



Forces trying to push youth to negative politics: BJP chief



West Bengal to get ₹1 lakh crore railway projects: CM Suwendu



Nepal PM urges BIMSTEC to tackle climate change together



Praggnanandhaa first Indian to win Norway Chess title



AGENDA

The Shah Factor

PM reviews economic roadmap

India must continue its development agenda despite global challenges

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
 ■ New Delhi

A day after economic growth data for the fiscal year 2026 came out, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday chaired a meeting of the Economic Advisory Council (EAC to PM) to discuss the impact of the West Asia crisis on the Indian economy and ways ahead. Though no specific decision was announced after the meeting, various new reform measures to ease doing business, boost consumption and give relief to people were discussed.

The Prime Minister is understood to have emphasised the need for preparedness in the face of a volatile international environment, stressing that India must continue advancing its development agenda despite global challenges. The discussions centred on safeguarding supply chains,



Prime Minister Narendra Modi chairing a meeting with the members of the Economic Advisory Council (EAC) to the prime minister in New Delhi

containing inflationary pressures and ensuring that economic growth remains on a stable trajectory. The meeting also reflected the Government's broader approach of combining short-term crisis management with long-term structural reforms.

The members of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM) also gave their assessment of the impact of the West Asia conflict on India and the

world. Various reforms to improve ease of living and ease of doing business were also discussed at the high-level meeting, the sources said. "Chaired a meeting of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister. Deliberated on a wide range of issues relating to India's economic transformation and long-term development priorities. Also shared perspectives on adding more momentum to the reforms

journey and ensuring Ease of Living as well as Ease of Doing Business," Modi said in a social media post. The meeting was also attended by two principal secretaries to the Prime Minister — PK Mishra and Shaktikanta Das.

The EAC is an independent body that gives advice to the Government of India, specifically to the Prime Minister, on economic and related issues. Two principal secretaries to the Prime Minister — PK

Mishra and Shaktikanta Das — attended the meeting, besides the members of the EAC. At present, the EAC comprises a chairman, three full-time members and 11 part-time members. S Mahendra Dev is the chairman, while full-time members are Sanjay Kumar Mishra, Sanjeev Sanyal and Shamika Ravi.

There are 11 part-time members: Rakesh Mohan, Sajjid Z Chinoy, Neelkanth Mishra, Nilesh Shah, TT Ram Mohan, Soumya Kanti Ghosh, KV Raju, Chetan Ghate, Pami Dua, Pulak Ghosh and Gaurav Vallabh.

The terms of reference of EAC include analysing any issue, economic or otherwise, referred to it by the Prime Minister, and advising him thereon, addressing issues of macroeconomic importance and presenting views thereon to the PM.

Delhi to Siliguri in 6 hours: Vaishnaw

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
 ■ New Delhi

Unveiling a rail infrastructure blitz in Bengal, Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Saturday announced a bullet train project that would connect Delhi with Siliguri, the gateway to the Northeast. Vaishnaw said it would reduce the travel time to just six hours from the present 20 hours. This will be India's second bullet train project after the 508 km Mumbai-Ahmedabad corridor, which is set to be operational next year.

"A bullet train project will come to West Bengal. It will connect Delhi and Siliguri via Lucknow, Varanasi and Patna," the Union Minister said. Vaishnaw on Saturday said, "In the next five years, 60 next-generation trains will be introduced for Kolkata Metro... This will prove to be very beneficial for Kolkata and its surrounding areas."

The previous Government had blocked



Union Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw conducts an inspection during his visit to Chingrighata crossing on the Kolkata Metro's Orange line in Kolkata on Saturday

all forms of development. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has plans for Bengal, and that is evident from the ₹14,205 crore allotted for railway projects in the State. Under the UPA Government, Bengal got ₹4,000 crore," Vaishnaw claimed.

He also referred to proposed high-speed rail corridors linking Delhi with Varanasi and Varanasi with Siliguri, saying they would significantly reduce travel time. Referring to the East-West Dedicated Freight Corridor,

the Railway Minister said it would connect West Bengal's Dankuni with Surat in Gujarat and boost industrial and trade movement across several States.

The corridor will benefit States like Odisha, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh, he said. The minister said 100 per cent railway electrification had been achieved in the State and assured the people of continued investment in new trains and infrastructure.

PIONEER IN SHORT

ARMY OFFICER FALLS TO DEATH IN J&K

An army officer died after slipping in a mountainous area and falling into a deep gorge during an anti-terror operation in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district on Saturday evening, officials said. The officer, a lieutenant, was part of the security forces engaged in Operation Sherwali, which entered its 15th day. Operation Sherwali is underway in the Dorimaal and Gambhir Mughalan belt to track down two to three Pakistani terrorists believed to be hiding in the forests of Rajouri district. During the search operation, the lieutenant reportedly slipped and fell into a 30-metre-deep gorge in the Dorimaal area, the officials said, adding that he succumbed to his injuries. The body has been recovered, and further details are awaited.

T20 CAPTAIN: SHREYAS REPLACES SURYAKUMAR

Winds of change swept across India's T20I set-up as Shreyas Iyer on Saturday took over the captaincy from Suryakumar Yadav, and wonder kid Vaibhav Sooryavanshi found a place in the squad for the twin tour of Ireland and England. At 15 years and 71 days old, Sooryavanshi becomes the youngest ever player to feature in an Indian cricket team, surpassing the long-standing record held by the great Sachin Tendulkar. Tendulkar was 16 years and 205 days when he made his Test debut against Pakistan at Karachi on November 15, 1989.

FULL REPORT ON P11

Much-awaited CJP protest ends without any impact

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
 ■ New Delhi

Despite the buzz across India, the Cockroach Janta Party's (CJP) protest at Jantar Mantar on Saturday turned out to be just another routine demonstration, a damp squib amid high expectations. Participants held placards and slogans demanding *azadi* and condemning paper leaks, as well as placards criticising the Government and the education minister. Some banners pointed out Prime Minister Narendra Modi's absence from press conferences. In contrast, others questioned the Government's response to the ongoing ethnic violence in Manipur between the Kuki and Meitei communities.

The protest felt like a typical left-wing rally, familiar to Delhi residents, marked by *azadi* slogans commonly chanted by leftist student unions. Even the few genuine students present, hoping their voices would be heard, left disappointed. Attendees sported cockroach masks, carried flowers, and included schoolchildren accompanied by their parents.

Earlier, Abhijeet Dipke, founder of the online movement Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), issued an ultimatum to Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, demanding his resignation



CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke, his spokesperson Saurav Das, and others, during a protest at Jantar Mantar

by 5 pm and warning of a nationwide mobilisation, including a major protest scheduled for June 13 at the same venue if the minister refuses to step down.

Dipke, the rally's organiser, arrived from the US early on Saturday morning. After obtaining police approval, he reached Jantar Mantar, where supporters had gathered since dawn. He appealed for peaceful conduct, encouraging supporters to bring books and national flags, and to offer flowers to police officers as a sign of compassion and gratitude. Climate activist Sonam Wangchuk joined him, along with leaders from CPI(M) Liberation, CPI, and various leftist youth and student organisations.

Reflecting on his arrival at Indira Gandhi International

Airport, Dipke shared that just before landing, he felt as if he were experiencing his last moments of freedom, ready to sacrifice everything for his cause. He accused many of compromising themselves out of fear of imprisonment. Still, he declared, "Lekin is desh ka chatra, yuva nahi bika hai", the youth and students of this country have not sold out, eliciting loud cheers.

Wangchuk praised the youngsters' peaceful protest and expressed hope that future demonstrations would be allowed to flourish. Calling Dipke the "Cockroach-in-Chief," Wangchuk commended the protesters for their resilience, noting they didn't sit at home crying or create chaos on the streets.

Jaishankar praises resilient India-Nepal ties

ASHOKE RAJ ■ New Delhi

India and Nepal have a unique opportunity to take their long-standing bilateral partnership to a new level by expanding cooperation into innovation-driven sectors while consolidating gains made in traditional areas of collaboration, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Saturday during talks with Nepal's Foreign Minister Shisir Khanal in New Delhi.

Addressing the meeting, Jaishankar described India-Nepal ties as one of South Asia's most enduring and resilient relationships,



anchored in deep-rooted social, cultural, economic and historical connections. He noted that the open border between the two countries, vibrant people-to-people exchanges and shared civilisational heritage continue to

infrastructure development, disaster management and cultural exchanges.

However, he stressed that both countries are now well-positioned to explore new opportunities in emerging fields that could define the next phase of bilateral engagement.

"India and Nepal have the potential to elevate their partnership by embracing innovation and technology-led growth," Jaishankar said, identifying startups, artificial intelligence, information technology and renewable energy as promising areas for future collaboration.

Coempt Edutek to continue CBSE work

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
 ■ New Delhi

Hyderabad-based Coempt Edutek Private Limited, which has faced criticism over its On-Screen Marking (OSM) system used for re-evaluating Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) Class 12 answer sheets, will continue to handle the process.

However, CBSE has now transferred all relevant data from Coempt's servers to its own servers as a safeguard against potential data breaches and cyber attacks. Two portals have been used for the evaluation process — a CBSE registration portal and the OSM evaluation



portal. The CBSE registration portal was launched on May 19, but it faced multiple technical glitches that were flagged by students on social media, prompting the board to shut it.

Meanwhile, students have raised issues in accessing their answer books and applying for verification and re-evaluation on the

Singapore Govt blocks media platforms attacking Indian community

GURDIP SINGH ■ Singapore

The Singapore Government on Saturday ordered three social media platforms to block access to 14 posts, likely originating from China, which targeted the Indian community and "undermine" the country's "model of multiculturalism".

The police have issued disabling directions under the Online Criminal Harms Act (OCHA) to block access to the posts on YouTube, Facebook and X, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) said in

Federal court blocks US immigration restrictions on nationals of 39 nations

ASHOKE RAJ ■ New Delhi

A federal judge has struck down a set of immigration restrictions introduced by the Trump administration that affected nationals from 39 countries, ruling that the measures violated US immigration and administrative law. In a landmark decision issued on Friday, Chief US District Judge John McConnell concluded that the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) had improperly suspended or delayed immigration-related benefits for individuals solely because of their nationality.

The ruling is expected to impact thousands of appli-



cants whose cases had remained unresolved under the policy.

The restrictions were introduced after a shooting incident in Washington, DC, last November involving an Afghan national accused of attacking two members of

the National Guard. Following the incident, the administration implemented heightened scrutiny and processing freezes for applicants from a group of countries spanning Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East.

Sooryavanshi becomes youngest India player

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
 ■ Mumbai

Wonder kid Vaibhav Sooryavanshi found a place in the squad for the twin tour of Ireland and England, said Chief selector Ajit Agarkar.

At 15 years and 71 days old, Sooryavanshi becomes the youngest ever player to feature in an Indian cricket team, surpassing the long-standing record held by the great Sachin Tendulkar.

Tendulkar was 16 years and 205 days when he made his Test debut against Pakistan at Karachi on November 15, 1989.

Sooryavanshi's inclusion was a foregone conclusion after the 15-year-old bagged the Orange Cap in IPL 2026, scoring 776 runs with a hundred and five fifties at a



AT 15 YEARS AND 71 DAYS OLD, SOORYAVANSHI BECOMES THE YOUNGEST EVER PLAYER TO FEATURE IN AN INDIAN CRICKET TEAM

strike rate of 237.30 for Rajasthan Royals. Agarkar was impressed

with the Bihar boy's game-changing abilities. "We have seen what he

can do. Even in the (IPL) playoffs, we saw he almost single-handedly carried the Rajasthan Royals (into the final). For a young kid to be batting in a high-pressure environment, he can be a game-changer. It's commendable," said the former Indian pacer.

"I don't need to talk about how well he is playing, and it's not just this season. He had a great start last season, and to back it up for a young kid, in a competition that is as competitive and has a high-pressure environment (as any), and how explosive he can be and a game-changer that he can be."

"We have got high hopes of him, and I think he just has picked himself really," Agarkar added.

RELATED REPORT ON P11



a statement. Seventy-five per cent of Singapore's over six million population are of Chinese descent, 15 per cent are Malay, and between seven and nine per cent are of Indian origin. The rest are of other international origins.

The direction requires the platforms to "take all reasonable steps to disable access by Singapore users to these posts", it added. Second Minister for Home Affairs Edwin Tong told reporters at a community event on Saturday that "from what we know so far, the content originated from overseas". (PTI)

CM Mann announces major relief for construction workers; 10 lakh labourers to be registered free of cost across Punjab

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Saturday announced a massive enrolment drive to register and revalidate 10 lakh construction workers free of cost across Punjab, while directing officials to take welfare schemes directly to labourers through special camps in villages and urban areas.

Chairing a review meeting of the Punjab Building and Other Construction Workers' (BOCW) Welfare Board, he said the Punjab Government is committed to ensuring that every construction worker receives social security benefits, welfare assistance and opportunities for skill development.

"The Punjab Building and Other Construction Workers' Welfare Board has been formed to ensure the welfare, social security and socio-economic upliftment of construction workers through registration, financial assistance and implementation of welfare schemes. It is unfortunate that despite the availability of ample funds, welfare schemes for labourers have not achieved the desired success due to long processing times," he said.

Emphasising the need to expand the coverage of



welfare schemes, Mann said as of now, 2.21 lakh workers are registered with the BOCW Welfare Board, which is quite low considering the massive construction activities and urbanisation taking place across Punjab. To improve registrations, more registration camps will be organised across the state.

He announced that the Punjab Government will remove the registration fee burden on workers during the special campaign to encourage maximum participation. "It has been observed that workers often avoid registration because they are required to deposit ₹145 as registration fee. To incentivise registration and revalidation, applicants will not be required to deposit this fee during the Mass Registration Campaign. Around 10 lakh workers will

be enrolled or revalidated during this campaign and the Punjab Government will bear the financial implication of nearly ₹15 crore," said Mann.

He further said that the Punjab Government will continue supporting workers even after registration. "The Punjab Government will bear the registration fee cost of all workers who do not avail any benefits within a year. The Labour Department has also been directed to organise special camps in villages during evening hours because labourers return home from work at that time and this will help ensure maximum registrations," he added.

The CM also directed officials to improve facilities available to labourers at Labour Chowks. "Sheds

should be established at Labour Chowks and drinking water facilities should be provided so that labourers do not face inconvenience while waiting for work," he said.

Emphasising the importance of skill development, the Chief Minister directed the Board to share details of 50,000 live registered construction workers with the Punjab Skill Development Mission. "The Board should provide data of 50,000 live registered construction workers to the Punjab Skill Development Mission for skill training. The training should be provided only at construction sites, Punjab Skill Development Mission training centres and camps organised by the BOCW Welfare Board," he said.

He said workers should be trained in specialised fields that can improve their skills and earning potential. "Training should be imparted in areas such as masonry, bar bending and fixing, shuttering carpentry, scaffolding, quality assurance, construction painting, construction electrical works, surveying, roads and runway construction, interior and exterior finishes, fabrication, draughting, shuttering carpentry and other related fields," he said.

Capt Amarinder meets Amit Shah, Nadda



PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Amid speculation about his political stance ahead of the Punjab Assembly polls, former chief minister and BJP leader Capt Amarinder Singh on Saturday met Union Home Minister Amit Shah and discussed various issues concerning the state.

He also met Union Health Minister J P Nadda and the two leaders discussed many political issues, including Punjab. The buzz about 84-year-old Singh, who quit the Congress in 2021, not being happy had grown after he raised questions on the appointment of Kewal Singh Dhillion as Punjab BJP chief, saying he was not consulted.

Himachal minister Chander Kumar disapproves son's 'wild allegations' against CM, Congress

PNS ■ Shimla

Disapproving of his son and former MLA Neeraj Bharti's tirade against the Congress government in Himachal Pradesh, Agriculture Minister Chander Kumar on Saturday said he should have taken up his grievances with the party leadership instead of levelling

"baseless and wild" allegations.

Addressing a press conference here, Kumar said Bharti's allegations undermined the credibility of both the party and the government. Over the past few weeks, Bharti has levelled a series of accusations online against the functioning of the Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu-led government. On Friday, a day after resigning from the post of Congress state vice president, Bharti alleged irregularities in the processing of contractors' payments in the state. He also claimed that five briefcases full of currency are collected monthly, with two kept locally and three sent to leaders in Delhi. "One does not know when the transfer process begins or when it ends. To add to it, there is no trace of the DOs (demi-official letters) that are sent," Bharti alleged on Facebook.

Responding to this statement, Kumar said, "Petty issues can be sorted through discussions with the chief minister and the party president. But making wild allegations to attack the government amounts to indiscipline. I disapprove of it." "Such allegations don't help in elevating one's political stature. On the contrary, it can harm the individual. I would like to advise Neeraj to refrain from making such baseless allegations, questioning the government's functioning," he added.

When asked whether Bharti had discussed his plans to resign, Kumar said that he did not give such an indication. "When son's feet start fitting in father's shoes, line of thinking changes," Kumar quipped.

Haryana Matches National Average in Infant Mortality Rate: ACS Health

PNS ■ Chandigarh

Haryana has made significant progress in improving child health outcomes, with the state's Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) declining to 24 deaths per 1,000 live births, according to the Sample Registration System (SRS) Report 2024.

A statement issued on Saturday said this places Haryana on par with the national average and reflects sustained improvements in maternal and child healthcare services across the state.

Additional Chief Secretary, Health and Family Welfare Department, Haryana, Sumita Misra, said the state has been consistently improving key health indicators through focused interventions in maternal and newborn healthcare. She said Haryana's performance demonstrates the effectiveness of sustained investments in healthcare infrastructure and community-based health

services.

The latest data show that Haryana's IMR has fallen from 28 to 24 over the past five years, representing a reduction of nearly 14 per cent. During the same period, Punjab's IMR declined from 18 to 16, an improvement of about 11 per cent. The figures indicate that Haryana has achieved a faster pace of reduction despite the challenges associated with serving a larger and more densely populated population.

Misra said Haryana has now reached the national average in IMR and continues to make steady progress in reducing infant deaths. She noted that while comparisons are often made with smaller states and Union Territories, Haryana's achievements are significant given its size, population density and healthcare delivery challenges.

Health officials said that Haryana's performance compares favourably with several large states where

infant mortality remains significantly higher. States such as Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh continue to report IMRs of around 35, while Chhattisgarh's rate is approximately 36 per 1,000 live births.

Misra said the state has witnessed a continuous decline in neonatal and infant mortality due to improved institutional deliveries, better newborn care and strengthened healthcare infrastructure. She added that the government is focusing on further improving antenatal care services, ensuring safe deliveries and upgrading neonatal intensive care facilities across government hospitals.

To further accelerate progress, Haryana plans to establish additional SNCUs, NBSUs, NRCs and Lactation Management Units across the state. Existing SNCUs are also being upgraded into Maternal and Newborn Care Units (MNCUs) to provide integrated care for mothers and newborns under one roof.

Over 29K vehicles checked as Punjab Police conducts drive against illegal hooters, sirens and flashers

PNS ■ Chandigarh

In a crackdown on traffic violations, the Punjab Police has carried out a five-day-long special statewide drive against the illegal use of hooters, sirens, and flashers on private vehicles, resulting in the checking of over 29,000 vehicles. The intensive operation commenced across the state on June 2.

The drive was focused on private vehicles unlawfully using signalling equipment, including hooters, sirens or flashers to bypass traffic rules and project undue authority.

Special Director General of Police (Special DGP) Law and Order Praveen Sinha, while sharing the details of the operation, specified that such devices are strictly meant for emergency vehicles and essential services. Private individuals cannot be allowed to misuse them, he said. The officer said that police teams checked a total of 29,324 vehicles. During the

checking, teams removed 52 hooters, 10 sirens, and 403 flashers from unauthorised vehicles, he said, adding that 4,221 violators were issued challans and 48 vehicles were impounded.

Warning violators of strict legal consequences, Sinha stated that this drive will continue across the state and rigorous legal action will be initiated against anyone found indulging in the unauthorised use of flashers, sirens, or hooters.

Meanwhile, the 'Gangstran te Vaar' campaign continued on Day 137 with Police teams arresting 320 individuals with eight weapons, taking the total arrests to 34,532 since the launch of the campaign. Apart from this, preventive action has been taken against 97 persons, whereas 13 persons were verified and released after questioning. Police teams have also arrested seven proclaimed offenders (POs) during the operation.

Himachal Cabinet decides to reconsider claims of compassionate appointments

PNS ■ Shimla

The Himachal Pradesh Cabinet, in its meeting held under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu on Saturday, approved the reconsideration of claims for compassionate appointments that were earlier rejected by various departments for various reasons. As a one-time measure, the most genuine rejected cases will be re-examined for consideration along with various needed relaxations.

According to a statement, the Cabinet approved the Policy for Regularisation of Certain Encroachments on Government Land, 2026, aimed at addressing the humanitarian concerns of landless families and marginal farmers who are in possession of government land for residential, agricultural and horticultural purposes. The policy has been framed in compliance with the directions of the Supreme Court of India. The policy has been sent to the Government of India for approval.

It decided to introduce the Agriculture Loan Interest Subvention Scheme to those farmers whose



land is up for auction. The State Government will bear 50 per cent of the interest liability on eligible agricultural loans up to Rs. 3 lakh, benefiting 6356 farmers across the State. The Cabinet gave its approval to create and fill 400 posts of Work Inspector under the Directorate of Recruitment. It also approved filling up of 300 posts of Medical Officers and 250 posts of class-IV/Multi Task Workers in the Department of Health and Family Welfare. It also put its seal on recruiting 200 staff nurses in the Department of Health and Family Welfare.

The Cabinet also decided to fill up 162 posts in Health and Family Welfare Department, which include 76 Operation Theatre

Assistants, 36 Radiographers, 50 Lab Technicians Grade-II. It decided to create and fill up 75 posts of Assistant Professors of various departments in different medical colleges across the State. It gave its consent to fill up two posts of Assistant Professor and two posts of Senior Resident in the Department of Cardiology at Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri Government Medical College, Nerchowk, district Mandi. It decided to grant a one-time relaxation to six designated Professors of Dr R a d h a k r i s h n a n Government Medical College, Hamirpur, who were almost six to 20 days short of becoming eligible for designation. It approved the creation and filling up of 12 posts of various

categories at Civil Hospital Dehra and three posts of different categories in the office of the Block Medical Officer, Dehra, in Kangra district.

The Cabinet also decided to fill up 17 posts of Assistant Professors in various departments in Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla. It also decided to grant full salary to employees proceeding on study leave. Employees who had previously availed study leave will likewise be paid the balance amount of salary due to them. It further approved the conversion of part-time workers who have completed seven years of continuous service as on March 31, 2026, into daily wagers. It also approved the grant of 15 days of paternity leave to Job Trainees.

The Cabinet approved the withdrawal of advertisements for 80 post codes issued by the erstwhile Himachal Pradesh Staff Selection Commission, Hamirpur, and decided to refund the examination fee amounting to Rs. 4.27 crore to the concerned candidates. It approved the launch of Phase IV of the Rajiv Gandhi Swarojgar Start-Up Yojana. Under the scheme, eligible beneficiaries will be

provided a 50 per cent subsidy for the purchase of e-buses and a 30 per cent subsidy for diesel buses to operate on identified bus routes, to promote self-employment and strengthen public transport services.

The Cabinet approved amendments to the Himachal Pradesh NDPS Rules, 1989, to regulate the cultivation, processing, manufacturing, warehousing and transportation of cannabis for medical and scientific purposes.

It approved a special relief package for 15 fire-affected families in the Jubbil, Kotkhai and Rohru areas of Shimla district. Under the package, financial assistance of Rs. 7 lakh per family will be provided to those whose houses were fully destroyed in fire incidents. A total assistance of Rs. 84.70 lakh will be disbursed to the affected families. It was further decided to constitute a Cabinet Sub Committee to be presided by Deputy Chief Minister Mukesh Agnihotri to look into centralizing and streamlining the recruitment process of Multi Task Workers to be appointed in various departments.

UT Election Deptt starts structured Training Programme for BLOs for smooth SIR

PNS ■ Chandigarh

In pursuance of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of Electoral Rolls announced by the Election Commission of India, the Election Department, U.T. Chandigarh, has commenced a structured Training Programme for Booth Level Officers (BLOs) to ensure smooth and efficient implementation of the revision exercise. The training sessions are being conducted at MCM DAV College, Sector 36, Chandigarh, from June 6 to 9. A reserve training schedule has also been provisioned for BLOs and BLO Supervisors who are unable to attend the scheduled sessions. During the training, participants were briefed on the guidelines governing the SIR process, the various phases of implementation and the distribution, filling and digitization of Enumeration Forms (EF). They were also apprised of the use of Form 6 and Form 8 during the Claims and Objections period, and the Notice Phase (Hearing and Verification). In the Enumeration Phase, BLOs will conduct House-to-House (H2H) visits and distribute Enumeration Forms to electors within their designated booths. Electors have been requested to cooperate with the BLOs and ensure the timely submission of duly filled forms to facilitate the preparation of an accurate and error-free Electoral Roll.

BRIEFS

HARYANA CM CALLS FOR SELF-RELIANT VILLAGES, SKILLED YOUTH AND PROSPEROUS FARMERS



Chandigarh: Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Saturday called upon citizens, particularly the youth, to contribute towards building self-reliant villages, empowering young people and ensuring prosperity for farmers, stating that the vision of a Developed India can only be realised through the development of rural India. Addressing the annual foundation day celebrations of the Seva Sadhana and Gram Vikas Kendra at Samalkha in Panipat district as the Chief Guest, he described the institution as a living model of self-reliant India and praised its efforts to transform rural communities through service, skill development, education, agriculture and social empowerment. Congratulating the thousands of families associated with the initiative, Saini said the institution represents a powerful example of collective social commitment. When society itself resolves to drive its own development, transformation is not merely visible; it continues across generations, he said.

DELHI LG PAYS A COURTESY CALL ON GOVERNOR KATARIA



Chandigarh: The Lieutenant Governor of Delhi, Taranjit Singh Sandhu, paid a courtesy call on the Governor of Punjab and Administrator, Union Territory Chandigarh, Gulab Chand Kataria, at Punjab Lok Bhavan, on Saturday. During the meeting, they discussed a wide range of issues related to Punjab, Chandigarh, Delhi, and matters of national importance, according to a statement.

