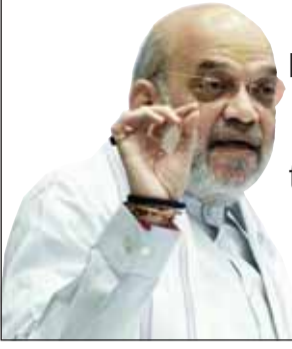


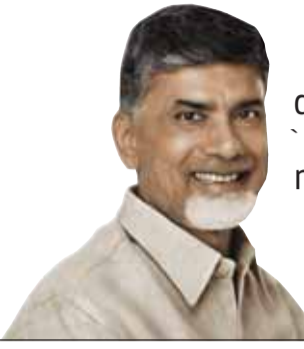
PAGE 5 NATION

BJP to govern country for many years to come: Shah



PAGE 6 NATION

Andhra CM disburses over ₹3,000 crore to nearly 47 lakh farmers



PAGE 8 GLOBAL

Pak court sentences 4 leaders of Imran Khan's party to 10-year jail



PAGE 11 SPORTS

Kohli's fitness Test on June 22; Hardik out of England ODIs



AGENDA



A new Bengal growth story begins: PM Modi releases 23rd installment of PM-Kisan scheme of ₹18,880 crore

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
 Kolkata/Bhubaneswar

In his first public address after the formation of a BJP Government in West Bengal, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said the double-engine Government in the State has started working at "superfast speed" to take West Bengal toward recovery and development, while unveiling various projects in the State.

Participating in the 'Paschimbanga Divas' or West Bengal Day celebrations at Tarakeswar in Hooghly district, he also released the 23rd installment of PM-Kisan scheme worth ₹18,880 crore, benefiting over 9.44 crore farmers across the country. The PM participated in a grand function to celebrate the State Day, along with Governor RN Ravi, Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari, ministers, MLAs, Government functionaries and the general public.

Earlier in the day during his Odisha visit, Modi said Eastern India, which remained backward during the Congress rule, was now



Prime Minister Narendra Modi embraces a child during visit to Pahadpur village in Mayurbhanj district, Odisha PTI

emerging as a gateway to progress and development. Addressing a public meeting at Rairangpur in Odisha's Mayurbhanj district after unveiling projects worth over ₹47,600 crore, Modi said the State was rapidly moving ahead on the path of development.

Addressing a public meeting in Hooghly, PM

alleged that the previous Left Front and TMC Governments in the State had created obstacles in the path of development over the last several decades. While the CPI(M)-led Left Front ruled the State for 34 years from 1977, the Trinamool Congress was at the helm for 15 years from 2011, till it was defeated in

the April Assembly election by the BJP. Modi said that decades of misgovernance have pushed West Bengal back by miles. Modi lamented that West Bengal, once a land of opportunities, had turned into a source of migration. PM said that soon after the BJP Government took over in West Bengal, the stalled work

at Chingrighata crossing in Kolkata for the Metro Railway's Orange line commenced and was completed within a few days.

The previous Mamata Banerjee Government had not introduced the PM Fasal Bima Yojana in the State and instead came up with the State's own crop insurance scheme for farmers, Modi alleged.

After a visit to President Droupadi Murmu's in-laws' village of Pahadpur in Mayurbhanj district earlier in the day on her 68th birthday, Modi announced it will be developed as a 'solar village', ensuring solar power generation in every household. Modi extended heartfelt birthday greetings to Murmu and described her rise from the soil of Mayurbhanj to the highest constitutional office of the nation as a matter of immense pride for Odisha and the country.

The PM said that West Bengal is also being attached to the Digital Agriculture Mission, maintaining that a farmers' registry will be created by way of "Agristat."

CONTINUED ON >> P4

NTA mobilises massive security for NEET-UG re-examination

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
 New Delhi

The National Testing Agency (NTA) on Saturday said it is fully prepared for the NEET re-examination with country wide district administrations, police forces and escort teams tasked with securely transporting confidential materials. Over two lakh personnel, including police and district administration officials, have been mobilised to ensure the smooth and fair conduct of the re-examination. In a first, the Indian Air Force (IAF) is being engaged to transport the question papers as part of enhanced security measures.

A nationwide mock drill was conducted across the country ahead on Saturday as part of the efforts to ensure smooth, secure and transparent conduct of the medical entrance test. Security has also been tightened at the NTA office in the national Capital. More than 22.79 lakh medical aspirants will appear for the re-examination on Sunday, nearly seven weeks after the original test was cancelled follow-



Security personnel make arrangements ahead of NEET-UG re-examination at a centre in Karnataka on Saturday PTI

ing allegations of a paper leak that triggered nationwide outrage, political sparring and legal challenges.

Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has chaired a series of high-level review meetings with senior officials to assess preparedness and oversee arrangements for the re-examination. Several States have also announced support measures for candidates, including free transportation facilities through State-run bus services to reduce travel-related stress and ensure timely access to examination centres.

The re-examination will be held from 2 to 5.15 pm across 551 cities in India and 14 cities abroad. Candidates with disabilities (PWD/PwBD) eligible for compensatory time will be allowed to write the examination till 6.20 pm. Candidates have been asked to report to their examination centres between 11 am and 1.30 pm. "Entry gates will close sharp at 1.30 pm, and no candidate will be permitted entry thereafter under any circumstance," the agency said.

CONTINUED ON >> P4

GREAT OFFERS!

Scan to Subscribe

Tehran closes Hormuz over Lebanon fighting

US-Iran talks to begin today in Switzerland



KAREEM CHEHAYEB/BASSEM MROUE/MUMIR AHMED
 Tyre (Lebanon)

Iran dealt two quick blows to the interim agreement with the United States on Saturday, angered by Israel's continued attacks in Lebanon, saying it had closed the Strait of Hormuz and also announcing that while its negotiators were going to Switzerland for talks, not much is likely to happen there.

Key mediator Pakistan, meanwhile, said the technical-level talks will begin on Sunday in Burgenstock, Switzerland, with Qatari mediators also participating. In Tehran's first salvo, Iran's joint military

command said the strait had been closed, citing the Israeli attacks and US "bad faith" and "clear breach of its commitments" by failing to end the war. Its statement on state television warned that "if the aggression continues, subsequent steps have been planned."

Shortly after that, the State broadcaster announced that Iran's negotiating team was heading to Switzerland "in the coming minutes," a trip that had been originally planned for Friday.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei, however, signalled that little might happen until Iran feels the US is living up to the deal.

CONTINUED ON >> P4

YOGA DAY 2026: 6 LAKH TO PERFORM WITH PM IN KOLKATA

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
 Kolkata/New Delhi

With India all set to celebrate the 12th International Day of Yoga (IDY) 2026, the Ayush Ministry's Yoga Sangam portal has achieved a major milestone with registrations touching the 6 lakh mark, according to an official statement. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be leading the International Day of Yoga celebrations at Red Road on Sunday morning.

Around 35,000 people are expected to gather in Kolkata on Sunday for one of the country's largest celebrations of the International Day of Yoga (IDY), with Prime Minister Modi set to lead the national event, officials said on Saturday.



They said an estimated 10 lakh people will participate in synchronised yoga sessions at various locations across Kolkata. Secretary of the Ministry of Ayush, Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha, said, "This is the first time West Bengal is hosting the flagship International Day of Yoga event on such a large scale. Participation is expected from yoga institutions, students, women, senior citizens."

Highlighting the public response, he said, "A key feature of this year's celebrations is the extensive registration of organisations through the Yoga Sangam Portal, the flagship community participation platform of IDY 2026."

CONTINUED ON >> P4

Former Maharashtra Minister Patil acquitted in Nimbalkar murder case

PRAMOD KUMAR SINGH
 New Delhi/Mumbai

On Saturday, a special CBI court in Mumbai acquitted former Maharashtra Home Minister and ex-NCP MP Padamsinh Patil, along with seven others, in the 2006 double murder case of Congress leader Pawanraje Nimbalkar and his driver Samad Kazi.



