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PIONEER IN SHORT

SPECIAL CHIEF SECRETARY DIRECTS OFFICIALS TO MAINTAIN VIGIL
 In view of the approaching Cyclone Montha, district administration officials must remain on high alert, said Special Chief Secretary and Regional In-Charge Officer for West Godavari to Chittoor districts, RP Sisodia. During his visit to Guntur on Sunday to review the cyclone preparedness, Sisodia inspected the District Control Room and later held a detailed review meeting with senior district officials at the Collectorate.
FULL REPORT ON P2

RTA FILES CASES AGAINST 360 PRIVATE TOURIST BUSES IN AP
 The tragic Kaveri Travels bus accident near Chinmatekur in Kurnool district has left behind deep sorrow, claiming 20 lives. Following this heartbreaking incident, the Andhra Pradesh Transport Department has become highly alert. A special drive has been launched across the state to inspect private travel buses. For the past two days, this drive has been actively underway, and officials have been filing cases...
FULL REPORT ON P3

BEING BIHARI MATTER OF PRIDE FOR PEOPLE OF STATE NOW: NITISH
 Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Sunday asserted that law and order has remarkably improved in the state after his Government came to power in November 2005 and claimed that "being Bihari is a matter of pride now" for its residents. In a lengthy post on X, the CM wrote, "People can't forget Bihar before 2005, when crime and corruption were at their peak in the state. When our government came to power in 2005, we prioritised...
FULL REPORT ON P5

ARGENTINA VOTES MIDTERM TO TEST MILEI'S MANDATE
 On the northern bank of Argentina's Riachuelo River, luxury car dealerships report sales surging since libertarian President Javier Milei scrapped import restrictions. Streets in the Puerto Madero financial district bustle with bankers who praise Milei for ending a yearslong ban on selling dollars online. Fine restaurants serve sushi and steak to Argentine oil executives who gush about his efforts to draw foreign investment. On the opposite side of the polluted...
FULL REPORT ON P8

QUOTE OF THE DAY

PROTECTING THE COW IS NOT A RELIGIOUS BELIEF. IF WE SAVE THE COW, WE SAVE NATURE, AND IF WE SAVE NATURE, WE SAVE OUR FUTURE
 — BANDI SANJAY KUMAR, UNION MINISTER OF STATE FOR HOME AFFAIRS

CYCLONE MONTHA

CM Chandrababu puts State administration on high alert

PNS ■ Amaravati
 With warnings from meteorologists on Cyclone Montha's impending threat to Andhra Pradesh, Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has put the administration on high alert. In a teleconference with senior officials on Sunday, Naidu assessed the readiness of various departments in light of forecasts predicting "heavy to very heavy rain and strong winds" for the coastal regions from October 27 to 29. He emphasised the importance of maintaining essential services, instructing officials to ensure power supply, telecommunications, and drinking water systems remain uninterrupted. "Take every precaution to prevent loss of life and property. The cyclone is expected to impact areas between Machilipatnam and Kakinada significantly. Information and warning systems need to be fully operational, providing continuous updates to the public. Use SMS, social media, IVRS calls, and WhatsApp to disseminate alerts, and ensure that real-time information flows from the village level to the State control room," the Chief Minister stated. He noted that the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) and National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) teams had been deployed to the coastal areas, utilising predictive

models and real-time data for precise assessments. "It's crucial to monitor water levels in all irrigation projects and reservoirs closely, taking immediate corrective measures when necessary," he added. Furthermore, Naidu mentioned that backup diesel generators were installed for 27,000 cell towers statewide to sustain communication networks.
CONTINUED ON >> P2



Army put on high alert as cyclone systems built up

The Indian Army has been placed on high alert as twin weather systems over the East Central Arabian Sea and the Southeast Bay of Bengal are set to intensify into Cyclone Montha within the next 48 hours, said an official on Sunday. According to the officials, the Army is coordinating closely with the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Indian Meteorological Department (IMD), and coastal state administrations to ensure rapid response and readiness. As of early Sunday, a depression over the East Central Arabian Sea was located about 700 km west-southwest of Mumbai and 760 km west of Panjim, likely to move westwards over the next 24 hours. Simultaneously, a deep depression over the Southeast Bay of Bengal, around 610 km west of Port Blair and 790 km east-southeast of Chennai, is expected to intensify into a cyclonic storm and further into a severe cyclonic storm by October 28.

Govt prepares action plan for relief, essential supplies

The State government has prepared an action plan for relief and essential supplies in pre-cyclone preparedness for Cyclone Montha. According to the Meteorological Department, the deep depression over southeast Bay of Bengal is very likely to cross Andhra Pradesh coast between Machilipatnam and Kalingapatnam near Kakinada on October 28 evening. It is located about 780 km east-southeast of Chennai, 830 km south-southeast of Visakhapatnam, 830 km east-southeast of Kakinada, 930 km south-southeast of Gopalpur, said the Met Department. It is expected to move north-westwards, then north-northwestwards, intensify into a severe cyclonic storm by morning of October 28, and cross Andhra Pradesh coast in evening. Maximum sustained winds are expected at upto 100 kmph, gusting to 110 kmph along the coast, with very heavy rainfall in some districts, it said.
CONTINUED ON >> P2

DISTRICT REORGANISATION

Naidu to hold discussions with Cabinet Sub-Committee tomorrow

■ A decision regarding merger of Nuzvid with NTR district and Kaikalur with Krishna district may be taken soon

PNS ■ Amaravati
 The Cabinet Sub-Committee, constituted to study the reorganisation of hold discussions with Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Tuesday. The Cabinet Sub-Committee already made several recommendations regarding the creation of new districts and the changes in district headquarters. It is expected that the meeting with the Chief Minister would bring further clarity on the matter. The government is considering completing the reorganisation of new districts by December 31. A decision is

likely to be taken after the Cabinet meeting on October 7 of next month. There have been allegations that the district divisions made during the YSRCP government were not done correctly. In this context, the current coalition government has appointed a Cabinet Sub-Committee to resolve these issues. Earlier, the YSRCP government had declared each parliamentary constituency as a separate district. As a result, Nuzvid and Kaikaluru constituencies in Krishna district

were merged into Eluru district. However, residents of these areas have long been demanding that Nuzvid constituency be merged with NTR district and Kaikaluru constituency with Krishna district. Recently, this proposal for the merger of these two areas has come up again. Currently, proposals have been submitted to the government regarding the merger of Nuzvid and Kaikaluru constituencies into NTR and Krishna districts, respectively.
CONTINUED ON >> P2



BUS ACCIDENT 10 bodies handed over to relatives

PNS ■ Kurnool
 Officials handed over the bodies of 10 people who died in the Kurnool bus accident to their family members based on DNA reports. They also provided death certificates to the families. District Collector A Siree supervised the process. Ambulances were arranged to transport the bodies to their native places.
CONTINUED ON >> P2

Take precautionary measures to prevent loss of life: Minister to officials

PNS ■ Eluru
 Minister for Information, and Public Relations K Parthasarathy on Sunday instructed the Eluru district administration to take all precautionary measures to prevent any loss of life or property in view of the cyclone threat. The Minister spoke with District Collector K Vetrivel and District Superintendent of Police K Pratap Shiva Kishore over the phone on Sunday and reviewed the situation in the district as well as the precautionary steps being taken by the administration in view of the cyclone. Minister Parthasarathy said that since Montha Cyclone is expected to make landfall on October 28, and the Meteorological Department has issued warnings of heavy rains and strong winds in several parts of the district over the next three days, officials must be fully prepared to face any kind of disaster. He directed the officials to evacuate people from low-lying areas to safer locations. The in flood-prone areas should be shifted to

safety. Since heavy rains and strong winds might cause hoardings and poles to collapse, he instructed the officials to take safety measures. The Minister also emphasised the need to identify and resolve issues related to drinking water, sanitation, and electricity immediately. He ordered the setting up of relief centres wherever necessary and asked district and mandal officials to work in coordination. He instructed officials from the Revenue, Police, Electricity, Medical, Agriculture, Irrigation, Panchayat Raj, and R&B departments to remain vigilant and work in coordination to implement preventive measures effectively.



K Parthasarathy

Home Minister Anitha reviews cyclone preparedness

PNS ■ Amaravati
 Cyclone Montha is likely to make landfall near Kakinada around midnight on October 28, according to the Meteorological Department, said Home Minister V Anitha. She mentioned that Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has been monitoring the situation closely for the past four days. The Minister held a review meeting with the Disaster Management Department officials to assess preparedness. She said that winds with speeds up to 100 km/h are expected to batter coastal district, and necessary



arrangements are being made accordingly. She instructed all departmental officials to work in coordination. She added that large hoardings are being removed in advance and measures have been taken to prevent fishermen from venturing into the sea. The government is trying to minimize the loss of property as much as possible and is using technology for effective cyclone relief operations.
CONTINUED ON >> P2

Revenue Minister puts officials on high alert

Revenue Minister Anagani Satyaprasad in view of the cyclone instructed officials to take precautionary measures in advance as heavy rains are expected for four days. He directed officials to ensure that there is no loss of life or property and to remain available at the field level.
CONTINUED ON >> P2

Essential medicines, vaccines kept ready: Minister

Given the cyclone threat looming over the state, the Health Department, under the Minister Sataya Kumar Yadav's instructions, reviewed preparedness to meet any eventuality. The Minister asked the officials to gear up the machinery to tackle the cyclone threat.
CONTINUED ON >> P2

Op Sindoor, eradication of naxalism added colour to festivals: Modi

PNS ■ New Delhi
 Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday extended greetings on the occasion of Chhath puja and said that festivals have become more vibrant this year due to success of Operation Sindoor and steps taken to eradicate the Maoist menace. In his 127th edition of his monthly radio address Mann ki Baat, the prime minister said that the Chhath Puja was a confluence of devotion, affection and tradition and reflected India's social unity. "The Mahaparva of Chhath is a reflection of the deep unity between culture, nature, and society. Every section of society comes together at the Chhath ghats," Modi said. "This sight is the most beautiful example of India's social unity. No matter where you are, within the country or in any corner of the world, if you get the opportunity, do participate in the Chhath festival," he said.



Recalling his letter to citizens on the occasion of the festival season, the prime minister said the achievements of the country have made the festive season more vibrant. "Operation Sindoor" has filled every Indian with pride. This time around, lamps of joy were lit even in those areas where the darkness of Maoist terror once prevailed," he said. "People want the complete eradication of the Maoist terror that had jeopardised the future of their children," the prime minister said. Modi also lauded the courage of Komaram Bheem, who had fought against the atrocities of the Nizam of Hyderabad and killed an officer dispatched by him to seize the crops of farmers in the region.

"Friends, during that era, when even uttering a word against the Nizam was a crime. That young man openly challenged an officer of the Nizam named Siddiqui. The Nizam sent Siddiqui to confiscate the farmers' crops. But in this struggle against oppression, that young man killed Siddiqui," he said. Modi said Bheem also successfully managed to evade arrest and escaped from the tyrannical police of the Nizam to reach Assam. He said Komaram Bheem did not live a long life but left an indelible mark in the hearts of countless people, especially the tribal community. The prime minister said on November 15 the nation will celebrate the Janajateeya Gaurav Diwas – birth anniversary of Bhagwan Birsa Munda. "Just like Bhagwan Birsa Munda and Komaram Bheem, there have been many other great luminaries in our tribal communities. I urge you to definitely read about them," Modi said.

Indian coffee becoming popular globally: Modi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said Indian coffee is gaining popularity globally, driven by the diverse varieties grown in states, including Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. In his 127th edition of his monthly radio address Mann ki Baat, the Prime Minister also said the Northeast is also progressing in coffee cultivation and this is further strengthening the identity of Indian coffee worldwide. "Indian coffee is becoming very popular all over the world. Be it Chikmagalur, Coorg and Hassan in Karnataka; the areas of Pulney, Shevaroy, Nilgiri, and Annamalai in Tamil Nadu; the Nilgiri region on the Karnataka-Tamil Nadu border; or the areas of Wayanad, Travancore, and Malabar in Kerala -- the diversity of Indian coffee is truly remarkable," he said. Modi added that Koraput (Odisha) coffee is also gaining popularity.
CONTINUED ON >> P2

BUS FIRE ACCIDENT

Bike-borne duo drunk, say police

PNS ■ Kurnool

Andhra Pradesh police on Sunday confirmed that the two bike-borne persons connected to the Bengaluru-bound bus fire accident, which claimed the lives of 19 passengers, were drunk.

In the wee hours of October 24, the sleeper bus ran over a two-wheeler, which had already met with an accident, at Chinna Tekuru village in Kurnool district.

There were 44 passengers on the bus and several managed to escape.

The two-wheeler was dragged forward underneath the bus, leading to the bursting of its fuel tank and subsequent ignition and intensification of the blaze with the explosion of the bus's two 12 KV batteries.

"We just received the forensic confirmation that the two bike-borne persons (Siva Shankar and Erri Swamy) were drunk," Kurnool Range Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Police Koya Praveen said.

Though police were aware that the duo was in an inebriated condition, they did not confirm this fact as they were

waiting for forensic evidence. The DIG on Saturday night said that the duo had food in a dhaba and Swamy had admitted to consuming liquor.

According to police, Shankar and Swamy had started off on the two-wheeler from Lakshimpuram village around 2 am on October 24 to drop the latter at Tuggali village in Kurnool district.

En route, the duo had halted at the HP petrol bunk near Kia car showroom to fill petrol at 2.24 am, said Kurnool Superintendent of Police Vikrant Patil. A video of their halt at the petrol bunk went viral and Shankar was seen riding the two-wheeler rashly.

Shortly after resuming their journey, the two-wheeler skidded, resulting in Shankar falling to his right and hitting the divider. He died on the spot. Over the past few days, the southern state witnessed widespread rainfall, leaving wet and muddy roads amid inclement weather.

When Swamy had pulled Shankar from the middle of the road and checked him, he realized that the latter had

died on the spot, Patil said. "Even as he was thinking of pulling the bike aside from the road, the bus rushed in and ran over it, dragging it forward to some distance," said Patil.

Since Shankar's body was pulled off the road by Swamy before the bus could run over it, it was mostly intact and not burnt like the bus victims, enabling the forensic investigation to confirm that he was drunk, said Praveen.

Following the two back-to-back accidents and the bus engulfing in a raging fire, Swamy got scared and left for his native village of Tuggali.

Later, police picked up Swamy and questioned him to unearth crucial details of the ghastly accident. Further, Miriyala Lakshmaiah (42), the driver behind the wheel during the accident, told police that he "couldn't see until he went near the motorbike".

"The driver's version was that visibility was less. 'I couldn't see till I went near the motorbike. I couldn't see at all. When I heard the sound, I applied the brakes and pulled over the bus,'" said the DIG, quoting Lakshmaiah.

CYCLONE MONTHA

Special Chief Secretary directs officials to maintain vigil

Special Chief Secretary RP Sisodia inspecting the control room in Guntur. District Collector A Thameem Ansaria is also seen

PNS ■ Guntur

In view of the approaching Cyclone Montha, district administration officials must remain on high alert, said Special Chief Secretary and Regional In-Charge Officer for West Godavari to Chittoor districts, RP Sisodia.

During his visit to Guntur on Sunday to review the cyclone preparedness, Sisodia inspected the District Control Room and later held a detailed review meeting with senior district officials at the Collectorate. He directed officials to remain fully alert as the cyclone is likely to intensify into a severe storm. All essential food and relief supplies should be kept ready, and people should be evacuated from dilapidated or unsafe buildings, he instructed. Special attention should be paid to weak walls, thatched huts, and old trees that might collapse during the storm.

He ordered the teams to keep power saws ready for clearing uprooted trees immediately and to identify and repair any vulnerable embankments or breaches



without delay. He also directed Revenue and Police departments to take precautionary measures at low-lying causeways. Mr. Sisodia emphasized ensuring safe drinking water supply and instructed officials to keep generators ready to maintain pumping operations during power outages. He said there should be no disruption in drinking water supply, and damaged electric poles must be restored immediately. He further instructed that drains and canals be kept free from

silt and blockages to prevent flooding. There must be no loss of life, livestock, or property, he stressed. Vehicles should be kept ready for emergency evacuations, and if additional fuel is needed, coordination should be made with banks for immediate release of funds.

He advised officials to keep milk, biscuits, and other essential supplies ready at relief camps, particularly for children and the elderly. Mobile towers must remain functional throughout the

cyclone period, and telecom operators should be given clear instructions. Mandal-level officers must be accessible on their mobile phones at all times. He also instructed officials to create awareness among farmers and ensure that crops in the fields are protected from possible damage. Noting that heavy to very heavy rainfall is expected in several districts, Mr. Sisodia said the impact of Cyclone Montha could be more severe than previous cyclones, and offi-

cial should remain in full preparedness mode for the next four days.

District Collector A Thameem Ansaria stated that special officers have been appointed for each mandal, and relief shelters have been identified and kept ready. Control rooms have been set up at the district, division, and mandal levels, and the district administration is fully prepared to handle any situation, she said. Guntur Municipal Commissioner Puli Srinivasulu informed that drain desilting and water flow clearance works have been completed across the city. Joint Director of Animal Husbandry, KVV. Satyanarayana, said that fodder and medicines are stocked, and awareness is being created among farmers. Department-wise officials presented details of the measures taken so far. Joint Collector Ashutosh Srivastava, District Revenue Officer NSK Khaja Vaili, and several other senior officials participated in the review meeting.

Cyclone threat: Jagan urges people to be alert

PNS ■ Tadepalli

A cyclonic storm is approaching the Andhra Pradesh coast. The Meteorological Department has predicted heavy to very heavy rainfall across the state due to the cyclone's impact. In this context, the state government machinery has gone on high alert and is taking precautionary measures.

Meanwhile, in light of Cyclone thrat, the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) has made a key decision. Former Chief Minister and YSRCP president Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy advised the people in cyclone-affected areas to remain vigilant. He also announced that the rallies planned for October 28 across all Assembly constituency centers — which were meant to protest the privatization of government medical colleges



— are being postponed. The YSRCP declared that these rallies will now be held on November 4. Jagan Mohan Reddy instructed party leaders, workers, and cadres to stand by the people in cyclone-affected regions. He urged them to participate in precautionary, relief, and rehabilitation activities wherever needed.

On the other hand, the Andhra Pradesh State Disaster Management Authority (APSDMA) stated that the deep depression over the southeast Bay of Bengal is likely to intensify into a cyclone within a few hours and may strengthen into a severe cyclone by Tuesday morning. It is expected to make landfall by

Tuesday evening.

Due to its impact, heavy to very heavy rains are expected on Monday in the districts of Eluru, NTR, Guntur, Palnadu, Nandyal, Kadapa, Annamayya, Chittoor, and Tirupati. Other districts are also likely to receive heavy rainfall.

The APSDMA further warned that on Tuesday, Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam, Alluri Sitarama Raju, Anakapalli, Kakinada, and East Godavari districts may experience extremely heavy rainfall. Similarly, Konaseema, West Godavari, Eluru, NTR, Krishna, Guntur, and Bapatla districts are also expected to receive very heavy to extremely heavy rains. The agency advised the public to stay alert and take all necessary precautions.

Bandi Sanjay calls for cow protection

PNS ■ Hyderabad

Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar said that protecting the cow is not a religious belief. He said that if we save the cow, we save nature, and if we save nature, we save our future. He said that this is a fact accepted by science. He said that he has seen scenes in Islam where some religious leaders prayed with a cow aside. The Narayanguda KMIT Engineering Colleges in Hyderabad conducted state-level examinations on "Scientific Knowledge in Cow Environmental Protection" under the auspices of the Telangana Go Seva Department on Sunday.

Bandi Sanjay Kumar presented prizes to the winners. Speaking at the event organized on this occasion, Union Minister Bandi Sanjay said, "Congratulations to the 'Goseva Telangana' department for organis-



ing such great programmes to raise awareness among students on "Scientific Knowledge in Cow Environmental Protection" under the auspices of the Telangana Region Go Seva Department. My congratulations to the winners of the state-level examinations today (October 26). "Not only in cities and

towns, milk packets, milk powder cans and packaged milk products have reached villages as well. We have come to a situation where 90 per cent of the people depend on them for their livelihood. From the moment we wake up to the moment we go to bed at night, everything from the food we eat to the water we drink has become contaminated. We

are also contaminating the fetus in our womb with the food we eat. From the moment we step foot in the outside world, we have to spend our entire life with various vaccines, injections, medicines, and tests. The main reason for this is that we have forgotten our Indian culture and our way of life and have become accustomed to foreign culture and way of life. If this system is to change, there is a great need to educate today's generation about Indian roots."

"After the mother, we give the cow the greatest place. That is why we call her Gomata. Cow urine is the main focal point for our crops, food and energy. If there is any living being that plays a key role in environmental protection and maintains the balance of nature, it is only cow urine. Because every product that comes from cow, including cow dung, milk, curd and ghee, is very environmentally friendly," he added.

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CM Chandrababu...

"We must ensure a steady supply of essential services. Evacuate residents in coastal areas to cyclone shelters immediately.

