the government is taking steps to promote local products.

He said, "The Mizoram Procurement Preference Policy for Small & Medium Enterprises 2025 has already come into force after its publication in the official gazette in February." The CM said cooperative spirit is deeply embedded in the Mizo way of life as it is reflected in the long-standing tradition of collective labour, unity, and mutual support.

He said Mizo people are recognised for their discipline, hard work, and readiness to take on challenges for the welfare of

the community. With strong cooperative initiatives, the people of Mizoram are capable of taking up even greater economic responsibilities, he said.

He lauded Mizoram Milk Producers' Cooperative Union (MULCO), a government undertaking for milk production, for its efforts to fully tap local milk production. Lalduhoma also hailed Mizoram Apex Handloom and Handicraft Cooperative Society Ltd (MAHCO)'s ambition to make Mizo handloom products recognised across the country as significant steps towards enhancing the cooperative sector.

He also thanked Mizoram State Agriculture, Horticulture, Forestry and Marketing Cooperative Federation Limited (MAHFED) for its efforts to strengthen its support for farmers, producers, and entrepreneurs by ensuring effective marketing of the state's agricultural and horticultural outputs.

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MY win for Bihar

The NDA's landslide rested on a re-engineered caste coalition that stretched well beyond its traditional anchors. The BJP secured a consolidated upper-caste vote, while JD(U) retained its Kurni base and made substantial inroads among Extremely Backward Classes (EBCs).

At the same time, LJP (Ram Vilas) and HAM(S) succeeded in strengthening their standing among Dalit and Mahadalit communities.

This broad coalition outpaced the Mahagathbandhan's dependence on the Muslim-Yadav axis. A new voting bloc emerged in the form of the "MY" (Mahila-Youth) factor - a demographic that the NDA dominated. Strategic welfare initiatives and targeted outreach enabled the alliance to knit together groups that were once electorally scattered. Women voters ultimately shaped the outcome. In several districts, female turnout surpassed male turnout by 10 to 20 percentage points. The extensive network of Jeevika Didis ensured smooth mobilisation, particularly in rural areas where women often face barriers to reaching polling stations. Nitish Kumar's long-term focus on female empowerment - through welfare schemes, educational incentives and social support networks - paid off at the ballot box. The addition of more than 1.4 million first-time voters, many of them young women, created an advantage that the Opposition struggled to counter.

Verdict redraws Bihar's power equations

The BJP's winning streak extended across the state: Shreyasi Singh dominated Jamui with a margin of 54,498; Nitin Nabin protected urban BJP turf in Bankipur by 51,936 votes; and Nitish Mishra triumphed in Jhanjharpur with 54,849 votes. The successes of Jibesh Kumar in Jale, Prem Kumar in Gaya Town, and Renu Devi in Bettiah underscored the party's rural-urban equilibrium and its well-distributed leadership.

The JD(U) matched the BJP stride for stride, powered by veteran anchors who ensured stability in the party's core belts. Leading the pack was Kalandhar Prasad Mandal, who delivered the

single largest winning margin of these elections: 73,572 votes in Rupauli.

In Gopalpur, seasoned JD(U) leader Shailesh Kumar (Bulo Mandal) captured 1,08,630 votes and won with a margin of 58,135, reinforcing the party's dominance in Extremely Backward Class pockets. Senior minister Vijay Kumar Choudhary, handling key portfolios including Water Resources and Parliamentary Affairs in the Bihar government, secured Sarairanjan with a margin of 20,798 votes. Minister Shrawan Kumar protected Nalanda with 33,008 votes, a seat central to JD(U)'s political identity. Other major JD(U) gains included Kaushal Kishore in Rajgir (margin 55,428), Sheela Kumari in Phulparas, Leshi Singh in Dhamdaha, Maheshwar Hazari in Kalyanpur, and Aniruddha Prasad Yadav in Nirmali. The much-watched battle of Mokama went to Anant Singh, who defeated RJD's Veena Devi by 28,206 votes, delivering yet another blow to the RJD's senior ranks.

For the RJD, the election was a mixed ledger tilted sharply toward disappointment. While Tejashwi Yadav held Raghupur with a margin of 14,532 votes, the reduced gap from his 2020 margin signalled weakened momentum. The losses of leaders like Awadh Bihari Chaudhary and Veena Devi further deepened the party's concerns. A few bright spots offered some consolation. First-time candidate Osama Shahab claimed Raghunathpur with 9,248 votes, and former minister Alok Kumar Mehta held on to Ujiarpur by 16,283 votes.

Taken together, Bihar's 2025 verdict is more than a numerical win. It is a recalibration of political strength, fortifying the NDA's pillars, expanding its base with new entrants, and leaving the RJD facing a critical test of strategy and leadership renewal.

Bypolls deliver setbacks to ruling parties

In Nagrota, BJP's Devyani Rana defeated Jammu and Kashmir National Panthers Party (JKNPP) candidate Harsh Dev Singh by 24647 votes. NC candidate Shamim Begum, who got 10872 votes, lost her deposit. Rana is the daughter of former MLA

Devender Singh Rana, whose death necessitated the bypoll. Opposition PDP's Aga Syed Muntazir won the Budgam bypoll in Jammu and Kashmir, defeating ruling NC candidate Aga Syed Mehmood by a margin of 4,478 votes. The bypoll in Budgam was necessitated after Chief Minister Omar Abdullah vacated the seat and chose his family bastion of Ganderbal after winning from both constituencies in the assembly elections last year. This is the first time that the NC has lost in its bastion of Budgam, in central Kashmir, since the first elections for the legislative assembly were held in 1957.

Congress' wins came in Anta assembly constituency in Rajasthan and Jubilee Hills in Telangana. In Anta, Pramod Jain Bhaya defeating his nearest rival and BJP nominee Morpal Suman by a margin of 15,612 votes. The bypoll was necessitated after BJP MLA Kanwar Lal Meena was disqualified following his conviction in a criminal case.

The ruling AAP retained the Tarn Taran assembly seat in Punjab with its candidate Harmeet Singh Sandhu defeating his nearest rival and SAD nominee Sukhwinder Kaur Randhawa by a margin of 12,091 votes. The Tarn Taran seat fell vacant after the death of AAP MLA Kashmir Singh Sohal in June.

JMM candidate Somesh Chandra Soren beat his nearest rival Babulal Soren of the BJP in the by-election to the Ghatshila assembly seat in Jharkhand by over 38,500 votes. Somesh is the son of JMM MLA Ramdas Soren, whose death on August 15 necessitated the bypoll. The Dampa seat fell vacant following the death of incumbent Mizo National Front (MNF) legislator Lalrintluanga Sailo on July 21.

Phoenix soars in Patna

Women's empowerment, roads, electricity, education, and safety triumphed over rhetoric.

The NDA's women-centric policies emerged as the decisive factor, mirroring the success of similar models in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. The Mukhyamantri Mahila Roigar Yojana, offering start-up grants and mentorship for aspiring women entrepreneurs, created a direct emotional and economic link with a key demographic.

Just as the Ladli Behna initiative in Madhya Pradesh and Majhi Ladki Bahin programme in Maharashtra cemented a loyal female vote, Bihar's version created a quiet but powerful groundswell. Even recipients awaiting their first instalment voiced confidence that "as long as Nitish is there, the money will come." A record-high turnout among women — outnumbering men by almost 10 percentage points — appears to have decisively favoured the BJP-led coalition.

Beyond women-focused outreach, the Nitish government targeted grassroots benefits: free electricity for the first 125 units, tablets and smartphones for Vikas Mitras and Shiksha Sevaks, and enhanced pensions for the elderly and disabled. Construction workers received new clothing allowances, while ASHA, Anganwadi, and Jeevika workers saw their honorariums rise. Together with the promise of one crore jobs over five years, these measures crafted an image of inclusive governance and welfare continuity—helping replicate the success of women-driven victories seen in other BJP bastions.

Kumar's own revival mid-campaign also played a critical role: his high-energy rallies and emphatic speeches countered speculation over his health and suitability for another term. His declaration that he had "never sought personal gain in life," captured in a widely shared video, seemed to strike a chord across Bihar's caste divides. Nitish Kumar's staying power lies in a rare political equation. Through careful social engineering — bringing together Extremely Backward Classes, Mahadalits, and non-Yadav OBCs — he has maintained a durable coalition of trust.

RJD wins votes, loses Bihar polls

The BJP stands at 20.40 per cent, while the JD(U) has 18.83 per cent.

The RJD entered the 2025 race relying on its traditional Muslim-Yadav (MY) base, which forms roughly 30 per cent of Bihar's electorate. Tejashwi struggled to win over Extremely Backward Classes (EBCs), Dalits, and aspirational youth, who over the past decade have steadily shifted toward the JD(U)-BJP combine. The MY formula, crafted by Lalu Prasad Yadav in 1990 after the Bhagalpur riots, once

powered the party's uninterrupted rule until 2005. But in 2025, Tejashwi failed to expand beyond this core.

The much-publicised 2023 caste survey, pitched by the RJD as a milestone for backward caste empowerment, failed to generate broader traction, with critics dismissing it as a political tool rather than a transformative step.

Tejashwi's failure to treat allies — the Congress, Left parties, and smaller partners — as equals led to major strategic errors and weakened coalition cohesion. Seat-sharing tensions and his RJD-centric approach caused internal friction and poor vote transfers. He branded the alliance manifesto as Tejashwi's Pledge and sidelined allies in campaign material, where Rahul Gandhi's photos appeared notably smaller.

His campaign leaned heavily on big populist promises — government jobs for every household, expanded pensions, and a review of the liquor ban — but lacked credible implementation plans. The absence of a clear blueprint for funding and executing the job for every household pledge fueled voter distrust.

Tejashwi's attempt to balance Lalu Prasad Yadav's complex legacy produced a muddled strategy. While he embraced Lalu's social justice plank, he simultaneously distanced himself from the *jungle raj* image by reducing Lalu's presence on posters — a contradiction the NDA capitalised on. Despite efforts to recast the RJD as a governance- and welfare-focused party, the shadow of the 1990-2005 period - widely labelled *jungle raj* — remained a major deterrent. The NDA, especially the JD(U), reinforced this contrast by noting that elections today see minimal violence compared to earlier decades, citing that in the 1985, 1990, and 1995 polls, dozens were killed and repolling was ordered in hundreds of booths. Nitish Kumar's reputation for stability and improved law and order further overshadowed Tejashwi's promises.

This election marks the RJD's second-worst performance in Bihar. In the 2005 Assembly polls — when Nitish Kumar swept to power with a thumping NDA victory — the RJD won 55 seats. At the time, Rabri Devi was Chief Minister and the party was battling deep anti-incumbency. Nitish Kumar, in alliance with the BJP, ended the RJD's long rule. The party's worst performance came in 2010, when it secured just 22 seats.

CM Yogi congratulates voters, NDA workers for win in Bihar



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Friday congratulated the voters, workers and office bearers of the NDA for their resounding victory in the Bihar Assembly elections.

NDA’s cash pitch to women swung Bihar polls: VIP chief

Vikasheel Insaan Party (VIP) founder Mukesh Sahani on Friday attributed his party's rout in the Bihar Assembly polls to the NDA's aggressive cash outreach to women voters, as the INDIA bloc ally failed to take a lead in any of the 12 seats it contested. Projected as the alliance's deputy chief ministerial face, Sahani insisted that the verdict was the "people's mandate", not a reflection of organisational slack.



People want development, says Haryana Minister Anil Vij



As the BJP-led NDA inched closer to a landslide victory in Bihar, Haryana Minister Anil Vij on Friday said the big message from the election is that "people want development".

Congress will deliberate on Bihar results: Hooda

After the Congress' worst-ever drubbing in the Bihar polls, former Haryana chief minister Bhopinder Singh Hooda Friday said that the election results in the state were not "in accordance with the public support" the 'Mahagathbandhan' had anticipated. "The alliance did not expect such an outcome," he further said. "Therefore, the Congress party will carefully analyse the reasons behind the Bihar defeat and conduct a thorough review," he said.



BJP credits historic Bihar win to PM’s development agenda

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Terming the NDS's victory in the Bihar Assembly polls as 'historic', the BJP on Friday said people have once again expressed their trust in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "development-focused" politics.

The BJP-led NDA has impressive leads in more than 180 of the state's 243 assembly seats, with trends indicating that the saffron party was on track to post its biggest tally with an excellent strike rate.

Senior BJP leader Ravi Shankar Prasad said people have voted for development and good governance, rising above caste and community. "This vote is of hope and trust. People have shown



BJP supporters celebrating as the NDA alliance leads during the counting of votes of the Bihar Assembly elections in Patna

faith in Prime Minister Modi's leadership and his guarantee for development (of Bihar)," the former Union minister told reporters here.

Prasad said the people of Bihar have seen "Lalu Prasad's jungle raj" during the RJD rule and the change

that took place in the state during the NDA's tenure.

People of Bihar have seen the NDA's good governance and the measures taken for their welfare, including for women, he said while hailing the poll results as "historic".

"They also remember Lalu's jungle raj," the BJP MP from Bihar's Patna Sahib Lok Sabha constituency said.

"People have shown faith in Modi, BJP and NDA...I am proud of the fact that our Bihar is today ready to march on a new path of development," Prasad said. Bihar will now move faster on the path of development, he added.

In a social media post in Hindi, BJP MP and chief spokesperson Anil Baluni said, "NDA heading towards a landslide victory in Bihar."

Baluni also posted a video footage of Prime Minister Modi's poll campaigns in Bihar where he had asserted that the NDA would register its biggest-ever poll victory in the state.

Firecrackers at NDA offices, silence in RJD

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Patna

As the Bihar Assembly results swept in on Friday, Patna's Veerchand Patel Marg, the city's political artery, split into two starkly different worlds.

At one end, the BJP and JD (U) offices throbbed like festival outposts, alive with drums, firecrackers and the smell of fresh laddoos. At the other, the RJD headquarters sat in a tightening hush, its corridors marked by long faces, hesitant murmurs and a disbelief that deepened with every fresh tick of the EC's screen.

As the NDA headed for a resounding victory, the BJP headquarters had already burst into a full-blown carnival. A tide of workers pushed

past the iron gates, many cycling in from the old city, and some tumbling out of auto-rickshaws stuffed with party flags that fluttered like festival bunting.

The party office's courtyard changed colours with every firecracker, orange from the saffron smoke, grey from the debris, and red from the gulal smeared on jubilant faces.

Workers wearing Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Nitish Kumar masks held their position at the entrance, breaking into impromptu jigs each time the BJP tally flickered upward on the large LED screen fixed above the porch. "Modi ka Parivan" they roared in unison, waving miniature cut-outs of the PM.



JD(U) supporters celebrating as the NDA alliance leads during the counting of votes of the Bihar Assembly elections in Patna

Close by, women workers in saffron saris punched the air with scarves, chanting, "Bharat Mata ki Jai!", "Narendra Modi zindabad!", "Nitish Kumar zindabad!" The drumbeats were relentless, threatening to drown

out even the fireworks.

"With one-sided leads, the NDA appears invincible! The public has rejected the politics of lies, loot and illusion," shouted a woman worker from Purnea, raising her voice above the crescendo.

No party big or small in NDA: Dilip Jaiswal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Patna

Bihar BJP president Dilip Jaiswal on Friday said that "no party is big or small in the NDA" as the alliance headed for a massive victory, with the saffron party poised to outperform ally JD(U) for the second consecutive assembly election. The NDA was heading to sweep the Bihar polls with its constituents leading in 206 of the 243 assembly constituencies in the state.

Jaiswal said the verdict reflected the people's overwhelming endorsement of the development model under Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the chief minister.

"The people liked the development brought by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Nitish Kumar. They have given us an enormous victory, an unprecedented success. For this, we bow our heads before them,"



he told reporters amid a swirl of congratulatory handshakes and celebratory drumming outside the BJP office.

Asked whether the BJP's stellar performance, leading in 95 of the 101 seats it contested, and comfortably ahead of the JD(U)'s 84, would upset the internal balance of the alliance, Jaiswal said, "No party is big or small in the NDA."

"Please don't get into that," he repeated, even as the party "pulling ahead again", just as

it did in the 2020 assembly polls. On questions about women voters' support, he remained measured in his reply. "The people have given us a huge mandate. We must accept it with humility and bow before them. That is all that matters right now," he said. The trends underscored a broader political realignment: the RJD's swagger from being the single-largest party in 2020 evaporated, the Congress struggled with just a handful of leads, and the

NOTA’s share up from 2020

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Election Commission of India's (ECI) data shows that the share of None of the Above (NOTA) option went up marginally this time in the Bihar assembly polls as compared to the last elections but is still much lower than 2015.

After two-phased election held on November 6 and 11, votes are being counted on Friday. The NDA was set to sweep the Bihar Assembly polls, surging ahead in close to 200 out of the total 243 seats, with the BJP emerging as the single largest party with nearly 95 per cent strike rate.

The Mahagathbandhan, which includes the RJD, the Congress and three Left parties, was struggling to

cross the 35-seat mark.

According to the latest figures, 1.81 per cent or 6,65,870 of the total votes polled went to the NOTA option on electronic voting machines (EVMs) when voting took place for the 243-member Bihar House.

Bihar has an electorate of over 7.45 crore. With 66.91 per cent voter turnout, it was the highest since the first Bihar elections in 1951. As many as 3.51 electors turned up at polling stations to cast their vote. Bihar recorded the

highest female voter turnout in its history

In 2020, about 7,06,252 people chose the NOTA option in the assembly election, which worked out to 1.68 per cent of the total votes polled.

The number of people who had chosen NOTA in 2015 was 9.4 lakh out of 3.8 crore people who voted, which comes to 2.48 per cent.

The NOTA option had recorded its lowest percentage share in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

Introduced in 2013, the NOTA option on EVMs has its own symbol — a ballot paper with a black cross across it.

From resurgence to renaissance: Bihar’s march toward a new era



DR SANJAY MAYUKH

The people of Bihar have spoken with clarity and conviction. This mandate is not merely an electoral victory; it is a reaffirmation of Bihar's collective faith in the path of development, stability, and good governance.

As we step into a new term, the responsibility ahead is immense, but so is our determination to accelerate the journey of progress that has transformed millions of lives over the past decades.

Under the visionary guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the steady and experienced leadership of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, Bihar has been on a remarkable path of transformation. This mandate is a reaffirmation that the people want this journey to continue with greater momentum.

Over the past decade, Bihar has undergone an extraordinary shift in its development trajectory. What was once a state struggling for basic roads, healthcare access, electricity, and administrative stability is today a state that is building expressways, attracting industries, empowering women, strengthening agriculture, and expanding welfare delivery with remarkable speed. None of this hap-

pened overnight. It is the result of consistent effort, collaborative governance between the Centre and the State, and a clear commitment that the fruits of development must reach every home, every village, and every citizen. Infrastructure has been the backbone of Bihar's resurgence. The expansion of national highways and state roads has fundamentally changed the pace of life and commerce in the state.

Through major projects like the AIIMS-Digha elevated road, the Patna-Buxar highway, the Patna Gaya route, and the fast-progressing Ganga bridge projects including the monumental Kacchi Dargah Bidupur bridge Bihar's connectivity has been reshaped. Roads that once took hours to traverse can now be covered in minutes. Markets have become more accessible, schools and hospitals easier to reach, and transport of goods more efficient. Whether it is the Muzaffarpur-Darbhanga corridor, Sitamarhi link roads, or other regional connectors, Bihar's road network has become a symbol of its new aspirations.

Railways have witnessed a similar transformation.

Modern trains such as Vande Bharat Express have begun operating in Bihar, bringing faster and more comfortable travel to the people.

Station redevelopment in Patna, Rajendra Nagar, Darbhanga, Muzaffarpur, and Begusarai reflects the state's growing infrastructure ambitions. Electrification and doubling of tracks have improved safety and efficiency, benefiting both passengers and industries dependent on freight movement. Under Prime Minister Modi's national vision for rail modernisation, Bihar has been an important beneficiary. Healthcare in Bihar has expanded rapidly.

AIIMS Patna now serves as a major centre of advanced treatment, and new medical colleges in Purnea, Madhepura, Bettiah, Nalanda, Vaishali, and Chhapra are strengthening both medical education and district-level services. Ayushman Bharat has provided lakhs of families with crucial financial protection, while Health and Wellness Centres have brought primary care closer to rural homes. Under the combined leadership of the Centre and State, healthcare has moved from scarcity to steady, structured growth.

Agriculture too has seen major transformation. The Kosi-Mechi Link Project and over ₹11,000 crore in central assistance have strengthened irrigation and flood management across vulnerable regions. Modernisation of the Sone canal, soil testing, mechanisation, agricultural credit, and PM-KISAN have significantly improved farmers' financial stability.

Guided by the vision of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, Bihar's agricultural sector has become more resilient, productive, and future-ready, with targeted policies bringing real change to rural lives.

Social welfare programmes have transformed lives across Bihar. Under PM Awas Yojana, lakhs of families now have permanent homes as an outcome of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's unwavering commitment to ensuring dignity and security for every household. Ujjwala Yojana has provided clean cooking fuel to lakhs of women, improving their health and easing daily hardship.