Ex-Maharashtra minister Padamsinh Patil arrives at a special CBI court in Mumbai on Saturday PTI

turned approver, calling it doubtful and not enough to connect the accused to the crime.

The murders happened on June 3, 2006. Pawanraje Nimbalkar, a well-known Congress leader from

the Osmanabad, and his driver Samad Kazi were travelling from Mumbai to Osmanabad when two gunmen stopped their car at Kalamboli in Navi Mumbai and shot them.

CONTINUED ON >> P4

International Yoga Day Yoga Call

Fundamentally, we Indians are descendants of Yogis. Time may have split us into sects, castes, and communities, but we need to remain indebted to our ancestors to shun the sin of ingratitude. Thus, let's practice Yoga together - form groups of 10, 20, 50, or 100 in every village and city neighborhood and share photos and reels of these gatherings on social media to inspire more people.

Take a Pledge yourself and motivate others to build a self-reliant India through Yoga, Ayurveda, and Swadeshi.

Opposition- Numerous evil forces are active in the conspiracy of fiercely opposing and destroying Yoga, Ayurveda, Swadeshi, and Sanatan culture. True nationalist *Sanatani* souls must wholeheartedly stand firm with Patanjali and the revered Swami Ramdev Ji in this Devasur Sangram (the battle between the good and the evil) or Dharmayuddha (the war of righteousness). Where there is Dharma (righteousness), there is victory; Truth alone triumphs. (यतो धर्मः ततो जयः, सत्यमेव जयते।)

Loot- The Oxfam International report and various other authentic sources available on the internet may be explored using AI tools, to ascertain that foreign companies have looted our nation of over 100 trillion in just last 200-250 years. MNCs, Macaulay's education system, and cultural subjugation have pushed this great nation of India to the brink of ruin. Recalling our golden era of 500-1000 years ago, let us work tirelessly and unitedly to build a glorious and developed India - defeating anti-India forces and realizing the vision of our sages (Rishis and Rishikas) and martyrs.

Patanjali's Contribution - Through the tireless efforts of the revered Swami Ramdev Ji, Acharya Shri Balkrishna Ji, and the Patanjali organization, the glory of Yoga, Ayurveda, Swadeshi, and Sanatan culture has now reached the entire world. Patanjali has contributed vast sums amounting to lakhs of crores of rupees to this noble cause of service. Adhering to nearly 10,000+ research protocols, Patanjali scholars have published 500+ papers in international journals. Driven by the selfless dedication and penance of millions of volunteers across Patanjali's nationwide network-encompassing institutions such as Patanjali Gurukulam, Acharyakulam, Patanjali University, the Bharatiya Shiksha Board (BSB), Patanjali Career Academy, Patanjali Civil Services Academy (PCSA), Patanjali Wellness, Patanjali Yoggram, Niramayam, Patanjali Research Foundation, and Gaushalas - a historic mission of service is underway. The penance of hundreds of ascetics, the selfless service of millions of *Karmayogis*, and the support of crores of fellow citizens are our strength. Our solemn resolve is to dedicate our entire being to the service of Mother India and humanity till our very last breath.

Connect with Patanjali to serve and to embody the virtues of Yoga, and the virtues of Lord Rama, Krishna, and Shiva. Sanatan Dharma is lived, not just preached.

Make it a daily habit to practice Yoga by tuning in to channels like Aastha and India TV, or by accessing content on YouTube.

Everyday 5:00 am to 7:30 am and 8:00 pm

Everyday 9:00 am

Everyday 8:00 am

Swami Ramdev | Acharya Bal Krishna

To purchase Patanjali's research-based health products and medicines as well as Swadeshi products - Cow Ghee, Dant Kanti, Honey, Kesh Kanti, Sharbat, Juices - search "Patanjali Store Near Me" on Google. These products are available at major stores nationwide. If not, request your shopkeeper to stock them.

For further details, visit the websites of Patanjali's major institutions.

Visit Patanjali Wellness to experience the benefits of holistic health; for registration, please contact: **8954-666-111**

For inquiries regarding the Bharatiya Shiksha Board and Patanjali Civil Services Academy, contact: **8954-555-999**



Government sets up cooling zones, minister reviews preparations

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

From free DTC travel for aspirant candidates to providing tea, Shikanji and cooling zones for parents and ORS and first aid facilities, the Delhi Government has made elaborate arrangements at 97 centres for Sunday's National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) amid multi-layered security.

Mock drills were conducted on Saturday to verify all systems — jammers, CCTV, frisking staff and biometrics — while coordinators have verified the examination material held in the custodian banks and confirmed its availability

for the examination. Delhi Education Minister Ashish Sood on Saturday visited CM Shri School, Pandara Road, and inspected the arrangements made at the examination centre. Senior officials of the Education Department and the concerned SDM were also present during the inspection.

As lakhs of students take this important step toward their dreams, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta extended her best wishes to the students and their families and said the Delhi Government has ensured that no family will face unnecessary difficulties related to transport, heat or long waiting hours on the day

of the exam. She said this is the first time that special waiting arrangements have been made keeping in mind the comfort and convenience not only of students appearing for the examination but also of their parents and family members.

The chief minister said NEET candidates will be allowed to travel free of cost on DTC buses, special cooling zones have also been set up outside all 97 examination centres for parents and family members. Respecting the dreams of every student and the hopes of every parent is the responsibility of the Government, she said, adding that the entire city is



wishing success to every candidate appearing for the examination tomorrow.

The Chief Minister said a total of 97 examination centres have been designated for the NEET examination

in Delhi. Special cooling zones are being established by the district administration near all these centres.

She noted that while candidates remain inside the examination halls, the concerns, heat and discomfort faced by parents waiting outside for several hours often go unnoticed. Recognising this human aspect, the Delhi Government has created cooling zones around the examination centres, where parents will have access to seating and resting facilities, along with clean drinking water, shikanji, ORS, tea and first-aid support. Comfortable waiting arrangements will be available for them outside the examination centres.

The Chief Minister also announced that all NEET candidates will be able to travel free of cost on DTC buses on June 21. To avail of the facilities, they will only need to show their valid NEET admit card to the bus conductor. She said the Government's effort is to ensure that students do not face any transportation-related inconvenience on the day of the examination and are able to reach their centres on time and appear for the test with complete concentration and confidence.

"The Delhi Government remains committed to providing every possible support and convenience to students during their education and competitive examinations. When parents feel comfortable and reassured, it also has a positive impact on students, helping them appear for the examination with greater confidence," she said.

She urged students to take the examination with confidence and wished them a bright future. She said the entire city is praying for their bright future.

Sood said the Delhi Government has coordinated with various departments to ensure adequate arrangements at all centres and security measures have been put in place by the district administration and police.

The minister said Chief Minister Rekha Gupta is monitoring the preparations and issuing directions to the concerned departments.

Schools told to form child safety panels, submit reports in 15 days

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

Remove school employees involved in offences against children, report suspected sexual offences without waiting for internal inquiries and form child protection committees. These are among a slew of directives issued to schools by the Delhi Government, ordering them to conduct a review of existing child protection mechanisms and submit compliance reports, student safety checklists and self-certification documents to district authorities within 15 days of the circular's issuance.



"Any employee with a criminal record related to these offences must be suspended from active duty immediately, pending legal proceedings," the DoE circular issued on Friday said, mandating background verification of teaching and non-teaching staff, contractual workers and other personnel associated with students.

The Directorate of Education (DoE) has ordered that employees must submit affidavits declaring that they have no history of offences against children or violent crimes. The DoE also mandated compulsory reporting of suspected sexual offences without waiting for internal

inquiries, warning that failure to do so may attract legal action, including imprisonment of up to one year for school heads.

Further, schools have also been asked to conduct awareness programmes on child safety, including body autonomy, safe touch, online risks, and reporting mechanisms. Additionally, schools must educate students on cyberbullying, grooming and sextortion.

protection committee will be headed by the principal or head of school, with members including a nodal teacher, parent representatives, counsellors or senior teachers, a child rights expert and a student representative.