AI, ROBOTICS AMONG FIVE NEW COURSES AT GURDASPUR STATE UNIVERSITY SOON: BAINS

CHANDIGARH: Punjab Education Minister Harjot Singh Bains on Saturday said that Sardar Beant Singh State University, Gurdaspur, will roll out five new industry-aligned, skill-intensive courses from the academic session 2026-27, which will revamp technical and professional education in the state. The new courses include B.Tech in Artificial Intelligence (AI) & Machine Learning, B.Tech in Robotics & AI, B.Pharmacy, B.Sc. Agriculture and five-year integrated programmes in MCA, MBA and M.Sc. Bains said, "The old model of theoretical, exam-centric learning is outdated. We are replacing it with hands-on training, lab immersion and real-world problem-solving. Sardar Beant Singh University will now become a launchpad for innovators, not just degree-holders." He added, "Every student will undergo mandatory semester-long internships and live projects. The goal is to ensure that when a student graduates, they are already industry-ready. This is not just a curriculum change. It is a revolution in how Punjab learns, earns and grows." Emphasising the need to curb brain drain, Bains said, "This initiative is designed to reverse the state's brain drain. Parents in Punjab should no longer feel forced to send their children outside for quality tech or pharma education. The Bhagwant Singh Mann Government is building future-ready universities right here."

PROF. DR. SONU GOEL OF PGIMER AWARDED FELLOWSHIP OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS OF EDINBURGH

Chandigarh: Prof. Dr. Sonu Goel, Professor of Health Management at the Department of Community Medicine and School of Public Health, PGIMER, Chandigarh was conferred the prestigious Fellowship of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh (FRCP), one of the highest professional honors awarded by the Royal College to physicians, researchers, and public health leaders who have demonstrated exceptional contributions to medicine, healthcare, research, education, and public service. The Fellowship is a recognition of Prof. Goel's distinguished career spanning more than 25 years in public health, focusing on health systems strengthening, health management and leadership, tobacco control, implementation science, and policy research, which has led to significant contributions in improving population health outcomes in India and globally. Prof. Goel has authored over 270 peer-reviewed scientific publications, successfully led more than 50 national and international research projects, and mentored numerous public health professionals, researchers, and policymakers.

ONE DAY SPECIAL CAMP AT ALL POLLING BOOTHS OF PUNJAB ON 7TH JUNE TO MAP MAXIMUM VOTERS: CEO ANINDITA MITRA

Chandigarh: As part of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) being undertaken by the Election Commission of India in the state, a special camp is being organised at all the 2453 polling booths of the state on June 7. Chief Electoral Officer, Punjab, Anindita Mitra, said that this one-day special camp is being organised to accelerate the pace of pre-mapping. BLOs will be available at these camps from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. to facilitate voter mapping. Mitra urged all the voters of the State to actively participate in this camp so that the PreSIR exercise will be smoothly executed.

2353 FIRS LODGED UNDER NDPS ACT AGAINST DRUG TRAFFICKERS IN HARYANA IN LAST 6 YEARS; 6256 HELD

Chandigarh: Haryana Police have lodged as many as 2353 FIRs involving commercial quantities of narcotics under the NDPS Act over the last six years. As many as 6256 accused persons have been arrested during the same period. In a parallel crackdown on drug-derived wealth, assets worth Rs 72.70 crore have been seized, frozen, or attached to date. These figures were presented by the Additional Director General of Police and Head of the Haryana State Narcotics Control Bureau (HSNCB), Sanjay Kumar, at the Police headquarters in Panchkula on Friday. Presiding over the meeting with the senior police officers, State DGP Ajay Singhal emphasised the need to conduct the anti-drug trafficking campaign more effectively and in a more coordinated manner. All police units, he directed, must ensure organised and unrelenting action to dismantle drug trafficking networks at their roots.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is brought to the notice of Public at large that Mr. Yogesh Kumar Aggarwal S/o Satish Kumar R/o 125, Seth Hukam Chand Colony...

PUBLIC NOTICE

BEFORE SH. PAVITER SINGH, PCS, ASSTT. ESTATE OFFICER, U.T., CHANDIGARH. Subject: Transfer of Ownership in respect of RESIDENTIAL Site No. 46, SECTOR 21-A...

यूको बैंक UCO BANK

GOLD AUCTION NOTICE The Pledges, in specific and the public, in general, are hereby notified that auction of the gold ornaments...

Table with columns: Name of Borrower, Address, O/s Amount, Intt. Upto, Gross Weight (in Grams), Place, Branch Manager & Contact No., Reserve Price.

Terms & Conditions of Auction: Decision regarding acceptance of an offer for purchase of jewellery through auction would be that of the Bank and the Bank is not bound to accept the highest offer.

ਪੰਜਾਬ ਨੈਸ਼ਨਲ ਬੈਂਕ Punjab National Bank

BRANCH: SS PARK(327400), Sonapat Mob. 7876013900 POSSESSION NOTICE Rule 8 (1)

Whereas The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of the Punjab National Bank under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002...

STATE BANK OF INDIA

NOTICE U/S 13 (2) OF THE SECURITIZATION & RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS & ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT, 2002 HERE AFTER CALLED "ACT"

Table with columns: Name of the Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s), Details of the Movable/Immovable Properties, Date of NPA, Date of Demand Notice, Liability Outstanding.

The steps are being taken for substituted service of notice. The above Borrower(s) are hereby called upon to make payment of outstanding amount within 60 days from the date of publication of this notice...

PHYSICAL POSSESSION NOTICE

Branch Office: ICICI Bank Limited Plot No-23, Shal Tower, 3rd Floor, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, New Delhi- 110005

The Authorised ICICI Bank Officer under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002...

Table with columns: Sr. No., Name of the Borrower(s)/ Loan Account Number, Description of Property/ Date of Physical Possession, Date of Demand Notice (Rs), Name of Branch.

The above-mentioned borrower(s)/guarantor(s) is/are hereby issued a 30 day Notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold after 30 days from the date of publishing this Notice...

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE

Branch Office: ICICI Bank Limited Plot No-23, Shal Tower, 3rd Floor, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, New Delhi- 110005

The Authorised ICICI Bank Officer under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002...

Table with columns: Sr. No., Name of the Borrower(s)/ Loan Account Number, Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession, Date of Demand Notice (Rs), Name of Branch.

The above-mentioned borrower(s)/guarantor(s) is/are hereby issued a 30 day Notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold after 30 days from the date of publishing this Notice...

STATE BANK OF INDIA

Home Loan Centre New Grain Market Muktsar

NOTICE U/S 13 (2) OF THE SECURITIZATION & RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS & ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT, 2002 HERE AFTER CALLED "ACT"

Table with columns: Name of the Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s), Details of the Movable/Immovable Properties, Date of NPA, Date of Demand Notice, Liability Outstanding.

The steps are being taken for substituted service of notice. The above Borrower(s) are hereby called upon to make payment of outstanding amount within 60 days from the date of publication of this notice...

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE

Branch Office: ICICI Bank Limited Plot No-23, Shal Tower, 3rd Floor, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, New Delhi- 110005

The Authorised ICICI Bank Officer under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002...

Table with columns: Sr. No., Name of the Borrower(s)/ Loan Account Number, Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession, Date of Demand Notice (Rs), Name of Branch.

The above-mentioned borrower(s)/guarantor(s) is/are hereby issued a 30 day Notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold after 30 days from the date of publishing this Notice...

Cooperative Bank

FULLY COMPUTERIZED BANK HEAD OFFICE: TARN TARAN

THE TARN TARAN CENTRAL CO-OPERATIVE BANK LTD.

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE (FOR IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES)

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of The Tarn Taran Central Cooperative Bank Ltd., under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act & in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(2) and 13(12) read with rule 8 and 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002...

The borrowers / guarantors having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers / guarantors and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the properties described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him / her under section 13(4) of the said Act read with rule 8 and 9 of the said rules on the date mentioned against each account.

Table with columns: Name of the NPA Account / Branch, Description of the Immovable Properties, Date of the Demand Notice, Date of the Possession, Amount Outstanding.

Date: 06-06-2026 Place: Tarn Taran Sd/- Authorised Officer

केनरा बैंक Canara Bank

Recovery & Legal Section, Circle Office, 2nd Floor, Sector 34-A, Chandigarh Ph. No. 0172-2602431, 2663733, E-mail: rcochd@canarabank.com

FOR SR. NO. 1 - LAST DATE OF RECEIPT OF EMD 26.06.2026 UPTO 5:00 P.M.

FOR SR. NO. 1 - DATE OF E-AUCTION: 29.06.2026 AT 11:30 AM TO 12:30 P.M. (with unlimited extension of 5 minutes duration each till the conclusion of the sale)

FOR SR. NO. 1 - DATE & TIME OF INSPECTION: 23.06.2026 & 23.06.2026 BETWEEN 03:00 PM TO 05:00 PM

FOR SR. NO. 2 TO 4 - LAST DATE OF RECEIPT OF EMD 30.06.2026 UPTO 5:00 P.M.

FOR SR. NO. 2 TO 4 - DATE OF E-AUCTION: 01.07.2026 AT 11:30 AM TO 12:30 P.M. (with unlimited extension of 5 minutes duration each till the conclusion of the sale)

FOR SR. NO. 2 TO 4 - DATE & TIME OF INSPECTION: 23.06.2026 & 24.06.2026 BETWEEN 03:00 PM TO 05:00 PM

FOR SR. NO. 5 - LAST DATE OF RECEIPT OF EMD 09.07.2026 UPTO 5:00 P.M.

FOR SR. NO. 5 - DATE OF E-AUCTION: 10.07.2026 AT 11:30 AM TO 12:30 P.M. (with unlimited extension of 5 minutes duration each till the conclusion of the sale)

FOR SR. NO. 5 - DATE & TIME OF INSPECTION: 01.07.2026 & 02.07.2026 BETWEEN 03:00 PM TO 05:00 PM

SALE NOTICE OF HYPOTHECATED ASSETS THROUGH E-AUCTION (ONLINE AUCTION)

Notice is hereby given to the effect that the movable property described herein, taken possession and same will be sold through e-auction on the following terms & conditions. E-Auction arranged by the Service Provider M/s PSB Alliance Ltd (ebkrry) through the website https://baanknet.com/.

Table with columns: Sr. No., Branch Name / Name & Address of the Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s), Description of Assets, Total Dues, Reserve Price (in Rs.), Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) (in Rs.), Details of A/c No. / IFSC Code / Possession Type.

M/s PSB Alliance Pvt. Ltd., Corporate Office: Unit 1, 3rd Floor, VIOS Commercial Tower, Near Wadala Truck Terminal, Wadala East, Mumbai, Maharashtra - 400037, Helpline Number - 8291220220, E-mail: support.BAANKNET@psballiance.com

COURT NOTICE

(U/o 5 Rule 20 CPC) (UNDER GUARDIAN AND WARD ACT) IN THE COURT OF Ms. Ranmeet Kaur Civil Judge (Senior Division), Malerkotla

Amandeep Singh s/o late Zora Singh (father of minor Harshpreet Singh), residents of Home no. 233, Ward no. 5, Bhai Veer Singh Nagar, near Hind Hospital, Ahmedgarh, District Malerkotla.

General Public CNR No. PBSCG0-000778-2026 GW/07/2026 Next Date:-29-07-2026

NOTICE TO: General Public In above titled case, the defendant(s)/respondent(s) could not be served. It defendant(s)/respondent(s) should appear in person or through counsel on 29-07-2026 at ordered that 10:00 a.m.

For details logon to https://highcourtchd.gov.in/?mod=district_notice&district=Sangrur

Civil Judge (Senior Division) Sangrur

Dated, 02-06-2026

COURT NOTICE

(U/o 5 Rule 20 CPC) (UNDER GUARDIAN AND WARD ACT) IN THE COURT OF Ms. Ranmeet Kaur Civil Judge (Senior Division), Malerkotla

Balwinder Kaur widow of Mohan Singh s/o Ram Singh, next friend and real mother of Harsimran Singh minor r/o Puneet Niwas, Backside Vikrant Palace, Shri Ram Nagar, Malerkotla.

General Public CNR No. PBSCG0-000627-2026 GW/06/2026 Next Date:- 06-07-2026

NOTICE TO: General Public In above titled case, the defendant(s)/respondent(s) could not be served. It is ordered that defendant(s)/respondent(s) should appear in person or through counsel on 06-07-2026 at 10:00 a.m.

For details logon to https://highcourtchd.gov.in/?mod=district_notice&district=Sangrur

Civil Judge (Senior Division) Sangrur

Dated, 02-06-2026

TAGORE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

N.H. 52, HISAR-RAJGARH ROAD V.P.O.-BARWA, TEH.-SHIVANI, DISTT.-BHIWANI (Approved by NCTE/SCERT & Affiliated to HBSE, Bhiwani)

FACULTY REQUIRED

For D.El.Ed. Course: Principal/HOD (01) Perspective in Education (02), Science (01), Maths (01), Hindi(01), English (01), Health & Phy. Edu. (01), Fine Arts (01), Social Science (01).

Non-Teaching Staff: UDC/Office Superintendent (01), Computer Operator/Store Keeper (01), Computer Lab Assistant (01)

Note: 1. Qualification and pay scale will be as per NCTE/SCERT/Haryana Govt. norms. 2. Applications alongwith the biodata, two photographs & self-attested copy of testimonials should reach within 21 days in the office of the Principal & copy of the same to director SCERT Gurugram by Regd. Post or by hand against proper receipt.

SECRETARY Ph. Fax - 7082751000, Email - tagorepgcoe@gmail.com

Bank of Maharashtra

Zonal Office - 1st Floor, Jai Kartar Bhawan, Near Circuit House, Ludhiana-141001. E-mail: gad_ldh@bankofmaharashtra.bank.in. M: 95305-50667

Application for Empanelment of Architects & Contractors

Applications are invited for empanelment of Architects and Contractors for (Civil / Furnishing / Electrical / Data Cabling Works) to be carried out in the branches/offices of Bank of Maharashtra in the State of Punjab & J&K.

Application forms along with all other details can be obtained from our office or downloaded from the Bank's website: https://bankofmaharashtra.bank.in/tenders. Last Date of Submission 25.06.2026 till 5:00 PM.

Date: 06.06.2026 Place: Ludhiana Authorized Officer

BABA FARID UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH SCIENCES

Sadiq Road, Faridkot-151 203 (Punjab) Phone: 01639-251232

University Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences & Research

ADMISSION NOTICE (2026-2027) Online Applications are invited for admission to the following courses from 09.06.2026 onwards.

Table with columns: S. No., Name of Course, Eligibility, Last Date to apply online.

For further details visit our website: www.bfuhs.gssmch.org REGISTRAR 3108/12/2026-27/12073 Dated CHD :- 05/06/2026

CORRIGENDUM

Consequent upon the V.C meeting held on 4-6-2026 with the worthy District Registrar, F&S Rohtak, on the petition filed by Sh. Ramphal & others and keeping in view the order issued by worthy DIC. Now the election at the Saini Dharmsahala, chamanpura Rohtak will be conducted for all the posts of governing body i.e., 1) President 2) Vice-President 3) Secretary 4) Joint Secretary 5) Treasurer 6) Two posts of Executive Members

The election will be held among the 64 members. It is also added that the election schedule has already published in two newspapers, one in Hindi and one in English. All the other events as date of nomination, date of withdrawal and date of election etc. will be same as per schedule already issued. This is for information to all the members of the society.

Sd/- Administrator

COPY TO :

- 1) Notice Board in Dharmsahala 2) District Registrar, FCS, Rohtak for information

General Body Meeting Notice
This is to inform all members of the Industrialist Cooperative House Building (Ist) Society Ltd. Plot No. 7, Sector 51D, Chandigarh...

Public Notice
This is to inform the general public that Mr. Laxmi Narain Sharma is the owner of the Plot No. MB-196 Area measuring 290.26 sq. mtrs. l.e. 347 sq. yards...

Public Notice
Notice is hereby given to whomsoever it may concern that Vicky V/S Suresh Singh, Residents of Fatehgarh Sahib is the owner of House measuring 2 Marla (60.5 Sq. Yds.)...

Public Notice
Notice is hereby given to whomsoever it may concern that Vicky V/S Suresh Singh, Residents of Fatehgarh Sahib is the owner of House measuring 2 Marla (60.5 Sq. Yds.)...

The Kangra Central Co-operative Bank Limited
ZONAL OFFICE - BAIJNATH 01894-262005
BRANCH OFFICE - TIBETIAN COLONY, CHOUGAN BIR
E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE (IMMOVABLE PROPERTY/IES)

Table with columns: Name of Borrower, Name of the Guarantor, Description of Property (Immovable), Date of Possession, Amount O/S as per demand notice (Rs.) Interest and other charges, Reserve Price (in Lakhs), EMD (10%)

Other terms and conditions: - E Auction / bidding shall be only through "Online Electronic Bidding" through the website www.bankauctions.com. The Property will be sold in "AS IS WHERE IS AND AS IS WHAT IS" basis including encumbrances, if any...

Public Notice
This is to inform the general public that Mr. Laxmi Narain Sharma is the owner of the Plot No. MB-196 Area measuring 290.26 sq. mtrs. l.e. 347 sq. yards...

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Canara Bank
REGIONAL OFFICE PANIPAT
N D TOWERS, FIRST FLOOR
SANJAY CHOWK PANIPAT
PHONE NO. 7496918312
Email: ropptrec@canarabank.com

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E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE
FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT, 2002. UNDER READ WITH PROVISIO TO RULE 6(2), 8(6) & 9 OF THE SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES, 2002

DATE OF E-AUCTION IS 25.06.2026 UPTO 5.00 PM
(With unlimited extension of 5 minutes duration each till the Conclusion of the sale)

Table with columns: Sr. No., Branch Name & Address of the Borrower(s) Guarantor(s), Brief Description of Property/ies, Total Liabilities as on specified Date, Reserve Price (In Rs.), Earnest Money Deposit (EMD), Detail of A/C No. / IFSC Code / Possession Type

Public Notice
This is to inform the general public that Mr. Laxmi Narain Sharma is the owner of the Plot No. MB-196 Area measuring 290.26 sq. mtrs. l.e. 347 sq. yards...

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Canara Bank
REGIONAL OFFICE PANIPAT
N D TOWERS, FIRST FLOOR
SANJAY CHOWK PANIPAT, PH. 7496918312,
Email: ropptrec@canarabank.com

COURT NOTICE
IN THE COURT OF
Ms. Parminder Pindru
Judicial Magistrate
- Ist Class -3
Patiala

Public Notice
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Canara Bank
REGIONAL OFFICE PANIPAT
N D TOWERS, FIRST FLOOR
SANJAY CHOWK PANIPAT, PH. 7496918312,
Email: ropptrec@canarabank.com

COURT NOTICE
IN THE COURT OF
Ms. Parminder Pindru
Judicial Magistrate
- Ist Class -3
Patiala
VS.
VIKRAM KUMAR
CNR No.:- PBPT03-004336-2023
Next Date:-05-08-2026

Public Notice
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Canara Bank
REGIONAL OFFICE PANIPAT
N D TOWERS, FIRST FLOOR
SANJAY CHOWK PANIPAT, PH. 7496918312,
Email: ropptrec@canarabank.com

DEMAND NOTICE
UNDER SECTION 13(2) OF THE SECURITIZATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT, 2002
Notice is hereby given that the following Borrower(s) / Guarantor(s) have defaulted in the repayment of principal and interest of credit facilities obtained by them from the bank and said facilities have turned Non Performing Assets (NPA) as mentioned below...

Classifieds

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Kamaljeet Singh S/o Karnail Singh R/o H.No. 260 Kala Sanghia Road Ishwar Nagar Jalandhar-1 Distt. Jalandhar have changed my name spelling from Kamaljit Singh to Kamaljeet Singh.

I, Amritpal Singh S/o Hardeep Singh R/o Village Lalheri, Tehsil Khanna (Ludhiana) declare that my name be read as given name AMRITPAL and Surname SINGH.

I, Sukhpreet Kaur Rakkar W/o Gurmeet Singh Barn R/o VPO Goh (Ludhiana) have changed my name from Sukhpreet Kaur Rakkar to give name as SUKHPREET & surname KAUR.

I, Jagjeet Singh S/o Amar Singh R/o GTB Nagar, Khanna (Ludhiana) have changed my name to Jagjit Singh.

I, Sonia D/o Lakhvir Singh R/o Village Sahibpura, Tehsil Khanna (Ludhiana) have changed my name to Sonia Nahar.

I, Chhinder Kaur W/o Rachpal Singh R/o VPO Rajawal, Tehsil Khanna (Ludhiana) have changed my name to Surinder Kaur.

I, Arshdeep Singh S/o Sarwan Singh R/O Mustafabad Saidan, Po-Hemrajpur, Gurdaspur, Punjab, India. Declare That My Given Name As Arshdeep And My Surname As Singh.

I, Jatinder Bir Singh S/o Mohinder Singh R/O Sarai, Tehsil - Gurdaspur, Gurdaspur, Punjab - 143521, India. Have Changed My Name From Jatinder Bir Singh To Jatinderbir Singh.

I, Karamjit Kaur Wife Of Amandeep Singh R/O MCBZ6-02246, Street No.6 Bachan Colony, Multania Road, Bathinda, Po- Bathinda City, District - Bathinda, Pin-151005, Punjab, India. Declare That Have Changed My Name From Karamjit Kaur To Sukhjeet Kaur And Changed My Dob From 03-09-1979 To 20-02-1981, Vide Affidavit No. In-Pb 57091780752519Y Dated 06-06-2026, Before Notary Public Gurdaspur, Punjab, India.

I, Manjit Kaur Wife Of Army No.4482668A, Rank Hav Kuldip Singh R/O Village- Nasar Ke, Tehsil/Distt- Gurdaspur, State- Punjab, India. Declare That My Name Manjit Kaur Is Wrong. But My Name Manjeet Kaur Is Correct. Vide Affidavit No. In-Pb 53826020532200Y Dated 27-05-2026, Before Notary Public Batala, (Pb).

I, Smt Preeti Sharma wife of No. 13754640K Nk Late Vipan Kumar resident of Village -Sarna Nehar, PO - Malikpur, Tehsil & Distt Pathankot (Punjab), have changed name of my daughter from RAJIT SHARMA to RAJAT SHARMA vide Affidavit No IN-PB56407346233055Y dated 04-06-2026 before Executive Magistrate Pathankot, Punjab.

I, Smt Sunita Sani wife of No 14908693K Ex Hav Late Bodh Raj resident of Near Warehouse Railway Phatak, Green Field Colony College Road, Pathankot, Tehsil & Distt Pathankot (Punjab), have changed my name from SUNITA SANI to SUNITA SAINI vide Affidavit No IN-PB56795519103269Y Dated 05-06-2026 Notary Public Pathankot, Punjab.

I, Gori S/O Ram Narayan R/O Patti Malovirk Vpo. Virk Tehsil Phillaur District Jalandhar Have Changed My Name From Gori To Gori Yadav.

I, Manjit Kumar S/O Satpal Singh R/O Sreet No.2, Bhulla Rai Road Ranjit Nagar Phagwara District Kapurthala Have Changed My Name From Manjit Kumar To Manjeet Kumar.

I, Lovepreet Singh Kanda S/O Hardeep Singh R/O H.No.1704 Guru Ram Dass Nagar Moga Have Changed My Name To Lovepreet Singh.

I, Mandeep Singh S/O Nirmal Singh R/O Vpo. Ferozeshah Distt. Ferozpur Have Changed My Name To Mandeep Singh Gill.

I, Jarnail Singh Virk S/O Sarban Singh R/O Vpo. Dangian Tehsil Jagraon Distt. Ludhiana Have Changed My Name To Jarnail Singh.