The Jal Jeevan Mission has brought reliable tap water to rural homes that once depended on distant or uncertain sources, reflecting the Prime Minister's focus on essential services for all. Swachh Bharat has strengthened sanitation infrastructure and awareness, driving a major shift in rural hygiene practices and advancing the nationwide cleanliness movement inspired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Bihar's industrial landscape is gaining new momentum. Under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, new industrial parks in Gaya, Purnea, Motihari, and Sitamarhi are drawing investment in food processing, agro-industries, textiles, and small manufacturing, giving a decisive push to regional growth.

MSMEs, strengthened by Mudra loans and the Credit Guarantee Trust, have

OVER THE PAST DECADE, BIHAR HAS UNDERGONE AN EXTRAORDINARY SHIFT IN ITS DEVELOPMENT TRAJECTORY

become major engines of employment and entrepreneurship across the state.

Youth skill development centres, upgraded ITIs, and vocational institutes are preparing young people for modern trades from logistics and healthcare to hospitality and digital services reflecting the Prime Minister's unwavering focus on skill enhancement and future-ready employment.

Education has expanded significantly, with new universities, engineering colleges, and agricultural institutions, alongside the implementation of the National Education Policy, opening wider opportunities for students. Digital India, driven by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has bridged the urban-rural divide by bringing broadband connectivity, e-governance, and digital financial services to every corner of Bihar.

Atmanirbhar Bharat has provided a powerful national framework for Bihar's aspirations. Under this vision of self-reliance articulated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the State has embraced local production, skill development, agricultural mechanisation, and empowerment of small and micro enterprises. The emphasis on building domestic capacity, strength-

ening supply chains, promoting rural industries, and encouraging innovation has fuelled a new sense of purpose among Bihar's youth and entrepreneurs.

Atmanirbhar Bharat is not merely a slogan, it has become a road map through which Bihar is positioning itself for sustained economic independence and future-ready growth.

Self-employment and entrepreneurship have emerged as engines of transformation in Bihar. Thousands of youth are now turning to self-employment not out of compulsion, but out of ambition whether through food processing units, small manufacturing setups, digital service centres, agri-based enterprises, or rural startups. Schemes such as Mudra Yojana, PM SVANidhi, Stand-Up India, and access to collateral-free credit have helped young entrepreneurs overcome traditional financial barriers.

Simultaneously, skill development centres, upgraded ITIs, and digital training hubs are equipping youth with capabilities for modern trades. This surge in self-employment reflects a deeper economic awakening in which Bihar's youth are becoming job creators, innovators, and contributors to local economies.

Urban development, too, has progressed. Under the Smart Cities Mission, cities like Patna, Bhagalpur, and Muzaffarpur have seen improvements in traffic systems, surveillance, solid waste management, public

service integration, and infrastructure. AMRUT projects have strengthened water supply, sewerage networks, urban transport, and green spaces. These improvements have contributed to more organised and sustainable urban life.

Energy infrastructure has expanded rapidly. Bihar today has almost universal household electrification, supported by new substations, upgraded transmission lines, and reduced outages. The extension of gas pipelines under the Pradhan Mantri Urja Ganga Yojana has introduced cleaner energy for households and industries.

It is in the context of this large-scale progress that the contrast with the past becomes unmistakable. Bihar has moved far away from the era once described as "jungle raj", a period associated with fear, administrative paralysis, and a breakdown of law and order.

The transformation from that uncertainty to today's environment of stability, infrastructure expansion, and welfare delivery is a testament to what focused governance can achieve. The people's mandate has made it clear that Bihar must never lose the progress it has gained, and must never return to an atmosphere where insecurity overshadows opportunity.

Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's guidance and Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's leadership, Bihar has seen what cooperative federalism and purposeful governance can accomplish together.

Today, Bihar stands on a stronger foundation with better roads, robust welfare programmes, improved healthcare, expanding educational institutions, and systems built on transparency and efficiency.

With this new mandate, the people have expressed their desire for development to move even faster. They want more industries, more jobs, stronger agricultural support, better healthcare access, modern schools, advanced digital infrastructure, and continued focus on women, youth, and the most vulnerable.

They want Bihar to align itself with India's goals for 2047 to become a state that contributes confidently and meaningfully to the national journey towards becoming a developed nation.

This victory is a reminder of responsibility more than celebration. It is an assurance that the people believe in a development-first model of governance. It is a call to deepen our commitment, accelerate our work, and ensure that the benefits of growth reach every corner of the State.

Bihar today moves forward with steady leadership, visionary national guidance, and the collective hope of millions. With humility and determination, we remain committed to building a Bihar that is stronger, more prosperous, and more confident than ever before.

BJP National Media Co-Head, National Spokesperson and Chief Whip of the BJP in the Bihar Legislative Council

States Focus



PM TO LAUNCH DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN GUJARAT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Gujarat on Saturday to mark Janjatiya Gaurav Divas and participate in the 150th birth anniversary celebrations of Bhagwan Birsa Munda. He will also inaugurate and lay the foundation stone for development projects worth over ₹9,700 crore in Narmada district, with a strong focus on tribal welfare, infrastructure, health, education and heritage, the Prime Minister's office said in a statement. The Prime Minister will also review the progress on the Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train project.



BIHAR POLL OUTCOME EXTREMELY UNNATURAL: CPI(ML) LIBERATION

CPI(ML) Liberation general secretary Dipankar Bhattacharya on Friday termed the outcome of the Bihar Assembly polls "extremely unnatural", and said the party would undertake a thorough analysis of the results. In a statement issued by Bhattacharya, whose party could win only two of the 20 seats it contested, said, "The outcome of the assembly elections. Has the scars of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls all over it". "The party will undertake a thorough analysis of the outcome and draw necessary lessons," he said.

Bihar polls: Cracks appear in Congress-SP alliance

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Lucknow/Patna

With Congress being blamed squarely for routing of the RJD in its bastion in Bihar, doubts are being raised about the prospect of another major INDIA bloc partner the Samajwadi Party (SP) to continue with the Congress as alliance in Uttar Pradesh when the State goes to polls in 2027. Akhilesh Yadav-led SP, in partnership with the Congress, had exhibited a stupendous performance by claiming victory on 37 of the 80 Lok Sabha seats, which was instrumental in spoiling the BJP's arithmetic in the 2024 General Elections. While Congress called for an introspection on its massive loss despite of an aggressive campaign together with RJD's Tejashwi Yadav

as the Mahagathbandhan Chief Ministerial candidate, SP chief Akhilesh Yadav on Friday alleged that the "game" carried out through the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Bihar will no longer be possible in other States. Posturing for a bold move, Yadav said that the "game" carried out through SIR in Bihar has now been exposed, and that such "election conspiracies" will not be possible in West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh or anywhere else. "Like CCTV, our 'PPTV,' or 'PDA (Backwards, Dalit, Minority) Prahari (watchdog)' will remain vigilant and thwart the BJP's plans," he said. The months-long SIR in Bihar concluded with the Election Commission (EC) publishing the final voters' list



Rahul Gandhi and Akhilesh Yadav

on September 30. The exercise drew sharp protests from the opposition, which accused the poll panel of working at the behest of the ruling BJP, a charge it flatly rejected. Yadav further said the BJP is "not a party, but a fraud". As the Congress and the

Mahagathbandhan suffered a humiliating defeat in the Bihar elections, calls for introspection and course correction started emerging from the opposition bloc, with some criticising the concentration of power in a few hands. Congress stalwart late

Ahmed Patel's daughter Mumtaz Patel alleged that the party's failures are a result of giving power in the hands of leaders who are totally disconnected from the ground reality. In a social media post, she said it is time to look within and accept the reality. She asked how long the loyal party workers have to wait to witness success. Another partner of the INDIA bloc, Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Priyanka Chaturvedi, who was formerly with the Congress, urged opposition leaders to speak to the women of the country. "Dear Opposition Leaders. Unsolicited advise. Speak to the women of the country. An alternative cannot be without them. Thank you," she said in a social media post. Congress leader and Lok Sabha MP Shashi Tharoor

said the party would examine the results, do some serious introspection, and look into the organisational mistakes that led to such a verdict. He also said he was not invited to campaign in the Bihar election, while noting that the Congress would examine the reasons for its defeat. "Remember, we were not the senior partner in the alliance, and the RJD also has to look carefully at its own performance," he told reporters. According to him, in a mandate like Bihar's, it is important to examine the totality of the party's performance. He noted that elections are about a number of factors. Another Congress leader and former state chief Akhilesh Prasad Singh said, "We will introspect where Congress lagged.

J&K bypolls: National Conference suffers twin defeats in Budgam, Nagrota

MOHIT KANDHARI
■ Jammu

In a stunning reversal of fortunes just one year after the National Conference (NC) dominated the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly elections, the ruling party on Friday lost its longstanding stronghold of Budgam to the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and Nagrota to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the bypolls on Friday. In Budgam (central Kashmir), PDP candidate Aga Syed Muntazir Mehdi clinched victory with 21,534 votes, defeating NC's Aga Syed Mehmood (17,382 votes) by a margin of 4,152 votes. An independent candidate, Jibran Dar, disrupted JKN calculations by siphoning off 7,152 votes, enough to dent Mehmood's tally and hand PDP the edge in a three-way split. BJP's Syed Mohsin languished in sixth place with a

paltry 2,619 votes, underscoring the party's waning influence in the Kashmir Valley despite its dominance in Jammu. Since 1977, the National Conference has won the seat in every contested election. The bypoll in the constituency was necessitated after Chief Minister Omar Abdullah vacated the seat following his election from the family bastion of Ganderbal as well in last year's assembly polls. The NC's high-stakes campaign in Budgam, led by the Chief Minister himself, ministers, and top leaders, failed to sway voters, underscoring fissures within the party and its alliances. From the Nagrota Assembly constituency, Devyani Rana, daughter of deceased BJP leader Devender Singh Rana, scripted a historic victory by defeating her nearest rival, Harsh Dev Singh, by a huge margin of over 24,000 votes. National Conference candi-



date Shamima Begum stood third in the final tally. The seat fell vacant after the death of her father, Devender Singh Rana, a prominent BJP leader in Jammu & Kashmir. Voters entrusted Devyani to carry forward her father's

vision for the constituency. Devyani's decisive win from Nagrota has increased women's share in the legislature to 4.44 per cent. The other elected women members of the current assembly are National

Conference (NC) leader Sakina Masood Ittoo, who is also a Cabinet minister in the Omar Abdullah Government, Shamima Firdous (NC), and Shagun Parihar (BJP). The results clearly signal deepening anti-incumbency against Chief Minister Omar Abdullah's Government and a resurgence for regional rivals. In Budgam, estranged National Conference MP from Srinagar, Aga Ruhulla, also contributed to the party's defeat. He purportedly stayed away from campaigning due to differences with Omar Abdullah. On the other hand, the grand victory of a PDP candidate from Budgam is also seen as a 'historic comeback' by PDP supporters. Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Friday said NC leader Aga Ruhullah "killed himself politically" by withdrawing from the Budgam bypoll campaign, adding that his decision was meant as a message to the party but

ended up hurting him more than anyone else. Speaking to reporters, Omar used the English phrase "you cut your nose to spite your face" to describe Ruhullah's move. "Ruhullah killed himself to give me a message," he said. "But remember, the person who has won from there will never let Ruhullah rise again." He said Ruhullah's political future in Budgam will now depend entirely on whether he can rebuild his space. "Only Ruhullah can decide if he will be able to rise again in Budgam or not," he added. "Whatever happened, happened." Omar admitted that NC knew the contest would be difficult, even before the campaign began. "In Budgam, people do not vote only based on work," he said. "There is a large section that does not vote on issues at all. Many voters make their choice quietly, behind the curtain. So I already knew it wouldn't be easy for us."

Rift between Ajit Pawar, State NCP chief

TN RAGHUNATHA
■ Mumbai

Ahead of the local body polls in Maharashtra, a major rift has developed between the camps of the founder-president of NCP (AP) and deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar and State NCP President Sunil Tatkare. In the newly released 2025 star campaigners' list for the local body polls is anything to go by, there are two power centres in the NCP (AP) – one led by Ajit Pawar and another headed by Sunil Tatkare. The rift over the star campaigners' list has cropped up at a crucial time when Ajit Pawar finding it difficult to handle his personal crisis arising out of his son Parth Pawar's alleged involvement in the Pune land scam. Tatkare released the list of NCP's star campaigners on Thursday. Among others, the names of the party's founder-president Ajit Pawar, national working president Praful Patel, Sunil Tatkare, Medical Education Minister Hasan Mushrif, former minister Dhananjay Munde, Women & Child



Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar

Development Minister Aditi Tatkare, senior leader Sayaji Shinde, Minorities Commission Chairman Mushtaq Antulay and former MP Sameer Bhujbal figure in the NCP's star campaigners' list. Significantly enough, the campaigners' list includes four members from Tatkare's own family - he himself, his daughter and Women and Child Development Minister Aditi Tatkare, son Aniket Tatkare, nephew Sanjay Tatkare and four leaders from his home district, Raigad, including his close associate Mushtaq Antulay.

However, the names of important part leaders like veteran OBC leader and Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Protection Minister and veteran OBC leader Chhagan Bhujbal, Rajya Sabha MP and Pawar's wife Sunetra Pawar, MP Nitin Patil, Dilip Walse Patil, National General Secretary Subodh Mohita, State Vice President Saleem Sarang, and Nationalist Students Congress National President Chaitanya (Sunny) Mankar. Informed party sources said that the omissions in the star campaigners' list was a clear indicator of the ongoing internal power

struggle within the NCP. Tatkare is said to be getting directions from former Union Minister and party's national working Praful Patel. Surprisingly, senior Muslim leader and former minister Nawab Malik has been ignored despite his seniority and stature within the party. Unlike the 2024 list of NCP's star campaigners which bore the stamp of Ajit Pawar's influence, the 2025 list has been prepared under the direction of Tatkare. "Tatkare has been steadily consolidating his control over the party's organisational machinery. The new list is an attempt to reduce the influence of Ajit Pawar in the party set-up," a senior state party leader said. This move appears to be a calibrated step to reduce Ajit Pawar's immediate influence," a senior leader commented. The elections to 246 municipal councils and 42 nagar panchayats will be held on December 2. The counting of votes will be held on December 3.

Bengal will remain pipe dream for the BJP: TMC

SAUGAR SENGUPTA
■ Kolkata

The Trinamool Congress has asserted that the Bihar election results will have no effect on Bengal, as it is Chief Minister "Mamata Banerjee who matters in Banga." The TMC's remarks came after the State BJP leaders gave a call for a "final putsch" to throw out Banerjee from power. "Out of Anga (Bihar), Banga (Bengal) and Kalinga (Odisha), two have fallen. Now it is the turn of Banga. The BJP workers are called upon to prepare for the final battle in 2026 when the corrupt Mamata Banerjee government will be pulled down from power," Bengal Opposition Leader Suvendu Adhikari said. Another senior saffron leader said, "Abki bari Didi hari (now it is the turn of Mamata Banerjee)" even as the BJP workers descended on the streets celebrating and distributing sweets all over Kolkata, Howrah and several parts of Bengal. The TMC was prompt to react, saying, "This time also



TMC spokesperson Kunal Ghosh

the BJP will face a humiliating defeat in Bengal like they did in 2021 when they targeted 200 out of 294 seats but ended up winning 77 seats only." TMC spokesperson Kunal Ghosh claimed in a post on X that the TMC would return to power for the fourth time with over 250 seats, with an additional jibe at the Congress, saying the Bihar elections once again showed that the tri-colour outfit was not fit to lead the opposition. "Bihar has its own equation, which has no connection with Bengal. Once again,

I loudly iterate that Bihar will not affect Bengal. Whereas the factors are different in Bengal, the factors are only development, unity, harmony, rights, and self-respect. Mamata Banerjee will once again return to power with 250 seats and become the Chief Minister again," Ghosh said, advising the Congress once again to "introspect why some parties are repeatedly failing to give leadership." He said, "People's love cannot be won by hurting their rights and self-respect. The way Bengal and Bengalis

have been insulted and the way their self-respect has been hurt, they will never vote for the BJP. In Bengal, love only matters, and the people's love is with Mamata Banerjee, whether it is winter, summer, or monsoon. "Saying that the TMC would keenly watch the direction the BJP-JDU(U) relationship would go, Ghosh said that "all the tricks being applied by the BJP via Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls in Bengal would go in vain. SIR and other tricks based on which the BJP is exuding such confidence will have little or no impact in Bengal. They will use agencies and other modes to browbeat us, but we will continue to fight them and defeat them here." Another senior leader and MP said, "In Bihar they could not catch the BJP's tricks and track SIR and thwart its manipulation as they were not in power, and those who were in power played the game. But in Bengal, the khela (game) will be played by none other than the TMC and Mamata Banerjee."

CM Yadav's outreach emerges as key factor in Bihar polls

GIRISH SHARMA
■ Bhopal

The trends from Bihar's vote count have thrown the spotlight on the NDA's calibrated, data-led campaign architecture—and at the centre of this strategy is Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav. His targeted outreach across Bihar's competitive constituencies is emerging as one of the most consequential factors in the alliance's strong early performance. NDA-backed candidates are leading in 21 of the 25 seats where Yadav campaigned, a statistic that party strategists view as evidence of his growing electoral traction beyond Madhya Pradesh. Yadav's campaign in Bihar was designed as a tactical intervention rather than a symbolic visit. The brief was clear: energise voter groups that had remained political-

ly dormant, create visible momentum in constituencies with narrow margins, and tighten booth-level mobilisation using his reputation for organisational discipline. His rallies were built around sharp, governance-focused messaging—centred on economic stability, welfare delivery and alignment with national priorities—which resonated strongly with voters looking for predictable, execution-driven politics. According to party insiders, what strengthened Yadav's impact was his communication style. While Bihar politics often leans towards emotive rhetoric, Yadav brought a data-backed, administrative approach, emphasising measurable outcomes and performance indicators. This contrast, strategists say, allowed the NDA to broaden its appeal among undecided voters



who were fatigued by political theatrics and wanted a more grounded narrative. The NDA's Bihar playbook this cycle reflects a corporate-style deployment model that prioritises operational efficiency. High-performing leaders are assigned to low-traction geographies to unlock incremental vote share, energise cadres, and stabilise campaign messaging. Yadav's assignment suggests the alliance's confi-

dence in his growing brand equity—an asset the party is now deploying strategically across state borders. If the current leads consolidate into actual wins, it would offer empirical validation for the NDA's cross-state leadership mobility strategy. It would also strengthen the case for expanding the roles of regional chief ministers in national campaigns—particularly those with a reputation for administrative preci-

sion and on-ground delivery. For the opposition, Yadav's successful intervention exposes a strategic weakness: the absence of a comparable leadership pipeline capable of driving momentum in unfamiliar terrain. Bihar's early trends indicate that voters responded to consistency and credibility—two areas where the NDA's messaging, aided by Yadav's presence, held a clear advantage. The broader political take-away is straightforward. Bihar's electorate rewarded a campaign anchored in discipline, governance outcomes and structural clarity. As the NDA prepares for upcoming electoral cycles, the momentum generated in Bihar will likely reinforce the alliance's reliance on cross-state campaigners like Mohan Yadav. For the opposition, the runway for course correction is getting shorter.

NDA's win emphatic vote of confidence in PM's leadership, says Shrikant Shinde

TN RAGHUNATHA
■ Mumbai

Availing that the people of Bihar had chosen *Mangal-raj* over *Jungle-raj*, the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena said that the NDA's spectacular electoral success was an emphatic vote of confidence in the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "The historic mandate in Bihar is an emphatic vote of confidence in the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji. The people of Bihar have delivered a clear and unmistakable message—they have rejected the forces of corruption, chaos and *jungle raj* and chosen the path of *Mangal Raj*, development and dignity," Kalyan MP and Shiv Sena Parliamentary Party leader Dr Shrikant Shinde said. Dr Shinde, who is the son

of the deputy chief minister Eknath Shinde, said, "The Congress slipping to single digits exposes a simple truth that (Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha) Rahul Gandhi commands zero political credibility in one of India's most politically-aware states. Their caste card, their communal card, their fabricated narratives—everything has collapsed." "Bihar's poor, backward communities, women, youth, farmers and workers have overwhelmingly backed the NDA. This mandate is a ringing endorsement of Nitish Kumar's clean governance, stability and people-first approach. Despite relentless attacks from the so-called opposition, the people have chosen security, trust and progress over opportunism and empty promises," the Sena's Parliamentary

Party leader said. "The powerful pro-incumbency wave in Bihar demolishes the opposition's propaganda that India wants 'change'. Yes—India wants change, but a change from disorder to stability, from corruption to accountability, from jungle raj to good governance. And only the NDA represents that change," Dr Shinde said. Slamming Rahul for "stooping" to make the SIR issue the centre of the Congress' campaign, Dr Shinde charged that the leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha had attempted to undermine the credibility of the Election Commission of India (ECI) — an institution respected across the world. "The people of Bihar have rejected this reckless and irresponsible politics outright. They have chosen democracy over disruption," the Shiv Sena leader said.