The committee will meet every quarter to monitor child protection measures, review complaints relating to bullying, harassment, cyber abuse, and ensure proper reporting and record-keeping, it said.

In the circular, there is a direction on CCTV surveillance as well, and schools have been told to preserve the footage for at least 30 days after any incident and share it with investigating agencies when required.

The CCTV surveillance is part of the campus safety measures which schools have

to undertake, besides building well-lit corridors, separate student toilets and visitor management systems.

All these measures form part of a drive to strengthen implementation of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act on school premises.

Schools must display child helpline numbers prominently and adopt a zero-tolerance policy towards sexual abuse, bullying, ragging and harassment. They have also been asked to conduct periodic safety audits and install confidential complaint boxes placed away from staff and CCTV coverage.

For transport safety, schools must ensure buses are painted yellow, equipped with GPS devices and two fire extinguishers, and display driver and emergency contact details. Drivers must hold valid commercial licences with at least five years' experience and no criminal record. Female attendants are to be deployed in buses until the last child is dropped off.

The circular also lays down a code of conduct requiring staff to maintain professional boundaries, avoid isolated interactions with students and ensure respectful behaviour in both physical and digital spaces.

'We will not leave': Dipke urges crowd to stay past permitted hours as CJP protest swells at Jantar Mantar

KHUSHI MEHROTRA
New Delhi

As the Delhi Police's permission for the Cockroach Janata Party's (CJP) protest at Jantar Mantar neared its scheduled end at 5 pm on Saturday, founder Abhijeet Dipke urged the gathering to stay put and continue the agitation until their demands were met.

Addressing hundreds of students, job aspirants and supporters, Dipke said he would not leave the protest site until Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan resigned and appealed to authorities to extend permission for the demonstration.



Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) supporters during a protest over alleged examination irregularities, repeated paper leaks and demands for accountability from the Government in New Delhi on Saturday PANKAJ KUMAR

"The youth from across the country is here. They want to sit here till we get justice," he told the crowd.

As the day wore on, the Delhi police started clearing the protest site, limiting the crowd near the stage and cordoning off the entry to Jantar Mantar around 6 pm on Saturday.

The call came at the culmination of CJP's second protest at Jantar Mantar, which drew participants ranging from teenagers preparing for competitive examinations to senior citizens backing the movement. Although attendees came from different backgrounds, conversations across the

venue repeatedly returned to two issues: paper leaks and unemployment.

Compared with the party's first protest on June 6, Saturday's gathering appeared significantly more organised. A proper stage had been erected, and volunteers distributed water, Rooh Afza and bananas to participants battling the summer heat. Security was also tighter, with police personnel and CJP volunteers checking identity cards and screening bags before allowing entry into the protest venue.

Throughout the day, organisers encouraged attendees to register with volunteers and come on stage to narrate their experiences. Dipke described the platform as a "people's forum," urging people to speak directly about the challenges they faced. Activist Sonam Wangchuk also joined the demonstration and voiced support. Present was Ankit, a B.Tech student from Delhi-NCR, who said he attended the protest for his younger sister, a NEET aspirant. According to him, she was left deeply distressed after the examination was cancelled despite performing well. Now facing uncertainty over a fresh test, she remains under pressure.

Ankit also expressed grief over reports of students dying by suicide amid the examination controversy and demanded accountability from the Government. Dipke said the platform is a "people's forum," urging people to speak directly about the challenges they faced. Activist Sonam Wangchuk also joined the demonstration and voiced support. Present was Ankit, a B.Tech student from Delhi-NCR, who said he attended the protest for his younger sister, a NEET aspirant. According to him, she was left deeply distressed after the examination was cancelled despite performing well. Now facing uncertainty over a fresh test, she remains under pressure.

ity from authorities.

Hari, a 24-Hari, a 24-year-old engineering student from Hyderabad, travelled to Delhi after volunteering at CJP's first protest in his city. Frustrated by paper leaks and a lack of employment opportunities, he said he felt compelled to contribute. works in the aviation sector, said Dipke's message resonated enough with him to begin designing posters and badges for the organisation. He is now working on producing CJP-themed T-shirts.

The protest also attracted Amit, a man in his 60s, who said he wanted to stand with young people during what he called "tough times". One of the day's most striking visuals came when protesters pulled out steel plates and spoons and began banging them in unison. "The Government asked us to bang plates to ward off Corona. Let's do the same to demand Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation," Dipke told the crowd, prompting chants for the minister to step down. As the crowd descended on Jantar Mantar, the clanging of plates echoed across the protest site, where many participants appeared ready to heed Dipke's call to continue the agitation beyond the officially permitted hours.

LG, CM Rekha to attend International Yoga Day events in national Capital

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

Delhi Lieutenant Governor Taranjit Singh Sandhu is likely to attend a programme at Baansera Park while Chief Minister Rekha Gupta will participate in the International Yoga Day programme at the national capital's Asola Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary on Sunday morning. The event will also be attended by Environment Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa, senior Government officials, environmental experts, eminent citizens and local residents.

and Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports Raksha Khadse are scheduled to attend programmes at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium.

"Through this programme, a collective message of yoga, environmental conservation and a green lifestyle will be conveyed. Owing to the visionary efforts and global leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the United Nations General Assembly recognised June 21 as International Yoga Day," Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said in a statement.

After performing yoga and encouraging citizens to adopt a healthy lifestyle, the chief

Uber bike rider held for snatching `35,000 from Sri Lankan tourist

ANUSHKA DAS
New Delhi

Delhi police have arrested a 23-year-old Uber bike rider for allegedly snatching `35,000 from a Sri Lankan tourist in Central Delhi's Karol Bagh area. Police have recovered `4,200 from the accused and seized the motorcycle allegedly used in the commission of the crime.



The accused has been identified as Bhubnesh (23), a resident of Ghanta Ghar, Delhi. Police said the case was solved through CCTV footage analysis and technical investigation.

According to Rohit Rajbir Singh, IPS, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Central District), a PCR call regarding the snatching was received at Police Station Karol Bagh on June 16.

Emergency Officer, immediately reached the spot and initiated an inquiry.

The victim, a Sri Lankan national staying at a hotel in Karol Bagh, informed police that he had booked an Uber motorcycle ride from Shangri-La Hotel to COSMO Hotel during the early hours of the morning. After reaching the destination, he was paying the `75 fare from his wallet when the rider allegedly noticed cash

under the leadership of the SHO of Police Station Karol Bagh and the supervision of the ACP, Karol Bagh.

The team immediately initiated a comprehensive investigation. CCTV footage from the vicinity was analysed, and a crucial camera near the scene of the crime revealed that the accused had fled towards Malka Ganj after committing the offence. Technical inputs and details obtained from Uber regarding the rider and the motorcycle then helped investigators trace the accused to Roshanara Road, Ghanta Ghar, Delhi.

accused admitted his involvement in the crime. He allegedly disclosed that after dropping the foreign national at the hotel, he noticed cash in the complainant's wallet while the latter was paying the fare. Tempted by the opportunity, he snatched the money and fled.

Based on his disclosure, police recovered `4,200, believed to be part of the stolen amount. The motorcycle allegedly used in the offence was also seized. Efforts are underway to recover the remaining amount.

Police records show that the accused was previously found involved in one case of hurt registered in Palwal, Haryana.

Acting swiftly on the leads developed during the investigation, the police team conducted a raid and successfully apprehended the accused.

During sustained interrogation, police said the

unable to trace his whereabouts since then.

She alleged that after years of no contact, he recently started calling her again, causing her to fear future trouble; she stated she wanted no connection with him. Officials advised her to register her complaint with the Marriage Dispute Cell in Saket, a unit that deals specifically with matrimonial disputes.

Naveen, a resident of one

NEW CUT OPENED ON GTK ROAD TO EASE TRAFFIC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi



The Delhi Traffic Police has opened a new cut on GTK Road between metro pillars 102 and 103 as part of a road realignment plan aimed at improving traffic flow and reducing congestion on the arterial stretch, an official said on Saturday.