I, No.15507373L LD Vikram resident of Village-Ramalwas, Post-Rambass, Tehsil- Charkhi Dabri, District- Charkhi Dabri, State- Haryana, Pin-127310, have changed my Mother name from Chandar Kala Devi to Chanderkala Vide affidavit No.IN-PB57027440998050Y dated 06 June 2026 before notary public Pathankot

I, No.15493328L DFR Sanjeet Singh resident of Village- Munpur, Post-Balluwas, Tehsil-Mundawar, District- Alwar, State- Rajasthan, Pin-301407, have changed my Father name from Satyaveer Singh to Satyabeer Singh Vide affidavit No.IN-PB57028486109262Y dated 06 June 2026 before notary public Pathankot

I, No.15493328L DFR Sanjeet Singh resident of Village- Munpur, Post-Balluwas, Tehsil-Mundawar, District- Alwar, State- Rajasthan, Pin-301407, have changed my Mother name from Neelam Devi to Nilam Vide affidavit No.IN-PB57028976508554Y dated 06 June 2026 before notary public Pathankot

I, No.15504448M LD Manoj Kumar resident of Village- Chamrauha Majra, Post- Unchadeeh, Tehsil-Manikpur, District- Chitrakoot, State- Uttar Pradesh, Pin-210208, have changed my Mother name from Shakuntala Devi to Shakuntla Devi Vide affidavit No.IN-PB57056477318679Y dated 06 June 2026 before notary public Pathankot

I, Shalu Devi spouse of No.15504448M LD Manoj Kumar resident of Village- Chamrauha Majra, Post- Unchadeeh, Tehsil-Manikpur, District- Chitrakoot, State- Uttar Pradesh, Pin-210208, have changed my name from Shalu Devi to Shalu Vide affidavit No.IN-PB57055983027055Y dated 06 June 2026 before notary public Pathankot

I, Shri Sat Paul Father of No.17007811M NK Sunil Singh Choudhary resident of Village- Matoo, Post- Jourian, Tehsil-Khour, District- Jammu, State- J&K, Pin-181203, have changed my name from Shri Sat Paul to Sat Paul Vide affidavit No.IN-PB57026210842091Y dated 06 June 2026 before notary public Pathankot

I, No.15504448M LD Manoj Kumar resident of Village- Chamrauha Majra, Post- Unchadeeh, Tehsil-Manikpur, District- Chitrakoot, State- Uttar Pradesh, Pin-210208, have changed my Son name from Dhruv Kumar to Dhruv Tripathi Vide affidavit No.IN-PB57057322574317Y dated 06 June 2026 before notary public Pathankot

I, No.14867257P NK/MT Chandan kumar resident of Village- Kariyawan, Post- Bharthar, Tehsil- Hsila, District- Nalanda, State- Bihar, Pin-801307, have changed my Mother name from Meena Kumari to Mina Devi Vide affidavit No.IN-PB51289804450654Y dated 19 May 2026 before notary public Pathankot

I, No.15502243Y LD Chandr Shekhar Yadav resident of Village- Nevada, Post- Mande, Tehsil- Sadar, District- Azamgarh, State- Uttar Pradesh, Pin-276129, have changed my Father name from Tilak Dhari to Tilakdhari Yadav Vide affidavit No.IN-PB57184109682295Y dated 06 June 2026 before notary public Pathankot

I, Army No: 14868896M Rank: Hav/ Clk (SD) Name: Jothivel R Presently Posted At Unit: 311 COY ASC [SUP] Type 'G' C/O 99 APO, Permanent Address: House No: 5/165, Vadavambadi, Village: Vadavambadi, Post: Vellapatti, Tehsil: Kadavur, Dist: Karur, State: Tamil Nadu, Pin-639102 declare that in my Service record my Mother name is Wrongly Mentioned as R DHANALAKSHMI but as per Civil/Govt. Documents my Son's Correct name is DHANALAKSHMI RAMASAMY and Also Correct my Mother's Date of birth from 01/06/1968 to 04/07/1973. Vide Affidavit No: 11AA 833128, Dated: 06/06/2026

I, BENDY DEVI am Mother of Army No: 15721730X Rank: L/NK Name: Chhotu Gope Presently Posted at Unit: 118 (I) Inf Bde GP Sig Coy C/o 56 APO Permanent Address: Vill: Silagain, Po: Silagain, Teh: Chanho, Dist: Ranchi, State: Jharkhand, Pin: 835301 declare that in my Service record my name is Wrongly mentioned as BENDY DEVI but as per Civil/Govt Documents my Correct Name is BEDI DEVI. Vide Affidavit No: 11AA 833118, Dated: 06/06/2026

I, CHANDRA PAL GOPE am Father of Army No: 15721730X Rank: L/NK Name: Chhotu Gope Presently Posted at Unit: 118 (I) Inf Bde GP Sig Coy C/o 56 APO Permanent Address: Vill: Silagain, Po: Silagain, Teh: Chanho, Dist: Ranchi, State: Jharkhand, Pin: 835301 declare that in my Son's Service record my name is Wrongly mentioned as CHANDRA PAL GOPE but as per Civil/Govt. Documents my Correct Name is CHANDRA PAL MAHTO. Vide Affidavit No: 11AA 833121, Dated: 06/06/2026

I, BEDI DEVI am Mother of Army No: 15721730X Rank: L/NK Name: Chhotu Gope Presently Posted at Unit: 118 (I) Inf Bde GP Sig Coy C/o 56 APO Permanent Address: Vill: Silagain, Po: Silagain, Teh: Chanho, Dist: Ranchi, State: Jharkhand, Pin: 835301 declare that in my Son's Service record my name is Wrongly mentioned as BAANO but as per Civil/Govt. Documents my Correct Name is BANO. Vide Affidavit No: 11AA 833125, Dated: 06/06/2026

I, SANGITA is Mother of Army No: 15595125P Rank: Spr Name: Jadhav Parmeshwar Sanjay Presently Residing at Unit: 118 Engr Regt C/o 56 APO Permanent Address: Village: Malkheda, Post: Avhana, Teh: Bhokardan, Dist: Jalna, State: Maharashtra, Pin: 431114 declare that in my Son's Service record my name is Wrongly mentioned as SANGITA but as per Civil/Govt. Documents my Correct Name is SANGITA SANJAY JADHAV. Vide Affidavit No: 11AA 833123, Dated: 06/06/2026

I, JAMNA is Mother of No: JC 386700N Rank: Sub Maj Name: Kera Ram Presently Posted at Unit: WCSR C/o 56 APO Permanent Address: Mundiyoado Ka Bass, Boyal, Boyal, Jodhpur, Rajasthan, 342605 declare that in my Son's Service record my Name is Wrongly Mentioned as JAMNA but as per Civil/Govt. Documents my Correct name is JAMNA DEVI. Vide Affidavit Dated: 06/06/2026, Before Notary Panchkula, Haryana.

I, CHANDRA PAL MAHTO am Father of Army No: 15721730X Rank: L/NK Name: Chhotu Gope Presently Posted at Unit: 118 (I) Inf Bde GP Sig Coy C/o 56 APO Permanent Address: Vill: Silagain, Po: Silagain, Teh: Chanho, Dist: Ranchi, State: Jharkhand, Pin: 835301 declare that in my Son's Service record my Date of birth is Wrongly Mentioned as 01/01/1948 but as per Civil/Govt Documents my Correct Date of birth is 01/01/1949. Vide Affidavit No: 11AA 833122, Dated: 06/06/2026

I, Army No: 15595125P Rank: Spr Name: Jadhav Parmeshwar Sanjay Presently Residing at Unit: 118 Engr Regt C/o 56 APO Permanent Address: Village: Malkheda, Post: Avhana, Teh: Bhokardan, Dist: Jalna, State: Maharashtra, Pin: 431114 declare that in my Service record my Name is Wrongly Mentioned as CHARANJEET KAUR but as per Civil/Govt. Documents my Correct name is CHARANJIT KAUR. Vide Affidavit No: 11AA 833119, Dated: 06/06/2026

I, Y LINGAMMA is Mother of Service No: 16118241A Rank: Hav Name: Yedurur Venkatesh Presently residing at 163 Br Coy, 16 Engr Br Regt (PMS), Chandimandir Cantt Panchkula, Haryana declare that I have changed my name from Y LINGAMMA and Date of Birth from 08/07/1970 to YEDURU LINGAMMA and Date of Birth 01/01/1974.

I, BINDU PRASAD Am Mother of Army No: 16129641M Rank: L/NK Name: Prabjith PN Presently Posted at Unit: 11 Engr Regt C/o 56 APO Permanent Address: Ala Nilkunnathil, Kozhuvallur, PO, Mulakuzha (Part), Alappuzha, Kerala, 689521 declare that in my Son's Service record my Date of birth is wrongly mentioned as 15/10/1973 but as per Civil/Govt. Documents my Correct Date of birth is 20/05/1973. Vide Affidavit No: 11AA 833127, Dated: 06/06/2026

I, HEMANT MISHRA is Father of Army No: 6502764L Rank: Sep Name: Rajeev Kumar Mishra Presently Posted at Unit: 556 Asc Bn C/o 99 APO Permanent Address: Vilaage: Marukia, Post: Marukia, Teh: Khajauli, District: Madhubani, State: Bihar, Pin-847228 declare that in my Son's Service record my Date of birth is Wrongly Mentioned as 05/01/1966 but as per Civil/Govt. Documents my Correct Date of birth is 01/01/1966. Vide Affidavit No: 11AA 833126, Dated: 06/06/2026

I, BAANO am Mother of Army No: 15595555Y Rank Spr Name: Javed Permanent Address: Village: Haibtpur, Saranwa (133), PO: Sarawan, Dist: Yamuna Nagar, State: Haryana Pin: 133206 declare that in my Son's Service record my name is Wrongly mentioned as BAANO but as per Civil/Govt. Documents my Correct Name is BANO. Vide Affidavit No: 11AA 833125, Dated: 06/06/2026

I, CHARANJEET KAUR am Mother of No: JC-503341Y Rank: Nb/Sub Name: Gurjant Singh Presently Posted at Unit: 13 Sikh Regt C/o 99 APO Permanent Address: Village Bhaawal, Tehsil Anandpur Sahib, District Rupnagar, Bhaawal, PO: Bhaawal, Dist:Rupnagar, State: Punjab, Pin: 140119 declare that in my Son's Service record my Name is Wrongly Mentioned as CHARANJEET KAUR but as per Civil/Govt. Documents my Correct name is CHARANJIT KAUR. Vide Affidavit No: 11AA 833119, Dated: 06/06/2026

I, MAHALAKSHMI T is legally wedded Spouse of Army No. 16116982Y, Rank: Hav Name: Veeramuniyandi M, Presently Residing at House No: 1/265, Muthu Samyapuram, Kangarseval, Virudhunagar, Tamil Nadu, 626131, declare that in my Husband Service record my Name is Wrongly mentioned as V Mahalakshmi but as per Civil/Govt. Documents my Correct name is Mahalakshmi T. Vide Affidavit No: FB 750346, Dated: 10/02/2026

I, Y RAJU is Father of Service No: 16118241A Rank: Hav Name: Yedurur Venkatesh Presently residing at 163 Br Coy, 16 Engr Br Regt (PMS), Chandimandir Cantt Panchkula, Haryana declare that I have changed my name from Y RAJU and Date of Birth from 21/06/1965 to YEDURU RAJU and Date of Birth 01/01/1967.

I, VISHWANATHAN APPAVU Father of RAMPRASATH V Army No. 16120302L, Rank HAV name RAMPRASATH V residing at 2 Aasai Nagar, Orathanadu, Orathanadu Taluk, Thanjavur District, Tamilnadu, India, Pincode 614625 declare that in my Son's Service record my name is Wrongly mentioned as VISHWANATHAN A but as per Civil/Govt Documents my Correct name is VISHWANATHAN APPAVU and Also Correct my Date of birth from 21 March 1955 to 15 September 1956. Vide Affidavit No: GG 0033999791, Dated: 12/03/2026

I, RENUKA VISHWANATHAN Mother of RAMPRASATH V Army No. 16120302L, Rank HAV name RAMPRASATH.V residing at 2 Aasai Nagar, Orathanadu, Orathanadu Taluk, Thanjavur District, Tamilnadu, India, Pincode 614625 declare that in my Son's Service record my name is Wrongly mentioned as RENUKA VISHWANATHAN and Also Correct my Date of birth from 19 September 1967 to 12 September 1967. Vide Affidavit No: GG 0033999788, Dated: 12/03/2026

I, Mahalakshmi T is legally wedded Spouse of Army No. 16116982Y, Rank: Hav Name: Veeramuniyandi M, Presently Residing at House No: 1/265, Muthu Samyapuram, Kangarseval, Virudhunagar, Tamil Nadu, 626131, declare that in my Husband Service record my Name is Wrongly mentioned as V Mahalakshmi but as per Civil/Govt. Documents my Correct name is Mahalakshmi T. Vide Affidavit No: FB 750346, Dated: 10/02/2026

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I, VISHWANATHAN APPAVU Father of RAMPRASATH V Army No. 16120302L, Rank HAV name RAMPRASATH V residing at 2 Aasai Nagar, Orathanadu, Orathanadu Taluk, Thanjavur District, Tamilnadu, India, Pincode 614625 declare that in my Son's Service record my name is Wrongly mentioned as VISHWANATHAN A but as per Civil/Govt Documents my Correct name is VISHWANATHAN APPAVU and Also Correct my Date of birth from 21 March 1955 to 15 September 1956. Vide Affidavit No: GG 0033999791, Dated: 12/03/2026

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I, VISHWANATHAN APPAVU Father of RAMPRASATH V Army No. 16120302L, Rank HAV name RAMPRASATH V residing at 2 Aasai Nagar, Orathanadu, Orathanadu Taluk, Thanjavur District, Tamilnadu, India, Pincode 614625 declare that in my Son's Service record my name is Wrongly mentioned as VISHWANATHAN A but as per Civil/Govt Documents my Correct name is VISHWANATHAN APPAVU and Also Correct my Date of birth from 21 March 1955 to 15 September 1956. Vide Affidavit No: GG 0033999791, Dated: 12/03/2026

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I, VISHWANATHAN APPAVU Father of RAMPRASATH V Army No. 16120302L, Rank HAV name RAMPRASATH V residing at 2 Aasai Nagar, Orathanadu, Orathanadu Taluk, Thanjavur District, Tamilnadu, India, Pincode 614625 declare that in my Son's Service record my name is Wrongly mentioned as VISHWANATHAN A but as per Civil/Govt Documents my Correct name is VISHWANATHAN APPAVU and Also Correct my Date of birth from 21 March 1955 to 15 September 1956. Vide Affidavit No: GG 0033999791, Dated: 12/03/2026

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Over 200 People Participate in Central Bank of India's Agricultural Credit Outreach Campaign

LUDHIANA/SANGRUR: Central Bank of India, a leading public sector bank, today organized a nationwide "Mega Agricultural Credit Outreach Campaign." Under the direction of the Bank's Regional Head, Ludhiana, Manish Verma, the Regional Office, Ludhiana, organized an event at Shiv Mandir, Village Ghabdan, Sangrur. Assistant General Manager and Deputy Regional Manager Mithlesh Kumar, LDM Surmukh Singh, Satish Ahlawat from SLBC, and Sarpanch Satnam Singh were special guests. They were welcomed by branch managers in the region with saplings. The event, moderated by J.S. Bedi of the Regional Office, was attended by over 200 village sarpanches, panchs, farmers, and other individuals associated with agriculture. A large number of loan approval letters for various types of loans were distributed on this occasion.



Central Bank of India Organizes Mega Agricultural Credit Outreach Program

BEHRAMPUR: Central Bank of India successfully organized a mega agricultural credit outreach program today in village Behrampur, District Gurdaspur (Punjab) to provide information about the bank's agricultural credit schemes to farmers and rural customers and to promote credit flow to the agricultural sector. Special guests at the event were Regional Head Mr. Saqib Ahmed Khan and Chief Manager Mr. Ankur Gandhi in the Amritsar Regional Office. Also present were Behrampur Branch Head Mr. Kamaljit, Awankha Branch Head Ms. Neha, and other bank officials and employees.



UCO Bank Executive Director Vijaykumar Nivrutti Kamble Inaugurates New Chandigarh Branch

Mr. Vijaykumar Nivrutti Kamble, Executive Director of UCO Bank, inaugurated the newly opened UCO Bank branch at New Chandigarh on 06.06.2026, being 72nd branch under Chandigarh Zone. On the occasion, Zonal Head Ms. Milan Dubey welcomed the Chief Guest Mr. Gurinder Singh Bhatti, Real Estate Tycoon and other dignitaries. Addressing the gathering, Ms. Milan Dubey stated that UCO Bank remains fully committed to its social responsibilities and continues to achieve steady progress across all areas of banking operations. She informed that the Bank's total business has crossed Rs. 5 lakh crore, reflecting its strong financial position and the trust reposed by customers.



Central Bank of India, Jalandhar Regional Office organized a Mega Agriculture Credit Outreach Camp today at Melody, Bathinda. The camp witnessed enthusiastic participation from Branch Heads of various branches of from Bathinda district, Muktsar District, Mansa district, Fazilka district and Faridkot district. Regional Office representatives, and a large number of customers were present. The programme was graced by Sh. Manjinder Singh, Agriculture Development Officer, Bathinda and presided over by Sh Rahul Singhal, Regional Head, Jalandhar Region.



Environment Day 2026 celebrated with enthusiasm at Nathpa Jhakri Hydro Power Station

As per the instructions of the Government of India and the Corporation Office, World Environment Day 2026 was celebrated by Nathpa Jhakri Hydro Power Station under the leadership of Project Head Mr. Rajeev Kapoor on June 5, 2026 on the basis of the theme "Inspired by Nature, For Climate, For Our Future". On this occasion, project head Rajeev Kapoor administered oath to all the officers and employees for environmental protection. On this occasion, slogan writing, poster making, photography competitions were organized for the officers, employees, their children and trainees.

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PROSPECT

Vaishnav reviews Kolkata Metro services, interacts with passengers



During his visit to Kolkata, Union Minister for Railways Ashwini Vaishnav travelled on the Kolkata Metro from Jai Hind Station to Noapara Station and interacted with fellow passengers to understand their travel experience and gather feedback on metro services. At the metro station, the Minister also met with sanitation staff and appreciated their efforts in maintaining cleanliness. During the interaction, cleaning staff members expressed satisfaction that their concerns and suggestions were being heard directly by the Rail Minister. Not part of the scheduled programme, the Minister spontaneously chose to travel by auto-rickshaw from Noapara to the Belghoria Expressway. The journey reflected the message of Prime Minister Narendra Modi Ji on fuel conservation and greater use of public transportation and also 'Bhay (Fear) Out Bharosa (Trust) In' BJP coming to power to serve the people of West Bengal. Following these interactions, the Minister proceeded to meet Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari to discuss ongoing development initiatives.

NGT Chairperson Justice Prakash Srivastava leads plantation drive

On the occasion of World Environment Day, Justice Prakash Srivastava, Chairperson of the National Green Tribunal (NGT), led a plantation drive at the NGT premises on June 5. Senior dignitaries and members of the Tribunal also took part in the plantation drive, reaffirming NGT's commitment to a cleaner and greener India.



The plantation drive was organised as part of NGT's continued commitment to environmental protection, ecological restoration, and sustainable development. The aim was to increase green cover within the tribunal premises and spread awareness about the importance of protecting the environment.

AI teams in hospitals may turn risky, says study

A new study by Indian-origin AI researcher Aman Sharma, originally from Shahdara in Delhi and now based in California, has found that teams of artificial intelligence systems used in hospitals can generate dangerous medical recommendations that individual AI tools would not produce on their own. The research, published as a preprint on the Authorea server, analysed nearly 4,800 trials and around 97,000 AI interactions involving models from OpenAI, Meta, Anthropic and an open-weights research model. The study found that in 30 to 56 per cent of cases, AI systems working together created new clinical recommendations that were absent in individual AI outputs.



WMC 2026 in Peru: India eyes critical minerals deals

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Lima (Peru)

The 27th World Mining Congress (WMC 2026), scheduled for 24-26 June 2026 at the Lima Convention Centre in Peru, presents a unique opportunity for Indian investors, mining companies, technology providers, equipment manufacturers, and financial institutions to strengthen their presence in one of the world's most resource-rich regions.

Under the theme "Mining for the Future: Trust, Transformation & Technology," the congress will bring together government leaders, industry executives, researchers, investors, and innovators from across the globe.

Peru's selection as host country is particularly significant. As one of the world's leading mining nations, Peru occupies a strategic position in the global supply chain of

critical minerals essential for the energy transition, advanced manufacturing, telecommunications, and emerging technologies.

For India, whose economy continues to grow at one of the fastest rates globally, securing reliable access to critical minerals has become a strategic priority.

The World Mining Congress offers Indian stakeholders a timely platform to engage directly with governments, mining companies, financial institutions, and technology partners from Peru and across Latin America.

Peru has emerged as India's largest trading partner in Latin America and one of the principal suppliers of minerals and mineral concentrates to the Indian market. The congress will provide Indian companies with direct access to investment opportunities throughout Peru's mining sector. Particularly attractive for



Indian investors is Peru's vast copper potential. Copper will remain indispensable for electric vehicles, power transmission infrastructure, renewable energy systems, artificial intelligence data centers, and advanced elec-

tronics. The event will also highlight opportunities related to lithium and other minerals essential for battery manufacturing.

Beyond resource extraction, the congress will showcase cutting-edge technolo-

gies transforming the mining industry. This technological dimension creates significant opportunities for Indian technology firms. Indian equipment manufacturers will also find a valuable platform to present competitive solutions.

Financial institutions from India should view WMC 2026 as an opportunity to explore project financing and strategic partnerships.

Another important aspect of the congress is the increasing emphasis on environmental, social, and governance (ESG) standards. The congress theme of "Trust" is particularly relevant in today's mining environment.

The theme of "Transformation" reflects the profound changes reshaping the global mining sector. The theme of "Technology" aligns closely with India's strengths as a global innovation hub. An additional attraction for international

visitors is the congress's coincidence with Inti Raymi, the ancient Festival of the Sun celebrated in Cusco.

For Indian investors, Peru's historical legacy may also resonate on a deeper level. The World Mining Congress can therefore serve as a catalyst for expanding India-Peru relations beyond traditional trade.

Looking ahead, the strategic importance of Latin America to India's economic future is likely to increase substantially. Participation in WMC 2026 should therefore be viewed not merely as attendance at an international conference, but as an investment in future opportunities.

As the world moves toward a more technology-driven and resource-intensive future, the World Mining Congress 2026 offers a timely and strategic platform for India and Peru to deepen their partnership.

Subhash Kashyap: Doyen of Parliamentary Studies in India



The news of the passing away of former Secretary-General of Lok Sabha was not a surprise to me. After I became the Consulting Editor of the Journal of Parliamentary Information (JPI), I was repeatedly trying to contact him, but each time the call remained unanswered and I reconciled that being an octogenarian in the twilight years, he must be ailing and bed ridden.

My fears were only confirmed. My memory of Dr Kashyap very clearly flashes back when I came to Delhi for my M.A at Delhi University in 1979. After I completed M.A in Political Science from the Arts Faculty, and was preparing for M.Phil at JNU, an officer from Lok Sabha secretariat who met me in brother's house in Vinay Marg, Chanakyaपुरी advised me to meet Dr Kashyap who was then, director in the Research Division of Lok Sabha. I met Dr Kashyap with a cousin of mine who had passed out in M.Sc in agricultural science from Allahabad University. My cousin was also looking for a

job in Delhi. He came from Allahabad with a recommendation letter from Dr. Pati, a professor in Mathematics at Allahabad University and a close friend of Dr Kashyap. Dr Kashyap received us with due courtesy and enquired about the purpose of our visit. My cousin passed on the letter of Professor Pati to Dr Kashyap. Dr Kashyap asked me of my academic background and after knowing that I had a masters in Political Science quipped that agricultural science was like Greek and Latin to him and offered to guide me for a job in the Research Division of Lok Sabha Secretariat. As I was preparing for Civil Services examination, I thanked him and explained my aspirations.

I never met Dr Kashyap after that and joined JNU and prepared for the Civil Services Examinations and taught in a college of Delhi University on ad hoc for a short while. After failing to get into Civil Services, I appeared for the post of Research Assistants in the Lok Sabha Secretariat. As my teaching job was an ad hoc basis, I decided to quit and joined Research Division of Lok Sabha Secretariat. Dr Kashyap had rose to become Secretary-General when I joined the Lok Sabha Secretariat.

I was asked by my senior officer whom I was reporting to meet Dr Kashyap with other freshly recruited Research Assistants. In a file he noted "Met Das today and was impressed, I'm sure, he will rise in his career".

Be that as it may, I continued to sever the secretariat with devotion and dedication. The Parliament Library in the old Parliament Building, the reading room in the Princes Chamber and the overall working environment nourished my interest in scholarly pursuits. My responsibilities including writing draft speeches and briefs for Speaker and Members of Parliament. Dr Balaram Jhakar was the Speaker, Lok Sabha then. Dr Kashyap then. Dr Kashyap

never met Dr Kashyap after that and joined JNU and prepared for the Civil Services Examinations and taught in a college of Delhi University on ad hoc for a short while. After failing to get into Civil Services, I appeared for the post of Research Assistants in the Lok Sabha Secretariat. As my teaching job was an ad hoc basis, I decided to quit and joined Research Division of Lok Sabha Secretariat. Dr Kashyap had rose to become Secretary-General when I joined the Lok Sabha Secretariat.

I was asked by my senior officer whom I was reporting to meet Dr Kashyap with other freshly recruited Research Assistants. In a file he noted "Met Das today and was impressed, I'm sure, he will rise in his career".

Next day the file came back with comments of Dr Kashyap who wrote 'hope the profile doesn't violate some body's copy right'. Aghast, my senior officer looked at me and asked if it did. I said, 'yes, it does.' Noticing the concerns of my officer, I said the profile will not appear in my name as I am the ghost writer. My officer heaved a sigh of relief. More was in store for me when Dr Kashyap transferred me to report to him directly. It was indeed a great honour and pleasure for me to work under his benign guidance. While working with him, I was offered a field study grant by JNU to go to Hong Kong for two weeks for my Ph.D. In a conservative office, it would have been otherwise to get leave to go abroad.

Dr Kashyap not only granted leave, but also wished me best of luck. When I returned from Hong Kong and met Dr Kashyap, he asked me how was the trip. I said it was fine, but food was a problem. Then

he said 'Das you didn't go to Hong Kong to eat native food, you should have tried Chinese food'.

Dr Kashyap was indeed a great institution builder. Although we had brilliant Secretary-Generals like M.N. Kaul and S.L. Shakkhar, Dr Kashyap contributed immensely in strengthening parliamentary institutions. It was during his time that Parliamentary Standing Committees in its embryonic shape took place when he established the subject based Parliamentary Committees. He also started the flagship programs like the Parliamentary Internship Program and legislative drafting program at the Bureau of Parliamentary Studies and Training (BPST), now rechristened as PRIDE. These two programs were supported by the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India through its Indian Technical and Economic (ITEC) program attracting Parliamentarians and Parliamentary officials in their capacity building. Dr Kashyap, in particular, took personal interest in developing the research services of the Parliament for the benefit of Parliamentarians and in wider dissemination of awareness and knowledge outside

Parliaments. He was instrumental in goading the officials in the research division to bring out useful books and monographs and also in updating the Practice and Procedure of Parliament, first authored by M.N. Kaul and S.L. Shakkhar which is getting updated by succeeding secretary-generals. The latest edition is updated by Utpal Kumar Singh, present secretary-general of Lok Sabha. During his long innings as the secretary-general, he also successfully organized a number of Parliamentary Conferences such as the Inter-Parliamentary-Union (IPU), the Commonwealth Parliamentary (CPA); and also the Presiding officers Conferences.

In short, Dr Kashyap, not only enhanced the image of Parliament in India and abroad, but also the position of secretary-general which succeeding secretary-generals including the incumbent Secretary-General Utpal Kumar Singh have upheld through neutrality, objectivity and high degree of professionalism.

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(The writer is the Consulting Editor of the Journal of Parliamentary Information (JPI) of Lok Sabha Secretariat who worked with Dr Kashyap when he was Secretary-General of Lok Sabha. Views are personal.)

KISS & KIIT students make history in Romania

ABHI SINGHAL ■ New Delhi

New Delhi witnessed a celebration of culture, language and international achievement on Friday as a special programme that was organised in collaboration with the Romanian Embassy and KISS-KIIT to honour a group of students who have brought global recognition to India through theatre.



The event, attended by distinguished guests, diplomats and prominent members of Delhi's cultural community, recognised the accomplishments of twenty students from Odisha-based institutions Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT) and Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS), who recently returned from Romania after participating in the World Shakespeare Theatre Festival 2026.