Depending on the storm's intensity, District Collectors may need to declare holiday for educational institutions," he instructed. He also called for urgent repairs to roads, canals, and tank bunds damaged by erosion. All subdivisions were directed to have power saws, cranes, and excavators ready to clear fallen trees or debris, with the possibility of deploying drones to assist in rescue and relief efforts. Additionally, he tasked the Agriculture and RTG departments to collaborate closely for precise assessments of any crop damage.

In regard to fishermen, Naidu directed authorities to ensure the safe return of those aboard 82 mechanised and 37 motorised boats. To coordinate cyclone response measures effectively, special officers have been appointed for each district, fostering inter-departmental cooperation. "It is our government's responsibility to protect the lives, property, and vital infrastructure of our citizens," the Chief Minister asserted.

Officials reported to him that they had already convened 11 review meetings on

cyclone preparedness and deployed 851 excavators, along with 757 cranes and power saws throughout the State.

Govt prepares...

State Civil Supplies Minister N Manohar said the action plan covers stock positioning of Public Distribution System (PDS) commodities, fuel inventory management, paddy procurement steps, food supply to relief shelters and post-cyclone relief distribution. "The Andhra Pradesh government has prepared an action taken report detailing the pre-cyclone preparedness measures for Cyclone Montha, ensuring readiness before landfall," Manohar said in an official release late on Saturday. The supply of food grains to all fair price shops in coastal areas shall be completed by October 26 and sufficient stock is already placed at Mandal Level Stock Points, he said.

According to officials, 40 per cent stock movement has been completed in coastal districts, and Global Positioning System (GPS) exemption has been granted for second-stage food grain movement based on requests from district collectors. On fuel preparedness, Manohar instructed the state nodal officer and oil market-

ing companies to fully stock petrol, diesel and Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) outlets in vulnerable districts.

District collectors were directed to coordinate with Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) to ensure diesel availability for power backup at telecom towers, control rooms, hospitals and cyclone shelters during disruptions.

On paddy procurement, officials informed the minister that procurement is expected to start in full scale in the first week of November, but centres will be opened wherever farmers arrive with harvested paddy to provide immediate relief.

Nearly 1,500 mills have been tagged to Rythu Service Kendras (RSKs) in coastal districts, and millers have been asked to provide drying space and covers for wet paddy, and not to distress farmers over high moisture levels owing to adverse conditions.

Further, 50,000 tarpaulins with ropes, sandbags and plastic sheets have been kept ready at RSKs for crop protection on a need basis. District Collectors have been authorised to draw essential commodities from MLSPs for food preparation in cyclone shelters and disaster camps, and expenditure can be adjusted under Treasury Rule (TR)-27. For post-cyclone relief distribution, sufficient

stock has been placed at Mandal Level Stock Points (MLSPs) for supply as per the scale set by the Disaster Management Department under the notified relief norms. Meanwhile, Andhra Pradesh State Disaster Management Authority (APSDMA) alerted people of heavy to very heavy rainfall in parts of coastal Andhra Pradesh on October 27.

"People and fishermen should not venture out as heavy rainfall is expected in coastal regions of the state.

Naidu to hold...

Opinions have already been collected from the people of these two areas as well as from relevant associations. Earlier, the residents had submitted petitions to the Collector requesting the government to merge them with Krishna and NTR districts respectively. Before the district reorganisation, these two constituencies were part of the undivided Krishna district. Nuzvid is very close to Vijayawada, and residents usually go to Vijayawada for education, business, and employment. After the division, they feel that Eluru district is not convenient, and hence they are requesting to be merged with NTR district. Regarding Kaikaluru, even now, irrigation and electric-

ity supply to the fields in this area come from Gudivada division. In terms of education as well, the region falls under the Gudivada division's education department. Kaikaluru MLA Kamini Srinivas has also written a letter in the Assembly in this regard.

10 bodies...

It is known that 19 passengers in the bus were charred to death in the accident. In this context, Kurnool SP Vikrant Patil said that a person from Chittoor has come forward claiming that his father has been missing, in connection with another unidentified body.

Home Minister...

A total of six NDRF and 13 SDRF teams have been kept ready. The cyclone is expected to impact all coastal districts, with special focus on six mandals in the Kakinada region. Helicopters are also being kept ready for emergency evacuations, if needed.

Revenue Minister...

Ambedkar Konaseema District Collector R Mahesh Kumar stated that preventive measures are being taken across the district. With a 90 km coastline, watchpoints

have been set up at every 3 km distance. NDRF and SDRF teams have been deployed. The public has been urged to avoid travel unless absolutely necessary. All educational institutions will remain closed on October 28 and 29 across the district.

Meanwhile, the Kakinada district administration is on high alert to face the impact of the approaching cyclone Montha. As Uppada Kothapalli mandal is expected to be hit hard, local officials conducted meetings with residents. Officials met local fishermen, advising them not to venture into the sea and to secure their boats safely ashore. They have set up 27 rehabilitation centres in the mandal and requested coastal residents to move to these shelters. Later, RDO Mallibabu held discussions with other officials on field-level actions to tackle the cyclone's impact effectively.

Essential medicines...

Minister Satya Kumar has approved and circulated these standard operating procedure (SOP) to all districts, instructing officials to strictly follow them. Epidemic cells were formed and vaccines were kept ready, the Minister said. The Minister directed the authorities to ensure ade-



PARAKAMANI THEFT

Judicial inquiry demanded

Retired IAS officer LV Subrahmanyam, retired Patna High Court Judge Justice Narsimha Reddy and former CBI joint director Lakshmi Narayana flag lapses in probe

PNS ■ Hyderabad

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) former executive officer and retired IAS officer LV Subrahmanyam stated that during the counting of offerings (Parakamani) at the Tirumala temple, the staff should enter without carrying anything on their bodies. If anyone has any object on them, it must be deposited in the hundi. He mentioned that a clerk named Ravi Kumar was caught stealing 900 dollars during the Parakamani service. Speaking to the media along with retired Patna High Court Judge Justice Narsimha Reddy and former CBI joint director Lakshmi Narayana, Subrahmanyam discussed the theft incident and other related matters.

"Since 2012, some changes have been made in the counting process. Because of a shortage of staff, devotees were also brought in to help. On April 29, 2023, a clerk named Ravi Kumar, who belongs to the office of the Pedda Jeeyangar, came for Parakamani duty. When he tried to steal money, vigilance



Retired IAS officer LV Subrahmanyam



retired Patna High Court Judge Justice Narsimha Reddy



CBI joint director Lakshmi Narayana

officer Satish Kumar caught him. Ravi Kumar admitted to having stolen \$ 900. On May 19, he proposed donating seven properties to the TTD, claiming they were worth crores of rupees.

Normally, such donations must be announced publicly so that objections, if any can be raised. However, he requested an exemption from this process, saying there was not enough time, and the Board agreed. No reason was given for completing the procedure so quickly. The registered value of those properties was around Rs 14 crore, but the amount he stole was only around Rs 70,000. Later, both Satish and Ravi Kumar went to the Lok Adalat and settled

the issue privately. Satish said he was pressured by the police into agreeing to the compromise. Looking at this, it was clear that the process of protecting the Lord's property was not properly followed. The Andhra Pradesh government should order an inquiry by a retired judge," demanded Subrahmanyam.

Retired Patna High Court judge Justice Narsimha Reddy said that such incidents in TTD are unfortunate.

"Even the poorest of devotees make donations to the Lord. How did a bundle of dollars end up with Ravi Kumar, who was not even part of the money-counting team? It's impossible to believe he acted alone. He should have received strict punishment, but the case

was settled instead. This is a disgraceful theft.

Former CBI Joint Director Lakshmi Narayana demanded that the Parakamani theft case be reopened. "If a person who worked there for nearly 20 years committed theft, it amounts to a breach of trust. The FIR looks very superficial. There was no investigation into the source of the Rs 14 crore worth of properties that Ravi Kumar and his wife donated to TTD.

People with a criminal background should not be part of the TTD Board. Those who truly value the sanctity of the Lord should be in charge. Such incidents are deeply painful in a place where devotees place their utmost faith," he said.

Coalition govt neglecting farm sector: ex-min Kakani

PNS ■ Nellore

In a strong criticism of the coalition government, former minister and YSRCP leader Kakani Govardhan Reddy expressed deep concern over the hardships faced by farmers, attributing their struggles to governmental negligence.

Addressing the media here on Sunday, he highlighted the severe financial losses farmers are enduring, particularly in the cotton farmers, due to a lack of proper price and ineffective procurement measures. He accused leaders, specifically Chief Minister B Chandrababu Naidu and his son Lokesh, of neglecting farmers' needs, while they wander abroad, seemingly indifferent to the challenges faced by those in the agricultural community. "The current crisis is unprecedented; the shortage of urea has not been experienced in our state until now," he stated.

"Naidu has even acknowledged that his government failed to provide adequate urea supplies." He condemned the government's inaction in the wake of recent



Kakani Govardhan Reddy

cyclones and raised alarms over the absence of necessary precautions or warnings for farmers. "Is there even an Agriculture Minister actively addressing these issues? Where is the concern for farmers?" The impact of recent rains has devastated mango and cotton crops, damaging around 50,000 acres of crops. Additionally, maize farmers faced losses of at the rate of Rs 12,000 per acre, while those cultivating paddy in the Krishna and Godavari deltas are bracing for further eco-

nomical strain. Despite these challenges, the lack of compensation for crop losses remains a significant concern, with Kakani criticising Naidu for showing little concern for the agricultural sector since taking office. He insisted that during YS Jagan's tenure, there was no urea shortage, he pointed out that while promises for financial assistance under the "Annadata Sukhibhava" scheme were made, only a fraction of that amount has been delivered, he said.

Free mega medical camps held at eight places

PNS ■ Kakinada

Free Mega medical camps were conducted at eight places in the Kakinada city on Sunday under the auspices of National medicos organisation enlisting the support of eighteen doctors of various specialties besides medical students of Rangaraya medical college.

The team of doctors include Dr URK Ramakrishna, Dr Nishant Dr Sushma, Dr Vidya, Dr Sastry, Dr Chalam, Dr Goutham Praveen, Dr Aditya, Dr Naarsing, Dr Kameswari, Dr Samanth, Dr Addala Satyanarayana, Dr Sivaji and Dr Sivaramaraju. The places where the camps were held include Lakshmi nagar, Rellipeta, Yetimoga G a i g o l u p a d u, Nookalamma Manyam, Goleelapeta, Upalanka. Over one thousand people were screened at these medical camps for various ailments and free medicines were distributed. The volunteers of Alluri Seetharamaraju Seva Yathra have supervised the arrangements.

Large number of devotees throng Srisailem Mallanna temple

PNS ■ Srisailem

As it is the auspicious month of Karthika Masam, a large number of devotees are thronging the Srisailem Mallikharjunasamy temple. Considering the sanctity of the Karthika month, devotees in huge numbers are visiting the temple for darshan.

In view of the increased rush, the temple authorities have made all necessary arrangements to ensure that devotees face no inconvenience. Special queue lines have been set up for devotees, and all efforts have been made to provide them a comfortable experience.

In connection with Karthika Masam, the authorities have decided to organise the Koti Deepotsavam (festival of one crore lamps) at Srisailem on November 14. Arrangements are already underway for this grand event.

Meanwhile, the Temple Board has given good news to devotees coming



for darshan — free laddu will be distributed. However, this offer applies only to those devotees who purchase the sparsha darshan Ticket. Each devotee with this ticket will receive a laddu free of cost, according to Temple Chairman Ramesh Naidu. The Karthika

Masotsavams have already begun at the Srisailem Mallanna Temple and will continue until November 21, said Temple Executive Officer M Srinivasa Rao. Considering the heavy rush during the Karthika month, the temple authorities have taken a few key decisions.

RTA files cases against 360 private tourist buses in AP

A special drive has been launched by the Road Transport Authority following the gory Kurnool accident which claimed 20 lives

PNS ■ Vijayawada

The tragic Kaveri Travels bus accident near Chinnarekur in Kurnool district has left behind deep sorrow, claiming 20 lives. Following this heartbreaking incident, the Andhra Pradesh Transport Department has become highly alert. A special drive has been launched across the state to inspect private travel buses. For the past two days, this drive has been actively underway, and officials have been filing cases and imposing fines on several private travel buses found violating safety regulations. So far, 361 cases have been registered, with the highest number (66 cases) reported in Nandyal district.

The Kurnool bus tragedy has cast a shadow of grief across both Telugu states. The horrific accident, which happened in the early hours of the morning, brought



irreparable loss to many families and plunged countless lives into darkness. Reports suggest that if the driver had alerted the passengers immediately after the fire broke out when the bus hit a bike lying on the road, many lives could have been saved.

This incident has raised serious concerns about the safety standards in private travel buses. Are private travel companies prioritizing profits over passenger safety? These questions have prompted the Transport Department to scrutinize whether private travel oper-

ators are following the prescribed regulations.

Under the orders of AP Transport Commissioner Manish Kumar Sinha, the department has been conducting this special drive statewide for the past two days. During this period, officials have found 361 private

buses operating in violation of rules. Forty buses have been seized, and 63 buses were found to have modified their seating arrangements without permission. Heavy fines were also imposed on buses that lacked fire safety equipment.

The inspections uncovered shocking lapses. Officials found 83 buses operating without fire safety devices, and cases were filed with fines imposed. Eleven buses were found without emergency exits, and 14 buses lacked fire alarms and safety systems. Additionally, 11 buses were caught transporting goods and parcels without authorisation and were fined accordingly.

Alongside inspections, the Transport Department is also creating awareness among passengers on how to safely exit through emergency doors during accidents.

Bhimavaram DSP curbs gambling in district: Grandhi

The former MLA urges Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan to find out who the real culprit is

PNS ■ Bhimavaram

Bhimavaram former YSRCP MLA Grandhi Srinivas made some sharp comments about Pawan Kalyan. Speaking to the media in Bhimavaram, Grandhi said that the Bhimavaram constituency has become a hot topic across the state because of alleged gambling activities, and he appreciated Pawan Kalyan for responding to the issue.

"I want to meet Pawan Kalyan and explain everything in person. I don't know whether I'll get an appointment or not," Grandhi Srinivas on Sunday in Bhimavaram. It is well known that in the 2019 elections, Grandhi Srinivas contested from YSRCP and defeated Jana Sena chief Pawan Kalyan in Bhimavaram.

Speaking on several local issues, Grandhi stated that those who had been collecting money from gambling clubs for the past 14 months targeted a police officer because there had been no income for them

during the last two months. He criticised those who complained to Pawan Kalyan against the police officer, calling it very unfortunate. Grandhi explained that the police officer was targeted only after he stopped the gambling operations.

"It's been 16 months since the new government came to power. The police have stopped gambling clubs for the past two months. For the previous 14 months, gambling was going on in Bhimavaram. People are saying that some people have been collecting Rs 10 lakh from each club.

They also believe that about Rs 4.5 lakh per month is being collected from each liquor shop,"

Regarding the DSP RG Jayasurya issue, Grandhi said that Deputy Speaker Raghu Rama Krishnam Raju's statements were correct. He added that it would not take even a minute for Pawan Kalyan to find out who the real culprit is.

Govt committed to BC welfare: Minister Savitha

PNS ■ Gorantla

Minister for Backward Classes S Savitha on Sunday unveiled a statue of Vadde Obanna at Gorantla. Speaking on the occasion, she said that Backward Classes (BCs) have always received political, economic, and social importance only under the Telugu Desam Party (TDP). She stated that, just as NTR supported BCs in the past, today Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu continues to stand as their strongest supporter.

She added that the coalition government led by Naidu has the credit of officially celebrating Vishwakarma Jayanti, Valmiki Jayanti, and Kanakadasa Jayanti in honor of BC sentiments. Similarly, the government also officially celebrated Vadde Obanna Jayanti, recognising him as a warrior from the Rayalaseema region who fought against British oppression and launched the first freedom struggle.

Savitha emphasised that Naidu always gave priority to



Minister for Backward Classes S Savitha speaking at a meeting at Gorantla in Satya Sai district

the self-respect and welfare of BCs and has implemented several schemes for their development. She said that BCs are the major beneficiaries of the welfare programmes being implemented by the government. She also expressed gratitude to the Vaddera community for playing a crucial role in her victory as the coalition candidate from Penukonda.

Minister Savitha announced that the Vaddera community would be given

greater prominence in the upcoming local body elections. She mentioned that even in the recently announced nominated positions, important responsibilities have been entrusted to Vaddera leaders. The government has also provided 15 per cent reservations in quarry allocations and a 50 per cent concession on seigniorage fees for Vadderas.

Minister Savitha stressed that education is essential for

the Vaddera community to progress in all fields. She urged them to encourage their children to pursue higher education.

The event was attended by Vaddera Corporation chairman Malle Eshwara Rao, TDP District President Anjanappa, BJP District President Shekhar Sahu, TDP senior leader Devalla Murali, leaders of the coalition parties, activists, and a large number of members from the Vaddera community.

CPI opposes attachment of 20 acres of poor farmers' land

PNS ■ Kakinada

CPI State Executive Member Thatipaka Madhu has strongly condemned the sudden attachment of 20 acres of land cultivated by poor farmers for nearly nine decades in Komaragiri Panchayat of U Kothapalli Mandal by the Endowments Department three days ago.

Madhu alleged that a "deep conspiracy" involving influential ruling party leaders was behind the incident. He said that after the department marked the land with red flags, declaring it attached property, the distressed farmers approached officials seeking justice.

A CPI delegation comprising District Secretary K Bodakonda, Joint Secretary Thokala Prasad, Pithapuram Constituency Secretary Ramakrishna, and Rythu Sangham District Convenor Nakka Srinivasarao visited the site on Sunday, interacted with the affected farmers, and gathered details about the issue.

Speaking to the media, Madhu stated that the

farmers have been in possession of the land since 1949, with all legal documents such as link papers, passbooks, Adangal, and 1-B records, and have even availed agricultural loans based on those documents. He pointed out that although the dispute has been pending in court since 2006, the ruling party leaders, with the support of officials, influenced the Endowments Department to seize the land unlawfully.

Madhu also alleged that the department was planning to auction the land on November 1, which he termed "illegal and unjust." He called on all parties and organizations to resist the move tooth and nail. The CPI, he said, will announce its next course of action after holding a round table meeting in Pithapuram.

Several affected farmers, including Satyanarayana, Subbarao, Krishna, Bapanaiah, and Danaiah, narrated their plight to the CPI leaders, appealing for justice and protection of their livelihood.

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2020 Delhi riots: SC to hear bail pleas of Umar Khalid, Sharjeel Imam



The Supreme Court (SC) is slated to hear on Monday pleas of activists Umar Khalid, Sharjeel Imam, Gulfisha Fatima and Meeran Haider in the UAPA case related to the alleged conspiracy behind the February 2020 riots in Delhi. A bench of Justices Aravind Kumar and NV Anjaria is likely to hear the matter. The Supreme Court on September 22 had issued notice to the Delhi Police and sought its response. The activists have moved the Supreme Court challenging the Delhi High Court order passed on September 2.

The High Court denied bail to nine people, including Khalid and Imam, saying "conspiratorial" violence under the garb of demonstrations or protests by citizens could not be allowed. Besides Khalid and Imam, those who faced bail rejection are Fatima, Haider, Mohd Saleem Khan, Shifa Ur Rehman, Athar Khan, Abdul Khalid Saifi and Shadab Ahmed. The bail plea of another accused, Tasleem Ahmed, was rejected by a different High Court bench on September 2.

The High Court said the Constitution affords citizens the right to protest and carry out demonstrations or agitations, provided they are orderly, peaceful and without arms and such actions must be within the bounds of law. While the High Court said the right to participate in peaceful protests and to make speeches in public meetings was said to have been protected under Article 19(1)(a) and couldn't be blatantly curtailed, it observed the right was "not absolute" and "subject to reasonable restrictions". "If the exercise of an unfettered right to protest were permitted, it would damage the constitutional framework and impinge upon the law and order situation in the country," the bail rejection order said. Khalid, Imam and the rest of the accused persons were booked under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) and provisions of the erstwhile IPC for allegedly being the "masterminds" of the February 2020 riots, which left 53 people dead and over 700 injured.

The violence erupted during the protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act and the National Register of Citizens. The accused, who have denied all the allegations against them, have been in jail since 2020 and had moved the High Court after a trial court rejected their bail pleas.

Must ensure justice remains within reach of citizens: Law Minister



Arjun Ram Meghwal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Chennai

Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal on Sunday said that Union Government is committed to improve judicial infrastructure and justice remains within the reach of citizens.

He was speaking on the occasion of the inauguration of a heritage building at Madras High Court. In speaking of the rich heritage of Madras High Court, he remarked, "This court has been a guiding light for the entire nation. As we inaugurate this additional heritage court building let it be a reaffirmation of our... resolve to ensure that justice is not delayed, not denied and justice remains within reach of every citizen."

"Let this building stand as a testament to our collective commitment to preserve our judiciary to uphold majesty of law especially the rule of law envisaged in Constitution," he added. He reaffirmed that this inauguration was not merely about adding new infrastructure but about strengthening the delivery of justice and preserving heritage while embracing the future and honouring the ideals of accessibility, efficiency and transparency in the judicial system.

"This inauguration marks a significant milestone in our collective endeavour to strengthen infra of our judiciary and underscores our unwavering commitment to justice, rich legal heritage and vision to meet needs of the future... the Govt of India under visionary leadership of PM Shri Narendra Modi has been steadfast in its commitment to improve judicial infrastructure across the country," said the Law Minister.