The newly-constructed cut has been operationalised as a formal T-point junction for vehicles entering GTK Road from Shah Alam Bandh Marg, according to the Traffic Police's Northern Range.

Officials said the move was implemented following a technical assessment of traffic movement patterns in the area. The new arrangement is expected to reduce congestion by eliminating the need for vehicles coming from Shah Alam Bandh Marg to travel further and take a U-turn near pillar number 100 before joining the main carriageway.

To facilitate the change, Delhi Traffic Police has deployed personnel at the site and installed advance cautionary signboards and reflective barricades to guide motorists through the revised traffic layout, officials said.

Commuters using GTK Road and those approaching from Shah Alam Bandh Marg have been advised to follow the updated lane discipline, cooperate with traffic personnel and plan their journeys accordingly.

Residents flag cyber fraud, property disputes at police public hearing

DRISHTI RAJPUT
New Delhi

At the Delhi Police Jan Sunwai (public hearing) held across the capital on Saturday, residents raised grievances including cyber fraud, matrimonial discord, property disputes, and an unsolved six-month-old theft of a Lord Ganesha idol, officials said.

The complainant sought the idol's recovery, stating the accused, who was intellectually challenged, had arrived in a Mercedes and allegedly stole it.

At the programme in Hauj Khas, 82-year-old Sudhir Gupta, a Khelgaon resident and the first complainant at the public hearing, complained about repeated cyber fraud calls from a Mumbai-based caller since morning demanding payment for alleged

pending bills. Officials advised him not to respond to unknown callers and to remain vigilant against cyber fraud attempts. Gupta raised a six-month-old case involving an accused, a Defence Colony resident, who arrived in a Mercedes car and attempted to enter his house. "When he failed to enter the premises, he stole a Lord Ganesha statue from the entrance of the property," he said.



recovered and urged them to trace and return it. Officials assured him that they would look into the matter as per procedure.

In another case, Jyoti Sharma alleged that her husband -- an IIT graduate who frequently changes his residence and never disclosed his address, making it impossible for her to track him -- abandoned her shortly after their 2019 marriage and that she has been



Delhi University campus, and Union Minister of State Harsh Malhotra at the Yamuna Sports Complex. Union Health Minister J P Nadda is expected to attend an event at Shanti Path Lawn and Minister of State for Jal Shakti Raj Bhushan Choudhary is likely to attend a programme at Lodhi Garden.

minister will inspect the Viksit Bharat Nursery developed within the sanctuary premises. She said that yoga is an ancient cultural heritage of India that has shown the world a path towards health, balance and positive living.

"Yoga is not merely a form of physical exercise but a science that brings harmony between the body, mind and soul. In today's fast-paced lifestyle, yoga helps individuals achieve mental peace, energy and self-confidence," she said. Officials said that during the visit, she will review various activities related to the cultivation of indigenous trees and plants, as well as efforts to promote biodiversity.



India, South Korea hold digital governance talks



MoS Jitendra Singh holds a bilateral meeting with South Korean minister Yoon Ho-joong in New Delhi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

India and South Korea on Saturday discussed possible cooperation between the two countries in digital governance, e-Government, public administration, capacity building and citizen-centric service delivery.

The discussion came up during a meeting between Republic of Korea Minister of Interior and Safety Yun Hojung and Union Minister of State for Personnel Jitendra Singh.

The two leaders, accompanied by respective delegations, held bilateral talks lasting over an hour, a statement issued by the Personnel Ministry said.

Singh said that the ministries concerned of both the countries are in active discussion for finalisation of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to promote cooperation in the field of public administration and Government innovation.

Discussions between the two sides focused on strengthening collaboration in areas such as digital transformation of Government services, application of emerging

technologies, including Artificial Intelligence, in public administration, capacity building of civil servants, citizen participation in governance, and best practices in public grievance redressal systems, it said.

Welcoming the Korean delegation, Singh highlighted India's significant strides in digital governance, public service delivery, and grievance redressal mechanisms under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The Union minister said India and Korea are both vibrant democracies with shared values, heritage and commitment to rule of law.

He said that both the countries are bound together by the historical ties of the marital connection between Princess Suriratna of Ayodhya and King Suro of then Gaya's confederacy and stressed that the strong bonds still have great resonance.

Singh also talked about the recent visit of President Lee Jae Myung that has led to forward-looking outcomes across key sectors including trade and investment, ports and maritime affairs, digital and fintech, science and technology, culture, sports, etc.

He highlighted India's initiatives such as CPGRAMS (Centralised Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System) portal, Digital Life Certificate for pensioners and the use of technology-enabled governance platforms to improve service delivery and transparency.

The Korean side shared experiences in smart governance, digital public services, and disaster and safety management, the statement said.

Both the sides also emphasised the importance of strengthening people-to-people contacts and institutional partnerships to address emerging governance challenges.

Referring to the bilateral talks being held on the eve of International Yoga Day, the minister said that Yoga is gaining popularity in the Republic of Korea (RoK), and invited the Korean delegation to participate in the Yoga celebrations.

The meeting concluded on a positive note, with both leaders reaffirming their commitment to enhancing India, Republic of Korea cooperation for promoting efficient, transparent, and citizen-centric governance.

India to host BRICS security conclave amid rising geopolitical tensions

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, Russian NSA Sergei Shoigu and other top BRICS security officials will converge in New Delhi on Monday for a two-day conclave that will focus on pressing geopolitical and regional security challenges.

The conclave of BRICS National Security Advisers will be chaired by NSA Ajit Doval.

China has already announced that Wang will attend the deliberations. The Chinese foreign minister is also expected to hold a bilateral meeting with Doval.

It is learnt that the Iranian Supreme National Security Council's Deputy Secretary Nezamipour is also expected to join the conclave that is set to prepare the grounds for the BRICS summit to be held in September in India.



Russian Security Council's Secretary Sergei Shoigu, China's FM Wang Yi

New Delhi is hosting the summit in its capacity as the current chair of the influential grouping.

BRICS, originally comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, expanded in 2024 to include Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, and the United Arab Emirates, with Indonesia joining in 2025.

The BRICS has emerged as an influential grouping as it brings together 11 major emerging economies of the world, representing around 49.5 per cent of the global

population, around 40 per cent of the global GDP and around 26 per cent of the global trade.

The top BRICS security officials are expected to deliberate extensively on the overall regional security scenario, including the situation in West Asia as well as the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

The Indian side is likely to raise its concerns over terrorism, including cross-border terrorist activities targeting Jammu and Kashmir by terror groups based in Pakistan.

BJP, NDA to govern country for many years to come: Amit Shah

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Kolhapur

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 12 years in office is just a start and there will be BJP and NDA rule in the country for many years to come.

Shah also said Prime Minister Modi's 12 years in office would occupy a significant place in the history of Independent India and would be inscribed in golden letters for creating a resurgent India and enhancing the country's prestige globally.



Ambabai temple corridor project in Maharashtra.

At another public rally in Chalkaraji in Kolhapur district, Shah said, "Modi's 12 years in office is just a start. There will be BJP and NDA rule for many years to come."

He said tasks once considered impossible had been accomplished under Modi's leadership, citing the construction of the Ayodhya Ram temple, redevelopment of Kashi Vishwanath corridor, Kedarnath and Badrinath shrines, and works at Somnath and Kamakhya temples.

Vijay Amritraj, Mammooty to get Padma Awards



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

Tennis legend Vijay Amritraj, actor Mammooty, playback singer Alka Yagnik and cricketer Rohit Sharma are among 65 prominent personalities who will receive the coveted Padma Awards from President Droupadi Murmu on Tuesday in the second civil investiture ceremony.

The president will present the Padma Awards 2026 at Ganatra Mandap of the Rashtrapati Bhawan at 5 pm on Tuesday, officials said.