The students earned international acclaim after performing William Shakespeare's classic works

in the tribal Santali language at the prestigious festival. The group, comprising ten students from KIIT and ten from KISS, spent two months in Romania preparing for and staging adaptations of Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet and Macbeth in Santali.

Their performances captivated audiences and marked a historic milestone, as it was the first time Shakespeare's works had been presented in the tribal language on an international stage of this scale.

The festival brought together 71 universities and

more than 3,000 participants from around the world, making it one of the largest global gatherings dedicated to Shakespearean theatre.

Amid this diverse international showcase, the students from India stood out for bringing an indigenous language and cultural tradition into conversation with one of the world's most celebrated literary figures.

Their achievement carries added significance as 2026 marks the centenary year of the Ol Chiki script, the writing system developed for the Santali language. By per-

Prasar Bharati launches two documentary series

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Prasar Bharati, India's public service broadcaster, launched two documentary series this week, continuing its commitment to showcasing the nation's rich cultural, spiritual and civilisational heritage through meaningful and engaging content.

As part of this endeavour, Prasar Bharati launched "Awakening India - Season 2" on Saturday, a documentary series that celebrates the depth, diversity and continuity of India's civilisational heritage. Building on the success of the first season, the series explores the ideas, values, traditions and personalities that have shaped the Indian consciousness over millennia.

Through engaging narratives, expert perspectives and immersive storytelling, the programme examines the spiritual, philosophical, cultural and historical foundations that continue to influence

Regenerative medicine offers hope for TBI patients

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Regenerative medicine and neuro-rehabilitation have emerged as a beacon of hope for patients suffering from Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBI) in the country. During a press conference organized by the Society of Regenerative Sciences, the inspiring story of Akash Saxena, a young marine engineer from Lucknow, was shared. Akash has shown remarkable recovery through this advanced medical approach after spending six months in a 'persistent vegetative state' (deep unconsciousness).

At the press conference, experts highlighted that India shoulders one of the largest burdens of TBI globally.



public intellectuals from across the country. Among the participants featured are Monks of Ram Krishna Mission and Chander Kanwar Bhardwaj, Nikhil Yadav, Vartika Nanda, Dr. Kajal Tahiri, Prof. KG Suresh, Vikas Bhushan Gupta, Harpal Singh (Yogi Ekam Aikoham Nath), Pawan Sinha, Deepak Kuntal (Acharya Shri Dev Vrat) and several other eminent guests.

The series is anchored by Praveen Tiwari and has been conceived and directed by Anurag Darshan, Sr Programme Executive, as an in-house Doordarshan production. Awakening India - Season 2 was premiered on June 6, 2026, and will be telecast every Saturday at 5:00 PM on DD National and 5:30 PM on DD Bharati.

Central Bank of India organises mega agriculture credit outreach programme

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Karnal

The Central Bank of India, Regional Office Karnal, successfully organised a mega agriculture credit outreach programme on Saturday, reaffirming its commitment towards the empowerment and development of the agriculture sector.

The programme was held at Mangal Sen Auditorium, Karnal, and witnessed enthusiastic participation from farmers, entrepreneurs, and bank customers.

The event was graced by Dr

Trains diverted, rescheduled, on Moradabad-Ghaziabad route

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Northern Railway will divert, reschedule and regulate several trains this month due to commissioning of Automatic Signalling in the Pilkhwa-Kuchesar Road section on the Moradabad-Ghaziabad route.

Twelve trains, including 15059 Lalkua-Anand Vihar Terminal, 15115 Chhapra-Delhi Jn and 15725 New Jalpaiguri-Anand Vihar Terminal, will be diverted between 9-16 June via alternate routes like Moradabad-

Roorkee-Deoband or Lucknow-Kanpur Central, skipping stops such as Moradabad, Hapur and Bareilly.

NOBO-BMS welcomes IOBOA to nationalist trade union family

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The NOBO-BMS leadership has formally welcomed the Indian Overseas Bank Officers' Association (IOBOA) into its nationalist ideology family, calling the affiliation a significant milestone in the shared mission to protect bank officers' rights.

In a statement, NOBO-BMS said it welcomes IOBOA to India's largest trade union family, which operates on the core ideological philosophy: "Nation First, Industry



Second, Individual Last." BMS recognises trade unionism not as an instrument of division, but as a vital pillar of national solidarity. Driven by the motto "Nationalise the Labour, Labourise the Industry, Industrialise The Nation,"

BMS champions a nationalist, independent, and productivity-oriented approach to workers' rights rather than a state-controlled model.

Of the 44 industries classified by the Ministry of Labour for membership verification, BMS has affiliated unions in all industries. It reports membership of more than 2 crore across all States, comprising over 6,000 affiliate unions. BMS is not linked to any political party and is therefore independent of party politics.

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FROM THE WORLD

NEPAL

Ex-PM opens Kalinga fest

The fourth edition of the annual Kathmandu Kalinga Literary Festival was inaugurated on Saturday by former prime minister Sushila Karki in Nepal's Lalitpur district. The festival is the Kathmandu edition of India's international Kalinga Literary Festival. The two-day festival centred on the theme "Beyond Borders: South Asian Literature in a Changing World" features litterateurs, writers, researchers, and cultural personalities from various South Asian countries, including India and Nepal, according to organisers. Chief guest, former prime minister Karki said that she is not far from literature, noting that her writing journey is deeply intertwined with society, life, and personal experiences. Literature is not merely a product of imagination, but an expression of society, experience, Karki said.

TAIWAN

Red pandas arrive in Taipei

A zoo in Taiwan's capital received a pair of endangered red pandas from China on Saturday, in the first exchange of animals in more than a decade as tensions between the two sides run high. The pandas, a 3-year old male and a 2-year-old female, will be in quarantine for a month and then acclimated to their new home in the Taipei Zoo before they are unveiled to the public. The two pandas have yet to be named. While the male panda immediately began to explore his new home and ate, the female remained cautious and preferred to observe, the Taipei Zoo said. Taipei last received red pandas from a zoo in China's Fujian province in 2014, according to the Taipei Times. The animals are endemic to China, as well as Nepal, Laos and Myanmar, among others. Taipei will send white-handed gibbons to Shanghai as part of the exchange, the Taipei Times said.

Israeli strikes kill Lebanese officers after ceasefire

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Beirut

Israeli airstrikes on southern Lebanon on Saturday killed nine people, including three members of the Lebanese military, the Lebanese army and state media said, days after the two sides reached a new ceasefire deal.

An airstrike on a vehicle on a road linking the city of Nabatiyeh with the town of Marjayoun killed a brigadier general, a captain and another soldier, the army said, without immediately releasing their names.

Another airstrike on the southern village of Saksakiyah killed six people and wounded four, the state-run National News Agency said. "The continued, deliber-



ate, and repeated Israeli aggression against Lebanon, its people and its army only strengthens our resolve, faith and determination," the army said in its statement.

It said Israel's attacks aim to thwart all efforts "to reach a solution that would restore stability, establish a comprehensive ceasefire and lead to the Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Lebanese territories." The Israeli military confirmed hitting a vehicle and said the incident is being reviewed. The statement added that the vehicle was "moving suspiciously" toward Israeli soldiers near the village of Kfar Tibnit, after the military received "concrete indications" that Hezbollah would direct fire toward Israeli sol-

diers from the same area. The military said that it operates against Hezbollah and not against the Lebanese army. Lebanon's President Joseph Aoun called the strike "a flagrant violation of Lebanese sovereignty and international law."

He said it came in the context of "ongoing escalation that threatens stability and security in the south (of Lebanon), despite the efforts Lebanon is exerting in the Washington negotiations to put an end to the ongoing Israeli attacks without a deterrent." The latest ceasefire announced in Washington came about through US-brokered talks between Israel and Lebanon's Government, which accuses Hezbollah of

dragging the country into war and had made efforts to disarm it before the latest hostilities. Hezbollah has refused the truce.

On Friday, Aoun and Lebanon's prime minister criticised Iran for opposing the latest ceasefire deal between the Lebanese Government and Israel, saying their country should not be used by Tehran as a "bargaining chip" in its talks with Washington.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi responded in a post on X on Saturday by saying that after Aoun's comments, "one would think it's Iran that has occupied a fifth of Lebanon, displaced a quarter of Lebanese and is bombing his country on a

daily basis." "Had Lebanon been a bargaining chip for Iran, we'd have a deal long ago. Save Lebanon from your real foe, Mr President," Araghchi said in reference to Israeli.

The war began on March 2, when Hezbollah fired rockets at northern Israel, two days after Israel and the US began their attacks on Iran.

Israel has since launched a ground invasion of Lebanon and carried out wide attacks that have displaced more than 1 million people. Israeli troops have seized around a fifth of Lebanon, pushing further into the country's south than at any time since the end of Israel's 1982-2000 occupation.

More than 3,500 people have been killed in Lebanon since the war began. (AP)

Iran fires missiles at Bahrain, Kuwait; attacks intercepted

SAMY MAGDY/ MICHELLE L PRICE ■ Cairo

Bahrain's Government said Saturday that Iran fired ballistic missiles and drones towards it and Kuwait. The foreign ministry said they had been intercepted and called on Iran to immediately cease attacks on its Gulf neighbours.

The statement came hours after the US military said it shot down Iranian ballistic missiles and drones launched toward the Strait of Hormuz and Gulf Arab allies on Friday, while striking some of the Islamic Republic's coastal surveillance radar sites in response, an exchange of fire that

further frayed a shaky ceasefire with Tehran.

The exchange of strikes comes as the Trump administration ramps up pressure on Iran to make a deal to end the conflict. US Central Command said on social media Friday night that Iran fired seven ballistic missiles toward Kuwait and Bahrain, with US forces intercepting six of the missiles and a seventh failing to reach its target. The military said there were no reports of harm to US personnel.

The ballistic missiles were fired after the US earlier in the day shot down four Iranian drones that were launched toward the Strait of Hormuz. "The attack drones posed an immediate threat



to regional maritime traffic," US Central Command said on social media.

Kuwait's military said forces were intercepting missiles and drones attacking the country, while Bahrain activated air raid sirens and told residents to move to the nearest safe location and follow official instructions.

Iran's Revolutionary Guard said it targeted the Ali Al Salem airbase, which hosts US forces in Kuwait, and the US Navy's 5th Fleet in the tiny Gulf island nation of Bahrain, according to the State-run IRNA news agency.

The US military is enforcing a blockade on Iranian ports in response to Tehran's chokehold on the crucial corridor for global oil and

natural gas shipments, which has sent energy prices spiking and posed political problems for President Donald Trump's Republican Party ahead of the midterm congressional elections.

US Central Command said it hit the radar sites, including an island in the strait, "to defend against further attacks." It was the latest in back-and-forth attacks that have strained the tenuous ceasefire in the war and efforts to reach a deal to extend that truce.

Earlier this week, Iranian drones heavily damaged a passenger terminal at Kuwait's main airport, killing one person, wounding dozens and briefly closing the airfield. (AP)

Nepal PM urges BIMSTEC to tackle climate change together

SHIRISH B PRADHAN ■ Kathmandu

Nepal Prime Minister Balendra Shah has called for stronger cooperation among member states of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation to build economic opportunities and tackle climate change and natural disasters.

In a statement issued on Saturday, he also stressed enhancing connectivity in transport, trade and digital networks to foster deeper integration of economies.

The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) is a regional organisation that focuses on economic growth, technological collaboration and connectivity among countries dependent on or adjacent to the Bay of Bengal. It has seven members — Bangladesh, Thailand, Nepal, Sri Lanka, India, Bhutan and Myanmar. On the occasion of the 29th anniversary of BIMSTEC, the statement



issued by Nepal's Foreign Office said, "He (Balendra Shah) underscored the importance of enhancing connectivity in transport, trade and digital networks to foster deeper integration of economies." (PTI)

Kosovo heads to third election in 18 months amid impasse

ZANA CIMILI ■ Pristina

Kosovo will hold its third parliamentary election in 18 months this weekend as frustration grows over a continued political impasse in the small Balkan country that is aspiring to move closer to the European Union and NATO.

The early parliamentary vote on Sunday was scheduled after Kosovo's main political parties failed to agree on who should replace former President Vjosa Osmani, whose mandate ended in late March. Prime Minister Albin Kurti's centre-left Vetevendosje party has held a clear parliamentary majority. But the president in



Kosovo is appointed by at least 80 lawmakers in the 120-member Parliament, a majority that neither Kurti nor the opposition could muster.

While the key players blamed each other for the crisis, who want the Government to focus on the economy and living standards instead. (AP)

Not about Sikhism: UK MPs in renewed appeal over offensive weapon murder

ADITI KHANNA ■ London

The murder conviction of a British Sikh man who attempted a religious defence for the weapon he used to stab a teenager to death continues to cause tensions in the UK, with Downing Street and parliamentarians among those renewing appeals on Saturday.

Vickram Digwa, 23, was sentenced to life imprisonment after a jury found him guilty of stabbing 18-year-old Henry Nowak to death.

While British Prime Minister Keir Starmer's spokesperson condemned "people trying to interfere in our democracy and seeking to stir up division on our streets" following the conviction, British Sikh MPs issued a joint statement to stress that the



murder was "not about Sikhism." "The Downing Street intervention followed US Vice President JD Vance's social media re-post of a video depicting police body-worn camera footage that showed the victim being handcuffed by police over Digwa's racism allegations in his final moments during the attack last December. Vance's post blamed the "mass invasion of migrants, many of whom

despise the West and the people who love it" for the murder. "The Nowak family are grieving after Henry's horrific murder. They have said they do not want his death to be used to create further division, hatred or tension. We should be respecting their wishes," Starmer's spokesperson said, alluding to the post.

"Our politics should bring people together even in the most terrible of circumstances. That is who we are as a country," the spokesperson said. The All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) made up of 11 British MPs of Sikh heritage made a second intervention to condemn the "horrific and senseless crime" and stress that the Sikh ceremonial knife, known as the kirpan, was not involved. (PTI)

Mango magic hits US as Seattle consulate imports Indian varieties

YOSHITA SINGH ■ New York/Seattle

Indian mangoes are taking US cities by storm, with Americans devouring popular varieties of the fruit and wanting more, as the Consulate General of India in Seattle hosted a special event that highlighted the potential for exports and consumption of the 'king of fruits' by connoisseurs in the US Pacific Northwest region.

The Consulate General of India in Seattle Friday hosted the second edition of 'Mango Magic: Promotion and Tasting Event of Indian Mangoes'.

Over 100 leading importers of Indian fruits, including senior leadership of US retail giants like Costco participated in the event. They also relished the opportunity to taste seven



Dignitaries from US Pacific Northwest posing for photographs during Mango Magic: Promotion and Tasting Event of Indian Mangoes in Seattle

premium varieties of Indian mangoes on display, including Alphonso and Kesar from Maharashtra, Banganapalle and Himayat from Andhra Pradesh, Langra and the famed Dussehri from Uttar Pradesh and Ripe Rajapuri from Gujarat. The 'Mango Magic' event further

amplified the potential of regional mango varieties from India and their potential for exports and consumption by wider global audiences in the US Pacific Northwest region, a press release by the Consulate General of India in Seattle said. Hosted in partnership with the

Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), the Indian Mango promotion event also featured a special luncheon with dishes of Indian cuisine made using the seven varieties of Indian mangoes on display.

In an enthusiastic endorsement and reaffirmation of mangoes from India, Washington State Lieutenant Governor Denny Heck said in a video message that "I will never ever ever miss opening day of mango availability again as long as I live." Addressing the special event, Heck welcomed the introduction of the wide variety of Indian mangoes to Washington State, particularly at leading US retailers like Costco. (PTI)

Traders face big losses after Uganda closes Congo border over Ebola contagion fears

RODNEY MUHUMUZA ■ Mpondwe

Leah Masika was on the verge of tears as she thought of her valuable consignment of plantain stuck in a long convoy of trucks on both sides of the Uganda-Congo border. Her cargo, destined for Uganda, was starting to leak water, and would go bad within hours if there was no movement.

The Ugandan trader was awaiting clearance from authorities for trucks to pass through the Mpondwe border post on Thursday after they were prevented from entering or leaving Uganda as part of escalating measures to prevent cross-border Ebola contagion. "Our things are here rotting," she said. On May 28,



Asero Jeanné, a mother of five who lost two of her children to Ebola, was discharged from the hospital after testing negative in Mongbwalu, Congo

about two weeks after Congo declared an outbreak of Ebola in the eastern Ituri province, Uganda closed its western border in a decision that reflected growing fears of cross-border contagion. Exceptions were made only in emergency cases, including for the outbreak response, humanitarian, cargo or security reasons.

But in recent days, as the spread of Ebola in eastern Congo appeared to outpace the response, authorities in the Ugandan frontier district of Kasese have tightened the measures.

Traders say they are frustrated by the slow movement of cargo trucks. Some at the Mpondwe border post told The Associated Press that while they knew the tough measures are provoked by

fear of Ebola contagion, they felt that holding up the trucks was excessive.

Sylvia Asiimwe, a clearing agent, pointed to the queue of trucks stretching over a mile on the Ugandan side. At least seven were carrying fish imported from China and destined for the Congolese cities of Beni and Butembo.

Asiimwe was adamant those Congolese towns are in the province of North Kivu, not the Ebola epicentre of Ituri. "The fish is going to spoil," she said. "So much money."

'Ebola has wasted our work'

The Uganda-Congo border is several hundred miles long and crossed by numerous footpaths

beyond formal border posts. Trade is often booming along the route up to Mpondwe, and there is kinship between the Bakonzo people on the Ugandan side and the Banande on the other side.

Mpondwe is Uganda's top border post for informal exports that were valued at an estimated USD 131 million in 2023, according to the Uganda Bureau of Statistics.

After the recent border closure, some shops were shuttered and young men, deprived of casual work, sat on stools dolefully.

"The situation is bad," said Ismail Mumbere, who often works as a vendor of roadside snacks on the Ugandan side. "A lot of people earn from here, in many businesses. But now the Government has told us there is Ebola. Ebola has

dragged our work." The current outbreak in Congo is suspected to have infected over 1,000 people. The number of confirmed cases is much lower because many suspected victims succumb to their symptoms outside hospitals and without firm proof they had Ebola.

The World Health Organisation, while declaring the current outbreak a public health emergency of international concern, discouraged border closures. But the UN agency also acknowledged that neighbouring countries are at high risk of contagion.

"With movement of cargo, and maybe trucks, is mobility of people, and we want to reduce that," said Arafat Bwambale, a surveillance officer for Kasese, defending the measures. (AP)



Ukraine strikes Russia again after Putin rejects peace talks

ASSOCIATED PRESS
■ St Petersburg

Residents of St Petersburg were told not to leave their homes after a large-scale Ukrainian drone attack targeted Russia's second-largest city on Saturday morning, underscoring Kyiv's growing ability to hit deep inside Russia.

The attack came a day after Russian President Vladimir Putin refused an offer to meet his Ukrainian counterpart.

St Petersburg Governor Alexander Beglov advised the residents not to go outside and warned of possible disruptions to mobile internet service, while regional Governor Alexander Drozdenko said 141 drones were shot down over the surrounding Leningrad region.

Russia's Defence Ministry said its air defences shot down 376 Ukrainian drones.

"Last night, our drones covered a distance of about 1,000 kilometres to the St Petersburg region — to the enemy navy's arsenals and a base in Kronstadt," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy wrote on X.

Although no casualties were immediately reported, the renewed attack on St Petersburg is the latest embarrassing blow to Putin's efforts to cast the conflict as a distant event that doesn't affect Russian daily life.

A Ukrainian drone strike set ablaze an oil terminal in the city and hit a nearby naval base on Wednesday, hours before the opening of the St Petersburg International Economic



Forum, Putin's annual showcase for investment.

Speaking at the forum, Putin said Thursday that Russia will strengthen its air defences to counter recent Ukrainian drone attacks, which have reached deep inside his country and cast a cloud over the event in his hometown of St Petersburg.

Putin on Friday rejected a proposal by Zelenskyy for a face-to-face meeting on the 4-year-old conflict, saying he sees "no point" in it.

Thursday's letter, the first public message Zelenskyy has written directly to Putin since Russia sent troops into Ukraine in 2022, was a sweeping critique of the Russian leader's 26 years in power, as well as some taunts about his age.

Responding to Putin's dismissal of the proposed meeting, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha said Saturday that things would "only get worse for Russia." "Failures will get more humil-

iating," he wrote on X, warning that there are "no safe places in Russia that can be exempt" from Ukrainian long-range attacks, and that the intensity of attacks "will continue to grow."

With the front line barely moving as swarms of drones hinder advances, both sides have sought an edge by launching long-range strikes.

In Ukraine, one person was killed and three wounded overnight into Saturday in the Dnipropetrovsk region, as Russian forces struck three districts nearly 30 times with drones and artillery, regional head Oleksandr Hanzha said. In Zaporizhzhia, seven people sought medical care after a Russian drone strike started a fire at a parking lot, according to regional head Ivan Fedorov.

Russia targeted Ukraine overnight with 272 strike drones, and air defences shot down 249 of them, the Ukrainian air force said on Saturday.

Armenia prepares for election

YURAS KARMANAU/
KATIE MARIE DAVIES
■ Yerevan

Armenia's parliamentary elections Sunday will be a vote on its geopolitical future as incumbent Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan seeks closer relations with the European Union and the United States despite longstanding ties with Russia that have been championed by his critics.

Many analysts favour Pashinyan's Civil Contract party to retain control of the parliament, but with many opposition parties running on pro-Russia platforms, the Caucasus nation's place on the international stage has been thrown into the spotlight. In the months

ahead of the election, Russian President Vladimir Putin and other Russian officials have warned Armenia that joining the EU could come at the expense of massive economic damage by disrupting Armenian trade ties with Moscow and its allies.

"These are the first elections in Armenia's history where geopolitical orienta-

tion has become a decisive issue," Mikayel Zolyan, an analyst and former member of the Armenian Parliament, told The Associated Press from Yerevan. "Until now, Armenia has remained within Russia's sphere of influence, and this was taken for granted, but now, for the first time, this is being called into question."

Relations between Moscow and Armenia soured in 2023 after Azerbaijan took control of the entire Karabakh region. The mountainous region had been controlled for decades by ethnic Armenian forces backed by Armenia, part of a long conflict between the neighbouring countries. (AP)



Nikol Pashinyan



Soldiers attend the Colonel's Review, the final rehearsal of the Trooping the Colour, the King's annual birthday parade at Horse Guards Parade in London

Argentina expands hantavirus probe, sends teams to test rats



ISABEL DEBRE
■ Buenos Aires

Argentina has said it is expanding its investigation into the origins of the hantavirus outbreak that struck an Atlantic cruise ship last month, sending scientists to trap and test rats in the western province of Mendoza while lab results are pending from the southernmost city of Ushuaia. Argentine authorities said biologists from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention were joining the mission next week in Mendoza. The rare outbreak on the MV Hondius was caused by the Andes hantavirus, a disease carried by rodents endemic to Argentina and Chile and the only hantavirus thought to be able to spread between people in some cases.

Reconstructing the chain of transmission is difficult work, and Argentine authorities say it may never be possible to pinpoint exactly where the first known victims — a Dutch couple who died in April — contracted the virus before boarding the cruise in Ushuaia. But experts say getting to the bottom of the outbreak will offer valuable information about how the rare virus spread and carry important lessons for management of the disease.

As repatriated cruise passengers from more than 20 countries have disembarked and entered specialised quarantine centres, epidemiologists are examining the 11 confirmed hantavirus cases, including the schedules of the three people killed, to better understand the chain of transmission. (AP)

Pope Leo visits Spain amid growing political crisis



ASSOCIATED PRESS
■ Vatican City

Pope Leo XIV's trip to Spain will bring the American pontiff to a traditional centre of European Christianity, where the Catholic Church has a complex legacy and the Socialist-led Government is in the midst of a political crisis. Leo's weeklong visit begins Saturday in Madrid with a welcome by the country's Catholic monarchs, King Felipe VI and Queen Letizia. His first day ends with a prayer vigil with young people, many of whom will be witnessing their first pope on Spanish soil. In a

sign that the clergy sexual abuse crisis continues to overshadow papal trips, the Vatican confirmed late Friday that Leo would meet with survivors during his visit. The Spanish Catholic hierarchy is belatedly reckoning with decades of abuse and cover-up in the once-staunchly Catholic country. The visit, the first by a pope in 15 years, signals Leo is returning papal attention to Europe and its Christian roots. Pope Francis largely stayed away from the traditional centers of European Christianity in favour of smaller Catholic communities farther away.

India, China share two millennia of legacy of learning, dialogue: Indian Envoy

KJM VARMA ■ Beijing

Indian Ambassador to China Vikram Doraiswami has said mutual learning of languages and a dialogue of ideas over two millennia have been a defining feature of ties between the two countries.

Doraiswami, who took over as India's envoy to China last month, visited the Beijing Foreign Studies University (BFSU), where he delivered a lecture on Friday, and interacted with students and faculty members. BFSU, a premier institution for foreign languages in China, offers courses in 102 languages, including Tamil, Hindi, Bengali, Sanskrit and Urdu.

It recently added Punjabi to its list of courses.

The languages are taught primarily to Chinese students as well



Indian Ambassador to China Vikram Doraiswami

as diplomats and officials. Many of its students go on to work with Chinese foreign-language media organisations, including state radio and television services catering to overseas audiences.

During his lecture, Doraiswami, a fluent Mandarin speaker, highlighted how the study of languages, societies and a dialogue of ideas had been a defining feature of India-China engagement for more than two millennia.

"Citing examples from the Mauryan period to the modern era, he [Doraiswami] noted how exchanges between the world's two oldest continuous civilisations enriched both societies through the sharing of knowledge, philosophy, artistic traditions, technologies, and innovation," according to a post on X by

the Indian Embassy in Beijing. "He emphasised that such interactions historically generated mutual benefit and remained more important than ever as both countries undergo profound economic, technological and social transformation," it said.

It added, "The lecture also explored the remarkable changes taking place in India today and the need for deeper knowledge, academic engagement, and people-to-people exchanges to better understand each other's contemporary realities."