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Kerala HC refuses to entertain State's plea to defer SIR



The Kerala High Court (HC) on Friday refused to admit the plea filed by the State Government seeking deferment of the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls being undertaken by the Election Commission of India (ECI) Justice VG Arun said that judicial discipline requires the High Court to not entertain the plea since petitions concerning SIR in other States are already pending before the Supreme Court. The Judge said that the State may approach the Supreme Court, as matter is pending there.

"Judicial discipline and comity requires this court to not entertain this petition. Therefore this writ petition is closed leaving it open for the petitioner to move the Supreme Court or approach this court depending on the outcome of the petitions pending before the Supreme Court," the Court said. The Kerala Government filed the plea in light of the upcoming panchayat elections in the State.

According to the plea, the elections would require about 1,76,000 Government personnel apart from 68,000 security personnel. The conduct of SIR would require the services of an additional 25,668 personnel. The same officials would have to be deployed for duties in connection with SIR and panchayat elections and this would strain the human resources of the State, it was argued.

ED moves Kerala HC seeking case files in Sabarimala gold case



Sabarimala temple

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Kochi

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday approached the Kerala High Court seeking documents related to two cases probed by the Special Investigation Team (SIT) in the Sabarimala gold theft incident, for initiating a probe under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

In its petition, the ED said it had received information indicating that the accused's modus operandi in the two cases probed by the SIT showed that valuable temple property was illicitly diverted and its proceeds converted for personal gain, thereby giving rise to proceeds of crime as defined under the PMLA.

The agency said that as the sole authority to investigate money laundering activities, it was duty-bound to initiate an inquiry under the PMLA to trace, identify, and attach the proceeds of crime arising from the alleged offences.

The ED stated that it had approached the Judicial First Class Magistrate Court in Ranni, Pathanamthitta, last month seeking certified copies of the FIRs and First Information Statements (FIS) in the two cases.

However, the Magistrate dismissed the request on October 17, citing the sensitive nature of the case and noting that the

investigation was being monitored by the Kerala High Court.

The ED argued in its petition that the Magistrate had incorrectly held that an investigation by another agency was prohibited by the High Court. It said the High Court had earlier directed that the FIRs registered by the Crime Branch be handed over to the SIT.

"There is no prohibition whatsoever on another investigation agency probing offences under a special legislation.

The wrong interpretation of the order of the Division Bench is far-fetched and liable to be interfered with," the agency said.

The High Court will hear the ED's petition on Monday. Meanwhile, former Travancore Devaswom Board secretary S Jayashree on Friday moved the High Court seeking anticipatory bail in the case related to the loss of gold from the Dwarapalaka (guardian deity) idols.

She approached the HC after her anticipatory bail plea was dismissed by the Pathanamthitta District Principal Sessions Court.

In her petition, she expressed apprehension about her possible arrest, cited health issues, and denied any involvement in the case.

The High Court will consider her petition on Tuesday.



CJI to deal with claim of bias at Chennai NCLAT

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The sensational claim that a senior High Court judge approached a judicial member of NCLAT, Chennai for an order favouring a company came under the scanner of the Supreme Court on Friday which said that the matter will be dealt with by the Chief Justice of India on the administrative side. Advocate Prashant Bhushan claimed before the top court that according to his information, "the message came from the Chief Justice of a High Court" to the judicial member of the company's appellate tribunal.

Taking note of the sensational claim, a bench comprising Chief Justice of India-designate Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi transferred the case, in which the said judicial member has recused itself from hearing, from the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) bench at Chennai to the NCLAT, Principal Bench at New Delhi.

"The larger issue raised in the matter is of vital importance and will be dealt with by the Chief Justice of India on the administrative side," the bench told Bhushan, appearing before the top court.



Justice Sharad Kumar Sharma

ing for a private firm AS Metcorp Private Ltd, in whose matter the judicial member of the NCLAT, Chennai recused himself.

It requested the NCLAT Chairperson Justice Ashok Bhushan to hear the matter in a bench headed by him and adjudicate the dispute at the earliest.

The top court also directed the interim resolution professional (IRP) appointed by the National Company Law Tribunal at Hyderabad to proceed in the insolvency dispute. According to the bench, the said judicial

member has recorded the incident in his order before recusing himself from hearing the matter, is enough for looking at the issue on the administrative side. "Consequently, we direct that the company appeal pending before NCLAT, Chennai be transferred alongwith all records to the Principal bench, NCLAT at New Delhi in the peculiar facts of the case. We request the President, NCLAT to list the company appeal before his bench and decide the same after notice to the contesting party at the earliest," the top court

ordered. The Bench said that there can be no qualm that all other issues are of vital public importance and the competent authority must have examined the available material and taken necessary steps as may be required.

"In any case, all these issues can be effectively dealt with by the Chief Justice of India on the administrative side. We thus deem it appropriate to keep this writ petition as a representation bringing on record information for consideration by CJI. Let the law take its own course," the top court said.

Bhushan said that based on the material, it is evident that it is an offence under the Prevention of Corruption Act (PCA) and an appropriate course would be to lodge the case against the senior judicial officer who approached him. He submitted that according to his information, "the message came from the Chief Justice of a High Court".

Bhushan further said the judicial member of the NCLAT has kept the screenshot of the WhatsApp message and shown it to the party in the insolvency dispute, saying he was approached by one of the most revered members of the higher judiciary seeking an order favouring a particular party. The bench said it would not like to comment any further as it has ordered the matter to be placed before the Chief Justice of India, who will look into the issue on the administrative side. The petition, filed by AS Met Corp Private Ltd, arises from proceedings before the NCLAT Chennai relating to the insolvency of KLSR Infratech Ltd.

On August 13, 2025, during the hearing in the NCLAT, Justice Sharad Kumar Sharma created a sensation by stating in an open court that he had received messages from a

senior member of the higher judiciary pressing him to rule in favour of a particular party. He also showed the messages on his phone to one of the counsels present and immediately recused himself.

According to the petitioner private firm, the approach was allegedly made to favour the other party. Justice Sharma recorded in the order, which was uploaded later the same day, that he was approached by "one of the most revered members of the higher judiciary" but did not mention on whose behalf the approach was made.

The writ petition before the top court sought registration of an FIR for offences under the PCA disclosed by the incident, including provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). It said the Supreme Court's earlier ruling had held that a criminal investigation into alleged judicial corruption cannot be substituted by any internal "inhouse" fact-finding. The private firm has also sought a court-monitored probe by an independent agency after preserving the electronic evidence, including video and audio of the August 13, proceedings, which the NCLAT registrar has refused to share, citing a lack of enabling rules.

Jharkhand HC pronounced 32 judgements in 61 pending cases: SC told

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Supreme Court was on Friday informed that the Jharkhand High Court has delivered 32 judgements out of the 61 cases, where verdicts were reserved for over six months.

The Jharkhand High Court had come under the top court's scanner for not pronouncing verdicts for years, particularly in criminal matters including death and life sentence cases.

A bench of justices Surya Kant and Joymalya Bagchi was told by senior advocate Ajit Sinha, appearing for the High Court, that the remaining judgements will be pronounced within a month's time and judges have been working on them.

"They have delivered 32 judgements till now and the remaining will be done in a month's time. The oral message of the court was placed before the judges of the High Court and they are working on

giving verdicts in remaining cases," Sinha said. The bench told the counsel that the court will be taking a holistic view in the matter and posted it for hearing in January and tagged it with pending matters.

On August 8, the top court suggested the Jharkhand High Court judges to take leave for penning verdicts after observing there were dozens of cases in which judgments weren't pronounced.

It had asked the judges to take their sanctioned leaves and complete the pending work. Sinha had earlier informed the court that till January 31, there were 61 cases in which judgements were not pronounced after reserving the verdicts for over six months.

The top court had passed the order in a batch of pleas in which students of faraway tribal areas of Jharkhand complained of judgements not being pronounced since 2023 in cases on appointments of home guards. On May 16, the top



Jharkhand High Court

court asked the High Court to file a status report of pending cases in which judgements were reserved on or before January 31 in both criminal and civil cases.

Students complained their case was last heard on April 6, 2023 but no verdict was pronounced.

According to the pleas, the aspirants of home guard positions have sought a direction to the High Court for pronouncement of the verdict in their cases. The petitioners moved the High Court after the Jharkhand Government cancelled the recruitment for over 1,000 posts

of home guards advertised in 2017, despite their names having featured in the merit list. The High Court, after having heard the matter since 2021, reserved the pleas filed by over 70 aspirants for orders on April 6, 2023.

Similarly, on July 21, the top court was informed that the High Court has delivered verdict in cases of 10 convicts out of which six were on death row in a week, after they moved the Supreme Court complaining of delay in deciding their appeals against conviction despite the verdicts having been reserved years ago. Advocate Fauszia Shakil, appearing for the convicts had submitted that the High Court pronounced verdicts in a week's time after the top court on July 14 issued notice on their plea. On May 13, the top court, which was hearing the pleas of life convicts, observed that the High Court judges were taking breaks "unnecessarily" and called for their performance audits.

SC lambasts Punjab Govt over lack of infrastructure for judiciary

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ New Delhi

The Supreme Court (SC) on Friday lambasted the AAP led Government in Punjab for not creating requisite infrastructure for the judiciary and rather building houses for itself besides misusing central grants. A bench of justices Surya Kant and Joymalya Bagchi pulled up the State Government for failing to create even basic infrastructure despite repeated directions from the Punjab and Haryana High Court and pointed out that funds provided by the Centre meant for judiciary may have been utilised somewhere else by the State officials.

"If we order an inquiry, we will find out that they have already consumed the central grant for other purposes. They are building houses for themselves but cannot construct courts and create judicial infrastructure," Justice Kant observed.

The top court was hearing a plea of the Punjab Government challenging the orders of the Punjab and Haryana High Court for creating appropriate judicial infrastructure and transit accommodation for judicial officers in the newly-created Malerkotla district of the state. Punjab advocate general Maninderjit Singh Bedi submitted that the State has created posts and facilities for Malerkotla judges and required infrastructure is being created.

Senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, who also appeared for the Punjab Government, submitted that the High Court's criticism of the State Government was unjustified and unwarranted.

He added that the issue before the High Court was limited to the establishment



Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann

of a court at Malerkotla.

Justice Kant told Singhvi, "You don't know what is happening in the state of Punjab. I know the State very well. Even if the funds are sanctioned by the Centre, they don't even allocate a site. They have enough money to spend on so many other things." The top court also questioned the logic of the state Government behind creating new districts without first planning necessary infrastructure including courts.

"First of all why did they declare Malerkotla a revenue district. It was only for political appeasement. When they knew infrastructure was not created, they should not have done it. You say you require a house for SP, but you don't require a house for a sessions judge," Justice Kant said.

Justice Bagchi pointed out that the court infrastructure often depends on centrally sponsored schemes and that state contributions are either delayed or diverted.

He then suggested that a more systematic budgetary commitment may be needed and there should be some minimum allocation in State and central budgets for the judiciary.

"It's not even one percent of the GDP at present," Justice Bagchi remarked.

Sensing the mood of the

court, Singhvi said that he would like to consult the state Government and sought permission of the court to withdraw the appeal and approach the High Court instead. "We will place a detailed status report with explanation before the High Court and seek suitable extension of time," he submitted.

The bench allowed the petition to be withdrawn with liberty to move the High Court and asked it to look into the issue of extension of time. The High Court while hearing a PIL had recorded that Malerkotla was declared a revenue district in June 2021 and a separate sessions division was approved in August 2023, but the State had not created permanent courtrooms or residences for the district and sessions judge and other judges.

On August 22, it directed the state to issue fresh administrative and financial approval for two additional courtrooms in the existing complex and asked the High Court's building committee to examine whether the deputy commissioner's guest house and other buildings occupied by executive officers could be used for judges.

The High Court in September took a strong view and flagged repeated delays despite the building committee's resolution and directed that the guest house presently occupied by the deputy commissioner and another house occupied by the Senior Superintendent of Police be vacated and allotted to the district and sessions judge as residence and, if possible, as a courtroom space.

Aggrieved by the order, the Punjab Government challenged the order before the Supreme Court.

World Cup: SC rejects Kolkata civic body plea over advertisement tax



Eden Gardens stadium

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Supreme Court (SC) on Friday dismissed the Kolkata Municipal Corporation's plea challenging an order which quashed the demand notice claiming ₹51.18 lakhs from Cricket Association of Bengal on account of advertisement tax for the 1996 Cricket World Cup held at Eden Gardens.

The corporation had issued a demand notice on March 27, 1996, claiming ₹51,18,450 from the association on account of advertisement tax for the inaugural ceremony and a semifinal match of the 1996 World Cup held at the Eden Gardens.

The inaugural ceremony of the World Cup was organised by the association on February 11, 1996, while the semifinal match was held on March 13, 1996.

A plea filed by the Kolkata Municipal Corporation challenging an order of June this year by a division bench of the Calcutta High Court came up for hearing on Friday before a bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta.

The High Court's division bench had dismissed an appeal filed by the corporation against an April 2015 order of its single judge. The division bench had said Eden Gardens stadium cannot be held to be a "public place". The single judge had allowed a plea filed by the Cricket Association of Bengal challenging the demand notice.

The top court dismissed the corporation's plea against the High Court's order.

In its order, the High Court's division bench had noted that the Cricket Association of Bengal enjoys a lease of the Eden Gardens in Kolkata and the owner of the property is the Ministry of Defence, Government of

India. It had said that certain advertisements were put up both inside and outside the stadium during the 1996 Cricket World Cup. The corporation had issued a demand notice on account of advertisement tax for the two days of the World Cup by invoking a provision of the Kolkata Municipal Corporation Act, 1980, which deals with tax on advertisements.

The association had challenged the demand notice before the High Court contending that the concerned advertisements were displayed within the Eden Gardens stadium which was not a public place and the same were not visible to the public from a public street or a public place.

A single judge of the High Court had quashed the demand notice after which the corporation had moved the division bench.

Before the High Court's division bench, the counsel appearing for the municipal corporation had argued that when advertisements were displayed either inside or outside the Eden Gardens stadium, such advertisements were visible from a public place.

"In our opinion, as soon as conditions are imposed on members of the public for having access to a place, that place ceases to be a public place. A public place must be accessible to an indeterminate number of people without any hindrance or condition," the division bench had said.

It had said that the public does not have absolute or unrestricted right of access to Eden Gardens and just because the stadium can accommodate a huge number of people, that would not per se make it a public place.

The division bench of the High Court had refused to interfere with the single judge's order and dismissed the appeal filed by the corporation.

Editor's

TAKE

Exit polls were right: NDA wins fair and square

NDA's thumping victory shows that elections in Bihar are won not with rhetoric alone, but with organisation and careful social-coalition management

The exit polls were right all along. Bihar has chosen to give another five years to the NDA with thumping majority. What may be debated is not the victory itself, but the margin of it. The National Democratic Alliance's emphatic win in the Bihar elections marks one of the most decisive mandates the state has witnessed in recent years. What makes this outcome remarkable is not merely the scale of the majority, but the clarity with which voters opted for continuity over change, organisation over loose alliances, and national issues over the local ones.

The opposition's inability to convert anti-incumbency into electoral advantage saw the smooth sailing for the NDA. Although dissatisfaction existed, it did not consolidate into a demand for change. Voters preferred stability and alignment of state politics with the central government . Moreover, Nitish Kumar, despite long years in power and multiple political shifts, remains a towering figure in the state's political landscape.

The NDA's campaign strategically positioned him as the anchor of stability and good governance, a tag he has earned over the years. While anti-incumbency was expected to weigh in favour of Mahagathbandhan, the NDA managed to turn the narrative towards experience, predictability and steady administration. This perception proved crucial tipping the balance in favour of the NDA. What truly powered the NDA, however, was its broadened social coalition. Beyond its traditional upper-caste and OBC support, the alliance made significant inroads among Economically backward castes (EBCs), Dalit communities and, critically, women voters. Women emerged as a silent yet decisive constituency whose turnout strongly favoured the NDA.

Equally important was the alliance's disciplined and highly coordinated election machinery. It ran a focused, message-driven campaign that highlighted development, welfare continuity and social stability. Booth-level workers, constituency-level organisers and well-networked local leaders ensured that the NDA's messaging travelled uniformly and effectively across the state.

In contrast, the Mahagathbandhan struggled to match this coherence. Despite generating enthusiasm in several pockets and fielding energetic leaders such as Tejashwi Yadav, the opposition failed to convert sentiment into structured mobilisation. Internal contradictions, an uneven ground presence and reliance on a narrow caste base weakened its effort. The dependence on the traditional Muslim-Yadav combination further limited its reach. Attempts to expand into EBCs and non-Yadav OBC groups did not significantly alter the electoral arithmetic. The underperformance of key partners – particularly the Congress – dragged down the coalition's overall tally. The entry of new players such as the Jan Suraj Party further fragmented the anti-NDA vote, weakening the Mahagathbandhan in several constituencies without yielding compensatory gains.

Nepal: Will the elections be held on time?

The country is caught between competing demands for electoral reform, a restive youth movement seeking deep structural change, and a judiciary questioning the very legitimacy of the current government



ASHOK K MEHTA

The question on everyone's lips is whether the elections in Nepal, slated for 5 March 2026, can be held on time—or even at all. The alternatives being discussed include the reinstatement of the dissolved Parliament with a new election date and the reappointment of former five-time Prime Minister SB Deuba; or an extension of the existing election date, something Prime Minister Sushila Karki herself has mentioned. So far, sixteen petitions have been filed in the Supreme Court seeking the restoration of the House. Former Prime Minister KP Oli, ousted three times, has called the present government unconstitutional and demanded Parliament's revival. On 29 October, a constitutional bench of the Supreme Court asked President R. C. Paudyal to provide justification for the dissolution of the House and directed petitioners seeking its revival to appear before the Court on November 20.

The establishment has not yet responded to the Court. Prime Minister Karki has attributed the formation of her government to the GenZ Andolan, for which its members seek national recognition as MOV 082. The real question now is whether the reforms demanded by GenZ—a directly elected Prime Minister, a stable government, voting rights for overseas Nepalis, and a reduction in the voting age from 18 to 16—can be implemented before March 5. Some reforms could be enacted through a Presidential Commission empowered to amend the Constitution, should the government agree. On October 19, Miraj Dhungana, who had earlier released a video outlining GenZ's demands, announced the formation of a new political party.

However, some maintain that GenZ itself will not contest the elections. Several of their initial eight-point demands were found to be unimplementable—such as the core issue of eradicating corruption, which is best addressed by an elected government rather than an activist movement.

GenZ itself remains deeply fractured. Nineteen different groups, many infiltrated by vested interests, have rendered the reform movement lacking in cohesion and clarity. In neighbouring Bangladesh, students recently hammered out the “July Charter”, which includes electoral reforms that must be implemented before the February 2026 elections. Although the Charter was initially opposed as unconstitutional by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), it was supported by its ally, Jamaat-e-Islami. Nepal's own Andolan-led reforms of 1990 could not be fully implemented because of the “mischievous clauses” inserted by the Palace into the 1990 Constitution—clauses that eventually triggered the Maoist uprising of 1996 and paved the way for the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal in 2008, replacing the Constitutional Monarchy. The single-party Maoist



rule that followed saw Prachanda attempt to bring the Nepal Army under party control.

The 2015 Constitution sought to prevent a repeat of the 2008 scenario by introducing a mixed electoral system, but it was later manipulated by three Prime Ministers—Oli, Prachanda, and Deuba—who shared power among themselves. Nepal, which has already had seven constitutions in seven decades, now faces the urgent need for constitutional amendments that can address this entrenched instability.

Prime Minister Karki has met various political parties, engaged with GenZ representatives, and selectively addressed some of their demands. The state violence that resulted in 76 deaths and incidents of arson is under investigation. Of the 1,300 weapons lost by the police, only a few have been recovered. Many of those who fled the jails have been recaptured, though some are believed to have escaped into India. Recent arrests in Ghorai, Dang, include arsonists who torched the district court, government offices, and public facilities—evidence gathered through CCTV footage. Meanwhile, whispers are circulating that Karki is leaning towards the United States and the European Union, raising eyebrows within the establishment. Nineteen new political parties have registered, adding to the existing 122. Rising political figures such as Balen Shah, Mayor of Kathmandu, and Harka Sampang, Mayor of Dharan, are keeping their cards close to their chests. Rabi Lamichhane, the charismatic leader of the ostensibly non-ideological Rastriya Swatantra Party, is currently in jail, and his popularity has declined.

The Nepali Congress (NC) is also in turmoil. Party President and five-time Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba is recovering in a Singapore hospital following an assault by GenZ activists. Acting President Purna Bahadur Khadka is overseeing Central Committee deliberations on whether to hold the national convention before or after the elections—and whether to contest the March polls at all. General Secretary Gagan Thapa favours holding the convention now, while a majority led by senior leader Shekhar Koirala wants it postponed until after the elections.