"In the second civil investiture ceremony, the president of India will confer 65 Padma Awards, including two Padma Vibhushan, seven Padma Bhushan and 56 Padma Shri," an official said.

The President had conferred 65 Padma Awards — two Padma Vibhushan, six Padma Bhushan and 57 Padma Shri in the first civil investiture ceremony held on May 25.

"The awards are announced on the occasion of Republic Day every year," an official said.

On Republic Day eve, the

Government had announced 131 Padma awards for 2026, including five Padma Vibhushan awards. Two of them are being given to four individuals but would be counted as two awards.

Former Supreme Court judge KT Thomas for public affairs, eminent Malayalam journalist P Narayanan for contribution in literature and education will receive Padma Vibhushan during the ceremony.

Playback singer Alka Yagnik, actor Mammooty, American oncologist Dattatreya Nori, tennis player Vijay Amritraj will be receiving Padma Bhushan during the ceremony.

Next of kin of late JMM founder Shibu Soren will receive Padma Bhushan.

Former India cricket captain Rohit Sharma, and hockey player Savita Punia will receive Padma Shri during the function, officials said.

The Padma Awards — one of the highest civilian awards of the country, are conferred in three categories — Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri.

Manipur CM urges all communities to keep differences aside, embrace dialogue

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Imphal

Manipur Chief Minister Y Khemchand Singh on Saturday called on all communities residing in the state to keep their differences aside and look forward to dialogue for bringing peace.

He also appealed to the people of the State to extend their full cooperation to the Government's ongoing efforts to restore and maintain peace.

Addressing the gathering at



Manipur CM Y Khemchand Singh

Jan Kalyan Shivir (Public Welfare Camp) held at Chingamathak here, Singh stated that the camp is being organised to ensure the doorstep delivery of various Government welfare schemes

and services to the people of the State effectively.

Stressing that there will be no development in the state without creating a peaceful environment, Singh urged that all the communities residing in the state must keep the differences aside and look forward to dialogue for bringing peace. He also appealed to the people of the state to extend their full cooperation to the Government's ongoing efforts to restore and maintain peace.

Ensure there are no glitches this time: Rahul on NEET re-exam

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

Ahead of the NEET-UG re-examination, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday urged the Government to ensure there are no "glitches" and "irregularities" this time, saying the students have been "through enough stress and cannot afford to go through it again".

Gandhi posted a video on X in which he wished everyone taking the re-NEET exam on Sunday.



"I hope you have a wonderful, excellent exam and you all do really, really well."

Remember, we are with you, we want to look after you, protect you and make sure that you have a brilliant future. Love all of you," the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha said. "To the Prime Minister (Narendra Modi) and to the Government, I would like to say, please, please, please, ensure that there are no glitches this time. The students have been through enough stress and they and they really cannot afford to go through it again," Gandhi said.

Ladakh groups call for shutdown, citing mistrust with Union Govt over May 22 meeting minutes

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Leh

The Leh Apex Body (LAB) and the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) on Saturday called for a Ladakh-wide shutdown on June 23, accusing the Centre of failing to incorporate key decisions taken during last month's meeting on the Union Territory's political and constitutional future in the official minutes.

Addressing a joint press conference here, LAB co-chairman Chering Dorjay said an MHA-led sub-committee meeting on May 22 covered a proposed democratic structure for Ladakh with legislative, executive and financial powers, and constitutional safeguards



that could be incorporated in the Constitution through a proposed Article 371K.

Dorjay said in the meeting that it was also agreed that the entire bureaucracy, including the chief secretary, would function under the authority of

the executive led by the people of Ladakh.

"Certain decisions were taken during that meeting, but they were not properly reflected in the Minutes of the Meeting," Dorjay said.

The top leadership of the two agitating groups in the

presser, also attended by Ladakh MP Haneeja Jan, said the omission of key decisions from the official minutes has deepened mistrust and could force them to return to their original demands for statehood and sixth schedule safeguards for the region.

Accusing the Centre of employing "delay tactics," Dorjay said the Government may be assuming that since His Holiness the Dalai Lama is coming to Ladakh, the local population will remain quiet and refrain from any action. "There are many ways to protest, and such protests do not necessarily have to take place in Leh," he said while announcing the shutdown across Ladakh on June 23.

VP Radhakrishnan pays homage to bravehearts at Leh war memorial

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Leh

Vice President CP Radhakrishnan on Saturday visited the Hall of Fame War Memorial here and expressed the nation's gratitude to the forces for their selfless service and unwavering commitment to safeguarding the country's security and territorial integrity.

Radhakrishnan, who is currently on a three-day maiden tour of Ladakh, also inspected the first rock check dam on the Sindhu River and Pashmina Goat Farm on the second day, officials said.

"Visited the Hall of Fame War Memorial in Leh, Ladakh, today and paid homage to the brave soldiers of the Indian Armed Forces. The unwavering commitment of our armed forces to the Motherland, embodying the spirit of 'Nation First: Always and Every Time', instils in every visitor a profound sense

of patriotism and gratitude," the vice president said in a post on X.

He appreciated the Indian Army for establishing and maintaining the memorial, which preserves the "inspiring legacy, courage and sacrifices of our heroes and serves as a source of inspiration for present and future generations".

The vice president said he also visited the galleries depicting operations during the Indo-Pak and Indo-China Wars in Hall of Fame which stand as a testament to the courage, dedication and sacrifices of the brave personnel of the Armed Forces.

Radhakrishnan met with the brave personnel of the 5th Battalion of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) and lauded their unwavering dedication, professionalism and steadfast commitment to safeguarding the nation's frontiers under some of the most challenging conditions.



Union Govt bans 16 fixed-dose drug combinations citing public health concerns

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

The Centre has prohibited the manufacture, sale and distribution of 16 fixed-dose combination (FDC) drugs, saying they lack "therapeutic justification" and their continued use was not considered beneficial in relation to the potential risks involved.

The move, the Union Health Ministry said, was to safeguard public health and promote rational use of medicines while ensuring only effective and scientifically

validated medicines are available to the public.

FDC drugs are those which contain a combination of two or more active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) in a fixed ratio.

The decision follows a review of FDCs undertaken in compliance with the Supreme Court's directions. The Drugs Technical Advisory Board (DTAB) had constituted an expert committee to examine various drug combinations and identify those that were irrational, therapeutically unjustified or potentially harmful.



"The manufacture for sale, sale, distribution and supply of the identified 16 FDCs for human use shall stand prohibited with immediate

effect across the country," the Ministry said.

It added that these combination drugs were found to "lack therapeutic justification" and were "not considered beneficial" with respect to the risks involved.

It further said that the prohibited formulations span a range of therapeutic categories, including certain dermatological preparations, analgesic (painkillers) and anti-spasmodic (muscle relaxants) medicines, and antibiotic-based combinations.

Among the banned formulations are combinations

such as Acetyl Salicylic Acid with Ethoheptazine; Dicyclomine, Paracetamol and Clidinium Bromide; Dicyclomine, Paracetamol, Clidinium Bromide and Chlordiazepoxide; Gliclidazide with Chromium Picolinate; and Paracetamol with Lignocaine.

Several antibiotic-based combinations have also been prohibited, including Amoxicillin with Serratiapeptidase, Amoxicillin with Lactobacillus Sporegenes, Amoxicillin with Cloxacillin, Lactic Acid Bacillus and

Serratiapeptidase, Cefadroxyl with Probenecid, and Cefuroxime with Serratiapeptidase.

The banned list additionally includes several dermatological and skincare formulations containing combinations of Aloe Vera or Aloe Extract with ingredients such as Vitamin E, Jojoba Oil, Orange Oil, Wheat Germ Oil, Tea Tree Oil, Allantoin and D-Panthenol.

The Ministry banned the FDC in the notifications issued under Section 26A of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940.