It was followed by an interactive session during which Doraiswami answered questions from students. During his visit, Doraiswami was briefed on the activities of the university by BFSU President Jia Wenjian.

Indian student in UK shortlisted for BAFTA Young Game Designers Award

HS RAO ■ London

An Indian student studying at a UK university has been shortlisted for a BAFTA Young Game Designers Award for a game exploring the life of a sweatshop worker in India.

D'Arcy Dhandu, a first-year student at the Department of Computer and Information Sciences at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, Scotland, has been nominated in the 15-18 years category for his creation, Maya.

The game follows the story of a young widow working long hours in a garment factory while raising a child and struggling with poverty.



The game uses a series of mini-scenes depicting both factory work and home life to highlight the pressures faced by the main character.

Professor Martin Halvey, Head of the Department of Computer and Information

Sciences at Strathclyde, said: "D'Arcy's nomination reflects both his creativity and ability to use game design to tell meaningful stories."

"The game's mechanics imitate real-life working conditions and give players a glimpse into Maya's reality. I wanted to create something people could feel emotionally connected to," D'Arcy said.

"You spend long days at a sewing machine and even the repetitive actions are designed to reflect the physical strain of that kind of work. People do not always think about those realities."

"I chose to set the game in India because I am Indian

myself and I felt I had the cultural understanding to tell the story," he said.

D'Arcy hopes to continue developing the project and added: "I started working on Maya when I was in S6 and I think it still needs more time. Six months of development is not very long in game design."

"I would like to become a full-time software engineer one day... Being part of the BAFTA competition can help me get a foot in the door of what is a very competitive industry," he said.

The winner's ceremony will be streamed on BAFTA's YouTube channel on Thursday, June 18. (PTI)

Imran Khan, wife deprived of rights, healthcare in jail, alleges KP Party

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Peshawar

Pakistan Government is denying legal and constitutional rights to the incarcerated former prime minister Imran Khan and his wife and depriving the couple of proper healthcare, his party unit in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province has alleged.

Khan, the founder of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), has been in jail since August 2023 in multiple cases while his wife, Bushra Bibi, was initially under house arrest and later sent to jail in May 2024. Shafi Jan, a PTI leader and also a minister in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, also told a press conference here on Friday, Khan and his wife were also not allowed to contact any of their relatives and party members.

Jan said that Khan had been suffering from an eye-related ailment for the past



four months, and his eyesight is yet to fully recover.

The couple were taken to a hospital late at night on Thursday for medical treatment in violation of jail regulations, he said at the press conference organised by Insaf Doctors Forum, the official representative body for healthcare professionals aligned with Khan's party, the PTI.

Three from Ahmadi community injured in firing in Pak's Punjab

M ZULQERNAIN ■ Lahore

Three young men of the Ahmadi minority community were critically injured when an unidentified gunman opened fire at its prominent place of worship in Punjab province of Pakistan, police said Saturday.

The incident took place at Ahmadi's worship place — Bait-ul-Aqsa — at the Ahmadiyya headquarters Sabwah, Chenab Nagar, some 175 kms from Lahore late on Friday evening.

According to police, the unidentified man came on a motorcycle at the Ahmadi worship place and opened indiscriminate fire on the people going to offer prayers.

Three young men were critically injured in the attack and were shifted to hospital, the police said, adding a case has been registered against the unidentified attacker.

Although Ahmadis consider themselves Muslims, Pakistan's Parliament in 1974 declared the community to be non-Muslims. A decade later, they were not just banned from calling themselves Muslims but were also barred from practising aspects of Islam. (PTI)



Indian companies pitch products, seek partnerships at mega tech trade event in Taiwan

ROOPALI DIXIT ■ Taipei

Indian electronics manufacturer Sahasra and software firm Zoho showcased their products and services at a major technology trade event in Taipei this week, as they sought to attract customers and partnerships in overseas markets.

While the event witnessed significant participation from Indian buyers, a handful of Indian companies also exhibited at COMPUTEX 2026, which featured a record 6,000 booths from 1,500 exhibitors representing 33 countries.

Sahasra Electronics, part of the Sahasra Group, displayed its microSD cards at the event.

The company said it received encouraging responses from customers from different markets. "We have customers in China, we have customers in the US, Europe



and the UK, so we are meeting customers here, and we are getting very, very good responses," said Ankur Dwivedi, strategic account manager at Sahasra.

The company said it was using the event to explore new partnerships, technology collaborations and potential joint ventures. "We are here to explore partnerships

in terms of customers and in terms of technology, innovation and joint venture kind of thing where we can participate and implement technologies in India also," Dwivedi said.

Zoho Corporation, which provides cloud-based business software and software-as-a-service applications, said Taiwan was

emerging as an important market for the company and that businesses in the region were increasingly engaging with its products.

"We are here in Taiwan because it is a growing market for us, it has good potential for Zoho," said Eng Kit Goh, market lead for Hong Kong, South Korea and Taiwan.

"There is a lot of opportunity for us in Taipei and Taiwan in general in terms of digital adoption, a lot of businesses are engaging with us," he said.

Zoho said India's growing reputation in software development and technology services had helped build trust among customers in Taiwan.

"People have recognised Indian expertise in terms of technology, in terms of software development, there is a trust as well," Goh said. Organisers said they hoped

to see greater participation from Indian companies in future editions of the exhibition as technology cooperation between the two sides continued to expand.

"We are extending a warm invitation to India's vibrant tech industry, encouraging stronger participation as the show continues to grow into one of the world's most influential platforms for AI and technology innovation," said James C F Huang, Chairman of the Taiwan External Trade Development Council.

Strategic partnerships in semiconductor manufacturing, AI infrastructure and electronics supply chains have strengthened India-Taiwan technology ties in recent years. While Taiwan provides technical expertise and manufacturing capabilities, India offers a large consumer market, raw

materials and a skilled workforce. Apart from exhibitors, Indian buyers were also present at the event in large numbers, looking for new products and business opportunities.

Abhishek Jain of Arihant Info Solutions, a technology company, said he was attending the annual event for the tenth time, adding that COMPUTEX remained an important platform for networking and identifying products for the Indian market.

"We have a lot of suppliers here, and we always come here to do some networking and look out for some new products which we can import from here and sell in India," Jain said.

He said Indian participation could grow further as the country's electronics manufacturing ecosystem develops. (PTI)

Praggnanandhaa first Indian to win Norway Chess title

AJAI MASAND ■ Oslo

Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa scripted history as he became the first Indian to win the prestigious Norway Chess title with a final-round victory over Germany's Vincent Keymer here on Friday, completing a brilliant campaign in style.

Praggnanandhaa, who began the day in third place with 15 points, delivered when it mattered the most, securing a classical win worth three full points to finish on 18 points and clinch one of the most coveted trophies in elite chess. In doing so, the 20-year-old Chennai player achieved a feat that had eluded even Indian chess legend Viswanathan Anand and reigning world champion D Gukesh among others, since the tournament's inception in 2013.



Competing in Norway Chess for only the second time, Praggnanandhaa endured a slow start in the elite six-player field before gathering momentum in the second half of the event. His campaign was highlighted by a remarkable achievement — defeating seven-time Norway Chess champion and World No. 1 Magnus Carlsen twice in classical chess — a rare accomplishment that underlined his determination to bounce back from the disappointing end of an underwhelming Candidates Tournament in Paphos earlier this year.

As reigning world champion Gukesh fell out of contention in the closing stages, Praggnanandhaa ensured that India's challenge remained alive, ultimately carrying it all the way to the title. The result was made possible after American Grandmaster Wesley So, who led the standings with 15.5 points heading into the final round, was held to a draw in his classical game against Alireza Firouzja,

sending their contest into an Armageddon tie-break. That outcome opened the door for Praggnanandhaa, who knew that a classical victory over Keymer would propel him to the top of the standings and secure a landmark title. Although Wesley So went on to win the Armageddon tie-break, the victory was worth only 1.5 points, taking his tally to 17 points — one short of Praggnanandhaa's winning total of 18. Alireza, who had also entered the final round with title hopes, finished third with 15.5 points.

BIGGEST WIN OF MY CAREER: PRAGGNANANDHAA

AJAI MASAND ■ Oslo

R Praggnanandhaa described his Norway Chess triumph as the biggest achievement of his career, emphasising that defeating some of the world's strongest players — including the great Magnus Carlsen — made the title particularly memorable. He said the event's extraordinary strength, with one of the highest average ratings ever assembled in a tournament, added even greater weight to his victory. Praggnanandhaa became the first Indian to win Norway Chess since the tournament's inception in 2013, capping off a landmark campaign by defeating world No. 1 and seven-time champion Carlsen twice — a rare feat against one of the game's greatest players. His triumph came in an exceptionally strong field, with all six players in the 'Open' section rated above 2700 and Carlsen leading the pack at 2840, adding further lustre to the title. "I think this is like (the biggest win of my career)... also stronger in terms of like average rating. I think, because you have like some 2600s (rating) in Wijk Aan Zee (Tata Steel Chess tournament). But here it's just the top players," said Praggnanandhaa after his final-round win over Vincent Keymer, which took him to 18 points and held off challenges from USA's Wesley So and France's Alireza Firouzja. "So, yeah, winning this is more special and also like adding to it, Magnus was there... also winning four (games) in a row. So, certainly this will come like top," said Praggnanandhaa, whose previous biggest triumph came at the 2025 Tata Steel Chess Tournament in Wijk Aan Zee, Netherlands. Even as Praggnanandhaa focused on his game against Keymer, his attention would have occasionally drifted to the other board, where So faced Alireza — a classical win for the American would have denied him the title. The draw in that encounter proved decisive, sending the match into an Armageddon tie-break, where So could only secure 1.5 points, sealing the championship for the Indian. "I was happy that like it (So vs Alireza match) was a draw and like, I mean, I just had to win, but still I had to win (against Keymer)," he said. Praggnanandhaa said that after the initial setbacks in the tournament, nothing fundamentally changed in his

approach, which eventually led to four consecutive wins and helped him clinch the title. He added that a key adjustment was a conscious effort to avoid time trouble and play faster, more controlled chess throughout the run-in. "I don't, like I said, think there is anything particular I change, but this conscious effort of playing faster was certainly, I think, helped in my games. I had more time than my opponents in most of the games." Looking ahead to the coming months, the young Indian Grandmaster said he plans to play fewer tournaments than last year to better manage his schedule and workload. However, he confirmed he will feature at the World Rapid Team Championship for Chess Gurukul, scheduled from June 16-22 in Hong Kong. "I mean, most of the players playing here are going to be there (for World Rapid and Blitz Team) and it's going to start in 10 days. But for now, I don't think I'll, I'll look at any chess for a bit." Asked whether defeating Carlsen twice in the same tournament was a big deal, he said he was ultimately pleased to have won the event itself — especially considering it featured a player of the Norwegian's calibre. "Winning the (matches against Carlsen), I mean, he helped in winning the tournament, so it's still, I think every point counts here. Yeah, I mean, I'm overall happy that I managed to come back like this (from a poor start). For me, it's more special that I won a tournament, especially when Magnus is here." He said the Superbet Chess Classic Romania in Bucharest (May 14-23), from where he flew straight to Oslo for Norway Chess and arrived on the eve of the tournament, had a positive impact as it served as valuable warm-up ahead of the challenge here. "I guess maybe like we were warmed up (for Norway Chess after playing in Bucharest)... So, like, I think we were looking forward to playing here. So, yeah, maybe we were more warmed up, but I don't know." (PTI)



BRIEFLY

British WC power surge: Electricity spikes expected during matches



British energy officials say England and Scotland's group games at the World Cup could start a national electricity spike equivalent to the combined power needed for the northern England city of Leeds and Glasgow. An analysis by the National Energy System Operator released Saturday predicted that each of England and Scotland's games in the group stages of the World Cup could see national electricity usage increase by 600 megawatts. That is the equivalent of the total electricity demand for the cities of Leeds, with a population of about 812,000, and Glasgow, which has a population of 650,000 and is the largest city in Scotland. (AP)

Iran's World Cup soccer team approved for visas to play games in US

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Washington

Members of Iran's World Cup soccer team have been granted visas to the United States, two U.S. officials said, clearing them to enter the United States from their training base in Tijuana, Mexico, ahead of their first two matches near Los Angeles this month. The team's participation in the World Cup has been complicated by Iran's war with Israel and the United States. Problems with processing visas had earlier led Iran to move its training base from Tucson, Arizona, to Tijuana, on Mexico's border with California. One US official said all



players on the Iranian team were approved for visas and were in the process of receiving them. A second official said visas had been issued for players, coaches, trainers and some support staff. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to discuss the visas publicly. The second official could not say if any Iranian applicants had been denied. It was not immediately clear when the Iranian team's passports would be returned to them to allow them to travel, but the official said it could be as early as Friday or Saturday. The squad has been

preparing for the World Cup at a training camp in Antalya, Turkey, before departing for Tijuana. The team said it has already received visas from Mexico's embassy in Ankara. US Ambassador to Turkey Tom Barrack credited the U.S. Embassy in Ankara for processing visas for the Iranian team. "Sports transcends borders, and we look forward to welcoming competitors and fans from around the world," Barrack wrote in a social media post Friday. Iran plays its first two games in Inglewood, California, against New Zealand on June 15 and Belgium six days later, then heads to Seattle to face Egypt on June 26. Iran and the US could meet in the round of 32 on July 3 in Arlington, Texas, if both teams place second in their groups. President Donald Trump in March had discouraged Iran from participating in the tournament, saying he didn't think it was "appropriate" and raising concerns over players' "life and safety." A day later, Iran's national team pushed back, saying "no one can exclude" it from playing. Iran finalised its team Monday, including 17 home-based players whose clubs have not played since February because of the war. Star forward Sardar Azmoun was dropped in March, reportedly because of a social media post that angered Iranian authorities during the war.

Women's U18 Asia Cup: India clinch bronze with 3-0 win



The Indian hockey team won the bronze medal at the Women's U18 Asia Cup after registering a commanding 3-0 victory over Korea in the third-place match here on Saturday. Sandeepa Kumari (2'), captain Sweety Kujur (16') and Nousheen Naz (33') were on target as India capped off their campaign with a podium finish. Determined to bounce back from their narrow shootout defeat against China in the semifinals, India made a dream start and took the lead within the opening two minutes. Sandeepa Kumari (2') showcased excellent composure, producing a brilliant finish to give India the breakthrough and set the tone for the contest. (PTI)

Canada settles for draw with Ireland in final WC tune-up

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Montreal

Chiedozie Ogbene's goal pulled Ireland into a 1-1 draw with Canada in the Canadians' final tune-up before the World Cup. Canada went up in the 24th minute on an own goal off Ireland defender Jake O'Brien, who was in front of the net on Stephen Eustaquio's corner kick. Ireland was awarded a penalty in the second half after Cyle Larin's reckless challenge of Ireland's Jamie McGrath. Canada goalkeeper Maxime Crepeau punched away the attempt by Troy Parrott, but Ogbene slammed the rebound to tie it in the 60th minute. Larin, who started for Canada, signed a two-year deal with Southampton



earlier in the day. Ireland, which did not qualify for this year's World Cup, nearly scored a go-ahead goal but Crepeau deftly stopped a charge by Mason Melia in the 85th minute. He finished with two saves. Crepeau earned the job for the World Cup over Dayne St. Claire. Crepeau missed out on the 2022 World Cup in Qatar after breaking his leg while playing for LAFC in

the MLS Cup final. Canada defeated Uzbekistan 2-0 in Edmonton, Alberta, on Monday. The team opens the World Cup on June 12 in Toronto in Group B against Bosnia and Herzegovina. They head to Vancouver to face Qatar on June 18 and Switzerland on June 24. Canada remained without captain Alphonso Davies, who is still nursing a hamstring injury he sustained while playing for Bayern Munich. There is no timeline for his return. Canada coach Jesse Marsch started Luc de Fougerolles at center back, replacing Moise Bombito, who was seen icing his leg after getting subbed off after the first half against Uzbekistan. Bombito is returning from a fractured tibia.

Veer Ahlawat sets course record in second round of Swiss Challenge



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Lucerne (Switzerland)

Playing on an invitation, Veer Ahlawat set a course record in the second round of the Swiss Challenge on the Hotel Planner Tour, firing a stunning round of 10-under 61 to get into a share of the lead here. The 30-year-old Ahlawat shared the lead with 37-year-old Mathew Southgate (64) heading into the weekend. Ahlawat and Southgate are at 12-under and both leaders went bogey free in the second round. They are one stroke ahead of George Bloor (66) and Mathieu Decottignies-Lafon (63). Ahlawat, who came close to a win on the DP World Tour in 2024, when he finished runner-up at the Hero Indian Open, played on DP World Tour in 2025. After failing to keep his card, he is dividing his time between the Hotel Planner Tour, DP World Tour and his home Tour, the DP World PGTI Tour, where he won the Order of Merit in 2024. Ahlawat began his record setting round on the front nine and after making an early birdie on the second

hole he followed up with another pair on the third and fourth holes. He would pick up another stroke on the seventh hole to be 4-under par for the day before the turn. On the back nine Ahlawat was on fire and made six birdies on the trot starting from the 12th hole before making par on the 18th to finish the day with a card of 10-under par. The other two Indian players in the field this week were Arjun Prasad and Saptak Talwar. Arjun Prasad had a total of even par (70-72) and Talwar shot 74-70 and missed the cut, which was set at 3-under par in what has been a low scoring week so far. Ahlawat delighted to be in contention heading into the weekend after a mixed start to the season. "I'm really pleased with my round. I had a really solid day out there; I struck the ball well and made some really good birdie putts. If it's as calm tomorrow as it was today, then it will be a low scoring day again." "All parts of my game are feeling very solid right now," he added. "I'll treat tomorrow as a normal day and try to play it one shot at a time."

FIBA still planning Basketball World Cup in Qatar in 2027

TIM REYNOLDS ■ San Antonio (US)

FIBA is operating as if the 2027 Basketball World Cup will take place in Qatar as scheduled, though said Friday that it could adjust if the war in Iran or other matters force the sport's global governing body to take action. "We have excellent partners in Qatar," FIBA's secretary general, Andreas Zagklis, said in a roundtable meeting with reporters while attending Game 2 of the NBA Finals between the San Antonio Spurs and New York Knicks. "If things arrive at that spot, I'm sure we will have very good and direct conversations, and we'll find the best possible solution for the players and the fans." In short, Zagklis is not



worried at this point. The 32-team tournament is set to begin on August 27, 2027, and runs for about 2 1/2 weeks — all happening in Doha. "We have a board meeting of the FIBA and the (local organizing committee) of the World Cup on Monday. I will get the latest updates," Zagklis said. "I can tell you that the organizing committee has

not stopped a single day. This is a project that has been made clear to us, by the highest levels of the government, is a project of national importance. And as you know, Qatar, since I think April 1, has not been affected, impacted by the hostilities." There have been a series of US-Iran negotiations facilitated by countries in the Middle

East over the last few months, including Qatar. The World Cup in Qatar would be the first time FIBA takes the event to the Arab world. And will be a direct qualifier for seven nations into the men's basketball tournament at the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics. The US is already qualified for LA28 as the host nation and will seek

a sixth consecutive gold medal. Qatar ultimately was the lone bidder for the 2027 World Cup. "I can tell you the level of preparedness and importance and investment that goes into the project shows that they treat it as what it is: It's the biggest celebration of national team basketball in the world," Zagklis said. "It will be the first time we will have 32 teams (and) four venues within 25 minutes. It is a dream of every basketball fan to visit and watch two or even three games per day. This is our ambition, and of course, we're following very closely." NBA Europe: Zagklis also had Olympic meetings in Los Angeles this week, and will be part of more meetings on the new NBA Europe league —

where the NBA is collaborating with FIBA — in the coming days as well, as the list of bidders for spots in the league gets whittled down toward clubs actually being selected. Zagklis said there is an agreement on what the new league will look like, in terms of how many games will be played in a season, a playoff structure and other logistical matters. "We know, but I think it's not appropriate to make this level of granularity (public) before we announce," Zagklis said. "I can tell you, and you will not be surprised, that we are looking at a post-season that will give the chance to the teams to have number of home games," Zagklis said. "And this is one of the elements that I would let the competition experts finalize and announce to you." (AP)



Shreyas replaces Suryakumar as India T20 captain

Sooryavanshi in for England, Ireland series; youngest-ever to make it to India team

DEVARCHIT VARMA
■ Mumbai

Winds of change swept across India's T20I set-up as Shreyas Iyer on Saturday took over the captaincy from Suryakumar Yadav, and wonder kid Vaibhav Sooryavanshi found a place in the squad for the twin tour of Ireland and England.

At 15 years and 71 days old, Sooryavanshi becomes the youngest ever player to feature in an Indian cricket team, surpassing the long-standing record held by the great Sachin Tendulkar.

Tendulkar was 16 years and 25 days when he made his Test debut against Pakistan at Karachi on November 15, 1989.

India will travel to Ireland for two T20Is (June 26 and 28), followed by a five-match T20I series against England between July 1 and 11. Shreyas has returned to the national T20 side for the first time after competing against Australia in Bengaluru on December 3, 2023.

"With regards to Shreyas, we have seen what he has done over the last few years, leading different franchises," chief selector Ajit Agarkar told media after announcing the squads for various tours.

"(He) won the final once, and from there a tougher season this year after a great start. We have

seen everything that a captain possibly can (handle). His own performances have been really good.

"He was quite close to getting into the (T20) World Cup squad as well. With Surya still there, there was no room for him, so he is in my opinion a stand-out candidate with enough experience now having led in the T20 format; this is obviously a different challenge," Agarkar added.

Shreyas' impressive leadership credentials in the IPL — leading KKR to title in 2024 and PBKS to final in 2025 — along with two seasons of consistent outings with the bat prompted the selectors to zero in on him to replace T20 World Cup 2026 winning captain Suryakumar.

Suryakumar not just lost the captaincy but also his place in the squad. Agarkar said Suryakumar's dipping form over the last two seasons in some way dictated their decision to remove the Mumbaier from the T20 captaincy, but it was not the only reason. "With regards to Surya, obviously it's a tough one having just won the (T20) World Cup.

But as it happens after most World Cups, we try and reassess what your best way forward is," Agarkar said. "(It was due to) partly his own form but also looking at the next two-year



cycle, or a little bit more than two years now till the next World Cup, we thought this was the best way forward and like I said, Shreyas is a very deserving captain." "We deliberated on it a lot, especially when someone has led you to a World Cup win. It's not the easiest sort of discussion to have, but I don't necessarily think... at some stage, we were going to look at it. Now, whether IPL form dictated it; I'm not so sure that's the case. There were

always conversations around it," he added.

Tilak is new vice-captain: Middle-order batter Tilak Varma will be Shreyas' deputy, while pacer Prince Yadav, who had an impressive season for Lucknow Super Giants, was drafted for the series against England and Ireland.

Agarkar said Tilak can learn more about the job of leading a side while being the deputy to Shreyas, a clear indication of his growth in the white ball format as



a key member.

Bumrah to miss England, Ireland tour: Lead pacer Jasprit Bumrah will miss the T20I series against England and Ireland, but he will come back for the Asian Games, to be held in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan, from September 19 to October 4.

"We know how important he is. Plus, (given) the WTC cycle, we've still got a chance to (qualify for the final) if we play well enough over these next nine Tests," Agarkar said. "If we can have Jasprit play

majority of those games and still keep him fit and healthy, it's always a thing. There's a lot of T20 cricket, you can always bring him back. (In the) Asian games, he will be there. The main aim is to try and keep him fit for the Test and the one-dayers," he added.

All-rounder Hardik Pandya, who is in India's ODI squad for the series against Afghanistan later this month, could not find place in any of the teams.

"Like Bumrah, if we can get him

playing well and keep him fit for one-day cricket — I do not think he has played one-day cricket for a while — and at this point that is the main objective," said Agarkar.

All-rounder Harshit Rana too has returned to the India set-up after missing the whole of the IPL for Kolkata Knight Riders owing to an injury.

Squads:
For Ireland and England T20 tours: Shreyas Iyer (c), Abhishek Sharma, Sanju Samson, Ishan Kishan, Shivam Dube, Tilak Varma (vc), Nitish Kumar Reddy, Axar Patel, Washington Sundar, Varun Chakravarthy, Ravi Bishnoi, Mohammed Siraj, Harshit Rana, Arshdeep Singh, Prince Yadav, and Vaibhav Sooryavanshi.

For Asian Games: Shreyas Iyer (c), Abhishek Sharma, Sanju Samson, Ishan Kishan, Shivam Dube, Tilak Varma (vc), Nitish Kumar Reddy, Axar Patel, Washington Sundar, Varun Chakravarthy, Ravi Bishnoi, Harshit Rana, Arshdeep Singh, Jasprit Bumrah, and Vaibhav Sooryavanshi.

For multi-day matches in Sri Lanka: Dhruv Jurel (c&wk), Sai Sudharsan, Devdutt Padikkal (vc), Ayush Pandey, Ruturaj Gaikwad, Harsh Dube, Saransh Jain, Gumoor Brar, Auqib Nabi, Yash Thakur, N Jagadeesan (wk), Aman Mokhadde, Shaik Rashid, Zeeshan Ansari. (PTI)

Injured Kohli replaced by Yashasvi in ODI series against Afghanistan

DEVARCHIT VARMA
■ Mumbai

Star batter Virat Kohli will miss India's three-match ODI series against Afghanistan later this month after failing to recover from a hamstring injury, and the selectors on Saturday named Yashasvi Jaiswal as his replacement.

The three ODIs will be played at Dharamsala, Lucknow and Chennai on June 13, 17 and 20 respectively. Kohli, who plays only one format after retiring from Test and T20, had suffered a hamstring injury during the recent IPL final between Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Gujarat Titans in Ahmedabad. Kohli had made an unbeaten 75 to fire RCB to their second IPL title in a row. "With Virat, at this point, it's just been less than a week since he injured himself in the finals. We will assess him (but) we don't know the timelines yet," chief selector Ajit Agarkar told reporters during a press conference at the BCCI headquarters. "Yashasvi will be his replacement. But it looks like he (Kohli) might be fit for



that England one-day series (in July) but again, it's not a definitive answer.