The CPN (UML), meanwhile, is in a dilemma. Its leader Oli has been tarnished by the events that led to the GenZ uprising and his eventual ouster. A majority of the party's Central Committee wants him to resign, but he has dug in his heels. This has opened a window for former President Bidya Devi Bhandari to attempt a political comeback. It is clear that the UML will not fight the next elections under Oli's leadership.

Maoist leader and thrice-elected Prime Minister Prachanda, known for his political agility and instinct for survival, has orchestrated the merger of ten leftist parties into what China has long sought—the revival of the erstwhile Nepal Communist Party, with Prachanda as its coordinator. The word “Maoist” has been conspicuously dropped. Meanwhile, the CPN (Unified Socialist) has split, with former Prime Ministers Madhav Nepal and Jhalanath Khanal parting ways—Nepal joining Prachanda's bloc. Other new entrants include Minister Kulman Ghising's Ujjailo Nepal Party and the Dynamic Democratic Party, founded by Buddha Air owner Birendra Basnet. Smaller parties are also undergoing rebranding. The Madhes parties, already splintered into at least six factions, have fractured further. Among royalists, divisions are emerging between Rajendra Lingden and Dhawal Shamsheer Rana, while firebrand royalist Durga Prasain

has announced a Hindu Rashtra movement and a protest for the restoration of the monarchy on 1 December.




Ultimately, the verdict on whether the elections will be held—with or without reforms—will rest with President Paudyal, Prime Minister Karki, Chief Justice Prakash Man Singh Raut, and, inevitably, GenZ and the political parties. Elections may yet be delayed, for precisely the same reasons that could hold up Bangladesh's own 2026 polls. Elections in Nepal were originally due at the end of 2027, with the expiry of the dissolved House. Prime Minister Karki remains confident that she will hold them earlier—but whether she will be allowed to do so remains the question.

The Pioneer

SINCE 1865

GENZ ITSELF REMAINS DEEPLY FRACTURED. NINETEEN DIFFERENT GROUPS, MANY INFILTRATED BY VESTED INTERESTS, HAVE RENDERED THE REFORM MOVEMENT LACKING IN COHESION AND CLARITY

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

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The path to inner peace through spiritual living



SADGURU SRI MADHUSUDAN SAI

2ND OPINION

THE PIONEER

All of us seem to be in a perpetual rush, all the time. There is noise, pressure, and endless demands from the external world, and we hardly have a moment to breathe. Many of us try to manage our duties, chase desires, and somehow keep up. Yet often, we end up feeling restless, even a little lost. At times like these, finding inner peace feels deeply important. Ancient Indian wisdom has much to say about it. It shows ways to step back, calm the mind, and see things clearly. Spiritual living, founded on truth and balance, offers a way forward.

The *Bhagavad Gita* says that peace begins with the mind. In Chapter 6, Verse 6, it mentions: “For one who has conquered the mind, the mind is

the best friend; but for one who has failed to do so, the very mind will be the greatest enemy.”

It is a simple idea, yet so true. When the mind is restless, even small issues seem huge. But when it is calm, even big problems appear small. Spiritual living helps us look inward, away from distractions, and notice what truly matters.

The Kathopanishad tells a story that makes this clear. A young seeker, Nachiketa, asks Yama, the lord of death, about life and peace. Yama says:

“The good and the pleasant approach the human being. The wise, examining both, distinguish one from the other. The wise choose the good over the pleasant.”

It is easy to see why so many of us remain stuck in chaos. Often, we choose what feels easy or pleasant on the surface, even if it becomes a source of trouble later.

The spiritual path asks something different: it asks us to choose what is good over what is merely pleasant—truth, discipline, and compassion. At first, it may seem difficult and even unattainable, but it leads to ultimate freedom and joy.

Inner peace also comes from knowing oneself. The Kathopanishad compares the body to a chariot, the senses to horses, and the mind to reins. The Self, or Atman, is the master. If the senses run wild, life becomes

messy and confusing. But if the mind holds the reins carefully and listens to the Self, the way forward becomes clear.

In practice, this means taking moments of quiet every day—praying, meditating, or simply sitting and observing our minds. Like a pond settling when the wind dies down, the mind can become still if we pay attention. In that quiet, we feel connected to everything. The Gita says: “The yogi, uniting the self with the Self, sees the same in all beings.” Such vision reduces fear, anger, and restlessness.

Spiritual living is also about kindness. Seeing others as part of the same Self makes compassion natural. Hearts soften and minds become clear. Peace is no longer only personal; it spreads to families, friends, communities, and even the wider world.

In the end, clarity is not somewhere out there—it is within. Following the Self, guided by the Gita and the Upanishads, shows us how to live in harmony. The world may remain noisy, chaotic, and messy, but within, there can be silence, strength, and joy. That is the gift of spiritual living—the kind of peace that remains untouched, unperturbed, and timeless.

The writer is a Global Humanitarian, Spiritual leader & founder of the One World One Family mission

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GLOBAL CLIMATE WARNINGS DEMAND SWIFT COLLECTIVE ACTION

This refers to the Editor's Take, "The Clock is Ticking on Carbon & Climate". The article rightly reminds us that the world is running out of time; with only a few years left within the global carbon budget to keep warming below 1.5°C, incremental action will no longer suffice. The weakening of natural carbon sinks – from the Sundarbans in our own neighbourhood to the Amazon rainforest – shows how ecosystems that once protected us are now under severe and accelerating strain.

Ever since Al Gore and organisations such as Greenpeace began sounding the alarm, climate science has only become more definitive. Yet political will has repeatedly been undermined by misinformation, including reckless assertions that climate change is a "Chinese hoax". Such

irresponsible claims have cost humanity precious momentum. The real lesson is that economic growth and clean energy can advance together – but only through deliberate, consistent policy. For developing nations, the shift from fossil fuels to clean fuels is not anti-development; it reduces long-term energy costs, improves public health, and strengthens climate resilience.

What is now required is resolute global and domestic action: investment in renewable infrastructure, restoration of threatened ecosystems like the Sundarbans, and protection of global lungs such as the Amazon. Developed nations must meet climate finance commitments, while emerging economies must reject the false binary between sustainability and prosperity.

HARSH PAWARIA | ROHTAK

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

DIMPLE WADHAWAN | KANPUR NAGAR

US shutdown leaves economy strained

The recent situation in the United States reflects a difficult period of economic and administrative disruption caused by the prolonged government shutdown. President Donald Trump signed a funding bill to end what became a record 43-day closure, a crisis that inflicted considerable hardship on federal employees and disrupted essential public services. Airports experienced severe delays, while many workers were compelled to rely on food banks for basic support.

Although the shutdown has now ended, it brought little satisfaction to either political side. Democrats failed to secure the healthcare provisions they demanded, while Republicans, despite controlling both Congress and the White House, faced significant public criticism. The temporary agreement funds operations only until 30 January, leaving the federal government on a path to continue adding roughly \$1.8 trillion annually to its already substantial \$38 trillion debt.

While the immediate crisis has been lifted, underlying fiscal and political tensions persist. Attempts are being made to improve overall conditions, yet the shutdown has underscored deep divisions within the US political system and created enduring repercussions for ordinary citizens.

NDA mandate must inspire responsibility

The NDA's sweeping victory in the Bihar elections, securing 197 of 243 seats, is not surprising given the strong performance of the BJP and JD(U) over previous electoral cycles. Their renewed partnership, combined with a largely clean image, naturally led to an emphatic mandate and a fifth term for Nitish Kumar as Chief Minister.

However, such an overwhelming majority must not encourage complacency. With the opposition reduced to merely 47 seats, it is essential that the government resists the temptation to dismiss alternative views.

A democratic mandate, however decisive, carries an equal responsibility to govern inclusively. The administration must focus on strengthening Bihar through sustained development, structural reforms, and welfare measures that benefit the poor, the middle class, and the wider public.

The government would do well to consider constructive suggestions from all political quarters. The progress of the state depends not merely on electoral victories, but on the collective wisdom that emerges from diverse voices in the Assembly. With cooperation, transparency, and accountability, Bihar can move steadily towards long-term growth.

PVP MADHU NIVRITI | TELANGANA

Bihar verdict shows democratic maturity

The recent Assembly election results in Bihar have reaffirmed that Indian democracy has matured considerably. The exit polls proved accurate, and the NDA secured a comfortable majority, demonstrating once again that voters cannot be influenced by last-minute promises.

The RJD's commitment to offering a government job to each family failed to sway voters, showing that unrealistic assurances hold little weight when people assess credibility. The NDA's success can be attributed to several factors. The consolidation of the BJP-JD(U) alliance worked effectively, reflecting stability after the turbulence that followed the 2020 polls. The BJP's expanding organisational strength in Bihar, combined with its capacity to translate national themes—welfare delivery, infrastructure expansion, and confidence in the Centre's leadership—into local appeal, may have significantly shaped voter sentiment.

This election also witnessed broad agreement across parties on key issues such as employment, job creation, and education. As these concerns were widely shared, the outcome hinged less on the promises themselves and more on the electorate's faith in who could actually deliver.

YASH PAL RALHAN | JALANDHAR

Before the ice melts, the ego must: The real crisis behind COP30

Destructive attitudes arise from flawed notions of self-identity. One feels a void within, clamouring to be filled, yet ignores it. The result is a simplistic conclusion: I must consume the world to feel fulfilled. This urge for consumption, born of an absence of self-knowledge, lies at the root of the climate catastrophe

FIRST
Column



ACHARYA
PRASHANT

The 30th UN Climate Conference has opened in Belém. The world meets in a burning forest to discuss how to stop the fire. For decades, we have spoken of cooperation but practised postponement. Finance is sidelined, attendance is thin, and the absence of the United States, the world's second-largest emitter, is dismissed as "less disruptive than expected". Yet the Earth does not hear declarations; it registers only emissions.

The Thresholds We Have Crossed

We are well past uncertainty. The world has already crossed the 1.5 °C threshold above pre-industrial levels. Each of the past eleven years has been the hottest on record. The planet's fever mirrors our own: restless, rising, unwilling to abate.

The Global Tipping Points Report 2025 confirms the first irreversible Earth-system collapse: warm-water coral reefs, more than 80 per cent bleached since 2023, are dying, threatening nearly a billion people who depend on them. The Amazon is nearing dieback below a two-degree rise; 17 per cent has already turned to savanna, releasing more carbon than India emits in a year. The Greenland and West Antarctic ice sheets are destabilising, together capable of raising sea levels by up to five metres.

The Arctic is warming 3.5 times faster than the global average, releasing methane and fuelling record wildfires. The United States has already endured fourteen billion-dollar climate disasters this year, with losses exceeding \$100 billion. Global emissions, instead of falling 44 per cent by 2030 as pledged, have risen by 3 per cent. Even if every COP30 promise is kept, we remain on track for 2.3–2.5 °C of warming. The fever will not subside because the disease lies not in the atmosphere but in ambition.

Policy and Technology Alone Will Not Help

Governments cannot impose what voters refuse. The same person who demands climate action as a citizen demands consumption as a buyer. No political system survives long by asking its people to live with less, so nations sign accords and return home to preserve comfort. The richest five per cent of



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ARE EDUCATORS
OF DESIRE.

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humanity produce most emissions, and the levels generated by the top one per cent are criminally excessive. Yet those who contribute least will suffer most. We worship technology as our saviour without examining the worshipper. Technology is the new theology. Each new gadget is a prayer for redemption without reflection. Electric vehicles may halve lifetime emissions, yet the same mind that buys a "green" SUV demands wider roads on which to drive it faster, and then buys additional green SUVs.

Yes, we need renewables and carbon removal. But technology without wisdom is surgery performed on a patient still drinking poison. The tools are innocent; the user is not. Until wisdom guides invention, cleverness will remain our curse.

The Existential Root

The deeper crisis is an artificially implanted existential sense of incompleteness. The two drivers of the climate crisis — population growth and consumption — share a single root: the illusion that consumption brings fulfilment. The richest produce most emissions; the poor almost none. A

billionaire's jet may emit more in one flight than a farmer emits in an entire lifetime, yet both, as human beings, are driven by the same restlessness to acquire and accumulate. Beyond the biological hard-wiring of loneliness, social forces work constantly to

make people feel incomplete so that they keep buying. Loneliness is sold as a problem and products as companions. Relationships and family become engines of commerce. We exploit the Earth for the same reason we exploit one another: because we feel hollow within. Climate change is the symptom; ignorance is the disease.

Two centuries of industry have given us immense power but not the wisdom to use it. Real sustainability begins not with technology but with wisdom. With wisdom, restraint is not even required, because excesses are not desired. A mind that knows itself needs no slogans to behave sanely. Consciousness is the ultimate regulator; when it shifts within, systems shift without.

Pledges to consume less, save the planet, or generate less waste matter only when they arise from insight. Otherwise,

one buys fewer plastics but more gadgets. The storm within rages on: the urge to upgrade and display. That same storm heats both the mind and the planet.

Self-Knowledge for Right Action

Destructive attitudes arise from flawed notions of self-identity. One feels a void within, clamouring to be filled, yet ignores it. The result is a simplistic conclusion: I must consume the world to feel fulfilled. This urge for consumption, born of an absence of self-knowledge, lies at the root of the climate catastrophe.

When one observes her thoughts and the predictable outcomes of her actions, she begins to check her tendencies. Change begins with attention. Before clicking 'buy', she pauses and asks what she seeks: the object, or a fleeting sense of fulfilment through the object.

Self-knowledge is solid action. Inner clarity can take social form. Cooperatives in Europe run solar grids owned by residents rather than corporations. Bhutan's "Gross National Happiness" demonstrates that even states can measure success using internal parameters rather than external growth.

One begins voting for policies that curb planned obsolescence, limit luxury emissions, and reward circular design. One demands that governments tax waste, not work, and that corporations disclose ecological facts rather than glossy pledges. One supports a green cess and a carbon border tax. And all this arises not from morality or ethics but from the same inner place that, if left unexamined, leads to destruction.

Can personal transformation reshape political reality? It must, because politics ultimately reflects the consciousness of the populace. When enough individuals see through manufactured desire, industries lose their grip. When consumption is recognised as compensatory behaviour, markets adapt or collapse.

Multiply inner awakening a millionfold, and industries will shift, because demand creates supply. Policy without inner change breeds resentment; introspection without public action is hypocrisy. The atmosphere will not cool while the mind burns. Humanity has always had insight, but wisdom was rarely lived by the masses. Religion became ritual rather than realisation; belief rather than understanding. The Gita calls Kama (desire) the destroyer of knowledge; the Buddha named Trishna (craving) the root of suf-

fering; Lao Tzu counselled knowing when enough is enough. Yet economies were built on stoking desire.

What went wrong? Wisdom was kept separate from commerce, confined to temples while society walked blindfolded. The crisis is not that wisdom was absent, but that it never left the books to challenge the factory floor. Forests fell while prayers rose; rivers died as shrines multiplied.

The philosopher's task does not end with meditation or publication. He must enter society and ensure that the light he has seen becomes the living light of the common man. He must be both rebel and builder: challenging the system while shaping new institutions. If he retreats, his self-absorption becomes the planet's ruin.

Reclaiming Joy and Responsibility

Be cautious of your role models. Celebrities and gurus who preach freedom while flying private jets or endorsing luxury brands are educators of desire. Cricketers marketing lifestyles obscenely high in emissions, actors presenting consumption as virtue, influencers monetising aspiration, and politicians selling deforestation as development — all profit from planetary harm. Stop funding them through your wallet, your vote, and your like button.

Demand public disclosure of celebrity carbon footprints; hold fame to the same scrutiny as factories. Concert tours that burn millions of litres of fuel and sporting events that leave mountains of plastic waste are industries disguised as entertainment.

Above all, seek deeper joy. Would you burn fuel if a book brought you joy? Seek retail therapy if music could heal you? Scroll endlessly if one conversation could move you? Watch a five-hundred-crore spectacle if a simple wisdom talk touched you more deeply? Chase distant resorts if a nearby forest could quieten you? Yearly upgrade devices if you saw that technology cannot fill an inner void? Buy status symbols if self-respect no longer needed proof? Hoard possessions if you discovered that lightness is freedom? Accept the extinction of species once you recognised consciousness in all beings?

When joy is rediscovered within, compulsive consumption loses its power. A person with self-knowledge cannot be sold dissatisfaction. The greatest cleansing force on Earth is consciousness.

The world in a single nest: How India's education is embracing Tagore's global vision



PREM KUMAR
KALRA



J K
VERMA

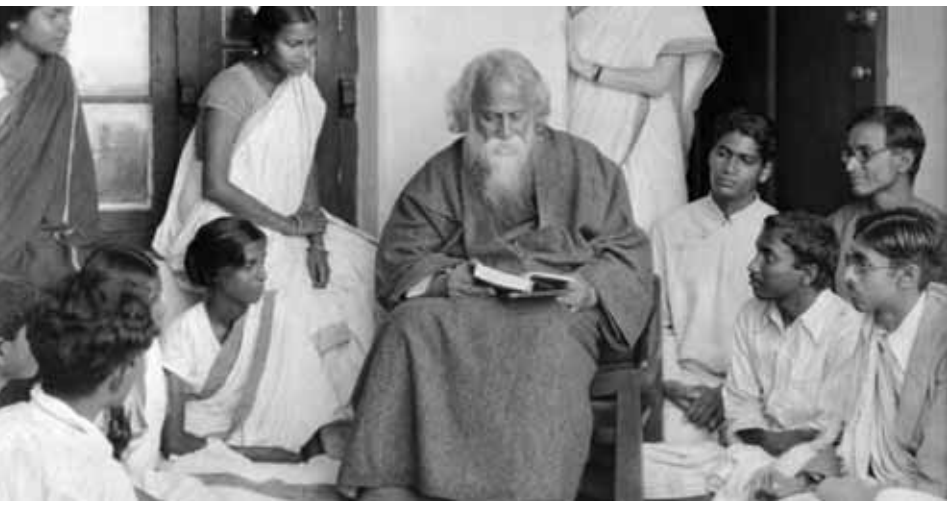
When Rabindranath Tagore founded Visva-Bharati University, he envisioned it as a place "where the world makes a home in a single nest". His dream was not to Westernise Indian education, but to universalise it — to let the winds of the world blow freely through India's corridors of learning without uprooting the Indian tree. A century later, that vision appears to be taking root once again. The decision to allow foreign universities to establish campuses in India marks a defining moment in the nation's educational journey. India's civilisation has always been broad, inclusive, and intellectually open.

The ancient universities of Takshashila and Nalanda remind us of our rich tradition of cosmopolitan scholarship. History is replete with accounts of scholars from China, Greece, and Central Asia travelling to India in search of wisdom and dialogue.

Today, the arrival of foreign universities is often viewed through economic or competitive lenses. Yet its deeper significance lies in something more profound — the revival of India's ancient spirit of dialogue between seekers of truth across cultures. It signals India's readiness to engage with the global education ecosystem on its own terms. Diversity, excellence, and affordability will soon stand at our doorstep. For thousands of Indian students, the dream of an international degree no longer demands the crushing expense of studying abroad. The world, quite literally, is coming home.

This exchange, however, will not be one-way. The partnership between Indian and foreign institutions promises to be both cooperative and competitive. Indian students will benefit from exposure to global pedagogies, research methods, and multidisciplinary learning environments. In return, foreign universities will gain unique insights into the opportunities and challenges of one of the world's fastest-growing knowledge economies. The "global classroom" is already taking shape — where a student from Jaipur debates a peer from Japan, and a professor in Delhi co-guides a thesis with a mentor in Melbourne.

Yet the road ahead is not without chal-



lenges. The internationalisation of education, if left unchecked, could become a luxury reserved for the privileged. Many global programmes still cater primarily to affluent learners. India must therefore establish strong frameworks for scholarships, flexible credit transfers, and "earn while you learn" opportunities. Equity and access must remain at the heart of this transformation. The true spirit of Indian education lies in balancing public good with private growth. The nation must ensure that education does not become a commodity, but continues to serve as a catalyst for character and creativity.

Importantly, India is no longer merely a recipient of global influence; it is also emerging as a contributor. Several premier Indian institutions, including the IITs and IIMs, are now setting up campuses abroad. This represents not just the export of curriculum, but the sharing of an Indian educational philosophy — one rooted in moral reasoning, inclusivity, and holistic growth.

Among the most promising innovations in this evolving landscape is the Academic Bank of Credits (ABC). This initiative allows students to accumulate and combine credits from both Indian and foreign universities, paving the way for dual or joint degrees. It recognises that learning is a lifelong, borderless pursuit.

A student might begin her degree in India, complete a semester in Singapore, and finish her research in London — all within a single academic framework. The result is not only greater mobility, but a deeper intellectual maturity born of diversity.

Meanwhile, the classroom itself is transforming. The rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI), virtual laboratories, and hybrid learning

models has made education more interactive and cost-effective. Students can now attend lectures by global faculty, collaborate with peers across continents, and simulate experiments in real time. Yet technology cannot replace the human touch. The teacher's role as a mentor, guide, and moral compass has never been more vital. We must ensure that machines do not erode the spark of curiosity and the depth of reflection that define true learning. This transformation calls for introspection. What do we truly value in education? As India opens its universities to global influences, it must also nurture critical thinking, empathy, and ethical awareness.