States Focus

PM, President offer prayers at tribal sacred sites in Odisha

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n Pahadpur (Odisha)

President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday offered prayers at tribal sacred sites, including Gosani Peeth and the Santhali and Ho Jaheras, at Pahadpur village in Odisha's Mayurbhanj district. The PM's visit to Pahadpur, the native village of the president's late husband Shyam Charan Murmu, was held amid unprecedented security arrangements and away from media glare. Murmu, who was already present in the village, received the prime minister on his arrival. Modi was accorded a ceremonial welcome by residents, with drumbeats, flowers and traditional tribal dances. The president and the PM



President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi during their visit to Pahadpur village in Mayurbhanj district, Odisha

first visited Gosani Peeth, then walked to the Santhali and Ho Jaheras, where they planted saplings. While Jaheras are sacred groves where tribal deities are worshipped, Gosani is associated with prayers offered to ancestors, said Damayanti Beshra, an OI Chiki scholar. "It was an unforgettable day for the tribals of Odisha. Both the President and the PM offered prayers at tribal sacred groves," Beshra said. As part of the customary ritual, Murmu, Modi and members of their security detail were offered traditional Santhali garments before entering the Jahera,

located amid trees. The two leaders later visited a school established by Murmu in memory of her late husband and her two sons, Laxman and Sipun. Shyam Charan Murmu and the couple's two sons died before Murmu became India's first tribal president in 2022. Modi paid floral tributes at the statue of Shyam Charan Murmu and also interacted with students at the school and the Skill Centre in Pahadpur. The leaders also visited an exhibition showcasing tribal products. The village was decorated with flowers, tribal motifs and traditional artwork on mud walls. Children and women lined the streets to welcome the two leaders, while cut-outs and hoardings of Murmu and Modi were put up across the village.



WORK ON TO IMPROVE ELECTORAL PROCESS: CEC TELLS BLOS

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar on Saturday interacted with around 700 Booth-Level Officers (BLOs) and supervisors in Jaipur and said efforts are being made to improve the country's electoral system. The interaction was held at the Jaipur Exhibition and Convention Centre (JECC) in the city's Sitapura area and was attended by Rajasthan Chief Electoral Officer Naveen Mahajan and other election officials. Kumar said that the Election Commission of India (ECI) is committed to strengthening democratic institutions, with the national poll body working to improve the electoral process and ensure greater efficiency and reliability in election management. The CEC also appreciated SIR-related activities and described the State's performance as commendable. (PTI)



SIKKIM GOVERNOR FLAGS OFF FIRST MANSAROVAR YATRA BATCH

Sikkim Governor Om Prakash Mathur on Saturday flagged off the first batch of pilgrims of the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra 2026 through the Nathu La Pass. The contingent of 44 pilgrims, including four liaison officers and a medical officer, entered Tibet after completing a four-day acclimatisation programme in Sikkim. The group, comprising 32 men and 12 women from states across India, proceeded towards Gyangze in the Tibet Autonomous Region, a key halt on the route to the revered Mount Kailash and Lake Mansarovar. The pilgrims were flagged off from Nathu La by Mathur in the presence of State Tourism Minister Tshering Thendup Bhutia. (PTI)

Union minister's son granted interim bail in POCSO case

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n Hyderabad

A city court has granted interim bail to Union Minister Bandi Sanjay Kumar's son, Bageerath, who was arrested in connection with a POCSO case registered against him, till June 25. Bageerath, who was in judicial custody, was granted interim bail by the court on Friday to enable him to write his BBA exams. Bageerath was arrested on the night of May 16 in connection with the POCSO case and was subsequently remanded to judicial custody by a magistrate. Earlier, the Telangana High Court had refused to grant him interim protection from



Union Minister Bandi Sanjay along with his son Bageerath

arrest. The case was registered on May 8 under relevant sections of the BNS and the POCSO Act at Petbasheerabad police station, based on a complaint lodged by the mother of a 17-year-old girl. She alleged that Bageerath had been in a relationship with her daughter and had sexually harassed her. After recording the girl's statement, more severe charges under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act

were subsequently invoked. Bageerath also lodged a counter-complaint, alleging that the girl had introduced herself to him and had invited him to family functions and group gatherings. In his complaint, he stated that, believing her family to be trustworthy, he accompanied them on visits to certain religious sites as part of a group. He further alleged that the girl and her parents later pressured him to marry her, and when he declined, they demanded money and threatened to file false complaints against him if he refused to pay. An FIR was registered based on his complaint as well.

Lakshadweep liquor draft triggers mass protests

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n Kochi/Lakshadweep

In a major blow to the administration's new tourism push, the Agatti Island Mahallu Jama-ath Committee has formally joined the territory-wide agitation against the proposed Lakshadweep Excise Regulation 2026. The influential committee has submitted a memorandum to the Administrator demanding an immediate and complete withdrawal of the draft policy, which seeks to permit liquor sales in the archipelago. As the gateway island hosting Lakshadweep's primary airport, Agatti's leadership has warned that they are on the frontline of the impending policy shift, which they claim has triggered widespread resentment across the peace-loving Union Territory. For nearly five decades, Lakshadweep has maintained a strict, community-backed liquor prohibition policy.

Condemning the administrative move to dilute existing laws under the guise of boosting tourism, the Agatti Mahallu Committee asserted that the new regulation would irreparably damage the peace, safety, and spiritual heritage nurtured by generations of islanders. The committee has demanded that the administration freeze the draft policy immediately and initiate a transparent review involving local stakeholders. They maintain that nothing short of a total withdrawal of the draft will suffice to protect the island's social fabric. "If liquor is deemed necessary for tourism development, then what Lakshadweep needs is its tender coconut. Liquor will destroy the peace of the islands. Where there is no peace, tourism cannot happen," says KC Abdul Khader Saquafi, Chairman, Agatti Mahallu Jama-ath Committee.



IUML formally severs its DMK ties; to begin political journey with ruling TVK

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n Chennai

The Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) officially announced its exit from the DMK-led alliance in Tamil Nadu and that it will continue its political journey with the ruling TVK, thus bringing curtains down on the decades-old historic alliance with the Dravidian major. The IUML cannot continue in the DMK-led Secular Progressive Alliance in the present political circumstances, while respecting the people's mandate for the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam, the party said in a resolution passed today, stating that it

was leaving the DMK's alliance. The party had supported the TVK in the Government formation in May, and its legislator AM Shahjahan, elected from Papanasam Assembly constituency, has been accommodated in Vijay's Cabinet as minister for Minorities Welfare. Immediately after the Assembly election results were announced on May 4, Congress, a long-standing ally of the DMK, entered into a post-poll pact with the TVK and joined the Cabinet. Two of its lawmakers have been made ministers. It also announced its decision to continue its poll alliance with TVK for future elections.



IUML national president KM Kader Mohideen

Another DMK ally, VCK, joined the TVK Government while the Left parties extended their unconditional support to the Government from outside. There are indications that the Vaiko-led MDMK, which contested in four constituencies as part of the

DMK-led alliance, under the DMK's rising sun symbol, and won two seats, is also likely to explore future alliance prospects with the Vijay-led party. A total of 14 resolutions were passed at the State general council meeting of the IUML held at its Royapuram office here, with 480 members in attendance. One of the resolutions formally approved the party's decision to withdraw from the DMK alliance, stating that it cannot continue in the DMK alliance in the present political circumstances. Later, IUML national president KM Kader Mohideen said the IUML extended its support to the formation of the TVK Government, respecting the mandate given by the people of Tamil Nadu. The present political circumstances do not make it possible for the party to continue its association with DMK, he said. The party's resolution said a decision on the electoral alliance would be taken once

the by-elections and local bodies polls were notified. "The people feel the TVK is dispensing good governance and that the regime should continue," Mohideen told reporters after exiting the DMK alliance. The general council stressed that IUML should focus on its own unique political contribution and identity. The alliance between the two parties was first formed in 1962. Mohideen noted that following discussions with DMK chief MK Stalin and internal consultation with their national leadership in Kerala, the IUML decided to join the TVK Cabinet to ensure the continuation of good governance.