"So, don't hold me to it. I haven't had a clear timeline from the physio yet," Agarkar added. An all-format player for India, Jaiswal has only played four ODIs since making his debut against England in February 2025. The left-hander had scored a match-winning 116 — his maiden ODI ton — against South Africa at Visakhapatnam.

Meanwhile, BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia said former skipper Rohit Sharma will be heading to the Centre of Excellence in Bengaluru where all-rounder Hardik Pandya is nearing comple-

tion of his rehabilitation.

"Hardik is in COE Bangalore. He is going to a rehabilitation programme and very soon he will go for the final phase (of recuperation) and will be in the process of clearance," Saikia said. Pandya has been named in the ODI squad to face Afghanistan but he was omitted from squads to tour Ireland and England, and for the Asian Games keeping his workload in the 50-over format in mind. Former skipper Rohit, who also now plays only the one-dayers, too suffered a hamstring injury during the IPL which restricted his appearances for Mumbai Indians to just nine matches this season. (PTI)

Rahul, Gill hammer tons in one-off Test against Afghanistan

KUSHAN SARKAR
■ Mullanpur

KL Rahul's poise was matched by Shubman Gill's panache produced contrasting centuries as India's formidable batting line-up posted 368 for three in their bid to out-bat Afghanistan on the opening day of the one-off Test on Saturday.

Rahul (100 off 165 balls) showed the value of defence while skipper Gill (103 batting off 143 balls) was intent-perfected on a day when India decided to give a batting masterclass in Tests to an Afghanistan attack that was high on spirit but low on skill quotient.

The manner in which Gill batted, it seemed like he was playing a practice game. The languid approach and the lazy elegance was on view as he held an already tired Afghan attack by the scruff of its neck, hitting 11 fours and a straight six. In his 41st Test, the Indian skipper now has 11 centuries.

The one who would rue missing out on a three figure mark is Sai Sudharsan (81 off 104 balls) despite getting two reprieves while Rishabh Pant was happy smashing three effortless sixes en route his unbeaten half-century off just



70 balls. It is unlikely that India would bat more than a session and half on the second day before declaration and unleashing their spin troika on Afghanistan.

The pitch has something for the slow bowlers and it will not be a surprise does not go full distance.

For Afghanistan, Mohammad Saleem (2/67 in 13 overs) was their most successful one but the stand out fast bowler was Ziaur Rahman (1/61 in 15 overs) who troubled batters without much success.

In fact, he could have Rahul early had keeper Afsar Zazai appealed for a caught behind which the TV replays later confirmed.

Once he got the lucky reprieve, Rahul was unflappable en route his 12th Test hundred. There were cover drives and signature on-drives and a beautiful straight drive in his 11 boundaries.

Rahul was more intent on playing within himself and allowed Sudharsan to attack during their 139-run second wicket stand after Yashasvi Jaiswal (24) gifted his wicket

with an innocuous tinkle down the leg-side during the first hour.

In case of Sudharsan, he was dropped once in the slips of left-arm spinner Nangeyalia Kharote and then off Ziaur as the ball flew between keeper and first slip. Sudharsan looked comfortable against pacers while whipping them through mid-wicket and just when he was nearing his maiden Test century, he tried to play an expansive drive off an over-pitched delivery from Saleem to be nicely snapped by Zazai

behind stumps. Rahul, however was in no hurry as it took him 164 balls to get to his ton but off the next ball from Ziaur, he uppishly drove to give a catch to cover fielder.

The Gill-Pant stand was the most entertaining of the day as they added 121 runs for the fourth wicket and left a bruised Afghan attack even more battered in the scorching North India heat.

The short arm pull was a purists' delight and the cover drive had class written all over it. He and Pant ran the singles with ease as Afghanistan skipper Hashmatullah Shahidi spread the field in order to stop leaking boundaries.

For Afghanistan, the problem was their spin attack. With their top three world class spinners choosing to be gun for hire in T20 leagues across the world, the ones picked for this game — left-arm spinner Kharote (0/95 in 20 overs) and off-spinner Abdul Malik (0/37 in 6 overs) simply didn't have the skills to stop the Indian batters.

They didn't go on a carnage but yet found ways to hit boundaries with alarming frequency with 42 fours and 4 sixes hit on the day. (PTI)

Minakshi, Deepak to lead India at World Boxing Cup (Stage 2)

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ New Delhi

World Number 1 Minakshi and seasoned campaigner Deepak will spearhead India's challenge at the World Boxing Cup 2026 (Stage 2), scheduled to take place in Guiyang, China, from June 15 to 21.

This is a second-string Indian team comprising boxers who finished as runners-up in the Commonwealth Games and Asian Games trials. India enters the tournament on the back of an impressive run in the previous World Cup cycle, where the



team consistently secured multiple medals across stages and delivered a strong overall tally in the finals, underlining its growing stature on the global stage. The Boxing Federation of India (BFI) has named a well-rounded squad featuring blend of established performers and emerging talent across both men's, women's categories.

Prathamesh accepts 2-year ban for three whereabouts failures: ITA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ New Delhi

Asian Games compound team event gold winner archer Prathamesh Jawkar has accepted a two-year ban for three whereabouts failures last year, the International Testing Agency (ITA) said.

Prathamesh, a part of the 2022 Asian Games compound team gold winning trio that includes Ojas Pravin Deotale and Abhishek Verma, committed three



whereabouts failures within a 12-month period.

He was not named in the 12-member Indian archery squad for the Asian Games in Japan in September-October.

"The ITA reports that archer Prathamesh Samadhan Jawkar has agreed to the consequences imposed for his ADRV under Article 2.4 of the WA anti-doping rules," the ITA, which looks after anti-doping-related matters on behalf of World Archery, said in a statement.

The athlete did not challenge the ADRV and agreed with the consequences proposed by the ITA. Accordingly, the case was resolved via an acceptance of consequences.

Bumrah, Hardik to be preserved for longer formats: Agarkar

DEVARCHIT VARMA
■ Mumbai

The national selection panel on Saturday did not include premier pacer Jasprit Bumrah and all-rounder Hardik Pandya in the squads to tour Ireland and England in a strong indication that the wisemen are largely reserving their services for Tests and ODIs respectively in the coming season.

Bumrah and Pandya were a shadow of themselves in the recent IPL 2026 for Mumbai Indians after being on the field since late last year



playing several T20 games, including a triumphant campaign in the World Cup, warranting a careful handling of the duo. Bumrah will return to action during

the Asian Games to be held from September 17 to October 3, but chief selector Ajit Agarkar made it clear that the pacer will be used more in longer formats.

Shreyas: The detached leader T20 setup needs

G UNNIKRISHNAN
■ Bengaluru

Perhaps no other cricketer has gone through so much turbulence and transformation between December 3, 2023 and June 6, 2026 as Shreyas Iyer, who took over the reins of India's T20 team from Suryakumar Yadav on Saturday.

Shreyas' is an extraordinary story, as it's tough for an Indian cricketer to survive a 30-month hiatus, particularly in the shortest format where talents are jostling for a space, and make a comeback, let alone as captain.

So, what has the 31-year-old done in that interim to



impress the Ajit Agarkar-led selection panel and head coach Gautam Gambhir?

It has to be his single-minded dedication to claw back from setbacks and create an upward moving career curve.

Shreyas was looking at a bleak future after losing his BCCI central contract, along with Jharkhand's Ishan Kishan, in February 2024 for skipping domestic matches for Mumbai that season. It took him nearly a year to

earn the contract back, and also had to go through rejections from India squads for major events like the T20 World Cup (2024, 2026) and Asia Cup (2025).

But he never sulked or vented his frustration through social media, rather focused on working on his batting and recovery from certain injuries that forced him to seek a break from red-ball cricket last year.

Ties with Gambhir: The first sign of his revival came when he led Kolkata Knight Riders to their third IPL title in 2024, working alongside team mentor Gambhir.

It might also have given the former India opener a

chance to take a closer look at Shreyas' mindset and thinking.

Even before that, it was Gambhir who recommended Shreyas as his successor when he stepped down from Delhi Capitals' (then Daredevils) captaincy midway through the IPL 2018.

So, the social media speculations about his muted relationship with Shreyas could remain just that.

But in the last two years, the Mumbai man too has matured a lot as an individual and as a cricketer, and now he would certainly know how to set aside his personal choices for the larger good of the team. (PTI)

1784/DGR/SE-1/Coal
Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare MoD
Directorate General Resettlement

Directorate General Resettlement has signed an MoU with Coal India Limited (CIL) for employment of ESM Coal Loading and Transportation in Subsidiaries of CIL. Online registration for the scheme will open on **20 Jun 2026** on DGR website www.dgrindia.gov.in

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Poetry in Pottery

THE AIM IS TO SHARE THE CALMING, TACTILE POWER OF CLAY WITH ONE THOUSAND PEOPLE

Every art form has a stage. Pottery lost its. What happens when an ancient craft has nowhere left to stand?

SAKSHI PRIYA

Why do people say that plunging bare hands into wet earth is the best form of therapy? There is a sharp, startling feeling when skin presses into cold mud. The clay we throw today holds thousands of years of history, yet we live in an age of glass screens and non-stop notifications. We always hear people call the wheel a form of therapy, and researchers actually see the proof happening in real time.

Kneading wet earth actively drops cortisol levels in the brain. It triggers the vagus nerve, telling an exhausted, panicked nervous system to simply power down and find real quiet. All the while, the concrete of our growing cities keeps paving over our heritage spaces. The gifted creators who spent their lives keeping our history alive are left dealing with a forced silence, losing the physical spaces they need to practise their craft. In response, shaping mud feels like an act of preservation. The wheel asks an exhausted

brain to finally sit still, tying us to our roots and anchoring us in the present. This need for physical reality pulses vividly through *Potters' Hub*, a collaborative workspace tucked away in Gurgaon. Conceived by Ranu Kawatra and later joined by Shantanu Prakash, a ceramicist with nearly twenty years of dedication to the wheel, the studio operates as a twenty-four-hour safe space. Built purely for the love of the craft, it functions as a shared haven where creators mould their lives around art.

Knowing the calming effect of the wheel, the duo launched a community mission to help one thousand everyday people touch clay. The sight inside is genuinely moving: corporate professionals tentatively shaping their very first, wonderfully lopsided teapots. In a few months, nearly nine hundred individuals have stepped up to the wheel, discovering the joy of unguided creation. Shantanu even uses this tactile medium to guide corporate leaders through complex problem-solving.

The romance of the studio quickly gives way to a rigorous, fascinating science. The earth sets its own timeline, making the crafting of a single ceramic vessel a three-week lesson in waiting. Raw material must be wedged heavily to push out air bubbles before it is centred on the wheel. A freshly formed bowl must sit untouched for five days to dry. During the

initial bisque firing, the kiln burns at a thousand degrees Celsius for twelve hours. The mud hardens into a porous shell. After a slow cooling period, the piece gets a delicate coat of glaze before braving a second firing, where heat melts earthy compounds into a glass finish. Working with clay teaches you very quickly that the material sets the schedule, because pushing the mud too hard on the wheel causes the wet walls to slump right into a messy puddle, and cutting corners during the drying phase means the intense heat of the kiln will crack your work into pieces. The payoff for all that required patience hits you the moment you open the door and pull out a glossy ceramic bowl where a grey block of dirt used to be, and holding a heavy coffee cup that you built from scratch gives you a very specific kind of pride that makes the long wait entirely worth it.

To shape clay is to give a physical voice to gifted creators who currently have zero stage left to stand on. Sinking your hands into the mud remains a beautifully defiant act, a lasting reminder of the grace found in slowing down, coaxing life from a humble void, and understanding the true poetry in pottery.

POTTERY PASSION

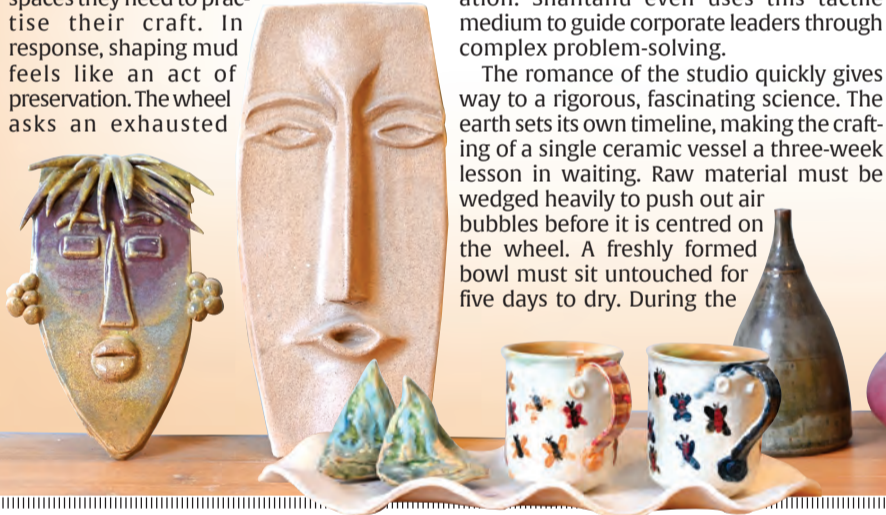


Handcrafted ceramic bowls showcase the beauty of pottery, where simple clay is transformed through skill, creativity and firing into functional works of art.



Participants immerse themselves in the tactile art of pottery, shaping clay by hand during a creative workshop that blends craftsmanship, mindfulness and self-expression, transforming simple earth into unique art.

PHOTOS: PANKAJ KUMAR



ART CORNER

Grey holds stories

SAKSHI PRIYA

We have spent centuries looking at classical art and expecting female strength to look a certain way. We search for tired hands or perfectly straight backs to tell us a story of survival. But a woman's internal world rarely fits into neat black and white boxes. The real story always happens in the subtle grey areas.

Aalekh Arts & Culture Foundation steps right into that space, working to preserve and rethink our diverse artistic traditions. Walking into their latest presentation, *Shades of Grey*, you immediately notice a shift in how these stories are told. Fresh from a run at Bangalore's Sabha Gallery, artist Divyaman Singh completely abandons the human figure. He leans

entirely on abstract horizons to map out memory and quiet endurance. It makes you stop and stare. Take *Edge of Silence*, where a pale cliff cuts through heavy shadow, serving as a brilliant metaphor for standing firm against erosion. *Quiet Grief* handles sorrow differently, not as a sudden, dramatic break, but as a slow, quiet pull. He completely avoids bright palettes, leaning hard into thick textures and quiet greys to capture the things we usually leave unsaid.

The exploration continues beautifully through *Threads Beneath Silence*, where delicate, intersecting lines weave an invisible web of responsibility and layered memory. Similarly, *Unspoken Calm* offers a horizon of gentle greys,

capturing those necessary moments of inward withdrawal and quiet introspection away from external expectations. Then out of nowhere, a sharp streak of crimson in *Ember Between Horizons* breaks the quiet, reminding us that real fire often burns right beneath a calm surface.

Foundation founder Rennie Jooy sees this exploration of the spaces between binaries as a necessary, shared conversation. Working the oil directly into the canvas with his own hands and palette knives, Singh maps out an inner reality you cannot actually see. The entire collection hits hard, leaving you with a very clear realisation — an artist does not need to paint a physical face to make you feel something real.



PHOTOS: PANKAJ KUMAR

DIVYAMAN SINGH'S TEXTURED GREYS QUIETLY REVEAL HIDDEN STRENGTH, MEMORY AND INNER FIRE — AN INTIMATE MAP OF ENDURANCE BENEATH CALM SURFACES

Century in rhythm

SAKSHI PRIYA

What does it take to keep something this old from disappearing? For over twenty years, Aayam quietly ensured Bharatanatyam's classical movements survived. When modern society often leaves traditional creators with no stage left to stand on, preserving heritage remains vital. Masters frequently face a forced silence, yet their work ensured the intricate visual geometry of Guru KN Dandayudhanani Pillai continued to



PHOTOS: PANKAJ KUMAR

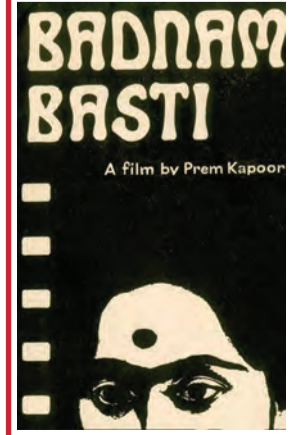
breathe. Handed down through KN Dakshinamoorthy to Guru Sindhu Mishra, this rich history took the spotlight once again.

What happens when over one hundred dancers step onto a stage carrying the weight of centuries? They turn a space into a living, breathing classroom for Nrityadhara 3: A celebration of learning, lineage and Bharatanatyam. How do three dancers capture years of quiet discipline in a single moment? Apoorna Bhatnagar, Satakshi Gupta, and Vibhooti Bhardwaj walked out and showed everyone exactly how. These senior disciples began with an effervescent *Ananda Nartana Ganapatim Bhavaye*, pulling the entire room into a space of deep devotion. Soon after, the youngest beginners

offered sincere prayers to Lord Shiva in *Angikam Bhuvanam*, while the junior students followed closely behind, executing sharp footwork in *Mushak Vaahan*, a pushpanjali dedicated to Lord Ganesha. The intermediate students then tackled a *Jatiswaram* in Ragamalika set to Misra Chapu tala, mastering the heavy footwork and landing on every single musical beat with total control. Holding hundreds of people completely spellbound without speaking a single syllable requires absolute mastery. Not everyone can hold a room without saying a word. Arundhati Chakravarty can. Her take on a flustered Yashoda, totally fed up with Krishna's mischief in *Krishna Nee Begane Baro*, had the whole room laughing. Then the mood took a sharp turn. Tanusha Tyagi stepped up with a powerful padam, "Tan Chhar Byal Kapal Bhushan," a rare excerpt from the Ramcharitmanas. Playing a ter-

rified mother, Maena, she reacted to Shiva's terrifying band of ghosts at his wedding, showing genuine desperation to save her daughter Parvati from the match. You could feel every ounce of that intense emotion in the room. The evening also brought fresh courage to the floor, with adult beginners making their stage debut to the well-known *Shri Ramchandra Kripalu Bhajamana*. Seeing them up there proved it's never too late to start. Finally, the senior batch wrapped up the night with a stunning Thillana set to Paras raga and Adi tala. They mapped out intricate, rapid footwork with intense, energetic pacing. Guru Sindhu Mishra has built a space where discipline, devotion, and creativity converge perfectly. Watching these students from different generations share the stage proves that classical traditions will continue to thrive loudly, filling the room with a vibrant, living energy.

CINEMA



PRIDE FILLS THE SCREEN

TEAM VIVA

Love extends beyond labels and with June, it's the perfect time to celebrate these different forms of love through the intersection where pride meets plot. For years, screens mostly framed queer stories as tragedies. But pride is not about tragedies. It's a beautiful celebration of living proudly. Long before this global movement, Indian cinema quietly delivered *Badnam Basti*, a bisexual romance completely free of shame, labels, or punishment.

While we absolutely need raw, unflinching mirrors like the *Guatemalan* drama *Jose* to show how hard surviving a conservative society can be and still crave the quiet, sun soaked heartbreak of *Call Me By Your Name*, Queer cinema refuses a cycle of sorrow. Surviving represents the opening act; we deserve a life we claim as our own. Look at *The Birdcage* — it radiates pure, glorious chaos. Anything's Possible is just a girl falling for a boy, the world not ending and somehow that simplicity feels like the most radical thing cinema has offered in years. Queer lives get to be funny, messy, and wonderfully unremarkable too. This June, give joy the same seat at the table as sorrow, because love in all its beautiful mess has never belonged to anyone but the people living it.



The soul of Rajasthan

PHOTOS: PANKAJ KUMAR

Ancient desert melodies, folk artists, and vintage photographs breathe life into Rajasthan's enduring cultural soul

Long before it became a recorded track, "Padharo Mhare Des" served as the ultimate invitation to the sands of Rajasthan. Rooted in centuries of desert hospitality, the phrase grew into a massive cultural symbol under the leadership of Lalit K Panwar. By 2011, Gauri R Yadwadkar wanted to put all that history on record. She managed to get musical giants like Jagjit Singh and Pandit Vishwa Mohan Bhatt into one room to work together. They shared one clear objective. They wanted to take all that welcoming heritage and turn it directly into music.



PHOTOS: PANKAJ KUMAR

traditional instruments played loudly, pushing back against the forced silence that so often threatens ancient folk traditions. Through the Arpan Music Lab, these gifted creators finally have a stage left to stand on.

A visual exhibition anchored the music perfectly. The space featured an exclusive edit of photographs by Sudhir Kasliwal. For sixty years, Kasliwal has been pointing his lens at everyday life across the state, and his portraits tell a very raw story. Hearing those young voices hit sharp, clear notes while standing surrounded by decades of local history gave the room an undeniable energy. Led by singer Manesha A Agarwal, the gathering merged vintage photography with live folk music, showing exactly how these invaluable heritage expressions hold their ground in a modern world.



CULTURAL HERITAGE PRESERVED THROUGH MUSIC, PHOTOGRAPHY, AND COMMUNITY ARTISTRY

PHOTOS: PANKAJ KUMAR

The Shah Factor

Amit Shah is perhaps one of the most revered yet controversial figures in contemporary Indian politics. Known for his clarity of vision and unwavering commitment to his objectives, he has often attracted criticism for his distinctive working style. Yet, many of the decisions he has pursued have required a firm hand and strong resolve to achieve their intended goals. Inspired by his political ideal, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Shah has sought to bring the same determination and administrative acumen to the Ministry of Home Affairs, earning an enviable reputation as a devoted follower of the Iron Man of India



ANOOP BOSE

October 22, 2018 marked a most fateful milestone in India's long trackless journey. India's Prime Minister Narendra Damodardas Modi proudly unveiled the "Statue of Unity" as a monumental ode to independent India's first Home Minister Bharat Ratna Sardar Vallabhbhai Jhaverbhai Patel (popularly known as the "Iron Man of India") on the solemn occasion of his 143rd birth anniversary at Kevadiya, ensconced on the banks of the holy river Narmada, facing the sprawling concrete gravity Sardar Sarovar Dam (set in motion by Modi on 17th September, 2017 to commemorate his 67th birthday!), southeast of Vadodara. The steel and bronze cast statue, masterfully chiselled by the internationally acclaimed sculptor Padma Bhushan Ram Vanji Sutar, turned out to be a breathtaking engineering marvel that cost ₹2,989 crores, weighed 130,000 tonnes and rose to a height of 182 metres, making it the tallest statue in the world bearing twice the height of New York's iconic copper-clad Statue of Liberty! In his awe inspiring speech, surcharged with unbridled emotion, Modi paid an effusive, glowing personal tribute to Sardar, "This statue is not only a token of respect for his strength and dedication, but is also an expression of New India's new self-confidence." The benign, unobtrusive presence of India's longest serving 32nd Home Minister Amithbhai Anilchandra Shah, the second most powerful personage in the country who proudly dons the coveted mantle of the mighty Sardar and is hailed far and wide as his true reincarnation, lent a very special flavour to the august event. Not to be outdone by Modi's historic inauguration, Shah unfurled an 11 foot tall, 1,100 kg statue of Sardar on December 8, 2024 in Jodhpur. In his impassioned address, Shah asserted in ringing tones that Sardar was "a page of history to which history and the nation both failed to do justice...the truth cannot be suppressed and will eventually shine like the sun at the right time."

Shah was propitiously born on October 22, 1964, at approximately 05:25 a.m. IST, into an affluent Gujarati family ensconced in Bombay (now Mumbai) when the astronomical skies were marked by a Full Moon in its Waning Gibbous phase, with about 97.8% illumination. His father, Anilchandra Shah, belonged to the prominent "Nagar Seth" family of Mansa, a quaint city belonging to a former princely state in Gandhinagar, and owned and operated a successful PVC pipe business. His mother Kusumben was deeply rooted in Gandhian ideals and instilled in him a sense of fierce patriotism and strict discipline from a very early age. He spent his childhood in Mansa and studied in the prestigious Sheth C. M. High School in Mansa until the age of 16.

Upon completion of his school education, his family shifted to Ahmedabad. Thereafter, he studied biochemistry at the premier CU Shah Science College in Ahmedabad. He graduated with a

Bachelor's of Science (B.Sc.) in biochemistry and then joined his father's business, working simultaneously as a stockbroker and in co-operative banks in Ahmedabad.

Shah's political indoctrination began at an impressionable age. At the age of 13, he pasted posters for Maniben Patel, the indefatigably Gandhian daughter of Sardar, in the 1977 general election in which she contested and won the Mehsana Lok Sabha seat. And at 16, he voluntarily joined the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), founded in Nagpur on September 27, 1925 by the noted physician Dr. Keshav Baliram Hedgewar. After joining the RSS, Shah got closely associated with the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), the student wing of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). He transitioned to the Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha, the BJP's youth wing, in 1987. During these years, Shah actively participated in the Ram Janmabhoomi movement,

He is an ardent fan of cricket and also enjoys playing chess. He is an avid reader, with a particular interest in history, and a movie buff

which vigorously campaigned for a temple to be built on the site of the Babri Masjid, believed by Hindus worldwide to be the exact birthplace of Lord Rama, the seventh avatar of Lord Vishnu, aptly described by Swami Vivekananda as "the ancient idol of the heroic ages, the embodiment of truth, of morality...and, above all, the ideal king". Shah also participated in the "Ekta Yatra", a rally that commenced on December 11, 1991 to advance the cause of the movement. On December 6, 1992, the Babri Masjid ceased to exist. On November 19, 2019, a landmark judgement of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India, entrusted the site exclusively to Hindus and directed the state to grant an alternate site in Ayodhya to Muslims. The grand, colossal Ram Mandir was later built on the hallowed site and formally inaugurated by Modi in a historic "Pran Pratishtha" ceremony on January 22, 2024. Shah could not physically attend the event due to compelling reasons, but was present in spirit as he watched the live telecast from Ayodhya while offering prayers at the famed Sri Laxmi Narayan Temple (Birla Mandir) in New Delhi, inaugurated by Mahatma Gandhi on March 12, 1939.

In the 1990s, the BJP began to democratically wrest power from the Indian National Congress in Gujarat. Shah was the lynchpin during this era of state politics and helped broaden the party's membership base. In 1997, Shah fought an election for the first time, winning a by-election from the Sarkhej constituency and becoming a member of the state's legislative assembly. He retained his seat in the assembly elections of 1998, and the party formed a government led by Keshubhai Patel. Shah assumed office as the Vice President of



THE IMMEASURABLE REINCARNATION OF SARDAR PATEL, THE IRON MAN OF INDIA

ESuresh

the party in 1999.