The test of education lies not merely in employability, but in enlightenment. The challenge is to engage with global diversity without losing one's distinct identity.

The global winds, then, need not uproot the Indian tree — they can help it bloom. India's entry into the global education marketplace is not merely a policy shift, but a cultural evolution. It signals a confident assertion that Indian education can stand shoulder to shoulder with the best in the world while retaining its moral centre.

If pursued with vision and vigilance, this initiative will allow India's universities not only to absorb global knowledge but also to radiate their own light outward. The Tagorian nest, it seems, is ready once again — for the world to make its home.

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New US Bill Targets Outsourcing, Threatens India's IT Engine



AJAY
SRIVASTAVA

The HIRE Act bill introduced in the U.S. Senate on 5 September 2025 seeks to penalise outsourcing through a 25 per cent excise tax and denial of tax deductibility for payments to foreign service providers.

For India's \$280-billion IT, BPO and GCC ecosystem—dependent on the U.S. for over 60 per cent of revenues—this would sharply erode the cost advantage that underpins offshore delivery. Though still at an early legislative stage, the bill signals rising U.S. hostility to offshoring, and India's tech sector must monitor it closely. The new 'Halting International Relocation of Employment (HIRE) Act' bill, introduced in the U.S. Senate on 5 September 2025—if it becomes law—would pose a serious threat to India's IT and BPO sector.

With the United States accounting for more than 60 per cent of the industry's revenues, the introduction of this bill has triggered unease across India's \$280-billion technology services ecosystem.

For a sector built on offshore delivery and cost arbitrage, the proposed law strikes at the heart of its operating model.

It is essential to distinguish this legislation from the similarly named Hiring Incentives to Restore Employment (HIRE) Act of 2010, which was a post-financial-crisis stimulus package offering payroll tax holidays and retention credits to U.S. employers. The 2025 HIRE Act is entirely different—a new, standalone bill crafted to deter outsourcing by U.S. companies and shift work back onshore.

Key Proposals

Introduced in the U.S. Senate on September 5, 2025 by Senator Bernie Moreno (R-Ohio), the bill proposes a suite of aggressive anti-outsourcing provisions. The most far-reaching among them is a 25 per cent excise tax on payments that U.S. firms make to any "foreign person" for labour or services that ultimately benefit U.S. consumers, even if the services are performed entirely abroad.

In parallel, the bill seeks to deny tax deductibility for such payments, dramatically increasing the net cost of sourcing work from countries like India.

It also introduces enhanced reporting requirements, forcing firms to disclose all "outsourc-



ing payments" and exposing them to significant penalties for non-compliance.

If enacted, these measures would apply to all relevant payments made on or after 31 December 2025, effectively beginning January 1, 2026.

For India, the implications are stark.

• A 25 per cent tax surcharge combined with loss of deductibility could make offshore delivery meaningfully more expensive for U.S. companies, prompting some to renegotiate contracts, rebalance delivery toward onshore or near-shore hubs, or slow down the pace of new outsourcing.

High-volume functions such as application maintenance, customer support, and back-office processing are particularly vulnerable. Even GCCs—captive centres that serve U.S. parent companies—may not be sheltered, as the proposed tax applies to any payment benefiting U.S. consumers, including internal cost allocations.

• Indian firms could face pressure to expand on-site U.S. staffing, accept margin compression, or accelerate a pivot toward higher-value digital, AI, cybersecurity, and consulting services.

• Meanwhile, uncertainty could chill new GCC investments at a time when India has become a global hub for such centers.

That said, the bill is at an early stage. It has only been introduced—without committee referral, hearings, or co-sponsors—and its passage is far from assured. U.S. technology and services companies are likely to lobby aggressively against measures that raise their operating costs.

Still, the political signal is unmistakable: Washington is re-examining the economics of offshoring. India's IT sector would be wise to monitor the bill's progress closely—and prepare for a world where U.S. outsourcing policy could turn structurally less favorable.

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LOAN NOT INTEREST

Speed and simplicity in getting the loans is more important than the interest rates as the deciding factors for the consumers. According to a survey by Paisabazaar, India's largest marketplace for consumer credit, which was conducted among more than 10,200 respondents across the country, 42 per cent of the borrowers chose the lenders primarily for quick disbursals and easy processes, while 25 per cent prioritised lower interest rates. The findings underline a clear shift in borrowers' behaviour convenience and digital accessibility in shaping loan decisions compared to costs and interest rates.

A majority 80 per cent of the respondents said that they preferred guided digital platforms for comparing and applying for loans, with 53 per cent citing faster approvals and seamless processing as their top expectations from lenders. "The growing confidence among the consumers across segments to take personal loans not just for essential needs but for aspirations, lifestyle, and festive spends, reflects a maturing credit ecosystem," said Santosh Agarwal, CEO, Paisabazaar. "Conversations with the consumers clearly indicate a preference for seamless digital processes that make access to credit convenient, transparent, and easy," he added.

The survey pointed to the rising first-time adoption of festive personal loans. About 41 per cent of the respondents said that they took the loans for the first time this year, and 46 per cent indicated that they were likely to borrow again during the future festive seasons, suggesting growing comfort with short-term credit. When asked about the reasons for borrowings, home renovation and furnishings topped the list at 18 per cent, followed by shopping, gifting, appliances, and electronics (15 per cent). Other popular categories included precious metals, debt consolidation (10 per cent), and fashion and lifestyle purchases (10 per cent).

Nearly 60 per cent of the borrowers opted for loans below ₹5 lakh, while 42 per cent preferred tenures under five years, which signals prudence, and an attempt to keep liabilities in check. According to the recent Reserve Bank of India (RBI) figures, while financial assets added between 2019 and 2025 grew by about 48 per cent, annual liabilities during the same period more than doubled, rising just over 100 per cent. In GDP terms, assets added accounted for 12 per cent of GDP. Financial liabilities, which were just below four per cent of GDP in 2019-20, climbed to 4.7 per cent in 2024-25.

The only relief lies in the fact that the liabilities fell sharply from 6.2 per cent in 2023-24, marking a 1.5 per cent dip in just one year. Which is a rare and noteworthy correction that merits deeper analysis. One possible explanation, economists suggest, lies in the "confidence factor." As households see their wealth, particularly paper wealth from booming stock markets rise, they tend to borrow more freely, confident in their ability to repay. More importantly, as the asset values rise, they do repay, and reduce liabilities.

However, when markets correct, this confidence quickly erodes, leaving families more leveraged than they realise. The recent moderation in stock prices could therefore serve as a timely reminder about the risks of overreliance on market-linked wealth for debt decisions. It also implies that the moment the asset values turned southwards, households reduced liabilities instantly, and tried to be in sync with the current scenario. The only reason why the liabilities came down is because of the consumers' mindset.

India's credit ecosystem has undergone a remarkable transformation over the last few years. Rising digital adoption, instant approvals, and improved credit awareness have made personal loans more accessible than before. The Paisabazaar report reinforces this shift, portraying borrowers as more tech-savvy and confident yet still largely prudent in terms of loan size and tenure. Experts note that the focus on digital-first borrowing is likely to deepen as fintech platforms expand partnerships with banks and NBFCs. They bring speed, transparency, and competition into the credit landscape.

One can look at various factors to explain this phenomenon. There is a shift from paying EMIs to buy a house or a plot to one where families borrow to fund consumption over traditional assets. A move away from the traditional model to instantaneous consumers can create a new culture. When borrowers feel more comfortable to loan money, without any hassles, but with ease, this indicates a credit culture. There is no angst about borrowings, interest rates, or payments. The only worries are whether the loans will be available without any problems. This is both a positive, and a negative.

In a country like India, the ease of borrowing can be a classic trap. Just because the money is available, we borrow, and then use the money for things we do not need, or anticipate. As we bank on higher incomes in the future, or our abilities to pay the loans, and interest, we do not realise that things can go wrong. This is why the assets-liabilities mismatch within the Indian households is a matter of concern, not just for the policy-maker, but the society. If loans stare in our face, we need to turn it away. It is not easy. It is more convenient to accept the money that comes in, and worry later about the cash that will go out as principal and interest.

The Pioneer

DEHRADUN | SATURDAY | NOVEMBER 15, 2025

BUSINESS

10

The grand tariff-trade ballroom

The US President Donald Trump appears to have sudden changes of heart since he firmed a plan to replace the East Wing of the White House with a \$300 million ballroom. It picked up pace during his recent three-nation Asia tour last month, and has concretised since his return. In recent times, Trump has altered, or indicated changes to, the specifics related to several nations. His administration has engaged in negotiations to change the final tariffs.

Notable examples of the tariff transformations include the temporary, proposed, and specific rates, either through negotiations or unilateral decisions, with China, India, Japan, Brazil, among others. The around-Asia-in-five-days connected Malaysia, Japan, and South Korea to boost regional agenda, and ink major deals. After sealing deals in Malaysia, he managed more in Japan, which resulted in a landmark framework on nuclear energy, and critical minerals. In July, America and Japan set tariffs at 15 per cent, a reduction from a threatened 25 per cent. It was the same month that the White House announced the construction of a new ballroom.

After Japan and South Korea, Trump beamed for the cameras with China's Premier Xi Jinping. After the temporary truce between them, the media headlines screamed that the trade war was coming to an end, albeit not too silently. Since the widely-splashed meeting, the world's largest economies reached key agreements that signaled a reset in economic cooperation. Xi emphasised that China and the US need to aim to be "partners and friends," despite the differences. He called for the two nations to shoulder global responsibilities together.

China's People's Daily stated that this week's meeting between senior officials from Beijing and Washington "would further enhance the favorable atmosphere, demonstrating that a stable and sound bilateral relationship serves the interests of both sides, and that the US business community highly values such certainty as it plans to expand further in the Chinese market." A US representative felt that the US business community was "inspired by the historic meeting between the leaders of China and the US in Busan, South Korea," and another observed how the six months preceding the meeting was a "period of uncertainty," which has possibly ended.

Since the last week, the two nations successively announced a one-year suspension of port fees on each other's vessels, and a parallel halt to related investigations in the shipping and shipbuilding sectors. This marked the latest step to implement the consensus reached at the bilateral talks during Trump's Asia tour. China agreed to end the retaliatory measures against the US semiconductor firms, and others, which could ease the pressures. The agreements were described as a "great success" by Trump, and were viewed by the more humorous voices as possible rehearsals for the grand dance among the global leaders at the new ballroom.

Trump identified India as the next success after months of uncertainty, and ongoing trade talks. Though the thaw was apparent with the US president waxing eloquent about the India Prime Minister Narendra Modi, it went up a few notches at the swearing-in of the new US Ambassador to India. His

statement temporarily lifts the doubts that the Trump-Xi waltzing in the new ballroom would sideline India. Mark the word "temporarily" since Trump's framing of the US-China summit as a "G-2" encounter signals a bipolar global power structure that is dominated by Washington and Beijing.

If the new ballroom intends to host only the elite, it could reduce New Delhi's leverage in multilateral forums, and negotiations. Thus, India could lose its edge as an alternative manufacturing hub unless it accelerates domestic reforms, and supply chain integration. While waiting for a formal opening of the

ballroom, amidst the "ifs," and the "buts," Trump's choice of a staunch loyalist, Sergio Gor, to become the ambassador in New Delhi shows his diplomatic priorities. He does not want anyone to interfere with his wishes.

"The tariffs on India are really high because of the Russian oil... but they have now substantially reduced Russian oil... so we will be bringing the tariffs down," said the US President. However, according to latest trade reports, India's crude oil imports from Russia remained almost the same in October, compared to September. Trump believed that they will substantially go down in December. Apart from this oil slick, there is the visa amnesia. The views on H-1B visa regime changes as fast as the Internet speeds.

Trump first imposed high visa fees, even as he talked about a change in the regime from lottery-based system to a merit-salary-based one. Then he claimed that Americans need certain skills and talents available with the foreigners. Recently, he maintained, "You also have to bring in talent." Earlier, he urged a South Korean firm to bring in specialists to train the Americans. It seems like the US president seeks the help of the East to get a few "teachers." It is a kind of reverse skill flow, from Delhi to Washington.

Someone needs to seriously ask Trump if he intends to use the "ornately designed and carefully crafted" ballroom for a dance with limited partners, or fill up the entire 90,000 sq ft (which has a "seated capacity" of 650 people, and maybe slightly less for dance space). Sadly, the space may not allow all the partners, accompanied as they are with paraphernalia of delegates. After all, imagine the following leaders in the same room. Russia's Vladimir Putin, China's Xi, and India's Modi may exchange handshakes with each other, and Trump. So will many others from Asia and Europe.

What may not gel with many may be the entry of Syria's President Ahmad al-Sharaa, whose bonhomie with Trump marks another dramatic reconciliation with a former wanted al-Qaeda insurgent. This meeting followed coordinated actions such as the removal of Syria from the sanction list, which cleared the legal and diplomatic obstacles. Politics can indeed make strange bedfellows, but al-Sharaa's inclusion may create a mess. Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, the Gulf states, and Israel will need to reassess Syria-related policies. They will figure out how to balance prospects for reconstruction, and the return of the refugee against security concerns and rivalries.

Trump has scripted new texts, and language in his private book on diplomacy, business, economics, and politics. In his view, past relationships do not matter much. Past friends can be enemies (Putin and Modi), past enemies can become part-friends (Xi), and past enemies can become strong friends (al-Sharaa). This is an apt time to accommodate more, rather than less, in the ballroom.

For ardent fans of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, it has been a few weeks of celebrations, joy, and congratulations. First, there was the news from the agriculture ministry that farm and horticulture output were set to break existing records in the current year. Then came the news from the big rating agencies, and other institutions that the GDP growth rate will exceed the earlier estimates. The icing on the cake was the sales of two-wheelers, which crossed the three-million mark in October 2025, the first time in history.

Sutanu Guru
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so low. No wonder the fans of Modi are beating the drums, and dancing in the aisles. But I wish to add a note of caution, and precaution for them.

For one, the 0.25 per cent number is possibly a one-off one. Do not be surprised, or shocked, if it goes up to 3-4-5 per cent in a few months. The low number, while welcome, is not a sign that the country has completely and unflinchingly contained inflation. For instance, vegetable inflation, or let us say, the prices of vegetables, have crashed by more than 25 per cent in October, and by more than 20 per cent earlier in September. No wonder there is negative food inflation. When it comes to cereals like rice, a large majority get free rice, and do not need to suffer the implications of inflation.

GST 2.0 is a one-off, and the rates and slabs will remain the same for a few years. So do not expect the GST effect to continue as it will wear off in a few months. The central bank, which sets the core interest rate, does not have much control over inflation because it is caused due to a sustained rise in food prices. Thus, the events and decisions that pushed prices down, and which were aided by good monsoons, good Kharif production, and other factors, may change.

Now, let us focus on the really jarring

Quiet caution on inflation

data, which is included in the official press release on retail inflation in October. While the national average is 0.25 per cent, the figure for Punjab is more than seven times higher at 1.81 per cent. Karnataka is worse at 2.3 per cent, and the number for Jammu and Kashmir is close to three per cent. As you ponder, the kicker, shocker, or a punch lies in Kerala, where the price rise is 8.95 per cent to be precise. One wonders how the inflation can be so different in different states located in different regions.

The massive difference between Kerala and India can be caused only by two factors. One, the rate of the price rise in regular consumption items in Kerala was incredibly high. Two, the consumption basket in Kerala is drastically different from Punjab, Karnataka, and Jammu and Kashmir, as also the other states. Remember, in Bihar, Odisha, and a few states, the retail inflation is extremely low, and borders on the negative. Clearly, both the factors seem absurd, and cannot be explained logically. There is something missing.

The solution may be simple. Several committees, which created a representative Consumer Index, repeatedly asserted that the diversity of India means that a single inflation rate is a difficult proposition. We are being forced to live with it, just as Indians are forced to live with a single time zone. We know that when the sun sets in Guwahati, Assam, and it is pitch dark, there is bright sunlight in Mumbai. Something similar seems to be happening with retail inflation, and the way India measures it.

Hopefully, this will change, and mercifully, the Government has announced that in February, 2026 it will launch a new consumer price index, which will be more representative, and give adequate weights to the items of regular consumption. This may sort out, and eliminate obsolete items in the current basket of goods used to measure consumption. I may point out that C Voter has launched a serious academic exercise to launch an aspirational Consumer Price Index in 2026. In Bihar, it recently

conducted preliminary surveys.

Bihar is an excellent starting point for a pilot because its per capita expenditure is the lowest in the country, and this will help C Voter to gradually arrive at a truly representative index. It is the lower classes, and the poor, whose spend needs to be accounted for, and not the middle class and rich. The latter two segments may crib about inflation, but are not really bothered about it. What matters is the rate of inflation for those who buy scooters, motorcycles, and bicycles.

In fact, most experts feel that the Consumer Price Index is biased towards the big cities, and undermines the situation in the smaller towns, and villages. Similarly, there is an inherent inability to account for the introduction, and purchases of new kinds of goods, improvements in quality, and substitution effects. New goods bias overestimates inflation. Quality upgrades may do the same, as a product may be expensive, but more productive. The fixed basket approach may lead to wrong calculations. The same reasons may achieve the opposite results in some cases.

One should never forget the base effect syndrome. Since food inflation was high a few months ago, the huge negative rates in September and October were driven by the higher earlier bases. This is why when one looks at sector-wise changes in prices, housing inflation was almost three per cent in October, healthcare was nearer to four per cent, and fuel and light was two per cent. These figures are way higher than the national average. This implies that even as consumers suffer with higher prices in these areas, their gain was in terms of food purchases, which were driven down by the Kharif crop.

As ardent consumers of data and information, we need to be aware of these issues. An average is an average, and not indicative of the nuanced changes across sectors, and states. One needs to go beyond the average to understand how price rise affects different segments of the society, and how changing consumption patterns have a differing impact on different sections. The one-size-fits-all does not work.

The author has worked for leading media houses, authored two books, and is now Executive Director, C Voter Foundation

Asia’s Potential Bipolarity: A vision of harmonious power between India and China



BHASKAR JYOTI MAHANTA

In the evolving geopolitics of the 21st century, the idea that Asia might become a new global power centre is increasingly compelling. Within this vision, two giants — India and China — naturally stand out. But rather than framing their roles in adversarial terms, what if India and China developed a cooperative relationship, each strong and independent, yet mutually respectful and supportive? What if that sort of partnership became the axis of Asia's rise — not a bipolar rivalry, but a constructive bipolarity? We explore that possibility: how it might come about, what it would look like, what the core factors of success and failure are and how this might translate into Asia becoming the world's strategic fulcrum.

Imagine India and China as the twin pillars of Asia's future. Each commands massive demographic, economic and strategic weight. Together, they would represent an Asian axis of power: China bringing scale, infrastructure, and manufacturing prowess; India bringing innovation, a relatively youthful population and soft-power resonance rooted in its democratic system. The key nuance is not merging into one hegemon, nor one country subsuming the other, but a bipolar axis of two complementary major powers, cooperating rather than contending. Their geopolitical outlook would shift from zero-sum competition to a shared recognition that a rising Asia benefits both and that in a global order marked by uncertainty, unity yields dividends. Asia thus ceases to be a theatre of great-power competition dominated by external actors, and instead becomes a platform for endogenous growth, innovation and influence, with India and China at its heart. If realised, Asia might shift from being perceived as a region to be contested, to being a region that leads.

The sheer power of this combined entity forms the foundational strength of this vision. Together, India and China already account for a huge fraction of global economic activity; on a Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) basis, their combined output is already immense. This scale creates an unshakable base for Asia-wide demand and investment. Critically, their economic profiles are complementary: China's strength lies in large-scale manufacturing and sophisticated supply chains, while India's is rooted in its consumption-driven growth, its vast digital economy, and



its leadership in services exports. If China's capital and industrial expertise were leveraged with India's consumer base and human capital, the resulting synergy could create an unparalleled economic engine for Asia. Furthermore, with the two Asian powers aligned, their influence on global Governance would be amplified. Both nations are key voices for the Global South and their coordinated action—whether on climate change negotiations or demands for multilateral institutional reform—would solidify Asia's voice, moving the world toward a truly multipolar structure. Moreover, successful cooperation itself would be a strategic win, reducing the immense cost and risk associated with a classic zero-sum rivalry, freeing up resources for domestic development.

However, the path to this harmonious bipolarity is riddled with formidable obstacles—the very realities that currently shape the relationship. The single most critical deterrent is the deep-seated mistrust stemming from their long, unresolved border. Historical conflicts and recent clashes mean that territorial disputes

remain an active and potentially fatal flashpoint. This fragility is compounded by a structural economic issue: the massive and widening trade imbalance. India's fears of being structurally dependent on China for critical imports, coupled with the low level of mutual investment, breeds strategic anxiety and undermines confidence in long-term economic alignment. Beyond economics, the divergent political systems and strategic cultures pose inherent challenges to trust and transparency.