Institutionalised corruption: PDP attacks NC Govt over alleged pacemaker scam

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n Srinagar

Opposition PDP on Saturday lashed out at the Jammu and Kashmir Government after an alleged 'pacemaker scam' came to the fore at the GMC Anantnag, saying the fraud is a result of the "institutionalised corruption." Training guns on the Government, PDP leader Iltija Mufti said that instead of getting J&K's "collapsing" healthcare on track, the ministers have "misplaced priorities" and are hurling "abusive tirades" against the PDP.



PDP leader Iltija Mufti

"J&K Government's institutionalised corruption has now resulted in a massive health racket at GMC Anantnag, where its cardiologists performed unnecessary advanced cardiac surgeries on unwitting patients who didn't even need them! All to embezzle funds from

the PM-JAY scheme," Mufti said in a post on X. An inquiry into alleged large-scale procedural irregularities at the Government Medical College, Anantnag, revealed that nearly 50 per cent of evaluated patients who underwent advanced cardiac surgical procedures did not even require them. The inquiry by the Jammu and Kashmir Health and Medical Education Department revealed fraudulent insurance claims, patient exploitation and unnecessary procedures on healthy patients.

5 dead in Maharashtra temple roof collapse

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar

At least five persons died, and 18 were injured after the under-construction roof of a Hanuman temple collapsed at Yashwadi village in Maharashtra's Parbhani district on Saturday afternoon, police said. The village is located on the Parbhani-Manwat road, about 190 km from Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar. A part of the roof of the under-construction 'sabhamandap' or outer hall collapsed around 3.30 pm, said a police official. While five people were confirmed dead, around 25 people have been rescued so far, he said.



It being a Saturday, a day associated with Lord Hanuman, the temple saw a rush of devotees, another official said.

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis expressed grief over the deaths of devotees, and said the injured were being provided medical treatment. The kin of the deceased will receive financial assistance of ₹5 lakh each, he announced. The deceased were identified as Santosh Gadade (resident of Mantha), Akash Surduse (Parbhani), Munesh Agarwal (26, Jintur), Suraj Popatkar (20, Manwat), and Srikrushna Gaware (38, Wadvani-Beed).

Himanta inaugurates students' union office in Guwahati

TONY DAS
n Guwahati

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma inaugurated the newly constructed office and hostel of the All Assam Chutia Students' Union at Sadhani Bhawan at Pathar Quarry in Dispur on Saturday. On the occasion, Chief Minister Sharma also paid rich floral tributes at the statue of Sati Sadhani and offered obeisance. It may be noted that the building has been constructed with a one-time grant provided by the Chief Minister to the Chutia Development Council. Besides supporting



the organisation's activities, the facility will benefit students who come to Guwahati for their studies, as well as people belonging to the community who visit the city for various reasons. Speaking on the occasion,

self-respect. He said that the political and cultural history of the Chutias, one of Assam's indigenous communities, is both ancient and special. He observed that over the past 10 years, the State Government has worked to promote the community's progress in various platforms. Referring to the immortal sacrifice made by the heroic Sati Sadhani to protect the dignity of the Chutia people, he said her legacy remains a lasting symbol of courage and strength in Assam's history. He further stated that the Chutias excelled not only in political affairs but also in cultural and technical

fields. Their contribution to the development of Assam as a State has been immense. Chief Minister Sarma stated that, in the modern era, a community's identity is largely measured by its academic achievements. He noted that a community's ancient culture, traditions, and heritage reflect the contributions of its ancestors. He, however, emphasised that the present generation must work to strengthen and uphold a community that takes pride in its rich history, culture, and traditions. According to him, nothing can replace education in achieving this goal.



Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma attended the Bishnu Rabha Divas celebrations and award ceremony at Srimanta Sankardev Kalakshetra, Guwahati, and paid heartfelt tributes to Kalaguru Bishnu Prasad Rabha. On the occasion, the State conferred the 'Bishnu Rabha Award', 'Sati Sadhani Award', and 'Ajan Peer Award' to distinguished personalities in recognition of their contributions to art, literature and cultural harmony

Yoga: Foundation of healthy humanity, balanced nature and sustainable future



RAJENDRA SHUKLA

India's ancient cultural tradition has always guided the world in the art of living. The philosophy of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" (the world is one family) is not merely an ideal but a pathway to the welfare of humanity. One of the greatest gifts of this tradition is Yoga. Today, Yoga is no longer confined to India; it has become a global means of achieving health, balance, and inner peace.

Under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the recognition of 21 June as the International Day of Yoga by the United Nations symbolizes the global acceptance of India's cultural strength and spiritual heritage. It is not merely an annual observance but a worldwide movement aimed at securing a better future for humanity. By taking Yoga to the masses, the Prime Minister has transformed it into an integral part of modern lifestyles. Today, millions across the globe practice Yoga for physical well-being, mental balance, and spiritual tranquility.

Yoga: More Than Exercise, a Complete Science of Life. At a time when the world is confronting challenges such as climate change, unhealthy lifestyles, mental stress, and rising diseases, Yoga has emerged not merely

as a form of exercise but as a comprehensive science of living. Yoga teaches us that life is not about consumption alone, and the future cannot be secured through the reckless exploitation of resources. Sustainable development requires the conscious, sensitive, and responsible use of natural resources.

Respect for nature and respect for one's body are deeply interconnected. Just as maintaining ecological balance is essential, preserving the balance of our body and mind is equally important. Yoga teaches this harmony. This is why the philosophy of Yoga perfectly complements the Lifestyle for Environment (LIFE) initiative advocated by Prime Minister Modi. While LIFE inspires responsible living, Yoga provides the discipline and inner strength needed to practice it.

The Future of Humanity Lies in Mindful Living

As competition over resources intensifies worldwide, humanity's future lies not in excessive consumption but in a disciplined and mindful way of life. Yoga cultivates inner discipline and teaches that true happiness comes not from material achievements but from mental equilibrium and spiritual fulfillment.

The Prime Minister's vision of the "Panch Pran"—building a developed India, freeing ourselves from the colonial mindset, taking pride in our heritage, fostering unity, and fulfilling civic duties—can only be realized through healthy and aware citizens. Yoga is



one of the most effective means of achieving this goal. A physically and mentally healthy individual is better equipped to contribute meaningfully to nation-building.

The Fit India Movement is another extension of this philosophy. A healthy India is a capable India. Healthcare today is no longer limited to hospitals and treatment; the focus has shifted toward preventive healthcare. By maintaining a balanced lifestyle, practicing Yoga regularly, managing stress, and living in harmony with nature, many diseases can be prevented.

In Madhya Pradesh, the Government is expanding healthcare beyond treatment by encouraging healthy lifestyles. Yoga, AYUSH, nutrition, mental health, and public awareness are being integrated into health policy as key pillars. The objective is to ensure that citizens live not only longer lives but also healthier, more active, and more dignified ones.

Yoga and Mental Well-being

One of the greatest challenges facing the world today is the growing crisis of mental health. Material comforts have

increased, yet inner peace has diminished. Stress, competition, insecurity, and imbalance have become defining features of modern life.

In such times, Yoga serves as a bridge to reconnect with oneself. It is not merely a practice for physical fitness but a process that harmonizes the body, mind, intellect, and soul. When individuals find stability within themselves, they naturally become more sensitive toward society and nature. Yoga teaches balanced awareness rather than impulsive reactions and enables people to discover inner peace amid external chaos.

Yoga in the Era of Climate Change

The relevance of Yoga becomes even greater in the age of climate change. Pollution, unhealthy dietary habits, sedentary lifestyles, and mental stress are weakening human immunity and resilience. Yoga strengthens the body's natural defense mechanisms, making individuals physically stronger, mentally balanced, and emo-

tionally resilient. Healthy human resources are a nation's greatest asset. Economic resources alone cannot make a country truly great. Long-term national development depends upon citizens who are healthy, aware, disciplined, and optimistic. Therefore, Yoga is not merely a personal practice but also a powerful instrument of nation-building.