Tracing impact of CJJ Gavai on Indian jurisprudence



**RANJIT
KUMAR
SINHA**

Justice Bhushan Ramkrishna Gavai's tenure in the Supreme Court and his eventual elevation as the Chief Justice of India (CJI) have been marked by a series of significant rulings across various areas of law, placing him as a key figure in Indian jurisprudence.

His short tenure as CJI, from May 14, 2025, to November 23, 2025, was not free from controversy. Issues arose over his "Ask the Deity" remarks in court, for which he allegedly faced an attempted attack by a lawyer. His tenure also saw administrative decisions by the Collegium, headed by him, particularly its agreement with the Union Government's objection to a proposed transfer of a High Court judge.

Before these events, the Supreme Court Collegium courted another controversy by recommending the elevation of a judge to the Supreme Court from a particular High Court despite a dissent from a member of the Collegium who had argued that such elevation would make him the third judge from the particular High Court, which some argued led to overrepresentation for that High Court compared to its sanctioned strength, while other large High Courts remained underrepresented.

Since Justice Gavai's tenure of approximately six months as the head of the judiciary is nearing, his focus is likely on disposing of major pending matters, particularly those heard by Constitution Benches where he has presided.

The significant judgments likely to be delivered before his retirement as the 52ND CJI are primarily in the realm of Constitutional Law and most important is the Presidential Reference on Governor's Powers.

A Constitution Bench headed by Justice Gavai has heard arguments on a Presidential Reference seeking clarity on whether fixed timelines can be imposed on Governors and the President for assenting to or otherwise dealing with bills passed by state legislatures. The judgment will have significant ramifications for the balance of power between the Union and States, particularly concerning a Governor's discretion in legislative matters.

Justice Gavai, who is the first Chief Justice of India from the Buddhist community; second judge from the Scheduled Castes to hold the office, spoke about the policy refinement of affirmative action and in his concurring opinion in the matter concerning the sub-classification of Scheduled Castes (SC) for reservation, he argued that to achieve true equality as enshrined under Article 14, the State must identify and exclude the "creamy layer" from the benefits of reservation within the SC/ST communities to ensure substantive equality, advocating for a nuanced approach to reservations.



Chief Justice of India BR Gavai

Justice Gavai was also in the limelight for his landmark 2024 judgment regarding "Bulldozer Justice," where he condemned the practice of demolishing the houses of accused persons without due process. He affirmed that the Executive cannot become the judge and executioner, as such actions violate the constitutional principle of separation of powers, the right to shelter (Article 21) and inflict unconstitutional "collective punishment" on innocent family members.

Co-authoring the significant decision, Justice Gavai wrote, "The chilling sight of a bulldozer demolishing a building, when authorities have failed to follow the basic principles of natural justice and due process, reminds one of a lawless state of affairs, where 'might was right'."

The judgment delivered on November 13, 2024, laid down pan-India guidelines to prevent the arbitrary demolition of properties, especially those belonging to accused persons, without following the proper legal procedure.

In recent times, Justice Gavai, as the CJI, pronounced an important interim judgment in the challenge to the contentious Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025, on September 15, 2025. The Bench headed by him refused to stay the law in its entirety but put on hold the implementation of several "prima facie arbitrary" provisions till the final adjudication.

The general consensus is that the judgment in the Waqf matter was a balanced judicial intervention that upheld the principle of presumption of constitutionality for a legislative Act while simultaneously protecting fundamental rights of the citizens.

In the last six years, according to the Supreme Court Website, Justice Gavai was a part of around 700 Benches dealing with matters pertaining to a variety of subjects, including constitutional and administrative law, civil law, criminal law, commercial disputes, arbitration law, electricity law, education matters, environmental law, etc.

He has authored around 300 judgments, including Constitution Bench Judgements on various issues, upholding the rule of law and

safeguarding the fundamental rights, human rights and legal rights of citizens.

Some of the other important Constitution Bench matters and politically sensitive cases, in which Justice Gavai was involved were — Abrogation of Article 370 in the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, Challenge to the Electoral Bond Scheme, Demonetisation Verdict, staying the conviction of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in a criminal defamation case, granting bail to controversial rights activist Teesta Setalvad in a criminal case, imposing a token fine of ₹1 (one) on activist advocate PrashantBhushan for his tweets criticising the judiciary, etc.

In the abrogation of Article 370 matter, the judge was part of the five-judge Constitution Bench that unanimously affirmed the constitutional validity of the Presidential orders and subsequent legislative changes.

He was on the Constitution Bench that unanimously struck down the Electoral Bonds Scheme, holding it violative of citizens' fundamental right to information under Article 19(1)(a) and compromising transparency in political funding. In the Demonetisation Verdict of 2023, he authored the majority opinion upholding the Centre's 2016 demonetisation scheme.

Justice Gavai was part of the bench that stayed the conviction of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in a criminal defamation case, noting that the trial judge had failed to provide cogent reasons for awarding the maximum two-year sentence, which had resulted in Gandhi's disqualification from Parliament.

The Chief Judicial Magistrate Court (CJM) at Surat, Gujarat, on March 23, 2023, found Rahul Gandhi guilty of criminal defamation under Sections 499 and 500 of the Indian Penal Code for his "Modi surname" remark made during an election rally in 2019. The Gujarat High Court, by its July 7, 2023 judgment, refused to stay the conviction and jail term. The matter was then challenged in the Supreme Court, where the three-judge bench, including

Justice Gavai, ultimately stayed the conviction on August 4, 2023, which paved the way for the reinstatement of his status as a Member of Parliament. The Supreme Court's decision in July 2023 to grant bail to Setalvad in the case of allegedly fabricating evidence, forging documents and tutoring witnesses to falsely implicate high functionaries of the Gujarat Government in the 2002 post-Godhra riots cases, by setting aside the Gujarat High Court's order, was a significant one. The bench, led by Justice Gavai, delivered a sharp critique of the lower court's reasoning and also found the Gujarat High Court's order to be "totally perverse" and "contradictory."

The PrashantBhushan Contempt Case of 2020 was a significant legal event where the Supreme Court initiated suo motu (on its own motion) criminal contempt proceedings against the activist advocate for two tweets criticising the judiciary.

Justice Gavai was the author of the August 14, 2020 judgment for the three-judge Bench that held Bhushan guilty of criminal contempt and imposed a token fine of ₹one, holding that the tweets constituted criminal contempt under the Contempt of Courts Act, 1971, on the grounds of "scandalising the court" and lowering the authority of the institution.

Now, after five years, another lawyer may face the contempt of court for allegedly throwing a shoe at Justice Gavai, who was presiding as the CJI. The not-so-popular lawyer allegedly had expressed his anguish on October 6, 2025, for Justice Gavai's September 16, 2025, remark when he told the petitioner to "Go and ask the deity himself to do something now. If you say that you are a strong devotee of Lord Vishnu, then pray and meditate."

Attorney General R Venkataramani has granted his approval for initiating a Contempt of Court proceeding against the errant lawyer. The Supreme Court Bar Association, which has terminated the membership of the lawyer, has supported the move, but a bench headed by Justice Surya Kant, who is to succeed Justice Gavai as the CJI, has shown some

reluctance in the matter. This remark in a case concerning the restoration of a damaged idol of Lord Vishnu at a temple had triggered a massive backlash on social media, with critics accusing Justice Gavai of mocking Hindu faith and disrespecting religious sentiments. The CJI later issued a clarification in open court, stating that his comments were misinterpreted and affirming his respect for all religions and commitment to true secularism. The incident of shoe hurling, following the "Ask the Deity" controversy, was widely condemned. The CJI had shown considerable composure and directed the proceedings to continue, stating, "Do not pay attention to such things. Please carry on. If we are not perturbed, why are you? Just ignore."

Justice Gavai's tenure as the head of the Collegium was also not free from controversy. First, questions were raised over the elevation of Gujarat High Court judge Justice VipulPancholi to the Supreme Court and second was the decision to agree to the Union Government's objection to a proposed transfer of a High Court judge, Justice AtulSreedharan, changing his transfer destination from one High Court to another.

Justice Gavai, who was elevated as a Judge of the Supreme Court on 24th May 2019, has made several notable statements, emphasising judicial ethics, access to justice and the foundational role of the Constitution, since he took over as the CJI on May 14, 2025.

He publicly pledged that he would not accept any post-retirement jobs with the Government, asserting that retired judges taking such positions raises "significant ethical concerns and invites public scrutiny" and in a roundtable conference in London, he acknowledged that instances of corruption and misconduct within the judiciary damage public confidence while stressing that a swift, transparent response to such incidents is necessary to regain trust.

On the Indian Constitution and democracy, Justice Gavai, while speaking in London at an event commemorating 75 years of the Constitution, described it as a "living document" that has guided India through challenges. He stated that certain principles of the Constitution, such as the rule of law, democracy and separation of powers, are inviolable and cannot be altered.

The CJI reaffirmed Dr BR Ambedkar's vision for an inclusive and just India, highlighting the judiciary's role in expanding rights under Article 21 to include education, health and a clean environment. He stressed that for democracy to succeed, political liberty must be accompanied by social and economic justice. While inaugurating new facilities at the Allahabad High Court, Justice Gavai emphasised the "fundamental duty" of the judiciary and the executive to ensure justice reaches the "last citizen of this country who needs justice".

The writer is a senior journalist covering legal affairs

AI can assist but judges, lawyers must be final arbiter: Justice Surya Kant

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Colombo

Justice Surya Kant observed that Artificial Intelligence (AI) can assist judges, lawyers and citizens but it cannot replace the human element behind rendering justice. While technology can guide, the human must govern and must be the final arbiter in the justice dispensation system, he said, cautioning against over-reliance on AI. The Supreme Court judge was delivering the keynote address on "Technology in the Aid of the Legal Profession — A Global Perspective" at the Bar Association of Sri Lanka's annual law conference on Friday.

"Artificial intelligence may assist in researching authorities, generating drafts, or highlighting inconsistencies, but it cannot perceive the tremor in a witness's voice, the anguish behind a petition, or the moral weight of a decision. Let us be crystal clear: we are not replacing the lawyer or the judge, we are simply augmenting their reach and refining their capacity to serve. Let technology be the guide and the human govern," he stated.

"AI tools are not infallible. They can generate inaccuracies, hallucinations or reflect latent biases of their training data. Human oversight is non-negotiable. The lawyer or judge must always remain the final arbiter, checking and validating the AI output," he said. Justice Surya Kant stressed that while technology may be a powerful ally, justice will always remain a profoundly human enterprise.

"The essence of our calling lies not in data or algorithms, but in con-



Justice Surya Kant

science and compassion. The judge's discernment, the advocate's reasoning, the litigant's dignity and the empathy that animates every fair trial — these are the living fibres of justice that no machine can replicate," he said.

Justice Kant said the legal profession stands at a "decisive moment" where it must learn to balance technological progress with the enduring human values that define justice. He cautioned that while data may inform decisions, it must never dictate them. He reminded the audience that the test of any technological reform lies in how inclusively it serves citizens, not merely in how efficiently it runs.

"If technology enables a villager to file a plea without travelling miles, if it ensures that a poor litigant is heard without delay, if it helps a court communicate its reasoning in a language that people understand — then it has truly served its purpose," he said. Justice

Kant described technology as a "force multiplier" that has transformed the practice of law and the administration of justice from courtrooms to classrooms.

Explaining how this transformation has reshaped legal work across the world, Justice Surya Kant said that what began as a modest digitisation of paperwork has now evolved into an ecosystem powered by artificial intelligence, analytics and automation. He said the challenge before the legal community is not whether to adopt technology, but how to do so responsibly. "It is not about replacing human judgment. It is about amplifying its reach, precision and purpose," he said.

Justice Kant highlighted how technology has transformed court administration by introducing e-filing, digital registries and online hearings. He pointed out that virtual hearings and case management systems have made access to justice

more transparent and efficient. He also spoke about the transformative impact of technology on law students and young scholars. In this regard, he noted that online repositories, digital internships and live-streamed court proceedings have made legal education more interactive and globally connected. At the same time, Justice Kant warned of the risks that accompany the rapid adoption of digital tools. He identified four major challenges — digital literacy gaps, data privacy, AI bias and institutional resistance to change.

Justice Surya Kant reiterated that the first challenge was ensuring that all members of the legal system could keep pace with digital progress. "This digital divide risks exacerbating inequality: some legal actors may leap ahead, while many may be left behind," he said, urging bar councils and judicial academies to invest in training and capacity building.

He said that as new tools and innovations reshape how justice is delivered, members of the legal fraternity must stay flexible and willing to learn, adapting to change without losing sight of their core values. "New models will emerge, systems will evolve and challenges will multiply. Our duty is to remain learners, open, adaptive, reflective and ready to embrace what aids in the pursuit of justice and discard what does not. For, at the end of the day, technology may illuminate the path — but it is humanity that must lead the way," said Justice Kant. Turning to privacy concerns, he underlined the need for lawyers to safeguard client confidentiality in an age of

data-driven practice. "Lawyers deal in trust and therefore the confidentiality, privilege, data integrity and cybersecurity of their clients must remain sacrosanct," he said.

He also cautioned against over-reliance on AI. "AI tools are not infallible. They can generate inaccuracies, hallucinations or reflect latent biases of their training data. Human oversight is non-negotiable. The lawyer or judge must always remain the final arbiter, checking and validating the AI output," he said. Justice Surya Kant then urged Bar Associations and judiciaries across South Asia to collaborate on ethical and technological standards. He proposed the creation of a "legal tech consortium" comprising judges, practitioners, academics and technologists to share best practices, regulatory models and training programmes across jurisdictions.

He said India's experience with e-courts, live-streaming, translation portals and AI-assisted transcription tools could offer valuable insights to neighbouring countries like Sri Lanka. He added that legal education should evolve to prepare young lawyers for a technology-driven future. Law schools, he said, must embed courses on data science, AI ethics and computational law into their curricula.

Justice Kant concluded by urging the legal fraternity to shape the digital transition rather than resist it. "We can resist technology and risk stagnation, or we can shape and guide it, embedding our legal and ethical values within its design, so that it strengthens, not supplants, justice," he said.



Omar Abdullah abandoned Budgam: Mehbooba Mufti



Campaigning for the Budgam byelection, opposition PDP president Mehbooba Mufti on Sunday accused Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah of abandoning the constituency after winning the assembly election last year.

ISRO to launch communication satellite on November 2

The ISRO on Sunday said its LVM3 launch vehicle is scheduled to lift off with the CMS-03 communication satellite on November 2, from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota. "India's LVM3 launch vehicle is scheduled to launch the CMS-03 communication satellite in its fifth operational flight (LVM3-M5) on November 2, 2025," ISRO said in a statement.



Chhattisgarh: 21 Naxals surrender in Kanker



As many as 21 Maoist cadres surrendered in Chhattisgarh's Kanker district on Sunday after handing over 18 weapons to authorities, a police official said. They laid down arms under 'Poona Margem: Rehabilitation through Reintegration' initiative started by Bastar Range police, the official added.

Tiger kills man in village of Mysuru district

Panic has gripped some villages in Mysuru district after a tiger killed another man on Sunday, officials said. The incident happened near Mullur village in Saraguru taluk, they added. According to forest officials, 58-year-old Rajashekar Murthy, a cattle herder from Mullur, was attacked by a man-eating tiger while grazing his cattle in an open field in the afternoon.



Waqf Act will be thrown into dustbin if voted to power: Tejashwi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Katihar/Kishanganj/Araria

If the INDIA bloc is voted to power in Bihar, the Waqf (Amendment) Act would be "thrown into the dustbin", the opposition coalition's CM candidate Tejashwi Yadav said on Sunday.

Addressing back-to-back public rallies in the Muslim-dominated Katihar, Kishanganj and Araria districts, Yadav said his father, Lalu Prasad, the RJD chief, never compromised with communal forces in the country.

"But Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has always supported such forces, and it is because of him that the RSS

and its affiliates are spreading communal hatred in the state as well as in the country. The BJP should be called 'Bharat Jalao Party'. If the INDIA bloc comes to power in the state, we will throw the Waqf Act into the dustbin," he said.

The Waqf (Amendment) Act was passed by Parliament in April. The ruling BJP-led NDA has hailed the law as a step towards transparency and empowerment for backward Muslims and women in the community, while the opposition has criticised it, alleging that it infringes on the rights of Muslims.

On Saturday, RJD MLC Mohammad Qari Sohaib

stirred a controversy by stating that if Yadav becomes the CM of Bihar, "all bills will be torn apart, including the Waqf bill", inviting a barrage of attacks from their opposition, who questioned how a central law could be changed by the chief minister of a state.

Without naming Jan Suraj Party founder Prashant Kishor, Yadav alleged, "Some people are trying to divide votes by fielding candidates forcefully, but people should not pay attention to such candidates."

He claimed that this election is a fight to protect the Constitution, democracy and brotherhood.



The CM is not in his senses. Corruption is rampant in each and every department of the government. The law and order situation has completely collapsed in the State

— TEJASHWI YADAV, RJD LEADER

"People of the state are tired of the 20-year-old Nitish Kumar government. Nitish Kumar has become like stagnant water, which has stopped flowing. It's stinking now. Therefore, in that case, this NDA government should be thrown out," he claimed.

"The CM is not in his senses. Corruption is rampant in each and every department of the government. The law and order situation has completely collapsed in the state," he alleged.

Yadav claimed that the NDA government has done nothing for the development of the Seemanchal region, comprising Purnia, Araria, Kishanganj and

Katihar districts. "If we come to power, we will set up the Seemanchal Development Authority for the overall development of the region. A world-class university will be built here, besides a super-speciality hospital and a centre of the Aligarh Muslim University," he said.

Yadav alleged that even after Kumar as CM for 20 years and Narendra Modi as PM for 11 years, Bihar has remained the most backward and poor state in the country. "Seemanchal is the poorest region of the state. This is the time to teach them a lesson," he added.

The RJD leader alleged that the NDA government

was copying the election promises he was making. "We promised an increase in the old-age pension. The Nitish Kumar government increased it from ₹400 per month to ₹1,100 per month. I promise, we will increase it to ₹2,000 per month," he said. Yadav also hit back at Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

"A few days ago, when Amit Shah came to Bihar, he was threatening us that he wouldn't leave us in a condition to contest elections. I will fight and I will win. We are Biharis, true Biharis, we do not fear outsiders. 'Ek Bihar sab pe bhari' (one Bihar is stronger than every one else)," he said.

Being Bihari matter of pride for people of State now: Nitish

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Patna

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Sunday asserted that law and order has remarkably improved in the state after his Government came to power in November 2005 and claimed that "being Bihari is a matter of pride now" for its residents.

In a lengthy post on X, the CM wrote, "People can't forget Bihar before 2005, when crime and corruption were at their peak in the state. When our government came to power in 2005, we prioritised the restoration of law and order above all else and established the rule of law. A policy of zero tolerance was adopted for crime and corruption. Now, there is no atmosphere of fear or terror in the state. Now, being Bihari is a matter of pride for the people of the state."

Hitting out at the INDIA bloc, without taking names of the Opposition leaders, the CM said that before 2005 (when the RJD was in power), there was complete anarchy in the state.

"It had become difficult for people to step out of their homes after 6 pm. Our sisters and daughters were not safe. Kidnapping had taken the form of an industry. Vehicles were looted from showrooms. Due to the fear of criminals, no one wanted to buy a



new vehicle," he wrote.

"Even those with money did not want to build new houses. Industries and businesses had shut down due to the terror of extortionists. Doctors and engineers were migrating out of the state," he claimed.

"The entire system had collapsed. There was no such thing as law and order in Bihar. Crime was directly protected by those in power. The people of the state were forced to live under the shadow of fear. Being a Bihari was considered an insult at that point in time," the CM wrote.

Earlier, police neither had vehicles nor weapons. Due to the lack of modern weapons, the morale of the police was very low, Kumar said. "In 2005, the number of police stations in Bihar was only 817, which has now been increased to over 1,380," he added.

On November 24, 2005, when the new government came to power, the

strength of the Bihar Police was quite low. At that time, only 42,481 police personnel were employed, Kumar said.

Since 2013, women have been given the benefit of 35 per cent reservation in the police force. To ensure the safety of women and to empower them, a large number of female constables have been recruited in the Bihar Police, he wrote.

Additionally, 'Tribal Women's Pride Battalion' was formed, he said, adding the participation of women in the Bihar Police is now the highest in the country.

The people of the state had decided in 2005 that they wanted Bihar to progress on the path of development, he said. "The year 2005 was a turning point for Bihar. Today, Bihar is developing with justice. The youth are getting jobs and there are a large number of employment opportunities available for them," he added.

Congress poll campaign to kick off after Chhath

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Patna

The Congress's poll campaign in Bihar will kick off soon after Chhath Puja with Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi canvassing for the INDIA bloc, senior party leader KC Venugopal said on Sunday.

Venugopal, the Congress national general secretary (organisation), said that other party leaders, including Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and national president Mallikarjun Kharge, will also campaign in the state, where the Voter Adhikar Yatra in August gave the party the much-needed momentum.