China's party-led system and its vision for a regionally centralised power structure conflict with India's democratic and federal system, which seeks a multipolar Asia where its autonomy is paramount. Past initiatives like the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar (BCIM) Economic Corridor have ultimately stalled, demonstrating the difficulty of sustaining high-level cooperation mechanisms when core strategic friction persists. Furthermore, both countries face immense domestic pressures—China managing its ageing population and debt, India tackling infrastructure and

inequality—which can easily force them to turn inward and sideline the cooperative agenda.

Yet, if these weaknesses can be managed, the opportunities unlocked are transformational for Asia. A cooperative axis could, for the first time, deliver pan-Asian connectivity. Infrastructure corridors, moving beyond old, stalled proposals, could be built with shared finance and technology, knitting South, Southeast and Central Asia more tightly and making regional supply chains more resilient. This would be a crucial step in accelerating the shift of the world's economic centre toward Asia. Moreover, in the critical area of technology and green transition, the potential synergy is enormous.

By combining China's overwhelming manufacturing capacity in solar and EV components with India's market scale and innovation ecosystems, the two giants could lead the green tech revolution and set new global standards for sustainable development. This coordinated leadership, backed by jointly reformed regional institutions, could truly empower the Global South, allowing these nations to partner with Asia on

their own terms, rather than being subject to the strategic manipulations of external powers.

The successful realisation of this vision, however, is constantly shadowed by significant threats. A resurgence of border escalation remains the most dangerous risk, capable of instantly collapsing any framework of cooperation and plunging the region into crisis. This threat is amplified by the external great-power dynamic. The involvement of the US, Japan, and others in the Indo-Pacific, through mechanisms like the Quad, introduces persistent centrifugal forces.

These alliances inherently pull India in one direction and China in another, risking the fragmentation of the cooperative axis into competing blocs. Even without conflict, the underlying competition for regional primacy—who influences neighbours, who leads global fora—may reassert itself, eroding the necessary trust. If the India-China axis is viewed by smaller nations not as a partnership for prosperity but as a new form of dominance, they may resist, creating fragmentation and undermining the entire Asia-wide project.

The future, therefore, hinges on a single, audacious pivot. Imagine a scenario in the early 2030s. India has sustained high growth and expanded its manufacturing base; China has upgraded its economy and consolidated its infrastructure networks. The two nations establish a "Shared Asian Prosperity Framework"—a commitment to structurally reduce India's trade deficit, jointly invest in advanced manufacturing in India and co-finance regional green technology corridors. They commit to a high-level strategic mechanism to manage the border, freeing up resources and attention.

This strategic choice—to opt for managed cooperation over antagonism—allows for the creation of an Asian architecture where both are strong, respected, and autonomous, yet interdependent. If India and China manage to align interests, build trust, invest together and lead regionally, Asia's rise could be orderly, inclusive and dominant.

The ultimate challenge for policymakers, business leaders and strategists is to foster the frameworks and mind-sets that turn rivalry into partnership. Because if the two most populous nations on earth, neighbours with massive stakes in each other's stability, opt for cooperation, the strategic centre of gravity could very well shift to Asia.

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WPI inflation falls to 27-month low in October on GST cut, favourable base

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ New Delhi

Wholesale price inflation fell to a 27-month low of (-) 1.21 per cent in October, led by a sharp deflation in food items like pulses and vegetables and lower prices of fuel and manufactured items, Government data showed on Friday.

Wholesale Price Index (WPI)-based inflation was 0.13 per cent in September and 2.75 per cent in October last year.

"The negative rate of inflation in October 2025, is primarily due to decrease in prices of food articles, crude petroleum and natural gas, electricity, mineral oils and manufacture of basic metals etc.," the industry ministry said in a statement.

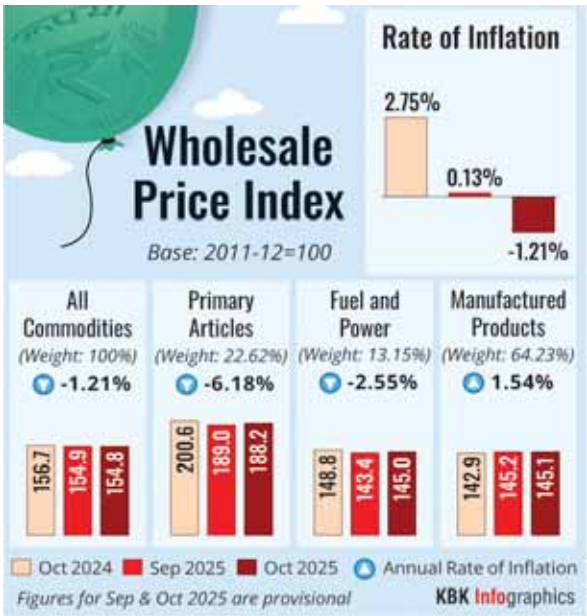
According to WPI data, deflation in food articles was 8.31 per cent in October, compared to 5.22 per cent in September, with onion, potato, vegetables and pulses seeing a decline in prices.

In vegetables, deflation was 34.97 per cent in October, against 24.41 per cent in September. In pulses, deflation was at 16.50 per cent in October, while in potato and onion it was 39.88 per cent and 65.43 per cent, respectively.

In the case of manufactured products, inflation eased to 1.54 per cent, from 2.33 per cent in September. Fuel and power witnessed a negative inflation or deflation of 2.55 per cent, against 2.58 per cent in September, thus recording a decline for seven consecutive months.

"Looking ahead, a favourable base effect in the rest of FY26 is expected to keep the wholesale index into deflation. Consequently, Ind-Ra anticipates wholesale deflation in November 2025 to be under 1 per cent," said Paras Jasrai, Associate Director at India Ratings and Research.

The fall in WPI inflation is on expected lines after the rates of Goods and Services



Tax (GST) were slashed effective September 22.

GST rates on daily use mass consumption items were cut as part of the tax

September retail or consumer price index inflation was 1.44 per cent.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI), which takes into account retail inflation, had kept benchmark policy rates unchanged at 5.5 per cent last month.

The decline in both retail and WPI inflation would put pressure on the RBI to cut benchmark interest rates in the next monetary policy review meeting scheduled on December 3-5.

Jasrai, however, said based on the trend of India's economic growth, the rationale for monetary easing is not very strong. FY26 retail inflation is now expected to be going down to around 2.5 per cent.

"However, to prevent the economy going deep in sluggish and weak economic growth, the RBI may go for a 25-50 bp cut in repo rate in its December 2025 monetary policy," he added.

PHDCCI, CEO and Secretary General, Ranjeet Mehta said the chamber expects WPI inflation to remain range-bound due to benign international crude oil prices, comfortable buffer stocks of food-grains and healthy kharif harvest.



rate rationalisation under which the four-tier tax structure was brought down to just 2 slabs of 5 and 18 per cent.

The tax cuts which lowered prices of goods, plus a favourable inflation base of last year, has pulled down both wholesale and retail inflation.

Data released last week showed, retail inflation was at an all-time low of 0.25 per cent in October, driven down by GST rate cuts and a high base of last year. In

India, Canada to boost partnership in critical minerals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ New Delhi

India and Canada have agreed to encourage long-term supply chain partnerships in critical minerals and clean energy collaboration essential for the energy transition and new — age industrial expansion.

Besides, both countries have agreed to identify and expand investment and trading opportunities in aerospace and dual-use capabilities partnerships, leveraging Canada's established presence in India and the growth of India's aviation sector.

Canada's Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development Maninder Sidhu was on an official visit to India between November 11 and 14 at the invitation of India's Minister for Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal.

The ministers reaffirmed the strength and continuity of the India-Canada economic partnership and reiterated

their commitment to deepening bilateral cooperation through sustained dialogue, mutual respect and forward-looking initiatives, a joint statement said.

"Recognising the importance of supply chain resilience, the ministers exchanged views on global developments and reflected on lessons from recent disruptions.

They underscored the relevance of strengthening resilience in critical sectors, including agriculture and highlighted the need for diversified and reliable supply chains as essential for supporting long-term economic stability," it said.

The ministers expressed satisfaction with the progress made in strengthening bilateral economic engagement and reaffirmed their shared commitment to elevate the economic partnership to reflect global developments and evolving supply chain and trade dynamics, it said.

They emphasised the importance of maintaining



momentum in the bilateral dialogue and supporting people-to-people ties, which provide a strong foundation for the partnership, it said.

The ministers agreed to sustained ministerial engagements with the trade and investment community in both Canada and India early next year, it added.

On the bilateral trade, the statement said, it has reached \$23.66 billion in 2024, with

merchandise trade valued at nearly \$8.98 billion, a substantial 10 per cent increase over the previous year.

The ministers emphasised the importance of continued engagement with the private sector to unlock new opportunities for trade and investment, it said.

They welcomed the steady expansion of two-way investment flows, including notable Canadian institutional

investment in India and the growing presence of Indian firms in Canada, which together support tens of thousands of jobs in both economies, it said.

The ministers committed to maintaining an open, transparent and predictable investment environment and to exploring avenues for deeper collaboration across priority and emerging sectors, it added.

Germany to subsidise industry’s energy prices in bid to revitalise economy

ASSOCIATED PRESS
■ Berlin

Germany's Governing coalition agreed to subsidise energy prices for heavy industry over the next three years as it tries to breathe new life into a stubbornly slow economy that is weighing on Europe's performance. Chancellor Friedrich Merz said he and other coalition leaders agreed Thursday evening to introduce an electricity price of about 5 euro cents per kilowatt hour starting January 1, through 2028, to "support companies that use a lot of electricity and face international competition."

Talks on the plan with the European Union's executive commission are near-complete and "we assume we will get permission for this," Merz said. The German economy, Europe's biggest, has shrunk

for the past two years and has not seen significant growth for much longer. The conservative Merz's coalition Government with the centre-left Social Democrats has made revitalising it a priority since taking office in early May.

Still, results haven't shown through yet, with gross domestic product stagnating in the third quarter. This week, the Government's panel of independent economic advisers forecast it will grow by an unimpressive 0.9 per cent next year after edging up 0.2 per cent this year. The country's economy, which is heavy on manufacturing and exports, has been held back by multiple factors including high energy prices, competition from Chinese producers of autos and industrial machinery, a lack of skilled workers and excessive bureaucracy.

India should be a leader of reform process at WTO: Ngozi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Visakhapatnam

World Trade Organisation Chief Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala on Friday said India should be a leader of the reform process at the WTO. She said that India's economy is growing at a healthy pace and it is a leader in areas such as technology. She said that there is a need to look at areas in the WTO which are not working and discuss ways to correct that.

"...and here India can be a leader, India should be a leader in the reform process at the WTO. India should be a leader in making sure that we do not stay in a system that becomes more power based instead of rules based," Director-General of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala said here at



CI's partnership Summit 2025. She added that India is a fast growing economy and has the scale and credibility to provide leadership not just in this region but globally.

Referring to high tariffs imposed by the US, she said the member nations should pay attention to the concerns flagged by America.

India too has flagged concerns on issues like public stockholding, she said adding repeating past grievances will not help to

build a strong global trading system. She appealed to all the members of the WTO to work together to strengthen the global trading system. The US has raised concerns over the way WTO arms are functioning and has called for reforms in the WTO including in its dispute redressal mechanism.

WTO is a 166-member Geneva-based multilateral body that deals with trade related issues. India has been a member since 1995. The WTO also said that a country may need bilateral trade agreements to push their growth but "you also need a multi-lateral system to move forward."

"That is why the WTO is important," she said, adding the world is witnessing huge disruptions in global trade at present.

FROM THE WORLD

UAE

Kerala teen dies in Dubai

A Kerala teen, who was visiting Dubai, died after falling from the top of a building in Deira, local media reported. Mohammed Mishaal, 19, from Kozhikode district of Kerala, was visiting his cousins and had been in Dubai for about 15 days, *Gulf News* reported. The incident occurred on November 7 when Mishaal reportedly went to the terrace of a multi-storey building to take photographs of flights. "He was staying with his cousins while his parents remained in Kozhikode. He had been in Dubai for about 15 days," Haneefa K K, a family friend, told. Mishaal was rushed to Rashid Hospital immediately after the accident, but could not be saved, *Khaleej Times* quoted M K K as saying. "He had several internal injuries," MK said, adding that Mishaal was alive until he reached the hospital but died soon after.

INDONESIA

Landslides in Java, 2 dead

Landslides triggered by torrential rains in Indonesia's Java island killed two people and left 21 others missing. Rescuers are still searching for the 21 reported missing. Several days of heavy rainfall in the region caused the landslides that hit dozens of houses in three villages in Indonesia's Central Java province on Thursday evening, officials said in a statement. "The unstable ground conditions posed a challenge for the search and rescue team in searching for victims during the golden hour. Nevertheless, the joint team continued their search and rescue efforts on Friday morning," said National Disaster Management Agency spokesperson Abdul Muhari in the statement. He added that heavy equipment was deployed to speed up the operation.

Russian drone, missile attack on Kyiv kills 5

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Kyiv

Russia unleashed a major missile and drone barrage on Kyiv early in Friday, killing five people, starting fires and scattering debris as the sound of explosions boomed across the city, Ukrainian authorities said. A pregnant woman was among at least 34 people injured. Emergency crews responded to multiple strikes during the night, said Tymur Tkachenko, head of Kyiv's military administration. Russia used at least 430 drones and 18 missiles in the attack that left gaping holes in some city buildings, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said. Russia has waged a devastating aerial campaign against Ukraine since its all-out invasion of its neighbor nearly four years ago. U.S.-led diplomatic efforts this year to stop the fighting have so far come to nothing. Friday's aerial assault, which also targeted Odesa in the south and Kharkiv in the northeast, was mostly aimed at Kyiv, where drones and missiles smashed into high-rise apartment blocks, according to Zelenskyy. It was "a specially calculated attack to cause as much harm as possible to people and civilians," he said in a post on Telegram. Moscow denies targeting civilian



Rescuers working on the scene of a building damaged after a Russian attack in Kyiv Ukraine

AP

areas, with the Russian Defense Ministry saying Friday it carried out an overnight strike on Ukraine's "military-industrial and energy facilities." Ukrainian officials scoff at those claims, showing repeated damage to homes and public buildings. The attack was the biggest on Kyiv in almost three weeks. Most recent Russian aerial attacks have aimed at electricity infrastructure around the country ahead of

the bitter winter months. Ukraine used its American-made Patriot air defense systems to repel the attack and shot down 14 missiles, Zelenskyy said. The Ukrainian leader has pleaded with foreign supporters to send more of the sophisticated systems. In the Odesa region, Russian drones struck a busy street in Chornomorsk, killing two people and injuring seven others, regional military

administration chief Oleh Kiper said. Mariia Kalchenko said it was a miracle she survived after her building was hit. "I didn't hear anything, I just realized that my hair was on fire," the 46-year-old volunteer rescue dog handler told The Associated Press. She turned on her flashlight and saw that her dog had moved away in fright. "I turned around and saw that there was no wall, and there was a neighbor's apartment,

the neighbor was screaming, there was no door, and the flames were going from the front door into the apartment," she said. Oleh Hudyma, 59, said she became aware of the attack and intended to go to a bomb shelter but she wasn't quick enough. "I got up, got dressed, went out, and there was an explosion. I couldn't hear the (drone) engine running, just an explosion, flames, everything flew," she

said. "I was in the kitchen and just fell to the floor." City authorities warned that power and water outages are possible. Eight of the capital's 10 districts reported damage. Emergency crews fought fires in apartment blocks, debris from explosions was strewn across yards and cars parked in the streets were set ablaze. In the wider Kyiv region, Russian strikes damaged critical infrastructure and private homes, injuring at least one civilian, the head of the regional military administration, Mykola Kalashnyk, said. A 55-year-old man in Bila Tserkva suffered burns and was hospitalized, he said. Fires broke out in private houses in the capital's suburbs. The strike came as European Union officials warned this week that Ukraine must continue to crack down on corruption following a major graft scandal that has put top nuclear energy officials under scrutiny. But they also offered assurances that aid will continue to flow as Kyiv strains to hold back Russia's invasion. Russia accuses Ukraine of hitting civilian sites. Ukraine has responded by launching its own domestically developed drones and missiles against targets on Russian soil, especially oil refineries and depots that

provide Moscow with income and manufacturing plants that supply the armed forces. The Russian Defense Ministry said Friday that its air defense forces shot down 216 Ukrainian drones overnight over a number of Russian regions, including the annexed Crimea. It did not mention missiles. However, Zelenskyy said Ukraine used a modification of domestically produced Neptune missiles to strike targets deep inside Russia. The Russian Defense Ministry accused Ukraine of hitting civilian facilities and claimed the overnight strike on Kyiv came in response to that. Over 60 Ukrainian drones were intercepted over the southern Krasnodar region that borders Crimea, according to the Defense Ministry. A total of 45 drones were destroyed over the Saratov region deeper inside Russia, while another 19 were shot down over Crimea. In Novorossiysk, a port city in the Krasnodar region, the attack damaged an oil depot at the Sheskhari transshipment complex, as well as unidentified "coastal structures," local authorities said. According to the Meduza independent news outlet, Sheskhari is one of the largest oil loading complexes for transshipment of oil and oil products in the south of Russia.

Jaishankar meets UN Chief Guterres in New York

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ United Nations

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar met UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres here and said he valued the UN chief's assessment of the current global order and its implications for multilateralism and also thanked him for consistent support for India's growth. "Good to meet with UNSG @antonioguterres in New York today. Valued his assessment of the current global order and its implications for multilateralism. Also appreciated his perspectives on various regional hotspots," Jaishankar said in a post on social media on Thursday (local time). Jaishankar met Guterres in the UN headquarters and was accompanied by India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador P Harish, Deputy Permanent



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar with Secretary-General of the United Nations António Guterres during a meeting in New York

AP

Representative to the UN Ambassador Yojna Patel and officials from the Permanent Mission of India to the UN. Jaishankar said he thanked Guterres "for clear and con-

sistent support for India's growth and development" and he looks forward to welcoming the UN Chief in India. Jaishankar was in Canada

for the G7 Foreign Ministers Meeting where he had met US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and held bilateral meetings with other global counterparts.

China, Thailand pledge closer ties

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Beijing

China's leader Xi Jinping and Thai King Maha Vajiralongkorn pledged closer ties on Friday during the first-ever visit to China by a reigning Thai monarch. Xi and his wife, Peng Liyuan, greeted Vajiralongkorn and his wife, Queen Suthida, at Beijing's vast Great Hall of the People. The visit was intended to mark the 50th anniversary of the countries establishing diplomatic ties. Xi described China and Thailand as "truly good relatives, good friends and good partners," according to the state-run Xinhua news agency. Beijing was looking forward to boosting agricultural imports from Thailand and advancing cooperation in fields such as railway development, artificial intelligence and aerospace, Xi said.



Thailand's King Maha Vajiralongkorn and Chinese President Xi Jinping review the honour guard during a welcoming ceremony in Beijing

AP

Vajiralongkorn described his country's relationship with China as "brotherly cooperation" and expressed his desire to deepen exchanges in various areas. The Thai royals were scheduled to visit a Buddhist temple and an aerospace development hub in Beijing, as well as attend a state banquet. Besides a trip to Bhutan in April, the visit to

China was Vajiralongkorn's only second official trip abroad since his ascension to the throne, in 2016, signalling a warming of ties with China. Thailand remains an official military ally of the United States, but China is the kingdom's biggest trading partner and increasingly a source of military equipment.

Ordinance on referendum unconstitutional: Jurists

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Dhaka

Bangladesh overnight issued an ordinance in line with interim Government chief Professor Muhammad Yunus proposed referendum on a political charter, drawing immediate rebuttal from jurists who called it "unconstitutional". President Muhammad Shahabuddin on late Thursday signed into ordinance the "July Charter Implementation Order" while the document was drafted by Yunus-headed National Consensus Commission after protracted consultations with several political parties excluding deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina's now disbanded Awami League. In a nationwide televised address Chief Adviser Yunus on Thursday said plebiscite would be staged simultaneously with the planned national election in February



FILE PHOTO

next year to elicit peoples mandate for the charter. "Most of the decisions taken in the July Charter, including those in the gazette, are contrary to the current Constitution. Since the Constitution is still in force, the President cannot legally sign this gazette," leading constitutional expert and former law professor Shahdeen Malik said in a newspaper interview.

Bangladesh Constitution kept no provision for referendum or plebiscite while its Article 93 of says no ordinance could be promulgated "for altering or repealing any provision of this Constitution". The charter contained over 80 proposals including issues requiring amendments to the Constitution but Yunus said the proposals were synopsized in four issues while the voters would just need to

say "yes" or "no" in a question covering the four issues. Malik told Bangladesh's the Business Standard newspaper that the referendum "would have been acceptable if the Constitution had been annulled or suspended under martial law (but) since neither has happened, everything should proceed according to the existing Constitution". He feared the voters would be unable to make an informed decision on the referendum issues and will "leave their ballots blank" on the referendum and vote for their chosen MP candidates alone. "The public first needs to understand the issues they are voting 'Yes' or 'No' on", he said. The ordinance stipulated the next parliament must complete constitutional reform, as outlined in the charter and by the referendum's result, within 180 working days from the date of its first sitting.