On October 7, 2001, the BJP's national leadership scrupulously replaced Patel as the Chief Minister of Gujarat with Modi. On February 27, 2002, the ill-fated S-6 coach of the Sabarmati Express carrying Hindu pilgrims was deliberately set on fire by a violent mob near the Godhra railway station, incinerating 59 innocent passengers, including a 16-day-old baby. This triggered widespread communal violence marked by destruction and bloodshed. On July 19, 2002, Modi voluntarily resigned as the Chief Minister purely on moral grounds. Snap assembly elections ensued in December, 2002, and the BJP emerged triumphant again. Modi resumed his Chief

Ministership, which he continued uninterrupted for 12 years. On February 8, 2012, a Supreme Court-appointed Special Investigation Team (SIT) filed a closure report citing "no prosecutable evidence" against Modi in the Godhra upheaval. This clean chit was eventually upheld in a definitive June 24, 2022 Supreme Court ruling. After the 2002 elections, Shah was made a minister in the Modi government and held multiple portfolios, including the key department of home affairs.

On July 25, 2010, Shah was arrested by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and slapped with serious charges in the Sohrabuddin Sheikh case, at the vengeful instance of his vicious rival

P.Chidambaram, the then Home Minister. Shah was given bail after three months in prison but was barred from entering Gujarat for two years.

On September 27, 2012, the Supreme Court allowed him to return to Gujarat, and he won the state assembly elections that year from the Naranpura constituency. On December 30, 2014, the Special CBI Court discharged him due to a lack of evidence. Shah was exonerated by the Supreme Court on August 1, 2016, when it dismissed a petition challenging his discharge. During these turbulent days of trial and testing for Shah, his long standing and faithful "foul weather friend" Tushar Mehta, presently India's redoubtable Solicitor General, stood behind him like a Rock of Gibraltar imbued with his razor sharp intellect and incredible legal acumen!

On September 13, 2013, the BJP's central leadership picked Modi as the Prime Ministerial candidate ahead of the 2014 general election. Following in the footsteps of Modi, Shah shifted his political locus from Gujarat to New Delhi. He was appointed General Secretary of the party on March 13, 2013 and given overall charge of the poll strategy for the "Gateway to Delhi" state of Uttar Pradesh. The BJP won the election with an outright majority of 282 seats. The victory was powered by the party's unprecedented win in 71 of Uttar Pradesh's 80 seats, thanks to Shah's superlative mastery of electoral strategy and management. Modi became the Prime Minister on May 26, 2014, and Shah was elected the party's National President on July 9, 2014. On August 19, 2017, Shah was elected to the Rajya Sabha. Two years later, he won the Lok Sabha seat from Gandhinagar. The BJP returned to power with an overwhelming mandate of 303 seats, and Modi remained unshackled as the Prime Minister. Shah had played a stellar strategic role in the BJP's sweeping election juggernaut. On May 30, 2019, he was made the Home Minister in the second Modi government.

Shah retained the post in Modi's third term after the BJP won the general election on June 4, 2024 and formed the government on June 9, 2024. As the Home Minister, Shah deftly oversaw two of the most far reaching political changes made by the Modi government viz. the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution, and an amendment to the Citizenship Act.

Article 370, an antiquated, superfluous provision that gave the Muslim majority state of Jammu & Kashmir special status and a high degree of internal autonomy, was effectively revoked on August 5, 2019. At the same time, Jammu & Kashmir was downgraded from statehood and reorganized into two distinct and separate union territories: Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh. The Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), passed by Parliament on December 11, 2019, provided a fast-tracked pathway to Indian citizenship to persecuted religious minorities from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan.

I am highly emboldened to chronicle three singular achievements of Shah in recent times viz. his steadfastly emancipating India, after three years of sustained, intensive anti-Maoist operations, from the scourge of Naxalism that had plagued India since the armed ultra-left Naxalbari uprising in 1967 in April, 2026, his tireless striving that enabled the BJP to trounce the autocratic, corruption-ridden All India Trinamool Congress (AITC) party in the last assembly election in West Bengal under the valiant stewardship of Modi in a landslide mandate in May, 2026 that brought into its kitty a rich harvest of 208 assembly seats and his assiduously Herculean effort in June, 2026 to secure India's long porous borders with Pakistan and Bangladesh from illegal immigration.

Significantly, Shah, working in close unison with Modi, is dealing a death blow to the twin dangers of global terrorism and cross border infiltration that hang heavily over our heads like the Sword of Damocles.

The relationship between Modi and Shah is an indefinable one. Their multifarious fans and admirers laud the duo as the "two wheels of a car" and compare them to the brothers Rama,

In the 1990s, the BJP began to democratically wrest power from the Indian National Congress in Gujarat. Shah was the lynchpin during this era of state politics

representing the "Paramatma", and Lakshmana, representing the "Jivatma", in an utopian Ram Rajya. Modi and Shah are inextricably attached to each other and undoubtedly share an indestructible bond of affection, respect, trust and frankness akin to the special relationship that existed between the legendary Indian saint and mystic Ramakrishna Parmahansa Dev and his noble disciple Swami Vivekananda. Shah is popularly feted as a modern-day Chanakya because of his extraordinary skills as a political guru, master strategist and decisive administrator. He is an ardent fan of cricket and also enjoys playing chess. He is an avid reader, with a particular interest in history, and a movie buff. He also revels in music, with a particular appreciation for Indian classical music and regional folk genres. Shah and his devoted spirited wife, Sonal Shah, have a son Jay Shah, who is a cricket administrator and businessman, and presently the Chairman of the International Cricket Council (ICC).

Shah's invincible ebullient spirit, unceasing vigilance, piercing perception, omnipotent gaze, delightful sense of humour and mesmerising oratorical skills give him a truly monolithic character. The Indian people are justly proud of him and are superbly confident of his unassailable courage and integrity and his tenacious adherence to noble grassroots principles and intense dedication to the path of high endeavour.

The author is an internationally reputed senior lawyer practising in the Supreme Court of India and various High Courts and Tribunals in India. He is an avid debater, public speaker, writer, broadcaster, telecaster, artist, painter, sculptor, music critic and filmmaker



As the Home Minister, Shah deftly oversaw two of the most far reaching political changes made by the Modi government viz. the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution, and an amendment to the Citizenship Act



"WE COULD ONLY SOLVE OUR PROBLEMS BY COOPERATING WITH OTHER COUNTRIES. IT WOULD HAVE BEEN PARADOXICAL NOT TO COOPERATE"
— MIKHAIL GORBACHEV



What India and Nepal debate often misses

Civilisational ties and territorial sovereignty are not contradictory but complementary

Prime Minister Balendra Shah's recent remarks in Nepal's Parliament on the India-Nepal boundary issue have generated considerable debate. Yet much of the discussion has focused on individual words rather than the larger significance of what was said.

At its core, the Prime Minister's message reflected an important reality: territorial concerns and civilisational ties are not competing ideas. A mature state is capable of safeguarding both.

By asserting Nepal's concerns regarding the Kalapani area while acknowledging the deep cultural and familial ties that bind Nepal and India, he highlighted a truth often lost in contemporary discourse—that sovereignty and coexistence can advance together. Recognizing shared lives and livelihoods across the border is not a denial of national interest; it is an acknowledgment of reality.

India-Nepal relations cannot be viewed solely through the prism of maps and boundaries. Unlike many international borders, the India-Nepal border has evolved within a landscape of shared communities. It is shaped not only by treaties and political agreements but also by rivers, forests, mountains, and settlements whose lives have been intertwined for generations.

The relationship is rooted in centuries of shared civilizational ties, roti-beti sambandh, pilgrimage routes, and philosophical traditions that have been preserved and nurtured across generations.

Families exist across the border. In the Terai, communities share language, culture, and kinship through Maithili, Bhojpuri, and Awadhi traditions. In eastern Nepal, long-standing connections link communities with Sikkim, Assam, and West Bengal. In the Far West, these ties with Uttarakhand remain intertwined. Literature, folklore, and everyday life remain testimony to a relationship that has never been confined by geography alone.

In many parts of the frontier, an Indian child may attend a Nepali school because it is closer than the one on the Indian side. A Nepali youth may cross the border daily for work and return home each evening. Communities trade together, celebrate together, and often share family ties through generations of cross-border marriages.

These realities do not weaken sovereignty. They explain why Nepal-India relations require a degree of sensitivity and understanding that goes beyond conventional border politics.

The challenge today is that issues requiring patient dialogue, technical expertise, and sustained groundwork are often overshadowed by narratives designed for temporary



NAVITA SRIKANT

political gain. Across South Asia, it is easier to manufacture outrage than to undertake the difficult work of negotiation. It is easier to amplify differences than to acknowledge interdependence. Differences between neighbours are natural, particularly where geography, history, and human settlement have evolved together

over centuries. What should concern us is not the existence of differences, but the growing tendency to interpret every disagreement through the lens of mistrust. No boundary issue between neighbours has ever been resolved through social media campaigns, emotional slogans, or competing nationalist narratives. Durable solutions emerge through dialogue, trust, political courage, and institutional mechanisms.

Prime Minister Shah's remarks are significant precisely because they suggest that national interest and constructive engagement can coexist. A leader can firmly assert a country's position while simultaneously recognizing the human realities that shape bilateral relations.

THIS CIVILISATIONAL CONTEXT DOES NOT ELIMINATE THE NEED FOR BOUNDARY DEMARCATION OR PROTECTING NATIONAL INTERESTS. IT PROVIDES THE TRUST NECESSARY TO ADDRESS DIFFICULT QUESTIONS THROUGH DIALOGUE RATHER THAN CONFRONTATION

Personal Reflections

During my time working at Singha Durbar, I often spent mornings at Pashupatinath Temple reflecting on the civilizational ties that bind Nepal and India. Conversations with scholars on Pashupatinath, Kedarnath, and Kailash Mansarovar reinforced a simple realization: the Himalayas have long connected peoples, traditions, and pilgrimages across present-day political boundaries.

The same realization emerged while travelling through Mithila Parikrama and the Ramayana Circuit, the Mithila Parikrama, one encounters a living cultural landscape that predates modern borders. Sita Maa or Prince Siddharth's journey cannot be reduced to a territorial claim. These remain shared inheritances of a civilization.

This civilisational context does not eliminate the need for boundary demarcation or protecting national interests. It provides the trust necessary to address difficult questions through dialogue rather than confrontation.

Rabi Lamichhane in Delhi

The recent visit to India by the Nepali delegation led by Shri Rabi Lamichhane, former Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Rastriya Swatantra Party, reflected the continued importance both countries attach to engagement at the highest levels. Meetings with Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, National Security Advisor Shri Ajit Doval, External Affairs Minister Dr S. Jaishankar, Home Minister Shri Amit Shah, senior officials and political leadership underscored a simple truth: sustained dialogue remains the most credible pathway for advancing holistic cooperation.

The significance of such engagement lies not merely in protocol but in its purpose. The real test of leadership is not whether differences exist; it is whether leaders possess the confidence and statesmanship to ensure that those differences do not define the relationship.

Conclusion

The India-Nepal border is shaped by both history and geography. Rivers alter their course, settlements evolve, and patterns of cultivation change. Boundary management therefore requires continuous cooperation, political commitment, and mutual trust. In a region where borders have often reflected the legacies of external historical forces, India and Nepal have an opportunity to demonstrate that enduring neighbourly relations are built through sovereign dialogue, shared interests, and an unwavering commitment to each other's stability, prosperity, and dignity.

Today, social media appears more interested in winning arguments than understanding the essence of Prime Minister Shah's statement or India's engagement with Shri Rabi Lamichhane. People on both sides are dissecting words and optics while overlooking a larger truth: two countries sharing centuries of civilizational, cultural, and familial ties possess a unique reservoir of trust. Shared civilization does not eliminate the need for boundary management; it provides the foundation for dialogue and lasting solutions. As someone who has lived, worked, travelled, prayed, and learned across Nepal, I cannot accept that a relationship shaped by the Himalayas, Darshan Shastra, and countless human connections should be reduced to competing narratives.

No matter how many provocative statements emerge, or how much facts are twisted into conjecture, the ship must sail through.

Shared civilisational ethos gives leaders what treaties alone cannot — Trust, the most valuable currency of diplomacy.

The Himalayas may define our geography, but it is trust that will define our future.

(The author is a financial, geopolitical, security analyst and an India-Nepal Relations Observer)

Laos pledges all-out offensive against cyber scam networks



ASHOKE RAJ

As cybercrime syndicates spread across Southeast Asia and increasingly target Indian citizens, Laos has vowed a tougher crackdown on transnational scam centres that have evolved into one of the world's most lucrative criminal enterprises.

In an exclusive interaction with *The Pioneer* during his official visit to India, Laos Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Thongsavan Phomvihane said dismantling cyber-scams operations and human trafficking networks has become one of his government's highest priorities, amid growing international concern over the rapid expansion of organised crime groups across the region.

"Scam centres are a challenge for Laos and other countries. It is a priority to tackle them. Our government is actively battling them," Phomvihane said, stressing that Laos is working closely with neighbouring countries to disrupt criminal syndicates operating across borders.

His remarks come at a time when India is grappling with a rising number of citizens being lured into cyber-fraud operations based in parts of Southeast Asia, particularly Laos, Myanmar and Cambodia. Many victims are recruited through fake job advertisements and fraudulent employment agencies promising lucrative overseas careers. Instead, they find themselves trapped in heavily guarded scam compounds and forced to participate in online fraud schemes targeting victims worldwide.

According to information provided by the Government of India in Parliament, cybercrime networks have increasingly exploited social media platforms and recruitment channels to lure Indians abroad. Once transported to scam hubs, many are allegedly coerced into conducting online investment frauds, romance scams, cryptocurrency scams and other digital crimes.

In response, Indian missions in Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar have stepped up rescue and repatriation efforts. New Delhi has repeatedly raised the issue with host governments while embassies continue to coordinate with local authorities, immigration agencies and law-enforcement bodies to secure the release and return of affected citizens.

The challenge facing governments across the region has become even more complex following a recent warning from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), which says criminal groups originating in East and Southeast Asia are rapidly expanding beyond their traditional bases.

In a major report released this year, the UN agency warned that organised crime syndicates behind large-scale online scam operations are increasingly relocating from traditional hotspots such as Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and the Philippines to newer destinations across Asia and other regions of the world. According to the report, criminal networks are adopting what investigators describe as a "hedging strategy" — expanding into multiple jurisdictions simultaneously to protect their operations from law-enforcement crackdowns.

The agency noted that whenever authorities dismantle scam compounds in one country, criminal operators frequently relocate, rebuild and resume operations elsewhere, exploiting weak governance systems, porous borders and regulatory loopholes.

UNODC estimates that hundreds of industrial-scale scam centres across the region generate nearly US\$40 billion annually. These operations increasingly rely on cryptocurrencies, underground banking networks and sophisticated money-laundering systems that allow illicit profits to move rapidly through the global financial system.



The report warns that cyber-enabled fraud and illicit financial networks have evolved into a highly organized transnational industry capable of undermining governance, fuelling corruption and weakening state institutions in vulnerable countries. Against this backdrop, Laos is seeking deeper regional cooperation to tackle both cybercrime and human trafficking linked to scam compounds.

Phomvihane said joint operations involving neighbouring countries have produced encouraging results and underlined the importance of sustained coordination among governments, law-enforcement agencies and international organizations. Security concerns, however, were only one part of the minister's visit to India.

The trip comes as India and Laos celebrate the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations and marks the first visit by a Lao foreign minister to India in more than a decade.

During talks with External Affairs Minister Dr S. Jaishankar, both sides reviewed cooperation in areas ranging from development partnerships and capacity building to healthcare, pharmaceuticals, connectivity and cultural exchanges.

Phomvihane highlighted the deep civilisational links between the two countries, pointing particularly to their shared Ramayana heritage, which continues to serve as an enduring cultural bridge between India and Laos.

INDIA'S RESCUE OPERATIONS

CAMBODIA: 44 Indians rescued in 2022; 207 in 2023; 982 in 2024; 1,300 in 2025.

LAO PDR: 74 rescued in 2022; 244 in 2023; 558 in 2024; 1,421 in 2025.

MYANMAR: 338 rescued in 2022; 89 in 2023; 147 in 2024; 1,594 in 2025.

He also praised India's role in preserving Laos' cultural heritage, especially through the restoration of the UNESCO-listed Vat Phou temple complex. The project is widely regarded as one of India's most successful cultural diplomacy initiatives in Southeast Asia. The Lao minister also welcomed India's Quick Impact Projects under the Mekong-Ganga Cooperation framework, which have supported community-development initiatives across Laos.

He expressed interest in expanding cooperation in pharmaceuticals and healthcare. Yet the shadow of cybercrime loomed large over discussions surrounding regional security. For India, the issue is no longer simply a matter of online fraud. It increasingly intersects with human trafficking, organized crime, money laundering and national security concerns. For countries such as Laos, the challenge lies in preventing criminal syndicates from exploiting geographical vulnerabilities and cross-border networks.

As governments across Southeast Asia intensify efforts to dismantle scam compounds, experts caution that isolated crackdowns will not be enough. Without sustained intelligence-sharing, coordinated enforcement operations and stronger international cooperation, criminal groups may simply shift locations and continue operating under new identities.

The convergence of Laos' renewed enforcement push and the UNODC's warning serves as a reminder that cyber-scams networks are no longer a regional problem. They have evolved into a global criminal industry-one that increasingly demands a global response.

The writer is an Associate Editor (Foreign Affairs) at *The Pioneer*

Unveiling ancient feminism: Challenging incursion into ancient Indian literature

Due to our cultural coding about women in ancient times, the negative statements about them in Manusmriti and Kamasutra rise to the surface. However, it is important to know another side to such texts which focuses on women's economic wisdom and innate intellect. Mukul Kumar's book *Women in the Womb of Time, Unveiling Ancient Feminism* is a bold and challenging incursion into ancient Indian literature, including the gaps, silences and misrepresentations that have surrounded the women figures in our long legacy. From this complex book, I wish to isolate three factors that have impressed me the most.

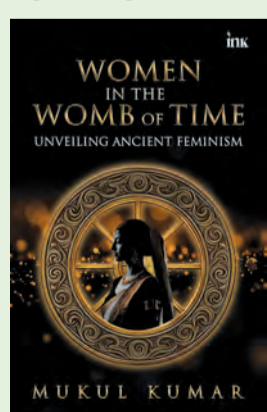
First that it is a male writer who is investigating feminism, both ancient and modern, with a deep sense of commitment to getting at the truth of the heritage. I say this because an unfortunate divide has occurred over time with feminism being identified with a



MALASHRI LAL

shrill and aggressive mode of protest and masculinity has often been interpreted through the gender lens of physical form. Mukul Kumar has a far more nuanced and comprehensive view in discussing both women and men through well-known texts and arguing cogently that women in ancient India had a status of equality, dignity, and self-hood. He does this without denigrating the men or blaming society in any simplistic manner. For instance, when he speaks of a character such as Ahalya, he raises the question of ambiguity in the story, which traditionally blames Ahalya for infidelity, but does not see the deceit of Indra and the frustrating ascetic husband, Gautama. This is only one example of how Mukul successfully enters the intelligent and acute mind of women characters who have been marginalised or wrongly blamed for decisions they have taken.

My second point is an appreciation of Mukul Kumar's scholarly, textual research. This impresses me as a recognition of a cultural legacy that originates in the Ardhanareeshwar concept that is the female and male conjoined and not separate, coexisting not competing, mutually supportive, and not disruptive. I agree with Mukul Kumar's overall summation that feminism in India derives from an ancient legacy of gender equality, whereas the much later western feminist movement is grounded in oppositional gender viewpoints. The chapter on Manusmriti is a masterpiece as this is a controversial text where the grammar of Sanskrit has an important role to play. "In a feminist interpretation of Manusmriti, we have to take cogni-



Title: Women in the Womb of Time: Unveiling Ancient Feminism
Author: Mukul Kumar
MRP: ₹799
Publisher: BluOne Ink

right to leave a husband who abuses her" (135). To understand how pertinent these directions are, even now, we just have to see the newspaper every day,

and read the discussions on sex-workers and domestic violence. Both single as well as married women continue to be vulnerable and seek protection under law. These are small examples that I give of the deep analytical thesis presented by the author.

My third point is about the practical uses of this book on ancient feminism. At last, a contemporary scholar has undertaken a rational study of the early period within the large framework of not only the texts but also sculpture and numismatics or the study of coins, thereby widening the scope of reference whereby women are presented in a complex social system. Women are not just wives, daughters, mothers, and householders, but they also impact the economics and the sociology of their times. Moreover, by presenting them as change agents, Mukul Kumar elevates the status of women from blindly submissive creatures to intelligent people who direct the thinking of their contemporaries and the younger generation. Mukul is not denying the existence of patriarchy, but modifying our approach to it by showing the func-

tioning of women within the scope of their circumstances as active participants in the history of India.

I conclude by appreciating the implied contrast that the book presents between Indian feminism and western feminism, something that I have tried to instil in my classroom teaching and in my books. I return to the image that has always guided me and that is of the equal partnership of women and men as the ideal relationship from ancient India until now. By contrast, Western feminism is far more recent and derives from a competitive idea of man versus woman. Hence the vocabulary and the critical stance is entirely different. This book brings the required gravity and scholarly underpinning to the conjectures about equality in the Indian tradition, and holds up the flag for the early emergence of Feminism in India.

Malashri Lal, is a retired Professor, English Department, University of Delhi. She is the recipient of the Kalinga Fiction Award. Her honours include the prestigious 'Maharani Gayatri Devi Award for Women's Excellence' and the SETU award of Excellence

"OUR BODIES ARE OUR GARDENS; OUR WILLS ARE OUR GARDENERS"
— WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

MASIK KARTHIGAI

Renewing faith under the Krittika Star



ANIL RAJPUT

Masik Karthigai, especially revered in Tamil religious tradition, is a monthly Hindu observance dedicated primarily to Lord Murugan, also known as Kartikeya, the deity of courage, wisdom and spiritual attainment. Observed each month on the day when the Krittika, or Karthigai, Nakshatra prevails, the occasion is regarded as an auspicious time for offering prayers and seeking divine guidance. Devotees visit Murugan temples, offer prayers, light lamps, recite sacred hymns and observe fasting or dietary restrictions according to local customs. While less elaborate than the annual Karthigai Deepam festival, Masik Karthigai serves as a recurring spiritual reminder of the triumph of wisdom over ignorance, devotion over ego and righteous conduct over dishonesty.

The significance of Masik Karthigai is rooted in ancient Hindu traditions surrounding the Krittika constellation, which occupies a special place in the mythology of Lord Murugan. According to sacred narratives, the divine child born from the fiery energy of Lord Shiva was nurtured by the six Krittika maidens, with whom the name Kartikeya is traditionally associated. Over time, the Krittika star became closely associated with Murugan worship, particularly in South India, where monthly observances developed alongside temple traditions and devotional practices. The recurring appearance of the Krittika star each month came to be regarded as an auspicious occasion for renewing one's spiritual discipline, expressing gratitude and seeking strength to overcome obstacles.

This is why the cuisine of Masik Karthigai assumes civilisational significance even though there is no single rigid menu that every family follows each month. While Karthigai Deepam carries a larger and more elaborate culinary tradition, Masik Karthigai is inspired by the same devotional heritage in a quieter and simpler form. Some homes prepare only one offering, some add a small sweet, others include a light tiffin meal after worship, while a few prepare several dishes connected with Tamil festive cooking. What remains common is the intention. Food is freshly prepared, vegetarian, often sattvic, and offered first in prayer before being shared. As the evening approaches, the kitchen itself becomes an extension of the ceremony. Rice is washed, jaggery is melted, coconut is grated, ghee is warmed, lentils are soaked, sesame is roasted, curry leaves crackle in hot oil, and ordinary ingredients are transformed into nourishment rooted in inherited recipes.

Among the most loved offerings associated with the Karthigai tradition is poru urundai, a sweet made from puffed rice and jaggery syrup. Its beauty lies not only in its simplicity, but also in the skill required to prepare it well. Light and airy puffed rice is folded into dark, hot jaggery syrup and shaped quickly by hand before the mixture cools. It is a dish of timing, touch and inherited instinct, where an ordinary grain becomes a firm,



glossy and deeply satisfying round of prasadam. The syrup must reach the right consistency so that the balls retain their shape without becoming hard. Cardamom may be added, and in some homes small coconut pieces or roasted gram are mixed in for texture. Its presence near the lamp feels natural, since it is humble, golden, sweet and easy to distribute after worship.

Closely related to it are aval poru urundai and nel poru urundai, both of which reflect the agricultural imagination of Tamil homes. Aval poru urundai uses puffed flattened rice, while nel poru urundai uses puffed paddy, giving it a distinct texture and a deeper connection with harvest and grain. Alongside them, families often prepare kadalai urundai, made with roasted peanuts and jaggery, bringing nuttiness and strength, or ellu urundai, made with sesame seeds and jaggery, carrying the traditional association of sesame with purity and ritual offering. Together, these urundais show how a small handful of ingredients can become devotional food. They are not elaborate in appearance, yet they carry the warmth of the hand that shaped them and the memory of homes where such recipes are learnt by watching elders rather than by reading measurements.

The appam family gives Masik Karthigai another layer of sweetness. Nei appam, made with rice flour or soaked and ground rice, jaggery, banana, coconut and ghee, is soft at the centre and gently crisp at the edges when prepared in an appam pan. The ghee gives aroma, the banana gives body, and the jaggery lends depth rather than sharp sweetness. Sweet appam may be made in slightly different ways across households, sometimes with wheat flour, sometimes with rice flour, and sometimes with an added touch of cardamom or dry



ginger. Vellai appam, though milder and often less sweet, holds its own place in the wider Karthigai spread. In these appams, the fragrance of ghee, jaggery and rice flour fills the house even before the lamps are lit, making the act of cooking itself part of the evening's devotion.