"Our campaign will kick off soon after Chhath Puja. I think Rahul Gandhi will be here on October 29 and 30. Tours of Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and Mallikarjun Kharge are also on the cards," he said.

Venugopal, who is a close aide of Gandhi, is among a number of senior Congress leaders who are camping in the poll-bound state to fine-tune the party's strategy, besides diffusing the crisis in its rank and file, which has come to the fore with many

workers alleging that tickets were "put up for sale".

When former Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot was asked about the scenario, he told reporters, "In every election, there are many who aspire for a ticket and get angry when their hopes are dashed. But I would appeal to all of them not to air their grievances till the elections are over."

"The elections in Bihar are not an ordinary affair. These are being watched by the entire nation, which wants the arrogant BJP-led NDA to be defeated. I would urge the party workers to realise that they are on the cusp of scripting history," he said. The veteran leader said naming RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav as the INDIA bloc's CM candidate

has sent a positive signal. "A young politician always has the passion to work hard, realising that if he does not live up to the expectations of the people, he would be spoiling his career," he said.

Training his guns at Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, the JD(U) president, Gehlot alleged, "He has sullied his reputation by making too many political about turns. At the age end of his political career, he should reflect on the depths to which he has plunged."

CPI(ML) Liberation releases manifesto

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Bhojpur

The Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation on Sunday released its Sankalp Patra for Bihar assembly polls, promising justice for the landless, redistribution of around 21 lakh acres of land, loan waiver for farmers and rural labourers, and 65 per cent reservation for disadvantaged communities, among others.

The document was released after a Sankalp Yatra, carried out in Bhojpur to mark the 15th death anniversary of its Dalit leader Ram Naresh Ram, popularly known as Parasji.

To ensure justice for the landless, the CPI(ML) manifesto promised to every landless and homeless family five decimals of land in rural areas and three decimals of land in urban areas and a pucca house. One decimal of land is equal to 435.6 square feet. The party also promised redistribution of around 21 lakh acres of land by implementing recommendations of the Bandyopadhyay Commission. The 2006 Bihar state commission headed by D Bandyopadhyay had recommended comprehensive land reforms in the state. It also promised prohibition on displacement of any poor person without rehabilitation.

For farmers and share-

THE MANIFESTO PROMISED TO EVERY LANDLESS AND HOMELESS FAMILY 5 DECIMALS OF LAND IN RURAL AREAS AND 3 DECIMALS OF LAND IN URBAN AREAS AND A PUCCA HOUSE

croppers, CPI(ML) promised government procurement of all crops and guarantee of fair prices, loan waiver for farmers and rural labourers, free electricity for agriculture, water to every farm and modernisation of canals, identity cards, guarantee of rights and ban on eviction of sharecroppers, and restoration of Agricultural Produce Market Committee Act, among other things.

The left party also reiterated the Mahagathbandhan's promise of 65 per cent reservation to disadvantaged communities and including it in the Ninth Schedule; guarantee of basic needs such as electricity, ration and pension; and strict action in incidents of violence against Dalits and the poor, police excesses and corruption.

Its other promises included an old-age pension of Rs 1,500, waiver of all loans up to Rs 2 lakh, regular salary and government status to all cooks and ASHA, Anganwadi, Mamta, Jeevika and sanitation workers. It also promised 200 days of

work under MGNREGA, Rs 600 daily wage and restoration of the Old Pension Scheme. The CPI(ML) also promised a directorate and state-wise assistance centres for the safety of migrant labourers.

For the youth, the party promised immediate filling of all vacant posts, Rs 3,000 monthly allowance to the unemployed, uniform education system and control of private education.

It also promised stricter laws on paper leaks and increase in scholarship amount, women's college in every block and free education for girl students.

For women, the party promised an honorarium of Rs 2,500, along with strict prohibition of violence, harassment and honour crimes; compliance with Vishakha guidelines at workplaces; women's hostels, and controlling microfinance exploitation and debt relief for poor women. Protection of minority rights, safeguarding of Waqf properties, implementation of Sachar Committee recommendations and prompt action on communal violence and hate speech are among the promises for minorities.

The party also vowed to fill vacancies in health services, free treatment, testing and medicines, among other things.

"We will not allow implementation of any law in Bihar that is against the Constitution or the federal structure.

Ahead of ASEAN meet, Cong recalls Malaysian PM's glowing tributes to Manmohan Singh

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's summit meeting with ASEAN leaders under the chairmanship of his Malaysian counterpart Anwar Ibrahim, the Congress on Sunday recalled what the Malaysian premier had said on the demise of Manmohan Singh, which it said reflected the "true friendship that was never advertised or boasted about".

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh shared a screenshot of Ibrahim's post on Singh's death last December. In his post, the Malaysian PM said, "The weight of grief bears down on me at the news of the passing of my honoured and cherished friend: Dr Manmohan Singh. Obituaries, essays and books a plenty there will surely be about this great man, celebrating him as the architect



of India's economic reforms." As the prime minister, Dr Manmohan Singh was the midwife of India's emergence as one of the world's economic giants, Ibrahim said.

"I had the rare privilege of witnessing the early years of these transformative policies first-hand while we both served as finance ministers during the 1990s. We shared a fervent commitment to the war against corruption—even collaborating on unravelling a major case," Ibrahim

wrote. The praise that will follow in the days ahead will be truly well-deserved, the Malaysian PM said.

Dr Manmohan Singh, slightly awkward as a politician but undeniably upright, steadfast and resolute as a statesman, leaves behind a legacy that will inspire generations to come, Ibrahim said.

"To me, he will be all that and much more. Not many people know this, and it is time that I share it with

Malaysians: during the years of my incarceration, he extended a kindness that he didn't have to—one that was neither politically expedient nor, as one can imagine, appreciated by the Malaysian government at that time. Yet, true to his character, he did it anyway. "He offered scholarships for my children, particularly my son, Ihsan. Although I had declined the gracious offer, such a gesture undoubtedly showed his extraordinary humanity and generosity, demonstrative, as the Bard would have it, of a man so full of 'the milk of human kindness'," the Malaysian PM said.

"In those dark days, as I navigated the labyrinth of imprisonment, he stood by me as a true friend. Such acts of quiet magnanimity defined him, and they will remain etched in my heart forever. Goodbye, my mitra, my bhai, Manmohan," Ibrahim had said.

Visit to Delhi a regular affair: DK Shivakumar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Bengaluru

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Sunday said his visit to New Delhi was a routine engagement. He said Chief Minister Siddaramaiah would speak about the Cabinet reshuffle.

Siddaramaiah on Saturday hinted that Cabinet reshuffle would happen after November when his Government completes two-and-half years.

"I regularly go there (New Delhi). Whenever there is work, I go there. I will go to meet the high command, to take rest, for shopping, also for court cases," Shivakumar told reporters before leaving for the national capital.

Speaking about Bengaluru's infrastructure projects, he said, "We have to expand the metro rail network. The Centre will give only 13 to 14 per cent of the total cost of the project. The rest everything will be borne by us. Yet we are doing it. We will do our job." On interactions with civic



stakeholders, Shivakumar said, "I met Mohandas Pai and Kiran Mazumdar Shaw. I took their opinion. We cannot leave them just because they criticise us. They are part of Bengaluru. They have given some good suggestions. We have to complete them within the democratic and bureaucratic setup. They are taxpayers. We have to listen to them." Referring to opposition to the tunnel road project, the Deputy CM remarked, "No one else but Tejasvi Surya is opposing tunnel road. He has sought a meeting with

me. I have given him time for meeting. He is a public representative.

"Let him come and discuss. Criticising is not important—let him do that—but at the same time he should come up with solutions as well. When he says an emphatic no, then he should give a solution as well. If his suggestion is viable, then we will consider it."

Clarifying property tax and property Khatha issues in Bengaluru, Shivakumar said, "The statement on A-Khatha and B-Khatha in Bengaluru is a mere comment and not a

SIDDARAMAIAH ON SATURDAY HINTED THAT CABINET RESHUFFLE WOULD HAPPEN AFTER NOVEMBER WHEN HIS GOVERNMENT COMPLETES TWO-AND-HALF YEARS

solution. We have examined it all. The BJP Government introduced the B-Khatha system.

"Now people have purchased revenue land after land use conversion but betterment charges have not been paid. So no one is giving them loans. What should I do? Should I demolish the building? These kinds of problems are there. We are not regularising properties but strengthening them."

Reacting to former Chief Minister H D Kumaraswamy's charge that the government was looting the public by imposing exorbitant fees, Shivakumar retorted, "Let him take away from my pocket if we are looting."



Editor's TAKE

ASEAN Summit 2025: High hopes but challenges galore

As world leaders gather in Kuala Lumpur for the ASEAN Summit, a question looms large: can it reclaim its central role amid rivalries and regional crises?

ASEAN, undoubtedly the most influential and coveted bloc in Asia, stands at the epicentre of attention as its 47th Summit gets underway. World leaders, including US President Donald Trump, UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer, the Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, and Japan's new Prime Minister Takaichi Sanae, are in attendance. Chinese Premier Xi Jinping and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi are conspicuous by their absence, though Prime Minister Modi will participate virtually.

Given the presence of these global leaders, expectations are naturally high. For Prime Minister of Malaysia, Anwar Ibrahim, the summit represents a defining moment to reaffirm ASEAN's relevance amid shifting power dynamics and deepening schisms across the Indo-Pacific. Indeed, it is the most consequential ASEAN gathering in years as most world leaders have come to attend it. The decision to include East Timor is more than a symbolic gesture – it shows ASEAN willingness to embrace new partners.

However, this is a challenging Summit as it takes place at a time when Southeast Asia is in turmoil and geopolitics is in a state of flux. From Myanmar's ongoing civil conflict to tensions in the South China Sea, from the Gaza war's challenges are many for the ASEAN members to deal with. The bloc faces a daunting agenda that tests both its unity and credibility.

Despite adopting a Five-Point Consensus in 2021, ASEAN has made little progress in restoring peace in Myanmar. The member states are divided over whether to maintain engagement or enforce exclusion of a country that is at war with itself. The South China Sea dispute remains another unresolved fault line. Two decades of negotiations have yielded little more than draft frameworks for a Code of Conduct with China. The confrontations between Chinese and Philippine vessels continue to intensify much to the embarrassment of ASEAN members.

Apart from the regional issues, ASEAN has to deal with the geopolitical contest between Washington and Beijing. Against this backdrop, India's participation carries particular weight. New Delhi's enduring commitment to its "Act East" policy continues unabated.

For India, ASEAN is not merely a partner but an important anchor of its Indo-Pacific vision – a region central to trade, connectivity, and maritime security. Economically, ASEAN is India's fourth-largest trading partner; strategically, it forms a natural bridge and buffer to the Pacific. The challenge, however, lies in moving beyond declarations and conferences. Concrete action will determine whether partnership can acquire real strategic depth for India.

ASEAN's ability to remain united and relevant will shape not only Southeast Asia's future but also the stability of the entire Indo-Pacific. For India, ASEAN is not just a trading partner, it is India's window to the East, a door it would like to open wider and make its presence felt in the region dominated by China.

Is the QUAD dead or on the backburner?

While concepts like QUAD will undergo topical pressures and even be put on the backburner, it would be premature to write-off QUAD and what all it offers, especially to the US in the long term



BHOPINDER SINGH

The late Prime Minister of Japan, Shinzo Abe, can claim to be the original proponent of the QUAD (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue) in 2007. QUAD, or the "Democratic Security Diamond", was envisaged as a strategic coalition of maritime democracies (the United States of America, Japan, India, and Australia), or like-minded nations, to work towards a "free and open Indo-Pacific" region.

What remained unsaid was the "elephant in the room" – the commonality of Sino-wariness that beset the four QUAD nations as they awoke to the realities of a belligerent, hegemonic, and expansionist China. Initial fanfare with the 2007 Malabar Exercise (Joint Naval Exercises) notwithstanding, the ideation went into dormancy for a decade, only to be revived in 2017 when China started stamping its footprint in the neighbourhood (South and East China Seas) and beyond (Belt and Road Initiative).

By 2017, specific factors such as the return of Shinzo Abe as Prime Minister, India's Doklam face-off, worsening public sentiment against China in Australia, and an assertive US under a China-baiting Donald Trump contributed to the circumstantial momentum for QUAD. Ambiguous language like "desisting unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force in the Indo-Pacific" barely hid the fact that the real target was China.

Later, Joe Biden continued the commitment with intermittent dialogues and occasional posturing through naval exercises. QUAD was expected to get sharper claws with the return of Donald Trump to the Oval Office in his second term. Oddly, this time, Trump's angst and ire are fuelled by tariffs not only targeted at China but also at its QUAD partners – most notably against India, with some of the most punitive rates. As the scope for QUAD was overwhelmingly wholesome, encompassing military, economic, infrastructural, and technological spheres, Trump's inexplicable and singular fixation with tariffs has not spared allies, putting the notion of preferential treatment afforded by concepts like QUAD in jeopardy.

As QUAD has not yet translated into a formal "treaty" and relies on positive consensus among member states, the popular mood against an uncouth Trump in India, Australia, and Japan has made intra-member engagement unnatural. This recent unease created by the US has led India to declare the October 2025 summit to be "on hold", alluding to prevailing bilateral tensions with the US. It is not just India – Trump has also threatened Japan unless it makes more trade concessions, citing Tokyo's unwillingness



AS THE QUAD HASN'T TRANSLATED INTO A FORMAL "TREATY" AS YET AND RELIES ON POSITIVE CONSENSUS AMONGST MEMBER STATES, THE POPULAR MOOD AGAINST AN UNCOUTH TRUMP IN INDIA, AUSTRALIA, AND JAPAN, HAVE MADE INTRA-MEMBER ENGAGEMENT, UNNATURAL

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to buy US-grown rice and its large trade deficit. Australia has had it even worse, with Trump forsaking all diplomatic balance and publicly telling the Australian Ambassador to the US to his face, "I don't like you either, and probably never will", besides pressurising Canberra on multiple fronts. It is as if India, Japan, and Australia have suddenly morphed into "enemy" states warranting punishment, thereby diminishing the chances for a conceptualisation like QUAD, which is predicated on mutual understanding and alignment among member states, especially the US.

On the contrary, other blocs like BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) have gathered momentum, memberships, and materiality. The fact that BRICS has two known nemeses of the US, Russia and China, within it, makes it even more leverageable for countries like India, which rightfully feel let down by the US in recent times.

In its own subtle way, Delhi is refusing to kowtow or bend to Trump's pressure tactics (for instance, cosying up to Pakistan) or persistent diatribes by refusing to renege on its historical equation and arrangement with Russia. So, does this signal the end of QUAD and all the great counter-possibilities that it promised? The short answer is no.

While concepts like QUAD will undergo topical pressures and even be put on the backburner, it would be premature to write off QUAD and all that it offers, especially to the US in the long term. It is important to recognise

that an unstatesmanlike leader like Trump rarely panders to the "larger picture" and tends to have very reactive, unfiltered, and limited thoughts whilst pronouncing on other countries, even if they were to be "natural allies" (a term once used for India). This infuses awkwardness on many bilateral and multilateral fronts.

As an unhelpful businessman, Trump's worldview is driven by very transactional, zero-sum bargaining for "business deals" rather than long-term strategic partnerships. Such a rationale in the Oval Office can end up overlooking the systemic context of interdependencies that cut across the realms of economics, geopolitics, geostrategy, and even security. Trump's language and conduct ironically personify the exact sentiment that QUAD expressly sought to negate, as per a joint statement issued on 20 May 2023, envisioning a world "where no country dominates and no country is dominated – one where all countries are free from coercion and can exercise their agency to determine their futures".

But by his own nature and incorrigibility, Trump will be made to feel enfeebled and isolated when China does flex its invariable muscle, and Washington DC will then suddenly find a miffed Delhi, Tokyo, and Canberra in an "I told you so" mode. Sadly, by the time Trump receives the rude wake-up call, much avoidable damage – to the detriment of all Sino-wary nations – would already have been done. So, QUAD is sadly relegated to the backburner – but only temporarily so.

PICTALK



Players of India and Argentina compete during an International Polo Cup 2025 match at the Jaipur Polo Ground, in New Delhi. PHOTO: PTI

Eating with awareness: Lessons from Zazen



RAVI VALLURI

2ND OPINION THE PIONEER

Festivities are in the air as there are celebrations galore all over. But this Diwali, we performed Lakshmi Puja (conducted online by the Vedic Pandits from the Art of Living Ashram, Bangalore), lit diyas, and partook of home-cooked food for both lunch and dinner.

Normally, I like to binge, eat outside, and succumb to the cravings for a variety of sweets. But it was a big "no" on this occasion – more about this later. Should one visit an Ayurvedic doctor or attend a wellness programme, say the Happiness Programme of the Art of Living, terms such as Satvik, Rajasik, and Tamasik food are often mentioned.

Ayurvedic medicine is based on the concept that the world is made up of five elements – *aakash* (space), *jala* (water), *prithvi* (earth), *teja* (fire), and *vayu* (air). A combination of each element results in three humours, or doshas, known as vata, kapha, and pitta. These doshas are believed to be responsible for a person's physiological, mental, and emotional health. According to Ayurveda, for optimal health, a vata-dominant person should follow a regular routine, manage stress through meditation and other calming activities, and maintain a warm body temperature by avoiding cold weather and consuming warm foods and drinks.

Those with a pitta-dominant dosha should focus on work-life balance and avoid extreme heat – whether in weather or food. Recently, while attending the *Navratri Pujas* at the Art of Living Centre, Bangalore, my wife and I consulted an Ayurvedic doctor and underwent Nadi Pariksha. My wife was identified as a Vata personality, while I was diagnosed as a Pitta personality, and we were prescribed the necessary medication. It may sound mind-boggling at first, but the findings were remarkably accurate. Simply put, my wife has long suffered from a nagging migraine and was also diagnosed with thyroid problems by the Ayurvedic doctor. Since childhood, I have struggled

with stomach ailments. Earlier, it was malabsorption, and later, my gut was severely affected due to excessive drinking – a habit I overcame through various Art of Living programmes. The Ayurvedic doctor quickly identified evacuation and bloating issues as my primary concerns.

Now, how come the Diwali celebrations were so low-key? A sudden stomach bug afflicted me, and soon I suffered a severe bout of gastroenteritis and dehydration, which required hospitalisation. After tests, I was put on antibiotics and IV fluids. It took almost a week to recover, during which I was on a diet of khichdi, buttermilk, chaas, coconut water, and bananas – feeling utterly enfeebled.

As I began regaining strength – like a cricket team trying to avoid a follow-on – my wife too suffered a similar attack and had to follow the same treatment. During our recovery, we chose simple, home-cooked food. Honourable Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi is known for frugal eating and yogic discipline, partaking of one variety of food during Navratri and fasting to detoxify the system. Wellness advocates like Akshay Kumar and Nagarjuna promote early dinners and fasting for better metabolism. Even Zen practitioners emphasise mindful eating through zazen. Gut health is the cornerstone of well-being.

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ADVERTISING LEGEND LEAVES EVERLASTING CREATIVE LEGACY

Leaving behind iconic advertisements, jingles, and lyrics that tug at every Indian heart, Piyush Pandey, the advertising legend, has passed away, creating a void that can never be filled. Pandey redefined the Indian advertising landscape with his brilliant campaigns that were deeply Indian – blending life, wit, humour, emotion, and flavour. His advertisements reflected everyday life and spoke directly to the heart.

His talent for writing mesmerising lyrics shone in the patriotic video song *Mile Sur Mera Tumhara* (1988), promoting national integration and unity in diversity. Perhaps after the national anthem, these lines were among the most recited by Indians. A recipient of the CLIO Lifetime Achievement

Award in 2012, he became the first Indian advertising professional to be honoured with the Padma Shri.

Some of his most iconic ads include BJP's "Abki Baar, Modi Sarkar" campaign for the 2014 Lok Sabha elections; Fevicol's crowded rickety bus; Cadbury Dairy Milk's "Kuch Khaas Hai"; Vodafone's "Cheeka the Pug" and ZooZoo's; Asian Paints' "Har Gar Kuch Kehta Hai"; Polio Eradication's "Do Boond Zindagi Ke" featuring Amitabh Bachchan; and Bajaj's "Hamara Bajaj" – all evergreen creations that will endure for generations.

Piyush Pandey leaves behind not just advertisements, but a legacy of cultural storytelling that transformed Indian advertising forever.

M PRADYU | KANNUR

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Assault on judiciary in Supreme Court

Right within the floor of the Supreme Court, with legal proceedings in full flow, none other than the Honorable Chief Justice of India was attacked with a shoe! If a person of such authority can be assaulted in the highly secured environment of the nation's highest court, no prizes for guessing the fate of vulnerable citizens on the streets, especially those who act or speak against the saffron "mainstream" or call a spade a spade.

Though our respected Chief Justice BR Gavai acted admirably by asking the apex court registry not to take any action against the assailant, the law of the land should have taken its course – that is, booking the Advocate for his audacious, barbaric, and violent act, and ensuring exemplary punishment, with heavy fines and imprisonment. Instead, we bizarrely witnessed how the unrepentant brute became a cynosure in the eyes of millions, laughing all the way to the "bank" of mass popularity, publicity, and hero-worship on poisonous social media.