Iran seize oil tanker: says US

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Dubai

Iran seized a Marshall Islands-flagged oil tanker as it travelled through the narrow Strait of Hormuz on Friday, a US official said, turning the ship into Iranian territorial waters in the first such interdiction in months in the strategic waterway. Iran did not immediately acknowledge the seizure, though it comes as Tehran has been increasingly warning it can strike back after facing a 12-day war in June with Israel that saw the US strike Iranian nuclear sites. The ship, the Talara, had been travelling from Ajman, United Arab Emirates, onward to Singapore when Iranian forces intercepted it, said the US defence official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss intelligence matters. A US Navy MQ-4C Triton drone

had been circling above the area where the Talara was for hours on Friday observing the seizure, flight-tracking data analysed by The Associated Press showed. A private security firm, Ambrey, described the assault as involving three small boats approaching the Talara. The British military's United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations centre separately acknowledged the incident, saying a possible "State activity" forced the Talara to turn into Iranian territorial waters. The ship's Greek owners did not respond to requests for comment. The Navy has blamed Iran for a series of limpet mine attacks on vessels that damaged tankers in 2019, as well as for a fatal drone attack on an Israeli-linked oil tanker that killed two European crew members in 2021. Those

attacks began after US President Donald Trump in his first term in office unilaterally withdrew from Iran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers. The last major seizure came when Iran took two Greek tankers in May 2022 and held them until November of that year. Those attacks found themselves subsumed by the Iranian-backed Houthis assaults targeting ships during the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip, which drastically reduced shipping in the crucial Red Sea corridor. The years of tensions between Iran and the West, coupled with the situation in the Gaza Strip, exploded into a full-scale 12-day war in June. Iran long has threatened to close off the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf through which 20 per cent of all oil traded passes.

Tourists bus crashes in Bali, killing 5 passengers

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Denpasar

A minibus carrying Chinese tourists sped out of control and crashed Friday morning on the Indonesian resort island of Bali, killing five of the passengers and injuring eight others. The minibus was travelling from the southern side to the northern side of the island on a winding, downhill road. The driver lost control and the vehicle veered off the road and into a garden, striking a tree, said Ida Bagus Widwan Sutadi, police chief in the Buleleng regency. "Due to the driver's lack of caution when turning and descending, he veered off the asphalt road and into a community garden, causing a traffic accident," Sutadi said in the statement. The national road in the Padangbulia village area was dry at the time of the crash.



China begins sea trials of amphibious assault ship

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Beijing

China on Friday began the sea trial of Sichuan, a large amphibious assault ship fitted with an electromagnetic aircraft launch system (EMALS) to operate fighter planes, helicopters and drones, according to the Chinese Navy. The launch follows the commissioning of the country's third aircraft carrier, the Fujian, by Chinese President Xi Jinping earlier this month. The aircraft carrier is stated to be the most modern warship equipped with EMALS, which is used only by the American aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford. The first hull of Sichuan, China's Type 076 amphibious assault ship, set off from a port of Hudong-Zhonghua Shipyard in Shanghai and sailed toward the relevant sea area for its maiden sea trial, an official statement by the Chinese Navy said.



After a decade, Syria reopens embassy in London

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Beirut

Syria's foreign minister officially reopened the country's embassy in London on Thursday after more than a decade-long closure, the latest step in Syria's reintegration into the international community after the ouster of former President Bashar Assad. The visit by Foreign Minister Asaad al-Shibani to the UK came after a historic visit to Washington by interim President Ahmad al-Sharaa, the first by a president from Syria since the country's independence in 1946. Al-Shibani, speaking at an event held by the London-based Chatham House international affairs think tank, said that his meeting with his British counterpart, Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper, was "successful." "Relations between Syria and Britain are advanced relations and we are not talking about opening a new page."

Bodies of 15 Palestinians returned by Israel, say Gaza health officials

ASSOCIATED PRESS
■ Khan Younis

Israel returned the bodies of 15 Palestinians to Gaza on Friday, officials at Nasser hospital in Khan Younis said, in the latest step to fulfilling the terms of the fragile US-brokered ceasefire agreement.

The bodies were returned after militants late Thursday handed over the body of one of the last four remaining Israeli hostages taken during the October 7, 2023, attack that launched the war in Gaza. Israel identified the returned body as that of Meny Godard, who was abducted from Kibbutz Be'eri in southern Israel.

His wife, Ayelet, was killed during the attack. The armed wings of Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad said Godard's body was recovered in southern Gaza.

The remains of 25 hostages have been returned to Israel since the ceasefire between Israel and Hamas began on October 10. There are still three more in Gaza that need to be recovered and handed over. Hamas returned 20 living hostages to Israel on October 13.

For each hostage returned, Israel has released the remains of 15 Palestinians, an exchange central to the ceasefire's first phase. Overall, the number of bodies of Palestinians received so far



Red Cross convoy carrying the body of a person believed to be a deceased hostage handed over by Hamas militants makes its way toward the border crossing with Israel, to be transferred to Israeli authorities in Deir al-Balah, central Gaza Strip

is 330, of which only 95 have been formally identified, according to Gaza Health Ministry officials.

Health officials in Gaza have said identifying the remains handed over by Israel is complicated by a lack of DNA testing kits.

The exchanges have gone ahead even as Israel and Hamas have accused each other of violating other terms of the deal. Israel has accused Hamas handing over partial remains in some

instances and staging the discovery of bodies in others, while Hamas has accused Israel of opening fire at civilians and restricting the flow of humanitarian aid into the territory.

The next parts of the 20-point plan call for creating an international stabilization force, forming a technocratic Palestinian Government and disarming Hamas. The fragile agreement aims to wind down the war that was triggered by

the Hamas-led attack on southern Israel that killed about 1,200 people and saw 251 taken hostage.

Israel responded with a sweeping military offensive that has killed more than 69,100 Palestinians in Gaza, according to Gaza's Health Ministry. The ministry, part of the Hamas-run Government and staffed by medical professionals, maintains detailed records viewed as generally reliable by independent experts.

Palestinians held for 12 hours on South Africa plane

ASSOCIATED PRESS
■ Johannesburg

South African authorities faced heavy criticism on Friday after they held more than 150 Palestinians, including a woman who is nine months pregnant, on a plane for around 12 hours due to complications with their travel documents.

A pastor who was allowed to meet with the passengers while they were still stuck on the plane said it was very extremely and that children were screaming and crying.

The Palestinians landed on a charter plane at Johannesburg's OR Tambo International Airport on Thursday morning after a stopover in Nairobi, Kenya, South Africa's Border Management Authority said in a statement.

The Palestinian passengers did not have exit stamps from Israeli authorities, did not indicate how long they would be staying in South Africa and had not given local addresses, leading immigration authorities to deny them entry, the statement said.

The 153 passengers including families and children were allowed to leave the plane on Thursday night after South Africa's Ministry of Home Affairs intervened and a local non-governmental organization called Gift of the Givers offered to accommodate them. The Border Management Authority said 23 passengers had since travelled on to other countries,

THE PALESTINIAN PASSENGERS DID NOT HAVE EXIT STAMPS FROM ISRAELI AUTHORITIES

leaving 130 in South Africa.

Gift of the Givers founder Imtiaz Sooliman said it was the second plane carrying Palestinians to land in South Africa in the last two weeks and that the passengers themselves did not know where they were going. He said both planes were believed to be carrying people from war-torn Gaza.

It was not immediately clear who organized the charter plane. A South African pastor who was given access to the plane while it was on the tarmac told national broadcaster SABC that many of the Palestinians now intended to claim asylum in South Africa. South Africa has long been a supporter of the Palestinian cause and the treatment of the travellers has sparked anger.

"It's dire," Nigel Branken, the pastor, said in an interview with SABC on Thursday from the plane as he described the conditions. "When I came onto the plane it was excruciatingly hot. There were lots of children just sweating and screaming and crying."

"I do not believe this is what South Africa is about. South Africa should be letting these people into the airport at the very least and letting them apply for asylum."

Security forces kill 26 terrorists in Pakistan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Peshawar

Pakistani security forces killed 26 terrorists in multiple intelligence-based operations in the restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, officials said on Friday.

The three operations were conducted in the Bajaur, Kohat and Karak districts on Thursday. The operation in Bajaur was conducted after receiving credible information about the presence of a large number of terrorists in the Gaddar village.

"As soon as the information was received, the forces carried out an extremely effective and targeted operation, during which 22 terrorists



were killed," a security official said. The terrorists were hiding in the village which the locals had already evacuated with the cooperation of tribal elders.

"At the time of the military operation, all the houses around the target were empty, due to which no civilians

were harmed," the security official added. "The nation of Pakistan and its security agencies are united to completely eliminate this scourge of terrorism, and these operations will continue until the last terrorist is eliminated," the official added. Separately, according

to District Police Officer (DPO) Kohat, Shehbaz Ilahi, the station house officer of Saddar police station was on a routine patrol with his team when the terrorists opened fire on them near Bazid Khel.

Police retaliated immediately and engaged the attackers in a gun battle, which resulted in the death of all three of them on the spot. In another incident, acting on intelligence, police launched an operation in Mir Kalam Banda area in Karak district.

One terrorist, wanted in multiple serious cases, was killed during the intense exchange of fire, a spokesperson for the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) said.

Druze group, Syria force clash in Sweida



ASSOCIATED PRESS
■ Damascus

A new round of clashes between Druze armed groups and Government forces in the province of Sweida in southern Syrian had subsided Friday but left fears of another escalation.

Clashes on Thursday led to both sides blaming each other for violating a ceasefire that ended several days of violent fighting in July. There were reports of people wounded on both sides, but no deaths reported. The National Guard, the de facto military in Sweida, accused Government forces of launching an attack on the town of al-Majdal Thursday, "employing heavy and medium weapons and attack drones, in an aggressive attempt to breach our defence lines and target vital locations."

"Our forces bravely and with high combat efficiency repelled this attack, inflicting heavy losses on the attacking forces in terms of equipment and personnel," it said in a statement.

The Government in Damascus accused the Sweida factions of violating the ceasefire first. Mustafa al-Bakour, the Damascus-appointed governor of Sweida province, said "some factions and the so-called

National Guard" launched "attacks on de-escalation points." The attacks, he added, "constitute a clear violation of international agreements and obstruct efforts to rebuild and prepare for the return of residents to their villages."

Saber Abou Ras, a political analyst who lives in Sweida city, said Thursday's clashes "were very intense and violent" and included attacks with drones, anti-aircraft machine guns and mortar shells. He said Israeli warplanes could be heard over the city of Sweida, but it was not clear if they launched any strikes.

Abou Ras said he believes the Government forces had launched "a retaliatory attack" after the police chief of the local governmental body in Sweida, along with a "large group of officers" took over a checkpoint formerly controlled by Syrian Government security forces in the northern countryside of the province.

Foreign Minister Asaad al-Shibani, speaking at an event held by the Chatham House international affairs think tank during a visit to London said there had been "mistakes made by all sides" in Sweida. meeting. "Please consider Indonesia your second home and Indonesia respects you highly."

Jordan, Indonesia strengthen ties

ASSOCIATED PRESS
■ Jakarta

Jordan's King and Indonesia's leader on Friday held talks as the two longtime friends agreed to strengthen military cooperation and economic ties between the two Muslim-majority nations.

King Abdullah II and President Prabowo Subianto share a long-standing personal relationship as alumni of the US Fort Benning military academy that dates to 1995 when both were still serving as military officers in their respective countries.

Three years later, Subianto sought self-exile in Jordan amid allegations of his involvement in the 1998 abductions of political activists during the dark days of Indonesia's military dictatorship. Despite his stateless status at the time, he was welcomed by then monarch King Hussein,

Abdullah's father. Subianto lived in Amman for several years before returning home in 2008. Abdullah's state visit to Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim-majority country and Southeast Asia's largest economy, was the fourth stop on his tour to Asian nations that includes Japan, Vietnam, Singapore and Pakistan.

Abdullah received a warm welcome in Indonesia's capital, Jakarta, with his royal plane escorted by two fighter jets. He was welcomed on the tarmac by Subianto at Halim Perdanakusuma Air Force Base. The king rode with Subianto in a motorcade to the Merdeka palace, where the two leaders held talks.

"I have an emotional bond with Jordan, His Royal, His Majesty and (then) His Majesty King Hussein who kindly received me 27 years ago.

US lawmaker to introduce bill to fully eliminate H-1B visa programme

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ New York/Washington

An American lawmaker will be introducing a bill to "completely eliminate" the H-1B visa programme and take away the pathway to citizenship that it offers, "forcing" individuals to "return home" when their visa expires.

"My dear fellow Americans, I'm introducing a bill to completely eliminate the H-1B visa programme, which has been riddled with fraud and abuse and has been displacing American workers for decades," Congresswoman from Gerogia, Marjorie Taylor Greene said in a video posted on X on Thursday. She said that there will only be one exemption in her bill, which will allow for a 10,000 per year cap on visas issued to medical professionals like doctors and nurses who



Congresswoman from Gerogia, Marjorie Taylor Greene

provide life-saving care to Americans. Greene however noted that even this 10,000 per year cap will be "phased out" over 10 years to "allow us time to build our own pipeline of American doctors and physicians." Greene added that her bill will also

UN human rights body holds special session on Sudan



ASSOCIATED PRESS
■ Geneva

The UN's top human rights body was holding a one-day special session Friday to highlight hundreds of killings at a hospital in Sudan's Darfur region and other atrocities committed last month by paramilitary forces fighting the army. The Human Rights Council was also debating a draft resolution calling on an existing team of independent experts to carry out an urgent inquiry into the killings and other rights violations in the city of el-Fasher by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) paramilitary. "The atrocities that are unfolding in el-Fasher were foreseen and preventable, but they were not prevented. They constitute the gravest of

crimes," said Volker Turk, the UN human rights chief. Last month the RSF seized el-Fasher, the capital of North Darfur, and rampaged through the Saudi Hospital in the city, killing more than 450 people, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO). RSF fighters went house to house, killing civilians and committing sexual assaults.

Turk said "none of us should be surprised" by reports, since the RSF took control of the city, of "mass killings of civilians, ethnically targeted executions, sexual violence including gang rape, abductions for ransom, widespread arbitrary detentions, attacks on health facilities, medical staff and humanitarian workers, and other appalling atrocities."

Nepal's green election code of conduct for March 5 polls

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Kathmandu

Ban on plastic and other non-biodegradable materials during campaign; use of EVs instead of fossil-fuel vehicles, and disposal of waste after rallies or marches are some of the things that Nepal's poll body expects from political parties ahead of the March 5 general elections. Media reports on Friday said the Election Commission (EC) has introduced a 'Green Election' code of conduct aimed at ensuring that the March 5 House of Representatives (HoR) election is conducted in an environmentally responsible manner. "The provision, outlined in Chapter 6 of the newly issued code of conduct, requires all election-related activities to be carried out in ways that minimise harm to the environment," said news portal MyRepublica. The Election Commission (EC) released the draft election code of conduct on Thursday, seeking feedback from the

political parties and the general people to revise it before bringing it to force, The Kathmandu Post said. According to the draft, political parties, candidates, sister organisations and all categories of election representatives – including polling and counting agents – must comply with eco-conscious standards and contribute to pollution control, MyRepublica said. It explicitly prohibits the use of plastic, polythene, and other non-biodegradable materials in campaign events. "It also urges political actors to discourage the use of fossil-fuel vehicles and promote electric alternatives wherever possible," the news portal said. In addition, the draft provisions require organisers to collect and properly dispose of waste generated during rallies, marches, and other election programmes, ensuring that such events leave no adverse environmental impact, it added.



Royal gun salutes for King Charles 77th birthday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ London

King Charles III's 77th birthday on Friday was marked with the traditional royal gun salutes alongside the announcement of 231 King's Awards for Voluntary Service (KAWS), including several charities of Indian heritage working within communities across the UK. In honour of the royal birthday, Buckingham Palace released a new photograph of the British monarch taken by photographer Millie Pilkington and depicting the gardening enthusiast Charles at his Sandringham estate in Norfolk, holding a shepherd's crook. The King is spending his special day in Wales with wife, Queen Camilla at a special reception. Meanwhile, the Government's Department for Culture, which honour groups transforming lives through mental health support and community initiatives.



Sri Lanka's budget gets Parliament nod

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Colombo

Sri Lanka's 2025-26 budget was adopted in parliament through a majority vote on Friday. A total of 160 parliamentarians of the 225-member House voted in favour, while 42 opposed it. Eight members abstained. A notable feature of the vote was the support extended by at least three opposition MPs representing the Indian-origin Tamil plantation worker community, who voted alongside the government. The three Tamil opposition MPs supported the proposal to raise the daily wage of plantation workers to LKR 1,750. President Anura Kumara Disanayake, who also holds the finance portfolio, had presented the budget on November 7, focusing on strengthening tax collection and increasing state revenue.

PROSPECT

Parliamentarians pays floral tributes to Jawaharlal Nehru



Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Minority Affairs Kiren Rijiju; Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge, Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi, KC Venugopal, Rajiv Shukla, JP Agarwal, Deputy Chairman, Rajya Sabha Harivansh; Members of Parliament, former Members and other dignitaries paid floral tributes at the portrait of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, former Prime Minister, in the Central Hall of Samvidhan Sadan, on his birth anniversary, on Friday.

Secretary General of Lok Sabha Utpal Kumar Singh and Secretary General of Rajya Sabha PC Mody also paid floral tributes on this occasion. The portrait of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was unveiled by the then President of India, Dr S. Radhakrishnan, in the Central Hall of Samvidhan Sadan (then Parliament House) on 05 May 1966.



Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma is speaking while inaugurating a new office building for BDO of Ramcharini block, Kamrup Metro

STAIRS foundation launches swimming programme

The STAIRS Foundation – The Society for Transformation, Inclusion and Recognition through Sports – a National Sports Promotion Organisation (NSPO) recognised by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, announced today that Rajkumar, Senior Vice President of the Swimming Federation of India, will serve as the discipline mentor for its flagship National Swimming Development Program (NSDP).

The initiative marks a major step in the foundation's mission to transform India's swimming ecosystem from grassroots to the global stage. The National Swimming Development Program aims to establish an inclusive, sustainable and structured pathway for swimmers across India. By integrating advanced coaching techniques, modern training frameworks and access to quality infrastructure, the program seeks to nurture talent capable of competing at the Olympics, World Championships and Asian Games.



Anil Ambani offers virtual appearance before ED

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has issued fresh summons to Reliance Group chairman Anil Ambani to appear before it on November 17 in a FEMA case after he skipped his scheduled date on Friday. Ambani offered “virtual means” and officials said the agency rejected his offer to depose through virtual.

In a statement, a spokesperson of the 66-year-old businessman said he has written to the federal probe agency assuring “full cooperation” in the probe.

The agency had asked Ambani to appear before it in person on Friday and get his statement recorded under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA). The investigation pertains to the Jaipur-Reengus highway project.

In an earlier statement, the ED had said that after recently attaching assets worth ₹7,500 crore belonging to Ambani and his



companies under the anti-money laundering law, a search carried out against Reliance Infrastructure Ltd found that an alleged ₹40 crore was “siphoned” from the highway project.

“Funds moved through Surat-based shell companies to Dubai. The trail has unearthed a wider international hawala network exceeding ₹600 crore,” the agency had said. The ED has recorded the state-

ment of various persons, including some alleged hawala dealers, following which they decided to summon Ambani, said officials. “The matter (FEMA case) is 15 years old, dates to 2010. It concerns

issues associated with a road contractor,” statement said issued by Ambani Group. In 2010, Reliance Infrastructure Ltd awarded an EPC (engineering, procurement and construction) contract to build the JR Toll Road (Jaipur-Reengus highway), it said.

“This was a purely domestic contract with no foreign exchange component involved whatsoever. The JR Toll Road has been fully completed and from 2021 onwards, has been with the National Highways Authority of India,” the statement said, adding that Ambani is not a member of the Board of Reliance Infrastructure.

“He served the company for about 15 years, from April 2007 to March 2022, only as a non-executive director, and was never involved in day-to-day management of the company,” it said.

The businessman has once been questioned by the ED in a money laundering case linked to an alleged ₹17,000 crore worth bank fraud against his group companies.

Jachep Tso adventure trek shows spirit of courage and endurance



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Itanagar

The Jachep Tso Adventure Trek was successfully conducted in the high-altitude regions of Eastern Arunachal Pradesh, reflecting the adventurous spirit and unwavering determination of Indian Army personnel.

The expedition aimed to promote physical fitness, endurance and environmental awareness while nurturing a sense of teamwork and self-reliance among participants.

Trekking through rugged



mountain terrain and extreme weather conditions, the team demonstrated exceptional resilience and discipline.

The initiative also sought to highlight the importance of adventure activities as a vital component of military training, strengthening mental robustness and adapt-ability in challenging environments.