Another cherished preparation is adhirasam, one of Tamil cuisine's most respected traditional sweets. Made from rice flour and jaggery, its preparation requires patience and experience. The rice is soaked, dried and powdered, the jaggery is melted into syrup of the desired consistency, and the dough is rested to give the sweet the right texture. When flattened and fried, adhirasam becomes dark, fragrant and slightly chewy, with a taste that belongs unmistakably to religious events, weddings and household festivals. It may not be made every month for Masik Karthigai, but when it appears, it brings the weight of tradition with it. A simpler but equally symbolic offering is maa vilakku maavu, a sweet flour mixture made from rice flour and jaggery, shaped into a lamp with a hollow centre. Ghee is poured into it, a cotton wick is placed within it, and the lamp is lit for prayer. In this striking preparation, food and flame become one. After worship, the sweetened flour is broken and shared as prasadam, turning the lamp itself into nourishment.

The sweet offerings are extended through payasam, paal payasam and sakkaraai pongal, each carrying a different mood of abundance. Payasam may be made with rice, moong dal, vermicelli or aval, simmered with milk or coconut milk, sweetened with sugar or jaggery, and finished with cardamom, cashews and raisins fried in ghee. Paal payasam is gentler, made with milk and rice slowly cooked until creamy, with sweetness kept soft and devotional. Sakkaraai pongal, prepared

with rice, moong dal, jaggery and ghee, is richer and more festive. The dal gives body, the jaggery gives warmth, and the ghee carries the aroma of cashews, raisins and cardamom through the dish. In the context of Masik Karthigai, these dishes remind us that sweetness in Indian ritual food is rarely only indulgence. It signifies auspiciousness, gratitude, and the wish that the household remain nourished in both body and spirit.

Yet the cuisine of the day should not be seen only through sweets. Savoury preparations are equally important, as prayer is often followed by an evening meal. Milagu adai is one of the most distinctive savoury dishes associated with Karthigai cooking. Made with rice, lentils, black pepper, cumin, curry leaves and sometimes coconut, it is thicker than dosa and more rustic in character. The pepper gives heat, the lentils provide strength, and the crisp edges contrast with the softer centre. It is often eaten with butter, jaggery, coconut chutney or a simple accompaniment. In a spread otherwise rich with jaggery, rice flour and ghee, milagu adai brings balance. Its peppery warmth gives the meal depth and reminds us that sacred food is not always soft or sweet. It can also be robust, grounding and deeply satisfying.

Other savoury dishes bring variety to the table. Thattai, a crisp rice flour snack seasoned with urad dal flour, sesame seeds, curry leaves, asafoetida and sometimes chana dal, is fried until golden and brittle. Its sharp crackle offers contrast to the softness of appam and the chewiness of adhirasam. Vadai, especially ulundu vadai, is also prepared in some homes as an offering or as part of the evening meal. Made from urad dal batter, shaped with a hole in the centre and fried until crisp outside and soft within, it carries the familiar taste of Tamil temple prasadam and household celebration. Sundal adds a healthier and simpler savoury note. Chickpeas, black chana, green gram or cowpeas are soaked, cooked and tempered with mustard seeds, curry leaves, asafoetida, green chilli and grated coconut. It is light, protein-rich and easy to offer, making it well suited to a monthly observance.

Rice preparations complete the meal in many households, especially when the family prefers a proper dinner after prayers. Ven pongal, made with rice and moong dal, tempered with black pepper, cumin, ginger, curry leaves, cashews and ghee, brings warmth and comfort. Lemon rice offers brightness through turmeric, lemon juice, mustard seeds, curry leaves, peanuts and chillies, while coconut rice brings a gentler flavour through fresh grated coconut, cashews, urad dal, chana dal and curry leaves. Curd rice, cooled with yogurt and tempered lightly with mustard, ginger and curry leaves, often becomes the final dish, calming the palate after sweets and fried snacks. These rice dishes show how the meal moves from offering to nourishment, from the sweetness of prasadam to the fulfilment of an everyday meal made special to honour the occasion.

To this repertoire are added dishes that sit comfortably between sacred offering and familiar Tamil home food. Puliyaorai, or tamarind rice, may be prepared in some homes, carrying a deep tangy flavour created from tamarind, sesame oil, roasted spices, peanuts and curry leaves. Kozhukattai, though more strongly associated with Ganesha worship, may still appear in Tamil homes as a steamed rice flour dumpling

filled with coconut and jaggery or with a savoury lentil mixture, depending on family tradition. Paniyaram, made from fermented batter and cooked in small moulds, may be prepared sweet with jaggery or savoury with chillies and curry leaves, though onion is avoided in stricter ritual homes. Vella seedai, small jaggery-sweetened rice flour balls, and uppu seedai, their savoury counterpart, can also be part of the festive kitchen when families want crisp offerings that can be stored and shared. Through these dishes, Masik Karthigai becomes not a fixed menu but a living tradition that adapts to region, household memory and the degree of observance.

Beverages on such days are usually simple, cooling, warming or gently restorative. Panakam, made with jaggery, water, dry ginger, cardamom and sometimes lemon, is valued for its ability to refresh while retaining sacred simplicity. Neer moru, or spiced buttermilk, prepared with diluted curd, curry leaves, ginger, green chilli, asafoetida and coriander, balances the fried and sweet elements of the meal. In some homes, warm paal, or milk, may be offered and later served, especially to children and elders. Sukku coffee, made with dry ginger, black pepper, coriander seeds and palm jaggery, brings warmth to the body and is popular in Tamil households as a traditional digestive drink. The day may also end with South Indian filter coffee, not necessarily as a ritual beverage, but as part of Tamil hospitality, offered after the lamps have burned steadily and the family has gathered around the evening meal.

What makes the cuisine of Masik Karthigai meaningful is not the number of preparations alone, but the way each dish forms part of a larger discipline. Lamps are cleaned, wicks are prepared, rice flour is measured, jaggery is melted, and offerings are arranged with care before they are tasted. Children learn that food is not always consumed immediately, that it can first be offered to the divine in thanksgiving and gratitude. Elders remember recipes passed down through generations, and the act of sharing prasadam after prayer creates a bond between age groups. Taste becomes memory, and memory is transformed into living culture.

Masik Karthigai ultimately reminds us that heritage survives when it is practised, not merely remembered. The lamp may be small, the offering may be simple, and the meal may be prepared within the quiet space of a home, but together they carry the weight of an ancient cultural inheritance. Through poru urundai, adhirasam, maa vilakku maavu, milagu adai, sundal, ven pongal, payasam and the many dishes prepared with devotion, families pass on more than recipes. They pass on discipline, gratitude, faith, memory and identity through taste. It is my belief that these traditions must be consciously preserved by cooking them, explaining them and sharing them with the next generation. A child who tastes prasadam, watches a lamp being lit, and learns why food is first offered before it is eaten receives a living lesson in culture. If we wish our civilisational heritage to endure, we must keep it alive not only in temples and texts, but in kitchens, dining spaces and family conversations. Masik Karthigai calls upon us to preserve this sacred continuity, so that the light of devotion and the taste of tradition continue to guide generations yet to come.

(The writer is Secretary, Cuisine India Society)

Pamper the southern-side of your soul



GYANESHWAR DAYAL

Atmanam's newest outpost at Galleria Market, Sector 28, Gurugram, arrives with quiet confidence, and rightfully so. Already beloved across its Sector 84 and Sector 65 locations, this pure vegetarian South Indian restaurant has earned its growing reputation one perfectly fermented batter at a time.

The name itself sets the tone. Drawn from Sanskrit and the Bhagavad Gita, Atmanam translates to "the self" or "the soul," and the restaurant wears this identity earnestly. Nothing here feels performative. The ambience is warm and unhurried, the kind of space that invites you to slow down, breathe, and actually taste your food.

And the food genuinely deserves that attention. The menu is a thoughtful celebration of South Indian classics, executed with care and technical respect. The Benne Dosas arrive crisp



WHETHER YOU'RE A SOUTH INDIAN FOOD PURIST OR SIMPLY CRAVING SOMETHING WHOLESOME AND HONEST, ATMANAM IS WORTH IT



and buttery, their edges golden and irresistible. Mini Podidlis tossed in ghee are dangerously moreish, while the Dal Vada delivers a satisfying crunch that holds up beautifully against a cup of filter coffee. For something sweet, the Payasam is a gentle, fragrant finish that lingers pleasantly.

What distinguishes Atmanam from the growing crowd of South Indian restaurants is its philosophical consistency. Naturally fermented batters, balanced spicing, and time-honoured cooking techniques aren't marketing language here — they're evident on the plate. There's a sincerity to the cooking that's increasingly rare. The restaurant's commitment to sustainability, including eco-friendly plates that convert to manure, adds another layer of intentionality to the experience.

Whether you're a South Indian food purist or simply craving something wholesome and honest, Atmanam at Galleria Market is worth your time.

Recommended dishes: Benne Dosa, Mini Podidli, Payasam.

FOOD TRIPPING BIHAR

When a cuisine comes of age

TEAM AGENDA

Regional cuisine has always had a flair for the theatrical, but its latest venture, Food Tripping at Le Meridien New Delhi, elevates that instinct into something genuinely compelling. This exclusive pop-up dining series launched in May 2026 with an ambitious promise: to transform dinner into a cultural odyssey. Having followed the inaugural chapter closely, one can say the hotel largely delivers on that lofty ambition.

The concept is elegantly simple yet richly layered. Each chapter of the series is conceived as an intimate, reservation-only evening where food, music, visual art, and storytelling converge to evoke a specific place and its culinary soul. Rather than merely plating "regional cuisine," the team at Le Meridien has deliberately chosen

authentic voices — home chefs rooted in their native traditions — to anchor the Indian chapters, lending each menu a credibility that hotel dining rarely achieves.

The inaugural chapter, Soul of Bihar, ran in May at Eau de Monsoon, and it set a remarkably high bar. Curated in collaboration with Shacchi Anand, founder of Baghar-e-Magadh, the menu was a confident, deeply personal exploration of Bihar cuisine — a culinary tradition too often overlooked on the national fine-dining circuit. Ancestral recipes were presented with quiet elegance,

never losing their soul to unnecessary modernisation. Dishes arrived carrying layers of memory and regional identity, the kind of cooking that makes you pause mid-bite and reconsider your assumptions about

a cuisine.

What distinguishes Food Tripping from similar hotel pop-ups is its insistence on atmosphere as an equal partner to the food. Regional music drifted through the space, visual storytelling framed the walls, and the overall sensory design felt considered rather than decorative. You weren't merely eating Bihar food — you were, however briefly, inhabiting a version of Bihar itself. Meena Bhatia's vision for the series — that every flavour should carry a memory and every evening should feel like a journey — is no mere marketing language. The execution reflects genuine curatorial intent. That said, the true test of any dining series lies in its consistency across chapters. The format, however polished, must keep reinventing itself to sustain anticipation. With plans to span Indian regional cuisines alongside international editions, Food Tripping has real potential to become one of Delhi's most distinctive dining destinations. For now, on the strength of Soul of Bihar alone, it earns a warm thumbs up!



Why Does Beauty Make You Close Your Eyes

Love addresses the deepest human loneliness. The purpose of companionship is to rejoice and share life. It is to have someone you can truly depend on

GURUDEV SRI SRI RAVI SHANKAR

Think of the last time something totally made you stop in your tracks. It may have been music, a fragrance, or a texture. Something so great, so wonderful, and so beautiful that it automatically shut your eyes, and you sank into that ocean of beauty.

This is not something small or incidental. It is through the five senses that you experience something beyond the five senses. Deep inside you, what gets created in that moment is a wave of beauty. And when that wave arrives, you are not in form any more. You dissolve into the formless and come back to your nature.

The senses brought you to the door and then stepped aside. The power, the energy inside you, starts moving in a new direction. Like in meditation, there is a feeling of elevation that gives you more energy and long-lasting joy and bliss. Like in spring, the entire creation just comes alive. The birds sing, the trees blossom, and when energy is kindled in you, it creates awe. You spring out of dullness and routine, and new life springs up in you.

Behind every love, there is something greater, something total. We tend to think beauty is decoration and love is emotion. But what if both are pointing at something much larger than we have imagined? Behind every love, every small beauty and joy, there is the Divine. This is a revolutionary thought, a revolutionary idea.

Love, when it is genuine and full of energy, is total and complete. And this completeness expresses itself in stages, each one deeper than the last.

The first sign that love has arrived is that you cannot stop talking about it. Have you noticed when someone is crazy about something? They talk about it and talk about it, and it never tires them. No amount of praise feels sufficient. Just a mild interest cannot evoke such depth of expression. That is the first sign of divine love. One would go on praising continuously and still feel, “Oh, it’s not sufficient. I have to do it more, more, and more.”

The second sign is to express love in all forms. Although there is no form of divinity, the Divine loves to express itself in forms, and that is why millions and millions of forms are present in this creation. You deal with forms all your life, whether in the waking state or the dreaming state. Except for deep sleep and meditation, forms appear in your mind. And so, even while knowing that divinity is formless, a form makes it more interesting. The form kindles love in your heart.

Then love wants to honour and offer itself to whatever has kindled it. Whatever you appreciate or adore, you feel the urge to worship it. And worshipping is just the opposite of wanting to possess. When you try to possess something beautiful, you actually bring ugliness to it. Worship is offering yourself instead of reaching out to possess. A sense of giving, or offering oneself, is one of the truest expressions of love.

Then comes something subtler still, and that is memory. It is not that you make any effort to remember. As soon as you wake up, the first thought that comes is of the loved one, of the Divine. You do not make any effort to think about that person. But the thought



“LOVE IS A HAPPENING. LOVE IS A GIFT TO YOU. DO NOT GO OUT SEEKING LOVE. SIMPLY RELAX AND BE AT EASE” — GURUDEV



BEHIND EVERY LOVE, THERE IS SOMETHING GREATER, SOMETHING TOTAL. WE TEND TO THINK BEAUTY IS DECORATION AND LOVE IS EMOTION. BUT WHAT IF BOTH ARE POINTING AT SOMETHING MUCH LARGER THAN WE HAVE IMAGINED? BEHIND EVERY LOVE, EVERY SMALL BEAUTY AND JOY, THERE IS THE DIVINE. THIS IS A REVOLUTIONARY THOUGHT, A REVOLUTIONARY IDEA

constantly comes, and you find yourself remembering. You go deeper and deeper into the silence within you. That very remembrance becomes meditation.

And then love deepens into something that most people find surprising. One form of the expression of love is great humility and service as one’s very nature. There is not even a thought of, “I am doing some service.” You cannot help but serve. Even if one tries to abstain from it, it does not happen. One finds oneself back in it. Love gets expressed as service.

Here is where something remarkable happens. Do you know what actually

brings authority? A caretaker, a servant, has full authority in the home. If the master is away, he acts as the master. A perfect servant or disciple has total authority and total responsibility. A servant is one in whom the master has bestowed his trust. Being a servant means acknowledging that the Divine has given you this task and that it belongs to you.

Love expresses itself as friendship. Towards someone who is your superior, you may have a lot of respect. But there may not be any love. You may honour them, but your heart may not start speaking. In such cases, the Master will say, “Come on, what is it? What is the matter? How are you doing? What is happening?” That is love expressed in the form of a friend, where wisdom is shared not in a serious manner but in a playful one.

Love addresses the deepest human loneliness. The purpose of companionship is to rejoice and share life. It is to have someone you can truly depend on. But human relationships keep changing. The Divine is the only truly dependable relationship, never changing and total. When the Divine becomes the companion you turn to, you become more centred. Otherwise, you keep hanging on to whoever happens to be near. Love at this depth becomes your anchor.

And then there is the supreme form, and that is longing. Not the frustration of longing, but the strange beauty that longing carries. Longing gives you the power to bless. The very longing in you is itself a form of love. As the longing grows more and more intense, it flips over. It becomes bliss, and you become totally immersed. Many have experienced intense longing and reached that turning point. At some point, that longing itself becomes a joy.

The fire of love creates a sense of longing in the beginning. But it moves on to the blossoming of bliss and fullness. This longing should never end. If longing ends, love also ends. That is why longing and love are inseparable.

Love is a happening. Love is a gift to you. Do not go out seeking love. Simply relax and be at ease. Only when you are free from tension, free from confusion, can you truly experience love.

When Leaders Become Pilgrims

Across the years, presidents, prime ministers and distinguished leaders from across the world have been drawn to Swaminarayan Akshardham. Beyond its awe-inspiring architecture lies a deeper attraction: a timeless vision of peace, spirituality and universal values that continues to inspire visitors from around the world



DR SWAMI GYANANANDDAS

In ancient India, the sages spoke of sacred spaces where the mind finds peace, the heart awakens to higher ideals, and the soul glimpses the divine. Such places stand as living bridges between earth and eternity, inspiring generations through their beauty, wisdom and spiritual presence.

Today, that timeless divinity finds magnificent expression in Swaminarayan Akshardham in New Delhi, a landmark that has captivated millions of visitors, including presidents, prime ministers, diplomats and dignitaries from across the world.

September 2023 was one of the most consequential moments in India’s recent diplomatic history. New Delhi had become the centre of the world’s attention as heads of state, presidents and prime ministers from across the globe gathered for the G20 Summit. Every minute of their schedules was meticulously planned. Every movement was watched. Every engagement carried diplomatic significance.

Yet amid the intensity of global discussions and high-level negotiations, one destination found a place on the itinerary of the United Kingdom’s Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak, and his wife, Akshata Murty. It was neither a government building nor a state banquet, but a mandir.

Despite the demanding schedule of the summit and the persistent rain, Prime Minister Sunak and Mrs Murty chose to walk barefoot along the 150-metre

pathway leading towards the mandir. To everybody’s surprise, one of the world’s most powerful political leaders, accustomed to red carpets and official ceremonies, walked humbly upon the rain-soaked pathway as a devotee.

It was not an act of protocol. It was an expression of faith and devotion. As the magnificent stone mandir gradually emerged before them, its intricately carved pinnacles rising against the cloudy sky, the atmosphere seemed to shift. The noise of politics gave way to serenity. The urgency of international affairs yielded to a sense of peace.

Within the sacred precincts of Akshardham, the Prime Minister and his wife offered prayers, performed puja and had darshan. For a brief period, they were not global figures carrying immense responsibilities; they were simply pilgrims standing before the Divine.

In this way, leaders arriving at Akshardham as distinguished statesmen leave touched by something deeper than its architectural splendour. The mandir’s rare ability to blend timeless spirituality with universal human values has resonated with visitors from across the world.

Across the Atlantic, American leaders, too, have been deeply moved by the Akshardham experience. US Vice President JD Vance’s visit to Akshardham in April 2025 revealed once again the temple’s extraordinary ability to touch hearts beyond borders. Accompanied by his wife, Usha Vance, the first Hindu Second Lady of the United States, and their children, Vance began his India visit in the serene precincts of Akshardham. As the family stood before the mandir’s majestic façade, dressed in traditional Indian attire, they appeared deeply immersed in its beauty and spiritual atmosphere.

Most recently, on 29 May 2026, Tiffany Trump, daughter of US President Donald Trump, visited Akshardham along with her husband, businessman Michael Boulous, and close friends. Their visit further reflected

Akshardham’s growing appeal among prominent American public figures and dignitaries. Amid a period marked by global uncertainty, conflict and war, Tiffany chose to begin her private visit to India with a journey into the heart of the nation’s spiritual and cultural heritage. As she explored the world-renowned monument’s breathtaking architecture, timeless artistry and profound spiritual message, her visit carried a significance beyond tourism.

Deeply moved by the experience, Tiffany Trump penned a heartfelt note in the temple’s guest book: “This was such an amazing visit. The beauty is out of this world. Thank you for such a perfect visit!”

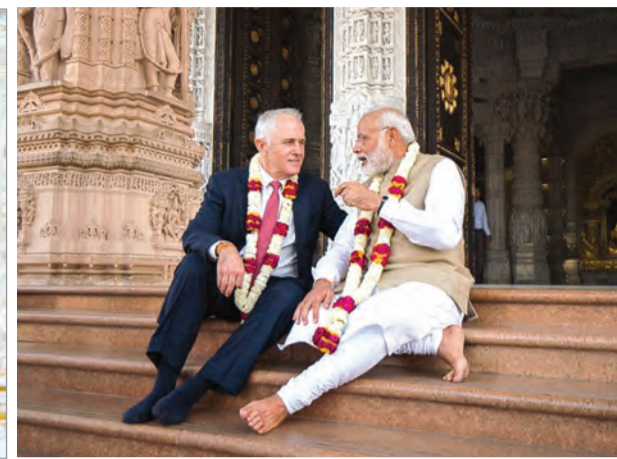
She later shared her admiration with millions of followers on social media, describing her experience at Akshardham simply as “incredible”.

Thus, from Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, and from New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon to Croatian Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic, Akshardham’s appeal continues to transcend nations and cultures.

During his second visit to Akshardham, President Kalam remarked, “I saw the movie of Bhagwan Swaminarayan in the exhibition. So beautiful. What a creation! What a creation! I believe Akshardham is really going to make a great influence on human life. Not only in India, but whoever sees it, it is going to have an impact on human life. How a good human life will emanate from Akshardham. That is my belief.”

This was the vision of Brahmawarup Pramukh Swami Maharaj, the creator and inspirer of Akshardham. He dreamed of a place where people from every background would encounter the best of Indian culture, faith and love, and leave inspired to become better human beings. Today, as world leaders, dignitaries and millions of visitors continue to walk through its sacred precincts, that vision stands beautifully fulfilled, transforming admiration into inspiration and visitors into ambassadors of universal values.

(The writer Dr Swami Gyanananddas is a dedicated follower of the Swaminarayan tradition and has earned a PhD from MS University)



Weekly Overview

The week begins under the Aquarius Moon, encouraging observation, planning and a wider perspective. As the Moon moves into Pisces, emotions, intuition and inner reflection become stronger. By the weekend, Aries energy brings fresh momentum, quicker decisions and a desire to move forward.

WEEKLY MOON SIGN FORECAST | 7-13 JUNE

Quiet Reflections, New Perspectives and a Fresh Push Forward

Dr Shanker Adawal
Astrologer, Author & Researcher

This forecast is based on your Moon Sign (Janma Rashi), which often reflects day-to-day emotional and instinctive patterns more closely than general Sun-sign readings.

opportunities for discussion, networking or future planning may begin to emerge. Remain open to different view points.

Aries (Mesh): The opening days may encourage you to step back from situations that have been demanding too much attention. Not every matter requires an immediate response. As the week progresses, you may find yourself reflecting more deeply on unfinished concerns or delayed decisions. By the weekend, the Moon enters Aries, bringing renewed energy and a stronger desire to act. This is a good time to restart something that has lost momentum, but avoid rushing simply because enthusiasm has returned.



Taurus (Vrishabh): Group activities, professional networks or discussions with like-minded people may play a bigger role early in the week. Some useful advice could come from an unexpected source. Midweek may feel quieter, with attention turning toward personal hopes, emotional expectations or long-term plans. By the weekend, you may prefer reflection over visibility. Trust your pace rather than comparing your progress with that of others.



Gemini (Mithun): Responsibilities may demand attention from the very beginning of the week. While others may appear uncertain, your ability to adapt can become an advantage. Midweek encourages a softer approach, especially in professional interactions where diplomacy may achieve more than argument. As the weekend approaches, fresh



Cancer (Karka): The week begins with a desire to understand the bigger picture rather than focusing only on immediate concerns. Travel plans, learning opportunities or meaningful conversations may attract attention. Midweek brings a more emotional atmosphere, and intuition becomes a useful guide. Family matters or personal relationships may require patience. By the weekend, practical responsibilities return to the forefront, making organisation more important than mood.



Leo (Simha): Some situations may require deeper understanding before you decide how to proceed. The early part of the week supports observation rather than direct action. Midweek may bring stronger emotional awareness, helping you recognise what truly matters and what can be left behind. By the weekend, confidence gradually returns and communication becomes more direct. A thoughtful decision made now may carry more value than a quick reaction earlier in the week.

Virgo (Kanya): Relationships and partnerships may occupy your attention during the opening phase of the week.



Listening carefully will be just as important as expressing your own views. Midweek brings emotional depth and greater sensitivity to the needs of others. Some matters may require compromise rather than analysis. By the weekend, financial planning or practical decisions become easier to handle. Focus on what is workable rather than what is perfect.



Libra (Tula): Routine matters, work responsibilities and daily commitments may shape the first half of the week. A practical approach will help prevent small issues from becoming larger ones. Midweek encourages greater emotional awareness, especially in close relationships where understanding may be needed more than advice. By the weekend, the Moon’s movement into Aries places attention on partnerships and interactions. Patience will help maintain harmony.



Scorpio (Vrishchik): The week opens on a comparatively lighter note, encouraging creativity, personal interests and meaningful conversations. Midweek, however, emotions may run deeper than expected, particularly where personal attachments are involved. This is not a negative phase, but it may encourage reflection. By the weekend, attention turns toward practical matters, health routines or unfinished responsibilities. Small improvements can produce noticeable results.



Sagittarius (Dhanu): Home, family matters or personal comfort may become important themes during the opening days. There may be a desire to simplify things rather than chase constant activity. Midweek brings a reflective

mood, making it easier to understand emotional patterns that have been repeating themselves. By the weekend, energy improves considerably, supporting creativity, social interaction and fresh enthusiasm. Use that momentum wisely.



Capricorn (Makar): Communication becomes a key theme at the beginning of the week. Discussions, paperwork or short-term plans may move faster than expected. Midweek encourages a more thoughtful pace, and important information could emerge through casual conversations. By the weekend, attention shifts toward home matters, family responsibilities or personal priorities. Practical decisions taken now may prove useful over the coming weeks.



Aquarius (Kumbh): With the Moon beginning the week in Aquarius, there is an opportunity to view situations with greater objectivity. Others may seek your advice or perspective. Midweek shifts focus toward financial matters, personal values and emotional security. Some decisions may require patience rather than immediate action. By the weekend, communication improves and confidence grows. Expressing your thoughts clearly will help avoid unnecessary misunderstandings.



Pisces (Meen): The opening phase of the week may feel quieter than usual, encouraging observation and inner reflection. Once the Moon enters Pisces, intuition becomes stronger and emotional awareness deepens. This is a good period for understanding motivations, both your own and those of others. By the weekend, practical matters, finances and future planning require attention. Trust your instincts, but support them with realistic action.