If sanity, civility, and free speech are to survive in India, legal action must be initiated against the Advocate, pursued seriously, and punishment ensured so that the intolerant brigade does not gain further viriolic power. Those bereft of even an iota of conscience do not deserve the leniency of the dignified Chief Justice.

KAJAL CHATTERJEE | KOLKATA

Rohit dominates Sydney ODI

Has anyone imagined that Rohit Sharma would claim both the Man of the Match and Man of the Series awards in the concluded ODI against Australia?

While memes targeted Kohli, mocking his zeros, Virat proved his comeback at the right time. Rohit silenced critics and demonstrated that form is temporary but class is permanent.

India's victory was convincing, particularly after losing the first two ODIs. Bundling out Australia for 236, the key tormentor was Harshit Rana with 4 for 39. Rohit's classic century equalled Sachin Tendulkar's record with his ninth ton against Australia.

Shubman Gill started well but was dismissed by a fine catch from Alex Carey. The arrival of Virat Kohli and his seasoned partners ensured India delivered a fairytale finish. This was India's first ODI win at the Sydney Cricket Ground since 2016.

A standing ovation is deserved for Rohit and Virat, whose return after seven months reminded the world why this pair is celebrated as invincible in cricket. Rohit Sharma's leadership and Virat Kohli's resilience reignited India's winning spirit. Their partnership once again proved why they remain cricket's most formidable duo. This victory was a statement of India's enduring class.

AP THIRUVADI | CHENNAI

Bus Inferno: Urgent reforms needed

The tragic fire in a converted sleeper bus, which claimed twenty lives within minutes, underscores the urgent need for safety reforms in public transport. Likely causes – illegal modifications, unfit vehicle design, overspeeding, poor visibility, and driver fatigue – demand stricter enforcement of road and vehicle regulations, alongside improved infrastructure, lighting, and speed monitoring. Driving hours must also be regulated to prevent exhaustion-related mishaps. India must urgently adopt international fire safety standards.

Every passenger bus should be equipped with heat sensors, automatic extinguishers, flame-retardant interiors, accessible emergency exits, and real-time tracking systems to alert authorities in case of fire or collision. Accountability is paramount; the nexus between negligent operators and corrupt authorities needs thorough investigation and penal action.

With night travel becoming increasingly common, sleeping passengers are especially vulnerable during emergencies. This devastating incident must serve as a wake-up call to completely overhaul India's bus safety framework – not tomorrow, but today. Fire safety cannot be treated as a privilege; it is an essential right that safeguards every life on the road.

KIRTI WADHAWAN | KANPUR



The Tale of a Billion Souls Chained by corrupt Feudal DNA

Corruption is not just an administrative disease; it is a moral crisis. The feudal arrogance that glorifies privilege and humiliates honesty has crippled a continent that once gave the world philosophy, art, and civilisation

FIRST Column



PRASHANT TEWARI

All across South Asia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Myanmar, and to some lesser extent in India, corruption is not just a flaw in the system; it is woven into the mindset. A feudal legacy that glorifies privilege over responsibility has turned democracy into patronage, and citizens into dependents.

Despite economic growth and democratic transitions, South Asia remains hostage to its oldest vice. Corruption is the slow poison that robs nations of money, dignity, and trust. The battle ahead is not merely legal; it is moral.

Corruption is not occasional; it is a way of life

From tehsil offices to national capitals, the invisible economy of bribes and favours corrodes every institution. Ordinary citizens, already burdened by poverty, pollution, and overcrowding, must negotiate survival daily.

Across the region, the pattern repeats: dynasties rule, politicians, bureaucrats, judges, police enrich themselves, and citizens navigate systems through connections, not rights. The result is a paradox, a region rich in talent yet chained by corruption so deep that it feels natural.

"Every bribe demanded from a poor citizen is not just financial exploitation; it is a wound upon his dignity."

The mighty colonial powers governed South Asia through local elites rewarded with land and privilege for obedience. Independence changed the names, not the mindset. New rulers inherited the machinery of control and used it for personal gain.

In India, idealism gave way to political patronage. In Pakistan, military and political elites perfected corruption as a tool of power.

Afghanistan's war economy thrived on graft; Bangladesh and Nepal were dominated by dynastic politics; Sri Lanka and Myanmar cloaked nepotism behind nationalism. Today, the state often functions less as a public trust and more as a family business.

The Feudal Mindset

Corruption in South Asia is unique because



it is psychological. Authority is still treated as inherited, not earned. Landlords command loyalty through fear, ministers treat posts as personal estates, and votes are often bought with caste, religion, or cash. Bureaucrats compete for postings with the highest earning potential. Police and municipal officials extract their share for every certificate or permit. The judiciary, instead of dispensing justice, often aids exploitation.

In such a society, honesty becomes an oddity. The honest are mocked; the dishonest are praised. Moral clarity is replaced by moral fatigue.

Trillions have been lost in scams, inflated contracts, and tax evasion. But the greater cost is invisible: lost opportunity, broken dreams, and eroded trust. Each diverted rupee or taka means fewer hospitals, broken schools, and stunted lives.

In India, innumerable scandals exposed systemic plunder. In Pakistan, "ghost projects" swallow entire budgets. Afghanistan's reconstruction aid vanished into warlords' coffers. In Sri Lanka,

FEUDALISM AND CORRUPTION REINFORCE EACH OTHER: CONCENTRATED POWER BREEDS GRAFT; GRAFT PRESERVES CONCENTRATED POWER. THE POOR REMAIN DEPENDENT; THE RICH UNTOUCHABLE. THIS IS NOT A COINCIDENCE; IT IS DESIGN. POVERTY BREEDS OBEDIENCE, AND OBEDIENCE MAINTAINS CONTROL

cronism drove the nation to bankruptcy. But the worst, debilitating loss is moral.

When a society believes that nothing moves without a bribe, democracy dies silently. Citizens stop expecting fairness, adapt, and survive, surrendering the very idea of freedom.

"A nation cannot progress when its foundational services are hostages of corruption."

Rot in the Mind

Anti-corruption agencies, vigilance commissions, and special courts exist, yet many roar only when targeting opponents and whisper when allies are involved. Bureaucracies have become fortresses of privilege, and media outlets are often compromised.

Even the essential services, police, healthcare, municipal governance, and judiciary have been infiltrated. Citizens, both taxpayers and beneficiaries, are reduced to beggars pleading for what is already theirs by right.

Hospitals prioritise bribes over emergencies; police demand "facilitation fees";

justice is delayed until it dies. This is not merely administrative decay; it is moral collapse. Until integrity is restored, people will keep paying twice: once through taxes, and again through extortion.

Yet, the human spirit occasionally rebels. India's Anna Hazare movement, Sri Lanka's 2022 protests, and recently GenZ uprisings in Bangladesh and Nepal have challenged entrenched power syndromes. These flashes prove that people's patience has limits.

But without deep institutional reform, these waves of outrage crash against walls of privilege.

Feudalism and corruption reinforce each other: concentrated power breeds graft; graft preserves concentrated power. The poor remain dependent; the rich untouchable. This is not a coincidence; it is design. Poverty breeds obedience, and obedience maintains control.

Breaking the cycle demands more than laws or commissions. It requires a moral revolution. Education must cultivate civic courage. Children must learn that bribery is complicity. Digital governance can reduce discretion, shrinking opportunities for graft.

Electoral funding must be transparent. Dynastic politics must yield to internal democracy. Without clean politics, no institution can stay clean.

Above all, citizens must reclaim their agency. Every bribe refused, every corrupt act exposed, every honest official supported, these are acts of nation-building. Integrity spreads not by decree, but by example.

"True progress will not come from skyscrapers or statistics, but from restoring integrity to public life."

Corruption is not just an administrative disease; it is a moral crisis. The feudal arrogance that glorifies privilege and humiliates honesty has crippled a continent that once gave the world philosophy, art, and civilisation.

South Asia's true greatness will not be restored through wealth, but through fairness and integrity, when honesty is no longer a risk, but a right. The fight against corruption is a fight for the very soul of the region.

This battle must begin within the conscience of its people, or over a billion lives will continue to be shackled by injustice, trapped in misery for generations to come.

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India emerges as institutional architect of the Global South



MAHENDRA KUMAR SINGH

The international system is not merely evolving; it is undergoing a foundational recalibration. The post-Cold War Pax Americana, a paradigm defined by US hegemony, neoliberal globalisation, and institutional consensus has fractured. In its wake, we are witnessing the emergence of a multiplicitous world order. This is not multipolarity in a tidy, 19th-century sense, but a more anarchic and fluid reality, a polyarchy of clashing geopolitics, disruptive technologies, and climate-driven scarcity.

It is within this interstitial chaos that the Global South, historically the object rather than the subject of international relations, is asserting its constitutive agency. To conceptualise the Global South as a geographic entity is to misunderstand its essence. It is, more accurately, a geo-political and geo-economic construct, a testament to the enduring legacy of colonial and neo-colonial extraction that systematically peripheralised vast swathes of humanity from the core circuits of capital and governance. It represents a coalition of the structurally marginalised, bound by a shared historical grievance: their forced participation in a global order whose rules they did not write.

Today, India emerges not merely as a voice within this coalition, but as its preeminent theorist and institutional architect. The prevailing "new world disorder" is defined by asymmetric multipolarity. While the collective West's relative dominance wanes, no single power or coherent bloc has emerged to replace it. China's state-capitalist model and Russia's revisionist militarism challenge the status quo, but they offer illiberal and hierarchical alternatives.

This has created a strategic vacuum, fertile ground for the rise of "swing states" like India, Brazil, and Indonesia. Their power derives not from overwhelming military might, but from demographic heft, economic gravity, and normative suasion. India's strategic posture in this landscape is one of unparalleled complexity. It is engaged in a tri-lemma of concurrent imperatives: containing a revisionist China on its borders, preserving a strategic entente with a resource-rich Russia, championing the cause of the Global South, and simultaneously deepening a consequential partnership with the West. Navigating this requires a foreign policy doctrine of immense sophistication. China's rise presents the central

strategic challenge.

Its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is not merely an infrastructure program; it is a spatial strategy of economic integration designed to create Sino-centric supply chains and security dependencies. Beijing's claim to Global South leadership is thus inherently paradoxical: it is a peer competitor to the U.S. that rhetorically positions itself as a fellow developing nation. The 2020 Galwan clash was a catalytic event, transforming India's China policy from managed competition to active deterrence, crystallised in the Quad. The core divergence is philosophical: China promotes a model of hierarchical connectivity, while India advocates for a model of sovereign capacity-building.

Russia presents a different strategic paradox—a European power politically and economically displaced into a Eurasian orientation. Its post-2022 pivot to the Global South, driven by Western sanctions, has made it a disruptive, resource-rich patron for states seeking non-Western alignments. For India, Russia remains an indispensable partner for energy security and defense technology. However, Moscow's deepening strategic vassalage to Beijing creates a precarious dependency, threatening to reduce India's room for diplomatic maneuver and potentially constraining its strategic autonomy. India's response to this tri-lemma is not non-alignment, but its 21st-century successor: Pragmatic Multi-Alignment. India's nuanced stances on Ukraine and Gaza are

not indecision but a deliberate doctrine of diplomatic sovereignty, rooted in the civilisational ethos of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* (the world is one family).

Unlike China's debt-financed leverage or Russia's transactional arms-for-resources diplomacy, India's model is built on Digital Public Infrastructure, green technology cooperation (International Solar Alliance), and humanitarian solidarity (Vaccine Maitri). This represents a form of "soft power 2.0"—not merely cultural appeal, but the export of scalable, replicable systems for governance and development. Crucially, the locus of power has shifted decisively from geopolitics to geo-economics, where influence is won through supply chains, technology standards, and digital infrastructure, making development and innovation the primary frontiers of confrontation.

It is within this context that coalitions like BRICS and the International Solar Alliance gain profound significance, embodying the Global South's aspiration to construct a more representative order. India's assertive participation in these forums, evidenced by its leadership in the New Development Bank and its push for alternative financial mechanisms, signals a deliberate pursuit of a plural financial ecosystem less reliant on Western-dom-

inated institutions, a strategic intent that has already drawn economic pushback and underscores the high stakes of this geo-economic rebalancing. India's G20 presidency was a masterclass in this new statecraft.

By securing the African Union's permanent membership, India did not just expand a forum; it re-engineered the topology of global governance, symbolically ending the era of a "G7 with guests." It positioned itself not as a bridge between North and South, a passive conduit—but as an interpretive and institutional nexus, translating Southern grievances into Northern parlance and vice-versa. The challenges are profound. India must contend with the heterogeneity of the Global South, where the interests of petro-states, least-developed nations, and emerging economies often diverge. It must navigate the Sino-Russian axis's co-optation of Southern discontent, and it must demonstrate that its own rapid economic ascent can generate tangible spillover benefits for the wider coalition.

This underscores a fundamental strategic truth: in the harsh arithmetic of geopolitics, autonomy without capability is an illusion. The third, and most pivotal, challenge is therefore internal. India's global leadership must be underpinned by the relentless acceleration of its own economic and technological development. It must scale its manufacturing base, navigate the balance between strategic decoupling and deep economic interdependence, and ensure its domestic progress is both rapid and equitable.

A prosperous, technologically self-reliant India is an irresistible model for the Global South; a India that struggles to deliver on its own economic promise risks seeing its normative appeal and diplomatic sovereignty diminish. Ultimately, India's grand strategy in this anarchic transition is to be the architect of a new pluralism.

Its ambition is to prevent the world from re-coalescing into a binary Cold War-style confrontation, where the Global South is once again a contested periphery. By leveraging its unique position and building the indispensable capability to support its autonomy, India seeks to transform the current disorder into a more equitable, polycentric order, a world where governance is networked, not hierarchical, and where the Global South transitions from being a subject of history to its author. In this endeavor, India's greatest export may not be goods or services, but a new grammar of international relations itself, one written in the language of sovereignty, justice, and inclusive progress.

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Fuelling India's Growth Story with Smarter Proteins



RAVI AUDICHYA

What's common between spongy khaman dhoklas, fluffy idlis, or a glass of refreshing kanji? It's those tiny-yet-mighty friends, microorganisms, that make food tastier and healthier through fermentation. Indian cuisine is no stranger to the magic of fermentation, which for thousands of years has played a major role in ensuring that our food remains safe, nutritious, and delicious. Fermentation, a branch of biotechnology, has also been a crucial tool to grow more food from side streams - things we generally throw away during food processing. Be it growing mushrooms using wheat straws or producing yeast proteins using molasses, advances in biotechnology are helping us leverage the power of this age-old process of fermentation to develop innovative food ingredients and end-products like smart proteins.

Smart proteins, or alternative proteins, are protein-rich foods derived from plants, cultivated animal cells, or fermentation that can be sustainable substitutes for animal-based proteins. Economic and cultural barriers to accessing animal proteins, coupled with the climate and public health inefficiencies of meeting the growing demand for meat, posit the need for India to explore alternative pathways to sustainable food production. Smart proteins not only have a much smaller environmental impact compared to traditional animal proteins but also hold the potential to future-proof India's public health and nutritional challenges.

Our strong cultural heritage has often inspired us to find solutions to the most pressing problems in accessing nutritious foods. From using vegetable peels to make delicious pickles to making Panta Bhat from leftover rice, Amma has always found ways to make the most out of what we have. Today, particularly as the country faces the challenge of protein malnutrition, is the best time to look back into her kitchen with the lens of biotechnology and find new ways to bring nutritious and delicious protein to everyone's plate, at scale.

India's bioeconomy has grown exponentially in the past decade to USD 165.7 billion. With strengths in low-cost commercial biomanufacturing and specialised R&D centres spread across the country, the sector is poised to reach USD 300 billion by 2030. The recent BioE3 policy by the Union Government plots these ambitions into a roadmap. With key initiatives such as setting up a network of specialised infrastructure clusters, viz. 'Biofoundries', the policy aims to support



impactful bioinnovations take their first step out of the lab into pre-commercial scale. Smart proteins, identified as one of the focus areas in the policy, offer limitless opportunities to create value from waste. The application of fermentation does not end at growing proteins from agricultural sidestreams alone; it pushes the very boundaries of how we have looked at food for centuries. Imagine a future where you start your day with a glass of cruelty-free milk produced by yeast instead of cows, have a lip-smacking snack of 'Chicken 65' made from mycelium (fungi), and dine on a Neapolitan pizza topped with mozzarella made using precision fermentation. 12,000 years ago, the invention of agriculture revolutionised our food systems, and now we are nearing the next stage of its evolution. With the established policy impetus and technical capabilities to make this transformation a reality, and regulatory pathways sure to follow, the real challenge now lies in translating these solutions to large-scale production.

To achieve full-scale commercialisation, we must tap into the existing 10,000 unit strong biomanufacturing infrastructure. Meanwhile, taking advantage of the rising global interest and investments in fermentation-derived smart

protein solutions for greenfield and brownfield projects, India can earn a global manufacturing edge in the sector and fuel long-term growth. Along with the potential to fulfil the nutritional needs of a growing nation, smart proteins provide a tool to leverage biotechnology to achieve our economic goals by creating value from waste, environmental goals by catalysing a sustainable and circular food system, and generating employment across the value chain, from the farm to the factories. Scientists, engineers, farmers, and policymakers must all work together to feed our 1.4 billion-strong nation and fuel India's growth story for the coming decades. Our technical and infrastructural strengths in food, fermentation, and biotechnology are crucial advantages for helping quickly build a resilient and sustainable food system with smart proteins and ensuring access to high-quality nutrition for everyone in the face of climate change.

The Pioneer SINCE 1865

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FROM THE WORLD

JAPAN

Spacecraft launched

Japan's space agency successfully launched on Sunday its most powerful flagship H3 rocket, carrying a newly developed unmanned cargo spacecraft for its first mission to deliver supplies to the International Space Station. The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency said the HTV-X1 spacecraft successfully lifted off atop the No. 7 H3 rocket from Japan's Tanegashima Space Centre in the country's south and confirmed it entered the targeted orbit 14 minutes after liftoff. The spacecraft was separated and placed into a planned orbit, JAXA said. If everything goes smoothly, it is expected to arrive at the ISS in a few days to deliver supplies.

CHINA

Tagore bust unveiled

A bust of Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore carved by the famous Chinese sculptor Yuan Xikun was unveiled at the Indian Embassy here. The sculpture was unveiled on the sidelines of a symposium titled Sangamam - A Confluence of Indian Philosophical Traditions organised by the Embassy on Saturday. Unveiling the bust, Indian Ambassador to China Pradeep Rawat said Tagore's visit to China a century ago was a milestone in our civilisational dialogue.

Trump attends Thailand-Cambodia ceasefire ceremony

ASSOCIATED PRESS
Kuala Lumpur

Thailand and Cambodia signed an expanded ceasefire agreement on Sunday during a ceremony attended by US President Donald Trump, whose threats of economic pressure prodded the two nations to halt skirmishes along their disputed border earlier this year. Thailand will release Cambodian prisoners and Cambodia will begin withdrawing heavy artillery as part of the first phase of the deal. Regional observers will monitor the situation to ensure fighting doesn't restart. "We did something that a lot of people said couldn't be done," Trump said. Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet called it a "historic day," and Thai Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul said the agreement creates "the building blocks for a lasting peace." The ceremony was Trump's first event after arriv-

ing at the annual summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), hosted in Kuala Lumpur. The trip, which will continue with visits to Japan and South Korea and a potential meeting with Chinese leader Xi Jinping, is an opportunity for Trump to burnish his reputation as an international dealmaker at a time when his tariffs have scrambled the international economy and he's feuding with Democrats over a government shutdown back home. Trump touched down in the Malaysian capital shortly before 0200 GMT, where he performed his trademark campaign trail dance with local performers and waved an American flag in one hand and a Malaysian flag in the other. The president signed economic agreements with Cambodia, Thailand and Malaysia, some of them aimed at increasing trade involving critical minerals. The US wants to rely less on



China, which has limited exports of key components in technology manufacturing. "It's very important that we cooperate as willing partners with each other to ensure that we can have smooth supply chains, secure supply chains, for the quality of life, for our people and security," said US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer. Trump also seemed eager to calm trade tensions with China, repeatedly expressing confidence about sitting down with Xi in South Korea at the end of his trip. "They want to make a deal and we want to make a deal," he said. Trump reiterated his plan to visit China in the future and suggested that Xi could come to Washington or Mar-a-Lago, his private club in Florida. Trump reengages with a key region of the world: The president attended this summit only once during his first term, and Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth seemed unfamiliar with ASEAN during his confirma-

tion hearing in January. But this year's event was a chance for Trump to reengage with a collection of nations that have a combined USD 3.8 trillion economy and 680 million people. "The United States is with you 100 per cent, and we intend to be a strong partner and friend for many generations to come," Trump said. He described his counterparts as "spectacular leaders" and said, "everything you touch turns to gold." The summit also allowed Trump to play global peacemaker with Thailand and Cambodia, which have competing territorial claims that result in periodic violence along their border. Some of the worst modern fighting between the two countries took place over five days in July, killing dozens and displacing hundreds of thousands of people, some of the worst modern fighting between the two countries.