The trek further reinforced the Army's commitment to promoting adventure sports and fostering a spirit of exploration in the remote

and scenic landscapes of Arunachal Pradesh.

Such initiatives not only build character but also inspire local youth towards fitness, environmental conservation and national pride.

During his visit to the region, the General Officer Commanding, Dao Division, lauded the participants for their spirit of adventure and perseverance, commending their efforts in exemplifying the Army's ethos of courage, camaraderie and resilience in every endeavour.



SSB-Nepal Police Force meeting concludes successfully

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The 9th Annual Coordination Meeting between the Indian delegation headed by the Director General, Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), India and the Nepali delegation led by Inspector General, Armed Police Force (APF), Nepal, concluded successfully in New Delhi today, reaffirming the mutual commitment of both nations to further strengthen cross-border security cooperation and coordination.

The Indian delegation was led by Shri Sanjay Singh, Director General, SSB and comprised senior officials from the Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of External Affairs and SSB. The Nepali delegation was headed by Shri Raju Aryal, Inspector General, APF and included representatives from the APF, Nepal Police, National Investigation Department, Nepal and the Embassy of

Nepal in New Delhi.

During the meeting, both sides reviewed the implementation status of decisions taken during the 8th Annual Coordination Meeting and assessed the prevailing security scenario along the Indo-Nepal Border (INB). The discussions centered on enhancing intelligence sharing mechanisms and intensifying joint efforts to curb trans-border crimes such as narcotics trafficking, smuggling of wildlife and forest produce, circulation of Fake Indian Currency Notes (FICN) and human trafficking.

Both delegations also deliberated on effective measures to regulate the movement of third-country nationals, address issues related to encroachment in No Man's Land and expedite the repair and maintenance of boundary pillars.

Emphasis was placed on expanding the scope of coordinated patrols, conducting

joint training and disaster management exercises and promoting exchange programmes between SSB and APF personnel to foster greater mutual understanding and operational synergy. SSB also reiterated its commitment to extend training and capacity-building support to APF officers in specialised areas of border management.

The meeting concluded with both sides expressing satisfaction over the outcomes and reiterating their resolve to maintain seamless cooperation for ensuring peace and security along the Indo-Nepal Border.

After the successful completion of 9th India-Nepal coordination meeting the Nepali delegation members called on Shri. Govind Mohan, Home Secretary to the Govt. of India. The 10th Annual Coordination Meeting between SSB and APF will be hosted by Nepal in 2026.

Exhibitors from 11 countries at 14-day ITF

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Exhibitors and traders from 11 countries including those from Sweden, China and South Korea are showcasing their products at the India International Trade Fair (ITF) which was inaugurated at Bharat Mandapam here on Friday.

The 44th edition of the global trade fair will continue until November 27, with the first five days (November 14-18) earmarked as business days for B2B interactions, followed by the days for general public beginning November 19. This trade fair has emerged as one of the



Folk artists at the India International Trade Fair, at Pragati Maidan, in New Delhi on Friday

biggest events for not only India but for the entire South Asia, Jitin Prasada, Minister of State for Commerce and

Industry, said in his address after inaugurating the fair. He said this is not just an exhibition but a showcase of

India's power, stressing upon its role in supporting MSMEs. Reflecting the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi for a “Viksit Bharat by 2047”, this year's fair is themed “*Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat*”.

The theme celebrates India's diversity, entrepreneurial energy and the nation's commitment to Aatmanirbhar Bharat, aligning deeply with the ethos of the Swadeshi movement promoting local enterprise, indigenous innovation and sustainable economic growth, according to an official statement. The fair, organised by the India Trade Promotion Organisation (ITPO), is a platform for busi-

ness collaborations, technology exchange and investment partnerships. As many as 11 countries including Thailand, Malaysia, Sweden, China, South Korea, Turkey, Egypt, UAE, Iran, Lebanon and Tunisia are presenting their products and innovations at the International Pavilion, the statement said.

Besides, participating states and Union Territories are also showcasing their distinct strengths, crafts and innovations across thematic halls. Bihar, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh are the Partner States, while Jharkhand has been designated as the Focus State, it said.

Singapore-based man held in Delhi bank fraud case: CBI

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The CBI has arrested a Singapore-based man from a hotel near Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport in connection with a ₹32-crore bank fraud, officials said on Friday.

The man, identified as Rajesh Bothra, was traced and picked up by the agency following a tip-off about his arrival in Delhi. The fraud case stems from a complaint by the Punjab National Bank

(PNB), which alleged that ₹31.60 crore were swindled by Frost Infrastructure and Energy Pvt Ltd (FIEL), its directors, unidentified public servants, among others, according to a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) statement.

The agency said the FIEL siphoned off Letter of Credit (LC) proceeds by submitting forged bills of lading, fraudulently depicting trade between the FIEL and two firms — FAREAST and Gulf Distribution Ltd —



which belonged to Bothra. It was alleged that the company defrauded the bank by availing the Foreign

Letter of Credit (FLC) limit from the bank, it said. “Investigation so far has revealed that Bothra played

an active role in the conspiracy with the company FIEL and its directors, by providing bogus bills of lading and falsely showing sale and purchase transactions of the FIEL with FAREAST and Gulf Distribution Ltd,” a CBI spokesperson said.

The bogus bills were submitted by the FIEL to the bank, through which the company siphoned off the LC proceeds, causing a “wrongful loss of approximately ₹32 crore to PNB”, according to the spokesperson.

AVG LOGISTICS LIMITED
Regd Office: 25, DDA Market, Savita Vihar, Delhi-110092
Corporate Office: 102, 1st Floor, Jhilmil Metro Complex Delhi-110095
CIN: L60200DL2010PLC198327; email- praveen@avglogistics.com
Website: www.avglogistics.com; Ph: +91 8527291062

Publication of Unaudited Financial Results (Standalone and Consolidated) for the Quarter and Half year ended September 30, 2025
Board of Directors of the Company at the meeting held on November 13, 2025 considered and approved the unaudited financial statements of the Company for the Quarter and Half year ended September 30, 2025.
Financial Results alongwith Limited Review Report and Investor Presentation have been hosted on the website of the Company and can be accessed by scanning the below QR code.

For **AVG Logistics Limited**
Sd/-
Sanjay Gupta
Managing Director
DIN:00527801

Date: 13.11.2025
Place: Delhi

नगर निगम देहरादून

नगर निगम देहरादून

नगर निगम देहरादून

पत्रांक-245(VA)

(ई-निविदा सूचना)

दिनांक 14.11.2025

नगर निगम देहरादून द्वारा केदारपुरम स्थित कांजीहाउस (देहरादून) व शंकरपुर (सेलाकुई) स्थित गौसदन पर आश्रित निराश्रित गौवंशीय पशुओं को खिलाने के लिये खाद्य सामग्री की आपूर्ति करने हेतु निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है तथा निविदा से सम्बन्धित समस्त विवरण ई-निविदा पोर्टल www.uktenders.gov.in से प्राप्त किये जा सकते हैं।

कार्य का विवरण	आगमन धनराशि (रुपये में)	निविदा शुल्क (18% जी०एस०टी० सहित)	घरोहर राशि निक्षेप (EMD @ 2% of Estimated Cost)	निविदा डाले जाने की प्रारम्भिक एवं अंतिम तिथि	निविदा खोलने की तिथि एवं समय
1. केदारपुरम स्थित कांजीहाउस (देहरादून) व शंकरपुर (सेलाकुई) स्थित गौसदन पर आश्रित निराश्रित गौवंशीय पशुओं को खिलाने के लिये भूसा एवं अन्य पशु खाद्य सामग्री की आपूर्ति करने हेतु।	1,60,00,000 /-	5,900 /- (पाँच हजार नौ सौ रुपये)	3,20,000/-	17.11.2025 से 01.12.2025 अपराह्न 5:00 बजे तक।	02.12.2025 को पूर्वाह्न 11:00 बजे।
2. केदारपुरम स्थित कांजीहाउस (देहरादून) व शंकरपुर (सेलाकुई) स्थित गौसदन पर आश्रित निराश्रित गौवंशीय पशुओं को खिलाने के लिये साबुत हरी घास की आपूर्ति करने हेतु।	1,10,00,000 /-	5,900 /- (पाँच हजार नौ सौ रुपये)	2,20,000/-	17.11.2025 से 01.12.2025 अपराह्न 5:00 बजे तक।	02.12.2025 को पूर्वाह्न 11:00 बजे।

नगर आयुक्त, नगर निगम, देहरादून

BRIEFLY

VAIBHAV HITS SECOND FASTEST T20 TON BY INDIAN



Young sensation Vaibhav Suryavanshi struck the joint second fastest century by an Indian batter in T20 cricket, off 32 balls, for India A against United Arab Emirates in the Asia Cup Rising Stars competition here Friday. The 14-year-old opening batter smacked a total of 15 sixes and 11 fours to make 144 off 42 balls, while equalling the mark of India wicketkeeper batter Rishabh Pant who had a 32-ball century for Delhi against Himachal Pradesh in 2018. His blitz powered India A to a huge total of 297/4 in 20 overs in which skipper Jitesh Sharma scored a 32-ball 83 (8x4s, 6x6s). The record for the fastest century by an Indian batter in T20s is jointly held by Indian opener and world No 1 T20I batter Abhishek Sharma and Gujarat's Urvil Patel, who both had scored 28-ball tons in the Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 Trophy in 2024-25. Suryavanshi, who made his debut in the IPL last season, already holds the record for the second fastest century in the competition off 35 balls, when he scored 101 off 38 balls for Rajasthan Royals against Gujarat Titans.

SHAMI SET TO BE SOLD TO LUCKNOW SUPER GIANTS



Sunrisers Hyderabad are set to trade out-of-favour India pacer Mohammed Shami to Lucknow Super Giants ahead of the 2026 Indian Premier League (IPL). SRH had acquired the services of the 35-year-old pacer for ₹10 crore at the auction last year. "Both franchise have agreed to the trade," a source in the know of things said Shami endured an underwhelming season last year with SRH. In nine outings he managed just six wickets at an average of 56.16 with an economy rate of 11.23. Once India's pace spearhead, Shami has also been unable to make the national team due to fitness concerns. He last played for the 'Men in Blue' in the final of the Champions Trophy in March this year. The deadline to submit the list of players the franchises want to release from their squad is November 15.

Alcaraz ends year on the top spot

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Turin

When it came down to it, Carlos Alcaraz needed less than 90 minutes to secure the year-ending number 1 ranking in men's tennis. Alcaraz needed one more win at the ATP Finals to beat Jannik Sinner to the number one spot and the Spaniard duly got that as he eased to a 6-4, 6-1 victory over Italian Lorenzo Musetti on Thursday to sweep his group at the season-ending event for the top eight players. "It means the world to me to be honest," Alcaraz said in his on-court interview. "The year No. 1 is always a goal. To be honest at the beginning of the year I saw that the No. 1 (was) really, really far away, with Jannik there, winning almost every tournament he plays.

"From the middle of the season till now I put the goal for the number 1 because I thought it was there And finally I got it. For me, it means everything, the work that we put every day during the whole season, up and downs so I'm really proud about my team and myself."

It is the second time in his career that the 22-year-old Alcaraz has ended the year at the top of the rankings. The Spaniard became the youngest player to finish a



Spain's Carlos Alcaraz serves the ball to Italy's Lorenzo Musetti during their singles tennis match of the ATP World Tour Finals in Turin, Italy

year at No. 1 when he achieved the feat as a 19-year-old in 2022. Alcaraz had to win three of his matches at the season-ending event for the top eight players to finish No. 1, while Sinner had to go undefeated to defend his title to be in with a chance. Alcaraz — who admitted he was feeling nervous at the beginning of the match — didn't give him that chance as he swept aside Musetti despite a partisan home crowd, sealing the result on his third match point. That was his third win in the Jimmy Connors group

FIDE World Cup: Harikrishna draws first game with Jose

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Panaji

Indian Grandmaster P Harikrishna started his fifth round campaign with a relatively easy draw against Jose Eduardo Martinez Alcantara of Mexico in the first game of the fifth round of the FIDE World Cup on Friday. Up against someone who has defied all odds to be in the fifth round, Harikrishna knew that Martinez could be a force to reckon with if given his type of position. However, the immense experience of the Indian came to the fore as he chose the Two Knights variation as black against the Italian opening of the Peruvian-Mexican Grandmaster.

Martinez had two upset victories in the last two matches against Nodirbek Abdusattorov of Uzbekistan and Alexey Sarana of Serbia but he did not get much with his white pieces against the Indian who has himself been in top form here with very clean games thus far. The middle game featured routine manoeuvres with Martinez having an extra pawn at the cost of a fractured pawn structure and his choice of going for a queen exchange in the middle game was indication enough that he had not found his best trait in this round. If there is one thing that does not bother Harikrishna much, it's the endgame. The



Indian is known for his expertise in this department of the game and despite being a pawn less, he had no problems whatsoever in getting a draw in 41 moves. With just 16 players out of 206 participants that started the event remaining in the fray, most of the players decided against taking undue risk and wait for the next game. As a result, the all-Russian duel between Andrey Esipenko and Aleksey Grebnev ended in a draw without much ado while Armenian Gabriel Sargissian also got a same result with Nodirbek Yakubboev of Uzbekistan. In another drawn game among the eight rounds,

Alexander Doncheko of Germany signed peace with Liem Le Quang of Vietnam. The \$2 million prize money event will see some heated battles in the rounds to come as the players train their eyes to get a place in to the top three in order to qualify for the next Candidates tournament. The Candidates will be played next year to determine the challenger for D Gukesh in the next world championship contest. Caruana Fabiano of United States, Anish Giri of Holland and Matthias Bluebaum of Germany have already qualified for the event while Indian R Praggnanadhaa is

also almost assured of a place among the eight qualifying places. Hikaru Nakamura of United States is also most likely assured a place while the remaining three will be picked from here. Available results round 5 game 1: Javokhir Sindarov playing Frederic Svane; Arjun Erigaisi playing Levon Aronian; Sam Shankland playing Daniil Dubov; Alexander Donchenko drew with Liem Le Quang; Gabriel Sargissian drew with Nodirbek Yakubboev; Andrey Esipenko drew with Aleksey Grebnev; Sevan Samuel playing Wei Yi; Jose Eduardo Martinez Alcantara drew with P Harikrishna.

India men's hockey to work with Dr Calder on coordination

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi

In a bid to improve players' hand-eye co-ordination, Hockey India has roped in renowned South African eye specialist Dr Sherylle Calder to work with the men's hockey team till next year's Asian Games, chief coach Craig Fulton said on Friday. Calder, who specialises in hand-eye, foot and body co-ordination, is the go-to woman for some of the top athletes of the world. Her EyeGym programmes have helped improve the performance of elite athletes such as golfer Ernie Els and Mercedes F1 driver Valtteri Bottas. Born in Cape Town and raised in Bloemfontein, she has also worked with the South African rugby and cricket teams. "We will have a strikers camp, goalkeepers camp and

hand-eye-specialist Dr Calder will be working with us in December in Cape Town," Fulton said. "She is specialised person in improving hand-eye co-ordination. Before any decisions are made you need to be able to see the ball, see what's in front of you and it's the ability to train that and react faster. "Hand-eye co-ordination is everything to do with goalkeepers, with hockey players. Like being a cricketer watching the ball out of the hands, you have a split second to make a decision, so we we are working on that in the build up to the World Cup and the Asian Games. "She will work remote mostly, sometime online and sometime on the field. Starting December she is going to work with us till World Cup and Asian Games. It's a online skill session which the players have to



complete and when needed she will join the team," he added. Fulton, also a South African under whom India won a second consecutive bronze medal at the Paris Olympics, has now trained his eyes on a podium finish in next year's World Cup to be jointly hosted by Belgium and the Netherlands. "The ideal goal is to win the

World Cup, every tournament we go to, we want to win. Realistically we need to see where we are ranked in the world, right now we are seventh in the world, so we also have to make some improvements in the next 6 months to be competitive on the world stage," he said. "But at the same time we want to win every tourna-

ment we play in. Yes we will love to win the World Cup and are preparing for it but realistically where we are now we have some work to do and we know that. "If we want to win the World cup, we need to beat six teams above us and all those that follows us. I am being pretty pragmatic about it. I am pretty confident that we can put in a very good preparation block and be ready for the World Cup. "With the right preparations and lesson learnt, we can beat any team on our day." Talking about his long-term goals, Fulton said: "The long-term goal is to qualify for LA (2028 Los Angeles Olympics) and podium at the World Cup and the short-term goal is to prepare the team as best as we can for Azlan Shah." Having stamped their authority in Asia with the Asia Cup title in August this

year in Rajgir, Bihar, Fulton now wants his side to replicate the success at the world stage, particularly Europe. "We have shown that we are very very strong in and around Asian competitions. We have won the last four Asia tournaments. We have got a good recipe and consistency in Asia. "Then we jump across to Europe, we play the European teams and it's a little bit tougher. 5-6 teams in Europe are in the top 7 and that's where we have challenge ourselves. So going into World Cup and Asian Games year, we are going to play all sorts of opposition around the world. "What we have to do is to work on defence, in and around the D and obviously final third, our attacking play. We need to convert our chances more, we are one of the best pressing teams in the world."

Ronaldo awaits FIFA verdict on World Cup ban

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Geneva

Cristiano Ronaldo likely faces a three-week wait to discover the length of his FIFA ban ahead of the 2026 World Cup. The Portugal superstar could be suspended for two or three games for the red card he was shown Thursday for striking Ireland defender Dara O'Shea with an elbow during a 2-0 loss in Dublin. FIFA has taken three weeks after rounds of 2026 World Cup qualifying games to publish a global list of disciplinary verdicts, including for red cards and incidents such as crowd disorder. Now, however, FIFA is under less time pressure to process cases with no World Cup playoff games until March, but there is intense interest in the Ronaldo outcome. FIFA declined on Friday to suggest a timetable for the case. A one-game ban is mandatory and will be served Sunday when group leader Portugal hosts last-place Armenia. A win will send Ronaldo's team to the finals in the United States, Canada and Mexico. FIFA disciplinary rules demand a ban of "at least two matches for serious foul play" or "at least three matches for violent conduct."

Those extra games beyond the mandatory sanction must be served in competition, at the World Cup — if Portugal qualifies Sunday as expected — and not in pre-tournament exhibitions. Ronaldo spun round and swung his right elbow into O'Shea's back as they waited for the ball to be crossed around the hour mark at Aviva Stadium, with Ireland holding a surprise 2-0 lead. The referee at first showed a yellow card but minutes later upgraded it to red after a video review at the field-side monitor. "I don't think it's an elbow, I think it's a full body," Portugal coach Roberto Martinez said in Dublin. "Obviously when he tries to get away from the defender, I think the action looks worse than what it actually is." "But from where the camera is it looks like an elbow," Martinez said. "We accept it. It could be a red card but for the right reasons." Bans in similar cases FIFA disciplinary judges must now decide if Ronaldo is guilty of serious foul play or violent conduct. Bans of two and three games for serious foul play were imposed on players who were sent off last month in World Cup qualifiers. Qatar defender Tarek Salman got a two-game ban for a serious tackle on a



United Arab Emirates opponent. Salman had both feet off the ground and went over the ball, planting his boot into the shin of his opponent. A three-game ban was imposed on Burundi forward Bonfils-Caleb Bimenyimana for injuring Kenya goalkeeper Brian Bwire. Bimenyimana raised his boot just above the turf and struck Bwire's face as they converged on a low cross to the near post. Ronaldo deserved credit, Martinez suggested, for not being sent off previously in an international career now in its 23rd season. "He is just a captain that has never been sent off before in 226 games,"

Martinez said, adding that Ronaldo was "being grabbed, being pulled, being pushed" throughout by Ireland defenders. "I think it was a bit harsh because he cares about the team," the coach said. The FIFA verdict could be announced after the Dec. 5 World Cup draw, when each team's schedule of three group-stage opponents will be known. Ronaldo, who turns 41 in February, is aiming to play at a record sixth World Cup tournament. His great rival Lionel Messi also is due to play at his sixth World Cup. Messi was sent off on his debut for Argentina in 2005 in a friendly against Hungary.

FRANCE QUALIFIES FOR 2026 WORLD CUP

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dublin

Kylian Mbappé and France are going to the 2026 World Cup. And Cristiano Ronaldo might be banned from Portugal's first game there if his team finally wins its European qualifying group. Two goals from star striker Mbappé helped two-time champion France to qualify with a 4-0 home win against Ukraine on Thursday. But Ronaldo was ejected for the first time in his international career and Portugal will have to wait until Sunday to secure a qualifying spot for the seventh straight time after it was stunned 2-0 by Ireland in Dublin. Midfielder Michael Olise and substitute forward Hugo Ekitike added the other goals in a dominant second half from France, the World Cup runner-up in 2022. Mbappé sent the penalty straight down the middle to break the deadlock in the 55th minute before Olise turned inside the penalty area to curl home the second goal in the 76th at Parc des Princes in western Paris. Mbappé poked in France's third goal from close range in the 83rd following a goal-mouth scramble.