East Timor joins ASEAN in bloc's first expansion since 1990s

ASSOCIATED PRESS
Kuala Lumpur

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations welcomed East Timor as its newest member Sunday, which its prime minister said was a "dream realised" for the tiny nation. Meanwhile, Cambodia and Thailand signed an agreement expanding a ceasefire on their borders with the hope it will lead to a lasting peace. "Today, history is made," Prime Minister Xanana Gusmao told the other leaders as the flag of East Timor, also known as Timor Leste, was added to the other 10 on the stage at a formal ceremony in Kuala Lumpur. It was ASEAN's first expansion since the 1990s and was more than a decade in the making. "For the people of Timor Leste, this is not only a dream realised, but a powerful affirmation of our journey — one marked by resilience, determination and hope," he said. The ceremony marked the opening of ASEAN's annual summit, followed by two days of high-level engagements with key partners including China, Japan, India, Australia, Russia, South Korea and the US. Chinese Premier Li Qiang, Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney and Japan's newly inaugurated Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi were among more than a dozen other leaders on hand. Membership in ASEAN could help one of the world's poorest countries grow: East Timor's accession to ASEAN gives the country, which has just 1.4 million people and a

GDP of around USD 2 billion, better access to an economic community of nations with some 680 million people and a USD 3.8 trillion economy. Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, whose country holds the bloc's rotating chairmanship, said East Timor's accession "completes the ASEAN family, the affirming of our shared destiny and deep sense of regional kinship." He said ASEAN's goal was to "pursue growth that is both resilient and fair, and to safeguard the welfare of generations to come." The integration of the region's youngest nation, and one of its poorest, demonstrates ASEAN's "inclusivity and adaptability, especially at a time of geopolitical flux," said Angeline Tan, an analyst with Malaysia's Institute of Strategic & International Studies: "As protectionism is on the rise, the expansion of ASEAN demonstrates its commitment to regionalism, openness and equal participation," she said. The last country to join ASEAN was Cambodia in 1999. East Timor, wedged between Indonesia and Australia, was a Portuguese colony for over four centuries before declaring independence in 1975. Indonesia invaded nine days later, beginning a brutal 24-year occupation that claimed tens of thousands of lives through conflict, famine and disease. A UN-supervised referendum in 1999 paved the way for independence, which was formally restored in 2002.

Pak holds talks with Afghanistan, warns of war if deliberations fail

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Islamabad

Pakistan and Afghanistan held the second round of talks in Istanbul to establish a joint monitoring and oversight mechanism to curb terrorist movements across the border even as Islamabad warned that war was still an option if talks failed to address its chief concern about terrorism. Dozens of soldiers, civilians and terrorists were killed in clashes earlier this month, creating a war like situation

but peace was restored temporarily on October 19 after the two sides held talks — facilitated by Qatar and Turkey — in Doha. As agreed in Doha, the second round of talks between Pakistan and the Afghan Taliban was held on Saturday in Istanbul, Turkey. Radio Pakistan quoted official sources saying that the discussions were focused on establishing a joint monitoring and oversight mechanism to curb cross-border terrorist movements and addressing trade barriers.

The two sides also explored the possibility of reaching a long-term political understanding. Geo News reported that Pakistan handed over a comprehensive counterterrorism plan to the Afghan Taliban during the second round of talks between the two sides. Separately, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif, speaking to reporters in his home town of Sialkot, warned of an "all-out war" with the Afghan Taliban regime if the talks failed, adding that the outcome of the negotiations

Russian drones hit Kyiv

ASSOCIATED PRESS
Kyiv

Russia targeted Ukraine's capital with drones, killing three people in their homes, local authorities said early on Sunday. At least 29 people were wounded, seven of them children, in what was the second consecutive nighttime attack on Kyiv to claim civilian lives. Ukraine's Interior Minister Ihor Klymenko said a 19-year-old woman and her 46-year-old mother were among the killed. Russian drones caused fires in two residential buildings in the capital's Desnianskyi district. Emergency crews evacuated civilians from a nine-storey building and a 16-storey building. Russia attacked Ukraine with 101 drones overnight on Sunday, according to Ukraine's Air Force, of which 90 were shot down and neutralised by Ukrainian forces. However, five strike drones hit four locations. Debris from shot-down drones fell on five locations, the statement said without elaborating where.

London police arrest sex offender, asylum-seeker released mistakenly

ASSOCIATED PRESS
London

London police said on Sunday they arrested a convicted sex offender and asylum-seeker who was mistakenly released from prison in a blunder that has embarrassed the government. The Metropolitan Police said Ethiopian national Hadush Gerberslasie Kebatu was arrested in the Finsbury Park area in north London. Police said he will be returned to the custody of the Prison Service. Before he was released in error, Kebatu had already been in national news

because his arrest earlier this year over the sexual assault of a teenage girl triggered a wave of angry anti-migrant protests in London and other cities. Authorities said they were alerted Friday afternoon that Kebatu, 38, was released by mistake at a prison in Chelmsford, Essex, and was seen catching a London-bound train there. British media reported that he was wrongly categorised as a prisoner due to be released, instead of being sent to an immigration detention centre. The migrant was sentenced in September to 12

months in prison for five offences, including the sexual assault of a 14-year-old girl in July in Epping, on the outskirts of London, just over a week after he had arrived in England by boat. Thousands of people protested outside the Bell Hotel in Epping, northeast of London, where he was staying along with other newly arrived migrants. Multiple protests targeting other hotels housing migrants followed in other British cities and towns, with some demonstrations attended by far-right activists and spilling into disorder.

Argentina votes midterm to test Milei's mandate

ASSOCIATED PRESS
Buenos Aires (Argentina)

On the northern bank of Argentina's Riachuelo River, luxury car dealerships report sales surging since libertarian President Javier Milei scrapped import restrictions. Streets in the Puerto Madero financial district bustle with bankers who praise Milei for ending a yearslong ban on selling dollars online. Fine restaurants serve sushi and steak to Argentine oil executives who gush about his efforts to draw foreign investment. On the opposite side of the polluted Riachuelo waterway, Veronica Leguizamón, 34, has only few eggs, a



carton of milk and a handful of bread rolls left in her pantry. Clutching a Tupperware container, she braved heavy rain last Friday to carry home dinner for her four daughters from a soup kitchen in her

neighbourhood of Isla Maciel — a new daily routine since Milei slashed subsidies for public services and unwound price controls on staple foods. "Before, we could choose what to cook," she said. "Now we depend on others to

know if we'll eat or not." The contrasting fortunes of these Buenos Aires neighbourhoods just over a kilometre apart illustrate the tensions polarising the Argentine electorate in Sunday's nationwide congressional midterms. As voters go to the polls, their vastly different perceptions of the economy stand to determine whether Milei succeeds — and whether the Trump administration presses on with a financial rescue plan for its cash-strapped ideological ally. "Within my little circle, everyone's happy with how things are going," said Fernanda Diaz, 42, who runs a yacht rental company in

Puerto Madero. "When I step outside it, I see people worried about making it to the end of the month." Milei's opposition spooks markets: Commenting on the midterm elections, US President Donald Trump threatened to rescind a USD 20 billion aid package for Argentina if Milei suffers a defeat at the hands of a "socialist or communist," prompting a sell-off in Argentine markets. Trump was apparently referring to Argentina's loosely populist, broad-based ideological movement known as Peronism that helped deliver the economic shambles that Milei inherited in late 2023.

Bhagavad Gita 'nectar of wisdom' for modern world, say Chinese scholars

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Beijing

The Bhagavad Gita is the "nectar of wisdom" and a "miniature history of Indian civilisation" offering answers to the spiritual and material dilemmas faced by people in modern times, noted Chinese scholars said articulating a rare public reverence for the ancient Indian scripture. Speaking on Bhagavad Gita at a symposium on "Sangamam - A Confluence of Indian Philosophical Traditions" organised by the Indian Embassy here on Saturday, Chinese scholars termed Gita as a philosophical encyclopaedia of India, highlight-

ing its timeless insights on achieving harmony between material and spiritual pursuits. The star speaker at the event was 88-year old Prof Zhang Baosheng, who has translated Bhagavad Gita into Chinese. Terming Gita as a spiritual epic and a philosophical encyclopaedia of India, he said its translation was necessary because it revealed India's spiritual outlook — its ideas of duty, action, and detachment — which still moulds Indian life today. Recounting his experiences in India (1984-86) from Cape Comorin (now known as Kanniyakumari) in the south to Gorakhpur in the north, Prof

Zhang said everywhere, he sensed Lord Krishna's presence — a living moral and spiritual idol. Through such encounters, Prof Zhang said he saw that Gita is not a remote scripture but a living influence on Indian psychology, morality, and social life — a "cultural anthropology" of the Indian soul. He called the Bhagavad Gita "a miniature history of Indian civilisation itself — a dialogue that captures its ethical crisis, philosophical synthesis, and religious rebirth." Bhagavad Gita struck a chord with the rest of the world, including in China, leading to its translation into all major languages, he said. In his address, Prof Wang Zhi-

cheng, Director of the Centre for Oriental Philosophy Research at the Zhejiang University said Bhagavad Gita, a dialogue from an ancient Indian battlefield over 5,000 years ago, transcended time to answers the anxieties and confusions people face today. Terming Gita as a "nectar of wisdom," he said, "Krishna's answers were engraved into the 700 verses of the Bhagavad Gita. These words are not outdated maxims, but 'spiritual keys' that have crossed millennia." He outlined to the mostly Chinese audience the "core" of three "wisdoms to solve life's problems" — which are the Karma Yoga, Sankhya Yoga, and Bhakti

Yoga — propounded by Krishna which provide a way out to deal with the problems faced by the people in the modern world. Highlighting the famous words of Krishna, "whenever dharma (righteousness) declines and adharma (unrighteousness) prevails, I manifest myself on earth," he said, "The wisdom of Gita is the light that 'manifests' when we are lost". "When you feel anxious, remember to 'let go of attachment to results,' when you feel lost, remember to 'recognise your true self,' when you feel empty, remember to 'give more,'" he said. Prof Yu Longyu, Director of Centre for Indian Studies,

Shenzhen University said the key points emerged from the studies carried out by various Chinese scholars was that India, as a great civilisation, possesses a profound cultural and philosophical heritage that deserves deep study and transmission. "In modern times, China's leading scholars have often embodied 'threefold learning — Chinese, Western, and Indian'. I therefore call upon Chinese scholars to study Indian culture with dedication, contributing to China's rejuvenation, to India-China harmony, and to peace in the world," he said. Earlier, welcoming the array of Chinese scholars, Indian

Ambassador to China Pradeep Kumar Rawat said it was an extension of last year's conference on Ramayana held by the Embassy. "Over millennia, India's philosophical traditions have sought to answer the most fundamental questions: 'What is truth? What is the nature of reality? How do knowledge and action lead to ultimate freedom?'" "The darsanas or philosophical schools — from Nyaya's logic to Yoga's discipline, from Vedanta's introspection to Buddhism's compassion — present diverse pathways to the same quest for wisdom and harmony," Rawat said.



PKK withdrawing fighters from Turkiye to Iraq

ASSOCIATED PRESS
Istanbul

A militant Kurdish group announced on Sunday that it is withdrawing its fighters from Turkiye to Iraq as part of a peace effort with Turkiye. The statement issued in northern Iraq by the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, came months after a group of its fighters began laying down their weapons in a symbolic ceremony, as part of the peace process. The group has been waging a decades-long insurgency in Turkiye that has led to tens of thousands of deaths since the 1980s. "To prevent any risk of clashes or provocations, we are currently withdrawing all our forces within Turkiye to the Medya Defence Area with Abdullah Ocalan's approval," read the statement from KCK executive board member Sabri Ok, referring to the group's imprisoned leader.



Russia tests unique cruise missile with nuclear engine

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Moscow

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Sunday announced the successful test of a unique nuclear powered 'Burevestnik' cruise missile with unlimited range and ordered the armed forces to prepare infrastructure for its deployment. Putin, in his televised meeting with the chief of defence staff and other military commanders, mentioned that during recent drills of nuclear forces, the 'Burevestnik' cruise was in the air for 15 hours and covered 14,000 kilometres during successful trials. As the Supreme Commander of Russia's Armed Forces, Putin visited the joint staff of military operations in Ukraine earlier in the morning and interacted with force commanders led by Chief General Staff Gen Valery Gerasimov.



Artificial Intelligence: A future with caution



VIPUL GAOUR

One of the most remarkable gifts by the mankind to itself is the Artificial Intelligence. Once a new word, Artificial Intelligence or AI, is the most commonly known term to every household now.

AI is also a smart assistant for any work, starting from making a shopping list to reviewing products online, many daily use applications and websites are using their AI versions for helping the users. AI is also a smart tool for academic research and teaching when used in a responsible manner. Some social media platforms are also providing AI tools for writing and creating post.

Artificial Intelligence is now spreading its wings in almost all the fields, be it healthcare, agriculture, education even the Government undertakings are using AI to make the services user friendly. India is at the pioneer in the use of artificial intelligence, the Government of India, taking a step forward has also come up with the India AI mission to promote the use of artificial intelli-

actors, politicians have become the target of deepfakes where their deepfake or AI generated video, voice notes, pictures were circulated online to marginalise their image and spread misinformation.

- **Scams:** Use of AI is increasing in committing cybercrimes. AI generated voice, pictures which generate a similar note as what is being portrayed, often leads to the victim believe, sender is an authentic person. Recent scams including digital arrest, courier frauds, share market scams are committed using AI as a mode.
- **Ethical and Legal Concerns:** Some AI tools work by gathering existing online content and forming opinions based on it. This can create problems, as the information or viewpoints they provide may be one-sided and fail to show other perspectives or the full truth.

- It is easy to manipulate an opinion for or against a person or a product and AI seems to be a useful tool for this. For academic writing, AI helps in changing the terminology and escaping the plagiarism, but this is ethically wrong.
- **Privacy concerns:** The present day generation is more connected on



gence. Search engines are using this technology to make their services better. There are AI chatbots which are providing assistance in academic writings, to researching on a particular topic, writing codes, essays, finding questions and answers in a particular domain and so on.

Artificial Intelligence is like a double-edged sword, while it is capable of being one of the greatest friends, at the same time, it is also capable of being the finest enemy. Though at one hand, it is being used for research or other productive measures but at the same time, it is also being used as a medium of committing scams, frauds including the cybercrime.

AI has become one of the tools for committing cybercrime, the use of deepfakes, AI generated images, video, voice notes are helping the fraudsters to commit these crimes. As the AI has progressed, the methods of committing cybercrime have become more sophisticated.

While a few months, it was slightly easy to demarcate between the AI generated content and the organic content, but with the advancement of AI technology, it is becoming difficult to distinguish between the two. Further, it is expected with more progression in the technology, the things are going to get more complicated.

CHALLENGES AND RISK

- **Deepfakes:** One of the most recent and a cause of concern is the increasing use of deepfakes. This is being used to spread misinformation, pornographic content, defame individuals, manipulate elections, opinion and to commit crimes. Recently social media influencers,

social media than their actual neighborhood. Consequently, all the personal data and pictures are either stored online or drives or uploaded on social media.

To make the pictures more creative, AI tools are being used, which may store the data. There have been instances, where the AI chatbots have even created identity cards raising a question on the security of the data which is being fed/uploaded on social media and AI tools.

- **Job Displacements:** Artificial Intelligence is becoming more creative day by day and is entering the domain of generating literary and artistic work. AI is doing things which were earlier considered to be completed only by human minds.

It is helping in making codes, editing pictures, videos, creatives, voice modulation and so on. It is increasingly become a threat as the recruiters are become more interested in hiring individuals who have a hand on this technology. Universities are promoting courses which are focused on artificial intelligence.

- **Dependency:** More use of Artificial Intelligence is creating a dependency on itself. We are relying more on the AI for any research than undergoing organic research.

Though it works like a chatbot, it may create a situation on the minds of the users to use it in a way to depict it as a human conversation. This can blur the difference between human and a machine conversation.

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Please read the complete article online in www.dailypioneer.com

India's AI boom comes with a power bill

AI revolution will be powered not only by algorithms but by electricity. The country that learns to make its machines think without overheating the planet will own the future of intelligence.



NISHANT SAHDEV

Every question we often ask an AI system carries a hidden cost. Behind the digital magic of chatbots, image generators and predictive models, a quiet physical process unfolds — one that consumes vast amounts of energy and produces enormous heat. In the age of artificial intelligence, thinking is no longer a metaphor. It's thermodynamics and it matters a lot.

When we say that AI "learns," what we mean is that billions of processors are performing mathematical operations, each powered by electricity. Those chips run hot. They must be cooled constantly. Every bit of information processed generates heat — a direct result of physics, not inefficiency.

According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), global data centres consumed about 460 terawatt-hours (TWh) of electricity in 2022 — roughly the same as France's total annual consumption. By 2026, that figure could double, largely because of AI workloads. One estimate suggests that training a single large model such as GPT-4 consumes more power than 500 average Indian households use in a year. Now, as India's own AI and digital infrastructure expands, this energy story is becoming our story too.

India's growing energy appetite:

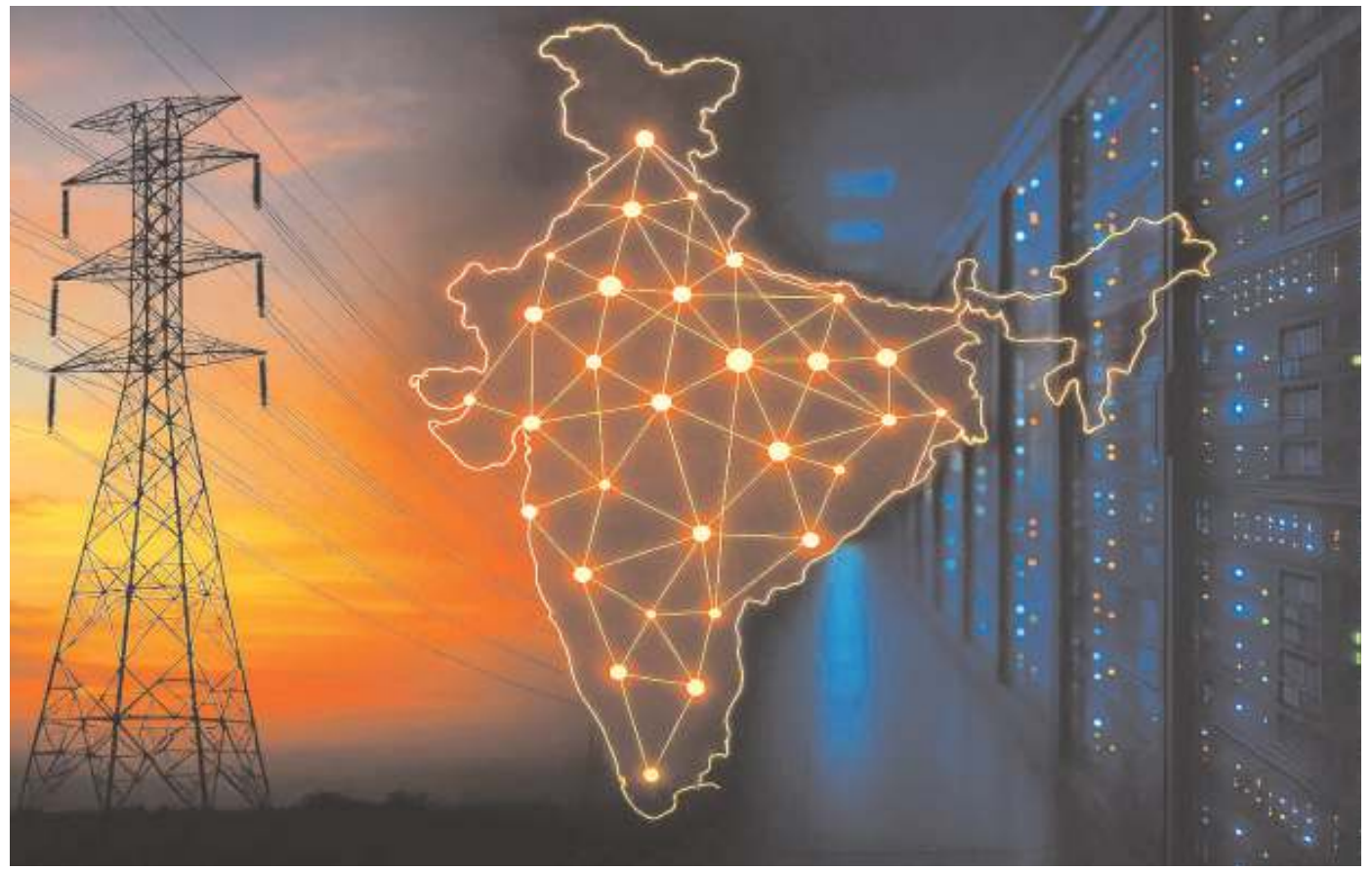
India's data-centre power capacity stands at about 1.4 gigawatts (GW) today and is expected to grow to nearly 9 GW by 2030, according to the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA). That's more than a six-fold jump in less than a decade.

The growth isn't just about space. A recent Deloitte report estimates that India may need an additional 40–45 TWh of electricity annually by 2030 just to support AI-linked data centres — equivalent to the yearly power use of Denmark. At present, data centres account for under 1 Per cent of India's total electricity demand. By 2030, it could reach 3 Per cent. That's a massive jump in a country where electricity generation is still dominated by coal.

The thermal consequence is simple: more energy means more heat. Data centres rely heavily on cooling systems — typically air-conditioning or water-based cooling — which themselves consume large amounts of power. The U.S. tech giants know this problem well. Microsoft recently reported a 34 Per cent increase in its global water consumption in a single year because of AI workloads. In India, similar trends are already visible in regions hosting new data-centre clusters.

The physics of intelligence:

All of this is not just an engineering issue; it's a law of nature. Physicist Rolf Landauer proved that erasing a single bit of information releases a small but measurable amount of heat. Every time an AI system deletes



redundant data or rewrites memory, energy is transformed into thermal noise.

That principle — known as Landauer's limit — defines the ultimate energy cost of information processing. Your brain obeys the same law, though much more efficiently. It runs on about 20 watts, roughly the power of a dim bulb. A single Nvidia H100 chip, used in many AI servers, draws about 700 watts. Multiply that by thousands of chips per data centre, and the comparison becomes staggering. Artificial intelligence may be faster than biological intelligence, but it is nowhere near as energy-efficient.

India's renewable advantage:

This is where India can turn a challenge into a strategic edge. The country is rapidly expanding renewable capacity, with a national goal of 500 GW of non-fossil power by 2030. That includes solar, wind, hydro and nuclear.

As of mid-2025, India's renewable power output is growing at its fastest pace in three years. If India powers its AI revolution with clean electricity, it could become the world's first low-carbon AI hub. Green data centres — designed with renewable energy sources, high-efficiency cooling and waste-heat recovery — already represent a \$1.6 billion industry in India and are projected to reach \$7.6 billion by 2032, according to Credence

Research. The state of Tamil Nadu has become a key location for such projects, combining proximity to solar power parks and undersea cable networks. Maharashtra, Telangana and Gujarat are also investing heavily in green data infrastructure. India's biggest advantage may be timing. Western nations built their AI infrastructure in the fossil era; India can build in the renewable era. It's the same leapfrog pattern seen in mobile payments and solar adoption.

The coming heat economy:

But this opportunity comes with a warning. AI will soon compete with other sectors for electricity and water. Cooling data centres in India's already hot climate requires reliable grids and freshwater — both under stress. Globally, data-centre electricity demand could approach 1,000 TWh by 2030 — about the same as all of Japan's power consumption. Goldman Sachs predicts AI alone could account for 8 Per cent of global electricity use by then. If that growth is powered mostly by fossil fuels, the emissions gains of other sectors could be erased. In India, this creates a new kind of policy dilemma: the heat economy. How do we keep AI expanding without overheating the grid or the planet?

Some answers are emerging. Liquid cooling systems can cut energy use by up to

30 Per cent. Locating data centres near hydro or solar farms reduces transmission losses. Using the waste heat from servers for industrial or residential heating — already tested in Europe — could close the thermal loop.

Cooler intelligence and The road ahead :

The future of AI won't depend on bigger models alone; it will depend on cooler ones. Quantum computers, for example, operate near absolute zero — just a few millikelvin above the coldest possible temperature. At that scale, resistance and energy loss vanish. Cryogenic computing and optical chips may reduce the thermal footprint of intelligence itself. But until such technologies mature, efficiency will be the new intelligence. Every joule saved per computation will matter more than every new parameter added to a model.

If India aligns its AI ambition with its renewable push, it can export not just software but sustainable intelligence — a model for a world trying to balance data growth with decarbonisation. The task now is to build an ecosystem where cloud companies, policy-makers and power producers collaborate on one goal: energy-aware intelligence.

In the end, temperature may become the real measure of progress. A smart civilisation isn't the one that computes the fastest; it's the one that learns to stay cool while doing so.

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From Assistants to allies: Rethinking AI as a true partner in enterprise transformation



ANUJ KRISHNA

In the last few years, AI has become our smart assistant! A quiet intern that helped us take up mundane tasks out of our way and help us achieve our goals smarter, faster, better. It could write emails faster, analyse customer data, or decide which marketing banner works best.

But today we stand at the crossroads of expecting AI to be promoted from an intern to a strategic partner, where they can autonomously help us achieve our strategic goals. However, achieving tangible ROI and scaled implementation has remained a challenge.

Could AI stop taking instructions and start sharing goals?

We've built machines that can act. The next leap is to build ones that can align, not just with individual requirements but to an enterprise need. And that's where we step into an era, where AI isn't just smart, but strategic. Not just action oriented, but outcome oriented.

From Doing Tasks to Driving Outcomes

When AI first entered the enterprise, it was all about doing. In marketing, for instance, early AI models handled narrow jobs like creative analysis, A/B testing, document summarization, performance tracking. They were efficient, reliable and repetitive. This may have improved individual performance at some level, but far away from enterprise level impact.

Next came use-case-specific AI with models that measured campaign performance, forecasted conversions, or optimised budgets. A step forward, yes, but still confined to the boundaries of a single



objective. Then the game changed. We began creating persona-specific AIs like "Marketer GPT" or "Sales Co-Pilot." Suddenly, AI started to know who it was serving.

A marketing manager's co-pilot, for example, could tailor insights based on that person's goals, tone, and campaign strategy. AI grew more personal.

A fourth level of the progression is workflow-specific AI. Here, intelligence isn't just generating ideas but managing processes.

Imagine an AI that understands your content pipeline: who approves, what tone fits, what compliance filters to apply, and which campaign it feeds into. It didn't just create; it planned and implemented.

Systemic AI: The Rise of Enterprise Collaboration

Let's say your goal is this: Increase digital marketing ROI by 25 Per cent. That's not one task. That's a systemic challenge.

One AI agent might analyze campaign data. Another could optimize ad spend. Another might rewrite content. A fourth could forecast audience response. Together, these agents iterate, collaborate and deliver with humans steering the vision. This is no longer "AI doing tasks." This is "AI driving results."

Systemic AI marks a shift from action-oriented systems ("Do this") to outcome-oriented ones ("Achieve this"). Humans provide intent, context and Governance; AI provides scale, speed and synthesis.

The result? A partnership that is not transactional but transformational, that drives real impact, real ROI.

Climbing the Context Ladder

Think of AI's evolution as a climb up a ladder where each level that we spoke about earlier adds more context. At the bottom, we have low-context agents: text-to-SQL converters, document summarisers, automation bots. They're brilliant at single, well-defined tasks.

Move one step up and we meet market research agents, which need to know what business they're researching and why. Context starts to matter. Go further, and we reach persona co-pilots like your marketing or sales AI that understands not just the data, but the person using it. Then come workflow AIs, where context expands to include organisational processes, approval hierarchies and interdependencies.

And finally, at the summit, we have systemic intelligence where the purpose itself becomes complex. Think "reduce churn by 15 Per cent," "accelerate product adoption," or "increase ROI by 25 Per

cent." These outcomes require deep knowledge about the industry, the business function, the enterprise. Just data doesn't cut through but what the system needs is business logic, culture, market dynamics, compliance frameworks and company strategy. The lesson is clear: as purpose grows in complexity, context becomes everything.

When we try to achieve complex outcomes with low-context AI, the results collapse. When we infuse purpose with the right context that's when AI becomes an ally.

Purpose Before Power

Every time we introduce AI into a workflow, we must pause and ask one simple question: Do we really need AI for this? Because not every process needs automation. Some need understanding. Systemic AI isn't about building more models, it's about building more meaning. It's about knowing why we're applying AI in the first place. Faster isn't always better. Smarter isn't always deeper. The right use of AI is one that makes humans more capable, not more replaceable. Purpose before power. Always.

The Future: Allies in Progress

The future of AI isn't about better chatbots or faster copilots. It's about trust. Trust between humans and machines. Trust between teams and technology. Trust that AI is not here to take over, but to team up. When AI understands our goals, aligns with our values and adapts to our ways of working, it becomes more than a tool. It becomes an ally. And allies don't just execute commands, they help us see what's possible. The enterprises that win the next decade won't be those that deploy AI the fastest. They'll be the ones that integrate it the deepest. Embedding intelligence into the very core of how they operate, innovate and grow.

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Villa Marie Degree College for Women is an academic institution par excellence dedicated to fostering innovation and empowering students with the skills to succeed in their professional and personal lives. The Convocation ceremony organized by the esteemed institution for the Batch 2022-2025 was an inspiring and memorable event reinforcing the institution's commitment to quality education and the overall development of students. The ceremony was graced Chief Guest, Prof. V. Balakista Reddy, Honourable Chairman, Telangana Council of Higher Education (TGCHE), Prof. K Shashikanth Prof. Parimala Kulkarni, Prof. A. Patrick, Prof. Smittha Sambrani, Prof. S. Hari Singh Naik, and Prof. A. Anupama, Dr. Philomena, Ms. Chinnamma, Srinivas Rao, Revati Devi Mathur.

● Shriya

● Chandini

● Niharika

● Gayatri, Spana and Ankhee gosh

● Jayathi

● Sophia Almas

● Srinithya

● Gouhar Zehra

● Harshitha

PARTY

Photos by- Ch. Vijaya Bhaskar



People enjoy the Bhavani Island on river Krishna on the occasion of Karthika Masam 1st Sunday in Vijayawada

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



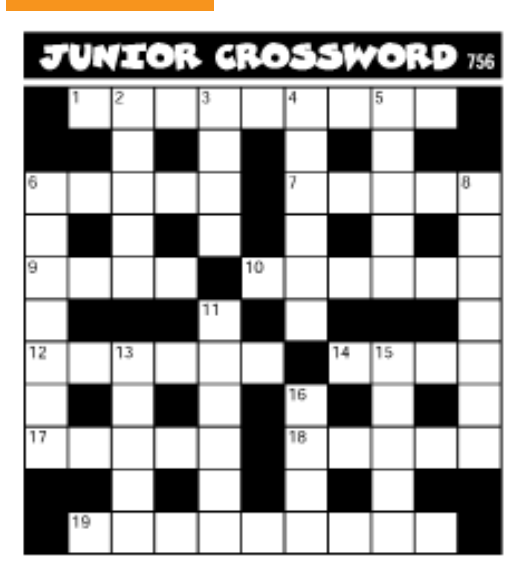
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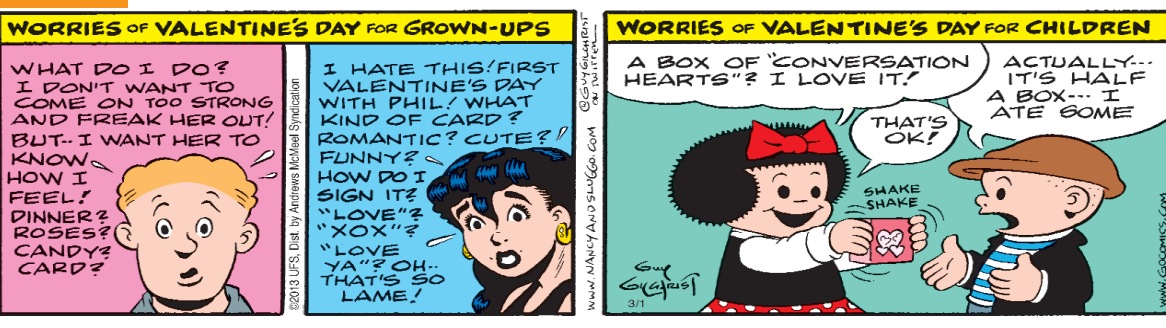
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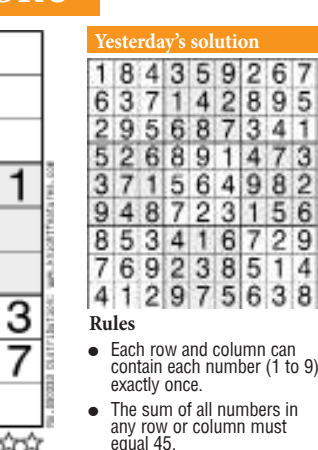
CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU



- ACROSS**
- The person next door
 - Ships tie up here
 - Someone in a play
 - These stop a vehicle
 - Unlace
 - Observed
 - Quits from a job
 - A drawer for money in a shop
 - Precious stones
 - A hard safety hat
 - A stopper for a bath or sink
 - A thick soft quilt used as a cover for a bed
 - A sheep's babies
 - A country in South America
- DOWN**
- A letter sent from one computer to another
 - Birthday present
- SOLUTION 756**
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GINGER MEGGS





An empty page, or rather an empty entry, resulted in a massive outage in the cloud services of Amazon Web Services (AWS). It implied that the world's famous, and not-so-famous, apps and services were down, people could not order food or other items, banking and security systems were shut, and hospitals were in disarray. The net result was a loss of hundreds of billions of dollars across the globe, and across sectors. "We apologise for the impact this event caused our customers. We know this event impacted many customers in significant ways. We will do everything we can to learn from this event, and use it to improve our availability even further," stated AWS in a post-mortem statement. The event, as AWS dubs it, resulted from a minor technical bug, a glitch of sorts, which snowballed into an international crisis, albeit for a short time.

In terms of jargon, the outage stemmed from two programs that competed to write the same entry at the same time, which destroyed each other's efforts, and resulted in an empty entry. It confused the cloud services, which was caught in a random chaos. Multiple AWS services were caught in a virtual whirlpool. To explain it simply, experts turn to analogy. A Cisco expert compared it to a telephone book. If the book goes poof, you know there is someone on the other side of the line, but you do not know how to reach them. With a hole of a small entry in AWS virtual entry book, many apps and services did not know how to reach the other party, or could not do so. Suddenly, there was an empty page in the phone book, and the numbers on that page simply vanished for a while.

A professor, as expected, compares the 'no entry' bug to a classroom. Suppose, a fast and sharp student is asked to work with a slow one. The slower student will invariably interfere with the work of his faster partner. The faster student is ahead in the thinking process, and may erase and rewrite the work done by his collaborator. In the process of writing, erasing, and rewriting, when the time is over, the bell rings, and invigilator comes to check the sheet, there may be nothing much on it except cuts, and overwrites. In essence, "an empty page (or crossed-out page) in the lab notebook (or examination sheet)." Instead of collaborators, they become competitors decimating each other's work. In the AWS outage case, both were bright and fast students, rather programs, and collaborators who turned into competitors, and somehow reached a 'no-entry' point.

Back to reality and AWS. When the programs' rewrites happened, and resulted in an empty page, two things happened, both negative and harmful. First, it brought down a specific database, whose "cascading effect" impacted other AWS services (like those which offer virtual servers for developing and deploying apps). When the database came on in some time, the services which were impacted tried to bring all the servers back online together. This crashed the system as it could not keep up. The first folly was possibly bug-based, and natural, although rare. The second one was system-based, and could have been corrected in the first place. From several experiences, we know that synchronised computing, or allowing systems to correct everything together, is dangerous. In some senses, it is like synchronised stock trading, which brought down global stock markets in the late 1980s. As one computer sold, it forced others to sell, which forced more to do the same. The sequence never stopped.

Most experts are willing to give Amazon the long rope. One is not sure if it is to escape, or hang itself. At present, it feels like an excellent escape route. One of the pundits claimed that outages like this are rare, but a reality. They can happen with the best of the best. What is important, though, is how a company handles the problem, and fixes it in the future. "Large scale outages like this, they just happen. There is nothing you can do to avoid it, just like (how) people get ill. But I think how the company reacts to the outages, and keeps customers informed is really, really, key," said this expert. One hopes similar chances are given to other entities in other sectors if they falter, or make mistakes and blunders. In most cases, the company is taken to task by the media, policy-makers, and judiciary.

This explains why the outage has outed a huge debate on how to deal with near-monopoly cloud services players like Amazon. In the telecom and communications segments, the private players are saddled with several duties and responsibilities in consumers' and public interest. The same checks and balances are missing in cloud services, especially since Amazon runs a parallel Internet. Since hospitals, banking, and other crucial sectors were hit due to the outage, there is considerable public interest involved. Amazon, or no company, can get away with an excuse that such things can, and do, happen. Even if one accepts this logic, and one says that there cannot be consequences for technical glitches, there is a need to investigate the matter independently. One cannot take a monopoly player's words for truth. One needs to find out if the outage could have been stopped, and if the company did everything to prevent such an event.

High gains for small investors

A study published in the RBI Bulletin (October 2025) revealed how small investors gained and lost in the SME IPOs roulette. While the retail buyers reaped huge listing gains, i.e., the difference between the offer prices and listing ones, they were left out in the cold if they held onto the shares. These are dangerous trends since the number of IPOs (Initial Public Offerings) of SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises) shot up in the past two years (2023-24 and 2024-25). On the National Stock Exchange (NSE), and Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) SME platforms, nearly 450 IPOs were listed in the two years.

In August 2024, the stock market regulator, SEBI, issued a press release to warn the small investors "to be careful and watchful about the SME IPO space, and urged investors to exercise caution while investing in the SME IPOs." In December 2024, the regulator approved a few decisions, which stemmed from an earlier consultation paper that aimed to facilitate and regulate such IPOs. The reason was due to a probe that revealed several irregularities. This was despite the positive trends in 2023 and 2024, when the BSE SME IPO Index, and NSE SME Emerge Index outperformed the BSE Mainboard IPO Index, BSE Sensex, and Nifty 50.

One of the main reasons that concerns SEBI is the rising interest among the small investors in SME IPOs. Since Q1-2023, the quarterly median number of applications by the latter zoomed from under 1,000 to more than 1,00,000 (Q3-2025), before dropping down to below 10,000 in the next quarter. Most investors in this space, as is the case with mainstream IPOs, other issues, and secondary trading, are young (below 30 years). This age-group accounted for less than 23 per cent of the investors' base in March 2019, and has grown to nearly 40 per cent in July 2025. During the same period, the median age of investors fell from 38 to 33 years.

It is this cohort of retail investors, along with non-institutional ones, which are driving the frenzied buying of SME IPOs. The demand from institutional buyers has "remained limited." Since July 2023, more than 30 issues were oversubscribed by more than 100 times. In some cases, the figures for the retail portions were more than 200 per cent. The numbers were higher, nearer to 400 per cent in a few cases, for the non-institutional investors. There was some moderation in the oversubscription fury since December 2024, when SEBI introduced new norms. Large anchor investors were missing from most IPOs.

Listing gains, and not medium-term or long-term investments, attracted the retail investors. They were pulled in by the lure of immediate profits within a few days. Of the 315 SME stocks listed on the NSE and BSE in 2023-24, and 2024-25 (till October 15, 2024), a mere 40 listed at discounts, or below the offer prices. The others listed at premiums which, in some cases, were as high as 100 per cent. While the bulk of the SME IPOs witnessed listing gains between 0 and 100 per cent, the relative figures for mainboard IPOs, or the larger ones, averaged between 10 and 40 per cent.

A scrutiny of what happened after the IPOs indicates that the investors were after listing gains. "Over one week, both mainboard and SME IPOs show returns centred near zero, but some SME IPOs exhibit a flatter and wider distribution, indicating greater variance. At the one-month horizon, both groups display positively skewed distributions, with many companies experiencing negative returns, while a few achieve very high positive returns.... At the three-month horizon, mainboard IPOs show a narrow distribution with returns concentrated near zero.... In contrast, SME IPOs demonstrate a much wider

spread... suggesting greater variability, and the potential for both higher risks and rewards," concluded the study.

What this means in simple terms is that zero or negative returns were visible in most SME IPOs, compared to the mainstream ones. But there were a few positive outliers too, which gave high returns. Hence, while there were a few opportunities for significant gains over 180 days in SME IPOs, the chances of high losses were higher. In fact, the greater the pre-IPO enthusiasm and excitement, which is reflected in the oversubscription, the higher the listing gains, and larger the potential for future losses. This may hint that most investors, retail or otherwise, dumped the stocks to book immediate profits, and were not concerned about the future.

To understand it in terms of numbers, the study analysed the top 10 IPOs in terms of oversubscription in the retail category. It found that the average listing gain was nearly 200 per cent, which dropped to below zero within a week, increased the losses, and remained in the red till six months. The listing gain for the bottom 10 IPOs in terms of retail oversubscription was lower and minimal, and the same was true for IPOs where the promoters diluted their stakes. But, in both the latter cases, the stock prices plummeted within a week of listing, and remained in the red for the next six months.

"High demand for certain stocks, combined with limited allotment, often leads to inflated prices as investors compete to acquire shares. Retail investors, drawn by the potential for quick listing gains, often overlook fundamentals, leading to inflated valuations," explained the study. This was evident from the Price-to-Earnings ratio of the 100 SMEs listed in 2023-25. "Around 20 per cent of these stocks have price-to-earnings ratios in excessive multiples when compared to their industry peers," stated the report. Sometimes, the overvaluation was three times the industry peers, and it was most evident in high oversubscription IPOs. Higher the interest, higher the valuation.

"The saying, 'Bull markets are born on pessimism, grow on skepticism, mature on optimism, and die on euphoria,' serves as a crucial reminder for investors in the SME IPO segment. While the buzz around SME IPOs may seem exciting, investing solely on market sentiment can be risky. During bullish phases in the market, enthusiasm and investors' appetite may cause investors to overlook due diligence. In this phase, demand for IPOs surge, and expectations of substantial listing gains can lead to inflated valuations. However, market reversals can quickly dampen this optimism," summarises the recent report.

However, SME IPO platforms are essential, especially in a nation which prides itself in its start-ups, and hopes to create new millionaires, billionaires, and unicorns. The need is to regulate the IPOs to reduce, even remove, information asymmetry, and regulatory arbitrage, and ensure proper use of the proceeds. In the process, the regulator needs to prevent manipulations, and protect investors' interests.

OUR TAKE



A Contrarian Investor

From merger blues to normalcy

More than two years ago, HDFC Ltd merged with HDFC Bank, which created India's third-largest company by market capitalisation, and the fourth-largest bank in the world. Now, brokerage houses feel that the combined entity's strengths are visible. Elara Securities recently stated that the bank had "transitioned through the tough part," and the "journey hereafter should be more amicable." PL Capital maintained that the Q2-FY26 results, especially the core profit after tax (PAT), marked a turning point in the bank's history, and suggested that "steady normalisation is underway," which indicated a post-merger stabilisation phase.

HDFC Bank delivered steady results in Q2-FY26, which demonstrated resilience amid balance sheet recalibration, and merger integration. Despite near-term margin pressures, the management was confident of tracking above system-level growth in FY27. The bank reported a PAT of ₹186.4 billion, up 11 per cent YoY (year-on-year), which exceeded Dalal Street's estimates. The "core PAT at ₹156.5 billion beat the estimates by 1.8 per cent, even after creating contingent provisions," stated a report by PL Capital. This reinforced that the performance was driven by robust recoveries, improved fee income, and strong balance sheet fortification.

In Q2FY26, loan growth rose 10.1 per cent YoY, and 4.5 per cent QoQ (Quarter-on-Quarter), with deposit growth at 12.1 per cent YoY. The net interest income (NII) was ₹315.5 billion, up 4.8 per cent YoY, and net interest margin (NIM) saw a modest 8 basis points sequential decline to 3.3 per cent. According to Elara Securities, this was due to the "impact of turning rate tables on yield already in base (sans any further rate cuts)." The easing liquidity and improved cash-deposit (CD) ratio are expected to benefit margins in the future.

Pre-provision operating profit rose 13 per cent YoY, which was supported by a 9 per cent uptick in fee income. PL Capital noted that this was "due to better fees." It added that "other income was higher at ₹143.5bn due to treasury, and a 6.5 per cent beat on fees." The cost-to-income ratio was 39.2 per cent, which reflected operating leverage from technology investments and merger synergies.

HDFC Bank's provisioning trends were favourable. Total provisions stood at ₹35 billion, down sharply from ₹144 billion in the previous quarter. Overall, the buffer provisions stand at 139 basis points of net loans, well above the peers like ICICI Bank (93 basis points). As Elara Securities commented, "The bank further buffered up contingent provisions by ₹15 billion, taking the total floating



and contingent buffer to 1.3 per cent of the loans."

Return ratios remained healthy. Elara Securities' estimates suggest a return on assets (ROA) at 1.9 per cent, return on equity (ROE) at 14 per cent, and profitability to improve as normalisation deepens. The brokerage house expects this financial year's net profit at ₹744 billion, which will rise to ₹827 billion in FY27. PL Capital projects a similar momentum, forecasting an EPS (Earnings Per Share) of ₹55.5 in FY27, and ₹62.7 in FY28, which will be supported by a 10-13 per cent increase in the annual earnings of the bank.

The key challenge for HDFC Bank is the delicate balance between growth, margin management, and funding structure. Elara Securities emphasised that this "conundrum to manage growth vs NIM vs LCR (Liquidity Coverage Ratio) vs CD ratio outcome... are likely to cause dislocation." While the loan-to-deposit ratio (LDR) rose to 98 per cent in Q2-FY26, the management reaffirmed its target to bring it down to 90 per cent by FY27.

As PL Capital stated, "Increase in LDR by 3 per cent QoQ was a quarterly aberration... (and the) guidance to reach LDR of 90 per cent by FY27 was intact."

Another area of concern is margin compression. The 50-basis points policy rate cut in June 2025 impacted yields in the last quarter, and reduced asset yields by 30 basis points. But PL Capital was confident that the "effect in ensuing quarters would be lower; hence NIM may have bottomed out."

Deposit repricing benefits are expected to flow gradually over the next six quarters, cushioning NIMs in FY26-27. On credit quality, risks seemed contained. Gross NPA (Non-Performing Assets) fell to 1.24 per cent from 1.4 per cent QoQ, and net NPA declined to 0.42 per cent. Elara Securities' report stated, "Slippages were curtailed (1.1 per cent vs 1.4 per cent QoQ), with steady progress across segments." It added that the management sees "no major red flags." Even after the merger with HDFC Ltd, the bank's asset quality held up remarkably well.

Macro factors like global volatility and regulatory changes will remain as external risks. The bank's management agrees that the "global situation remains volatile due to geopolitical uncertainty and tariffs." Yet, it emphasised that India's economy remained resilient, supported by tax reforms and a recovering consumption cycle.

HDFC Bank's core strengths are its franchise scale, asset quality, and digital capability, which remain intact. As Elara Securities highlighted, "Healthy asset quality, ROA, NIM, and cost metrics have been range-bound," demonstrating consistency despite merger complexity. The bank's CASA ratio stood steady at 34 per cent, underscoring strong retail deposit traction. PL Capital added, "For mortgages, the bank chose not to cut interest rates to chase market share, instead prioritising higher yields and better customer quality."

Business diversification continues to be a key advantage. There was a corporate and SME lending-led growth, with corporate loans up 4.7 per cent QoQ, and agri-loans up 7 per cent QoQ. According to PL Capital, "SME growth is supported by a strong client base and branch network," and retail growth was modest at 1.8 per cent QoQ, which reflected a calibrated approach to risk.

The future appears encouraging as the merger integration nears completion. Both Elara Securities and PL Capital maintain positive ratings on the bank's stock. Elara Securities urges investors to "Accumulate," with a target price of ₹1,147. PL Capital emphasises on a "Buy," with a target price of ₹1,150. The current market price of the stock on October 26, 2025, was just below ₹1,000.

The bank's management reiterated that FY27 will be a year of above-system growth, as the "capital buffers will be utilised to grow faster than the system." NIM stability, controlled credit costs, and efficiency gains are expected to drive earnings. Elara Securities summarised, "A merger of this scale is an onerous task, but HDFC Bank is doing a commendable job at that... we see near-term challenges easing out." HDFC Bank's Q2-FY26 results reaffirm its reputation as a strong franchise capable of balancing prudence with growth. With credit quality intact, digital agility accelerating, and capital strength unmatched, the lender seems poised to enter a phase of renewed momentum anchored by resilience and precision.



Karun Nair's hundred carries Karnataka to strong position

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Shivamogga

Karun Nair made his 25th first-class hundred to take Karnataka to a strong position against Goa on the rain-hit second day of their Ranji Trophy Elite Group B match on Sunday. Karun, who was omitted from the India Test squad after a middling series in England recently, made an unbeaten 174 off 267 balls to announce his return to the run-making ways.

It helped Karnataka make 371 in their first innings after resuming from overnight 222 for five.

Karun started the day from 86, and batted in his usual solid self to complete the hundred. Lower-order batters like Vysakh Vijayakumar (31) helped Karun to move the Karnataka innings past the 350-mark.

For Goa, pacers Arjun Tendulkar and former Karnataka player Vasuki Koushik picked up three wickets each. Goa were 28 for one when the rain poured down to end the day's proceedings, and now they trail by 343 runs going into the third day.

Opener Yash Dubey made an unbeaten 109 off 236



balls as Madhya Pradesh survived two late blows to reach 195 for four against Saurashtra at Rajkot.

The home side starting from 258 for eight were bowled out quite early in the first session for 260.

Aryan Pandey and Kumar Kartikeya shared eight wickets among them equally. Dubey and opener Harsh Gawli added 87 runs for the opening wicket before the latter fell to seasoned pacer Jaidev Unadkat. Thereafter, Dubey and

Himanshu Mantri added 64 runs for the second wicket to take MP past the 150-run mark. But Mantri and skipper Shubham Sharma fell in the space of five runs and Harpreet Singh was dismissed at the fag end of the day as Saurashtra gained some of the lost ground.

Brief scores: At Shivamogga: Karnataka: 371 all out in 110.1 overs (Karun Nair 174 not out, Shreyas Gopal 57; Arjun Tendulkar 3/100, Vasuki Koushik 3/35). At Rajkot: Saurashtra: 260

all out vs Madhya Pradesh: 195/4 in 78 overs (Yash Dubey 109 batting; Jaidev Unadkat 1/15).

At Mullanpur: Punjab: 436 all out in 163.4 overs (Harnoor Singh 170, Prerit Dutta 74; Ankit Sharma 4/103) vs Kerala: 15/1 in 7 overs.

At Chandigarh: Maharashtra: 313 all out and 66/0 in 11 overs (Prithvi Shaw 41 batting) vs Chandigarh: 209 all out in 73 overs (Raman Bishnoi 54, Nishunk Birla 56; Vicky Ostwal 6/40).

Parth Vats steers Haryana to second win in a row

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Rohtak

Left-arm spin bowling all-rounder Parth Vats starred once again with a fifer to guide Haryana to a commanding nine-wicket victory over Tripura in their Group C Ranji Trophy match on Sunday.

The 21-year-old produced his second consecutive Player-of-the-Match performance, this time with the ball with a match haul of eight wickets as Tripura were bowled out for 47 in their second essay, which left the hosts with an easy target of 16 runs to achieve.

Haryana chased down the target in 4.3 overs and now have 12 points from two matches.

Vats, who bagged 3/14 in the first innings, claimed a maiden five-wicket haul in first-class cricket, finishing with 5 for 14 as Tripura's second innings lasted for 19.1 overs with only two batters' getting to double digits.

Earlier, Tripura's left-arm spinner Swapnil Singh ran through Haryana's first innings with a career-best 7 for 66, but his effort could not prevent Haryana from taking a slender 32-run first-innings lead after Tripura posted 126.

Vats had made a stunning debut against Railways with scores of 52 and an unbeaten 110 and was adjudged



PoM in their 96 runs win in Surat. Sharma bags nine in big Services win

Services on Sunday completed a dominant eight-wicket victory over Assam at Tinsukia, with left-arm spinner Arjun Sharma claiming nine wickets that earned him the Player of the Match award following an extraordinary opening day.

Resuming the second innings at 56/5, Assam lasted less than nine overs on Sunday as Services' bowlers continued their relentless assault, being bowled out for 75.

The target of 71 was comfortably chased in 13.5 overs with eight wickets intact.

Services now have 13 points from two matches.

Sharma had taken a hat-trick in the first innings on a historic day when Services' Mohit Jangra also achieved the feat, marking the first time two bowlers have taken hat-tricks in the same Ranji Trophy match.

Sharma was once again incisive and returned with figures of 4/20 from 9.3 overs, running through the tail. Only three Assam batters, including overnight batter Sumit Ghadigaonkar, reached double figures.

Amit Shukla provided excellent support with 3/6 from six overs, triggering Assam's second-innings

collapse. Shukla accounted for key wickets including overnight batter Sibsankar Roy, who added no runs to his overnight total, while keeper-batter Ghadigaonkar top-scored with 25.

Sharma and Shukla bowled in tandem to wrap up the innings in 29.3 overs.

The seeds of the victory were sown on the opening day when Services' bowlers recorded the unprecedented feat of two hat-tricks.

Assam had earlier managed a slender first-innings lead of two runs after Services posted 108, thanks to Riyan Parag's 5/25 and Rahul Singh's 4/44.

Services' lost two wickets in their paltry chase falling to local star Parag (2/31) but a brisk 20 not out from eight balls by Ravi Chauhan, alongside Mohit Ahlawat's 16 not out guided the visitors past the modest target.

Shahbaz spins Bengal into command

At Eden Gardens, left-arm spinner Shahbaz Ahmed marked a successful return from injury with a four-wicket burst as Bengal took firm control against Gujarat.

Back in action after recovering from a shoulder injury that sustained during the Bengal Pro League T20, Shahbaz returned impressive figures of 4/17 from 11.3 overs to rattle Gujarat's middle-order.

BRIEFLY

BENCIC WINS 10TH CAREER TITLE AT PAN-PACIFIC OPEN



Belinda Bencic claimed her 10th career title with a 2-6, 6-3 victory over Linda Noskova in the final of the WTA's Pan Pacific Open.

Ten years after her previous appearance in the final of the Tokyo tournament, Bencic dominated her Czech rival throughout Sunday's final, breaking Noskova's serve three times on the way to a comfortable win in one hour and 22 minutes.

Tokyo has provided recent happy memories for the Swiss who won the Olympic singles gold medal and doubles silver in Tokyo four years ago. "It was wonderful playing in front of you guys," Bencic said after the match. "The last time I won here was the Tokyo Olympics when it was an empty stadium, so it was a completely different atmosphere, but it was great to play in front of you guys. I love to play in Japan, so I'm super happy to finally win this tournament."

MANFRED EXPECTS MAJOR LEAGUERS IN LA OLYMPICS



Major League Baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred is increasingly confident big league players will participate in the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

MLB did not allow players on 40-man rosters at the 2021 Tokyo Olympics, when Nippon Professional Baseball interrupted its season and Japan beat the U.S. 2-0 in the gold medal game.

MLB has discussed creating an extended All-Star break to allow participation in the 2028 Games, to be held from July 14-30. An agreement with the players' association is necessary and sponsor deals could be impacted. "I am positive about it. I think that the owners have kind of crossed the line in terms of, we'd like to do it if we can possibly make it work," Manfred said Saturday before Game 2 of the World Series. "There are logistical issues that still need to be worked on."

At the 2021 Tokyo Olympics, the baseball tournament took place over 11 days, including a four-day group stage followed by knockout rounds and culminating in gold and bronze medal games. Baseball at the LA Games is likely to have a more compressed format.

"We have made a lot of progress with LA 2028 in terms of the calendar," Manfred said. "Right now we're in discussions with the players' association about that set of issues."

Rahane hits 159 against Chhattisgarh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Mumbai

Former captain Ajinkya Rahane hit a resolute 159 as Mumbai reached 406 for eight in their first innings on a rain-affected second day of their Ranji Trophy Elite Group D match against Chhattisgarh on Sunday.

Rahane, who had retired on the first day at the score of 118 due to cramps, came out to bat on the second day and finished at 159 off 303 balls laced with 21 fours. He was dismissed caught behind by Aditya Sarwate (4/103).

Mumbai had resumed their first innings at 251 for five on the second day and only 46 overs were bowled on the second day of the contest at the BKC Ground.

Akash Anand was batting on 60 (148 balls, 5 fours), accompanied by Tushar Deshpande (4 not out) at stumps.

At the Arun Jaitley Stadium, hosts Delhi left Himachal Pradesh in a spot of bother at 165 for three, leading by another 265 runs in their first innings.



Delhi had posted a huge total of 430 but none of their batters could convert the starts into a big score. Openers Arpit Rana (64), Sanat Sangwan (79) and No 3 Yash Dhull (61) hit fifties at the top while the lower order chipped in as well.

Ayush Doseja made 75, Sumit Mathur struck 51 while Anuj Rawat hit a strokeful 57 off 66 balls

with four fours and three sixes as Delhi finished with a big total after resuming play at 306/4 on the second day. In reply, Himachal Pradesh opener Sidhant Purohit made a watchful 70 off 165 balls with 10 fours but a couple of late wickets in the day put them in some trouble.

Purohit fell to India bowler Navdeep Saini, who also got rid of Ankit Kalsi

(20) later on while Ankush Bains (43) fell to Sumit Mathur after a fine 43.

Last year's quarterfinalists Jammu and Kashmir were in complete command against Rajasthan, who were trailing by another 89 runs in the second innings after slipping to 41/5.

Rajasthan were bowled out for 152 in their reply after J&K posted 282, conceding a lead of 132 runs in the first innings.

In the second innings, Auqib Nabi ran riot in the Rajasthan ranks to return a superb spell of 6-2-5-5 as he left the visitors reeling and putting the game in complete command at the Sher-e-Kashmir Stadium in Srinagar.

In the last Group D game, hosts Puducherry reached 25/1 in reply to Hyderabad's 435 in the first innings, trailing by 410 runs in the first innings.

Rahul Gahlaut struck 114 while half-centuries from opener Tanmay Agarwal (50), Kodimela Himateja (66) and wicketkeeper-batter Rahul Radesh (81) pushed Hyderabad to a big score in their first essay.

Golfer Bhullar registers first Top-10 of the year in Manila



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Manila

Indian golfer Gaganjeet Bhullar produced a steady three-under 69 on the final day to register a Top-10 finish at the \$2 million International Series Philippines here on Sunday.

Bhullar (67-69-67-69), who stayed in the Top-10 this whole week, carded all four rounds under 70 for a total of 16-under. He finished Tied-seventh for his first Top-10 on the International Series in 2025. It was also his first top-10 outside India this year.

Among other Indians in fray, Karandeep Kochhar (72) at nine-under was T-36,

Ajeetesh Sandhu (69) was eight-under for the week at T-40th. SSP Chawrasia and Rayhan Thomas had missed the cut. Miguel Tabuena, who was one of the three co-leaders after the third round, compiled a fine seven-under 65 to break out of the overnight lead group, which also had Sarit Suwannarat and Sampson Zheng.

Local hero Tabuena had an eagle and six birdies against one solitary bogey as he held off Japan's Kazuki Higa, who also had a 65, which included four closing birdies.

Tabuena won comfortably by three shots as he kept the momentum with four birdies on the back nine.

GUKESH SHINES IN CHESS CHAMPIONS SHOWDOWN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ St Louis

World Champion D Gukesh will have his task cut out against the strongest ever field in the \$420000 Clutch Chess Champions showdown that gets underway.

Almost rushing to another continent from Europe after leading his team Super Chess to a fantastic win in the European Club Cup, Gukesh will face the top three ranked players in the world over 18 games to be played under rapid chess format at the newly designed facility here at the St Louis Chess Club. World number one since 2011, Magnus Carlsen's break ends after becoming a proud father recently and the world number one will yet again start as the favourite ahead of the American duo of Hikaru Nakamura and Fabiano Caruana.

The second addition of the Clutch Chess within a fortnight will have the winner taking the lion's share of the prize fund becoming richer by \$120000.

The second prize is \$90000 while the third and fourth are \$70000 and \$60000 respectively. There is also an additional \$72000 at stake for every victory scored in each round.

India defeats Argentina at KogniVera Polo Cup 2025



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The prestigious KogniVera International Polo Cup 2025 witnessed a spectacular display of skill, speed, and sportsmanship as Team India triumphed over Team Argentina 10-9 in an electrifying match held at the iconic Jaipur Polo Ground, New Delhi.

The event drew a distinguished audience of over a thousand guests, including Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Union Minister for Tourism, who graced the occasion as Chief Guest. The gathering also saw the presence of

Kiren Rijju, Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Minister of Minority Affairs, MP from Arunachal Pradesh; Naveen Jindal, Chairman of Jindal Steel and Power, Member of Parliament, Kurukshetra and polo patron, celebrated poet Dr Kumar Vishwas; Lt Gen VMB Krishnan, Quarter Master General, Indian Army; and Ambassadors and diplomats from several nations, underscoring the global stature of the event.

Cheered on by an enthusiastic crowd, Team India, led by Saiwai Padmanabh Singh of Jaipur, delivered a commanding performance against the formidable

Argentine side. From precision strikes to strategic plays, the match embodied the very essence of international polo with passion, power, and partnership.

Speaking on the occasion, Kamesh Sharma, CEO and MD, KogniVera IT Solutions, said, "Polo represents grace, grit, and global friendship, it values that resonate deeply with KogniVera. Hosting and witnessing India's victory at the KogniVera International Polo Cup has been truly special. It's heartening to see this sport unite people across cultures and inspire excellence on and off the field." Sharing his thoughts

after the win, Simran Singh Shergill, Captain of the Indian Polo Team, said, "Winning against Argentina is an incredible moment for all of us. Every player gave their best, and the energy from the stands pushed us even further. It's a proud day for Indian polo." The evening concluded in a grand trophy presentation ceremony, celebrating not just India's victory but the spirit of international camaraderie that defines the sport. The KogniVera International Polo Cup 2025 once again highlighted India's growing prominence on the global polo circuit and the timeless elegance of the game.

Hitaashee finishes 21st; Tseng Yani wins title in Taipei

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Taipei

Hitaashee Bakshi, who was inside top-3 after her first round 4-under 68 at The Wistron Ladies Open, shot even par 72 in the second to finish T-21st in an event that was cut short to just two rounds and 36 holes.

Hitaashee had the privilege of playing the first round with the eventual winner, Yani Tseng, a former World No. 1 and winner of the first Hero Women's Indian event in 2007.

The five-time major champion winner and former World No. 1 Yani clinched her seventh Ladies European Tour (LET) title in what was an emotional win on home soil, finishing on 14 under-par at Sunrise Golf and Country Club. Her last win was the 2014 Taifong Ladies Open.

Hitaashee who completed her first round this morning added one more birdie to card 68 in the first round.

In the second round, she had just one birdie against three bogeys and on the back nine she had three birdies, including one on the 18th, against just one bogey.