Yoga for Every Generation

Yoga should not be confined to a single day of observance but embraced as a way of life. It is beneficial for children, youth, adults, and senior citizens alike. In particular, Yoga has immense significance in the context of elderly health and geriatric care. A healthy and peaceful old age cannot be ensured through medical care alone; it requires a balanced lifestyle. Yoga helps senior citizens remain active, self-reliant, and mentally positive.

India has always offered the world not just ideas but a way of life. Yoga is a guiding light of that tradition. It establishes harmony between the body, mind, society, and nature. If humanity is to move toward a healthy, peaceful, and sustainable future, Yoga must become an integral part of everyday life.

Let us embrace Yoga not merely as a physical practice but as a philosophy of life, and contribute to the creation of a healthy humanity, a balanced environment, and a developed India.

(The author is the Deputy Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh)

Isha Foundation to hold 1,000 free yoga sessions across India

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n Coimbatore

Isha Foundation will mark the International Day of Yoga on June 21 by conducting nearly 1,000 free yoga and meditation sessions across India, with an estimated participation of 50,000 people from corporate organisations, educational institutions, healthcare facilities, Government departments, defence establishments and community groups.

The nationwide initiative aims to promote yoga as a holistic approach to physical, mental and emotional well-being while encouraging participants to incorporate simple yogic practices into their daily lives.

The sessions, led by trained volunteers and teachers from the foundation, are designed to introduce participants to yoga as more than a form of exercise. Speaking about the significance of yoga, Sadhguru said, "Yoga is not just an exercise. It is a process and system through which human beings can find their highest possible potential."

As part of the celebrations, participants will also be introduced to "Miracle of Mind," a free seven-minute guided meditation developed by Sadhguru.

Available through a dedicated mobile application, the meditation programme has attracted more than 3.5 million active users globally.

The foundation announced that six additional languages—Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam,



Bangla, Italian and Nepali will be added to the app on International Day of Yoga. The app is currently available in English, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Spanish and Russian.

The expansion is expected to make the meditation programme accessible to a broader audience in their native languages.

Special yoga events will also be organised at major Isha centres.

At Sadhguru Sannidhi in Bengaluru, more than 2,300 participants, including National Cadet Corps (NCC) cadets, Border Security Force (BSF) personnel, students, villagers, volunteers and members of the public, are expected to take part in yoga and meditation sessions in the presence of Adiyogi.

Meanwhile, the Isha Yoga Center at the Velliangiri foothills near Coimbatore will host over 700 participants, including 500 students from the Young Indians Coimbatore Chapter and 200 personnel from the

Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF). According to the foundation, more than seven lakh visitors have participated in free yoga and meditation sessions at the Coimbatore centre over the past year, reflecting growing public interest in wellness and mindfulness practices.

Founded over three decades ago and guided by Sadhguru, Isha Foundation operates through more than 400 centres worldwide and is supported by over 17 million volunteers.

The organisation focuses on human well-being through yoga, meditation and various social outreach initiatives aimed at addressing physical, mental, emotional and spiritual dimensions of life.

The large-scale observance of International Day of Yoga by the foundation comes amid increasing awareness of yoga's role in promoting health, stress management and overall quality of life across diverse sections of society.

Indian Army revamps student hostel in North Sikkim



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n Gangtok

In a significant step towards improving educational infrastructure in remote areas of Sikkim, the Indian Army has completed the upgradation of the Netaji Subhas Chandra Hostel at Taryang Primary School in Lower Dzongu, North Sikkim, under its flagship Operation Sadbhavana initiative.

Established in 1976, Taryang Primary School serves children from remote Lepcha villages scattered across the region. The challenging terrain, harsh weather conditions, poor connectivity and limited infrastructure have long posed difficulties for students in accessing quality educational and residential facilities.

The hostel, home to around 35 students, had been operating with inadequate amenities for several years.

Recognising the need for better facilities, the Indian Army undertook a comprehensive development project aimed at enhancing both the living and learning environment for the students.

The upgraded hostel now features improved sanitation facilities, a hygienic kitchen and dining area, proper electrification, modern furniture, digital learning aids, sports infrastructure, recreational facilities and safety chain fencing along the school boundary.

Speaking on the occasion, an Army officer highlighted the longstanding relationship between the Army and the people of Sikkim.

Yoga Day: 32 lakh SHG members to participate in celebrations in Assam

TONY DAS n Guwahati

The Assam State Rural Livelihoods Mission (ASRLM), under the Panchayat and Rural Development Department, will observe the International Day of Yoga on June 21 across rural Assam in collaboration with the Department of AYUSH, Government of Assam, with the participation of more than 32 lakh Self-Help Group (SHG) members.

A central state-level celebration will be held in Guwahati and is expected to be attended by Union Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma. Meanwhile, Panchayat and Rural Development Minister Atul Borah will participate in a yoga programme in Golaghat.

The initiative aims to promote yoga as an essential component of a healthy lifestyle among SHG members and their families, encouraging physical, mental and emotional well-being in rural communities across the state.



CM Himanta Biswa Sarma performing Yoga FILE PHOTO

According to ASRLM, yoga sessions will be conducted in 23,498 villages at 37,383 venues, with an estimated participation of 32,19,898 SHG members, making it one of the largest community-based yoga observances in the state.

In preparation for the event, the Department of AYUSH developed a Common Yoga Protocol comprising basic yoga asanas tailored for SHG members. Participants across Assam have been practising the protocol since June 1.

The Department of AYUSH has also provided extensive support for the programme, including capacity-building initiatives,

training of resource persons and the distribution of necessary materials to facilitate yoga activities across the state. Officials said the observance reflects ASRLM's broader commitment to holistic empowerment by integrating health and wellness initiatives with its ongoing efforts to strengthen women's collectives and enhance rural livelihoods.

Through the collaborative effort, ASRLM and the Department of AYUSH aim to encourage the regular practice of yoga among SHG members and contribute to building healthier and more resilient rural communities throughout Assam.

Indian Army, NEFTU students participate in yoga session

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n Aalo

As part of the celebrations leading up to International Yoga Day 2026, the Indian Army conducted a special yoga session with students of the North Eastern Frontier Technical University (NEFTU) in Aalo, West Siang district of Arunachal Pradesh on Saturday. The event was organised by the Spearhead Division under the Spear Corps in the scenic Siyom Valley and witnessed enthusiastic participation from over 100 students and Army personnel. The session aimed to promote physical fitness, mental well-being and holistic health among participants.

During the hour-long programme, students and soldiers practised a range of yoga postures, breathing exercises and wellness techniques designed to improve flexibility, concentration, emotional balance and overall fitness. Organisers highlighted yoga as an effective tool for fostering a healthy lifestyle, self-discipline and resilience.

Set against the tranquil backdrop of the Siyom Valley, the event under-



scored the Indian Army's continued efforts to engage with youth and promote wellness awareness while strengthening ties between the military and civilian communities.

Officials said the initiative also carried forward the core message of International Yoga Day by encouraging harmony, unity and collective well-being through the practice of yoga. Participants welcomed the programme and appreciated the opportunity to interact with Army personnel in a setting focused on health and fitness.

The event further strengthened the bond between the Indian Army and the youth of Arunachal Pradesh while reinforcing the values of discipline, positive living and community engagement.

PNB CR Park branch holds CLDN Exchange Mela



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n New Delhi

Punjab National Bank's (PNB) CR Park Branch successfully organised a Coin and Lower Denomination Note (CLDN) Exchange Mela at its branch premises.

The event was graced by Chief Guest CS Punetha, Manager, Issue Department, Reserve Bank of India (RBI), who was received by Smt. Punam Kumari, Branch Head, PNB CR Park Branch, and Sujeet Chaudhary, Chief Manager, Circle Office, Punjab National Bank.

Addressing the gathering, Punetha highlighted the importance of Indian banknotes and their key security features. He also shared valuable information on coins, currency management and the identification of genuine banknotes, thereby creating public awareness regarding the proper handling and circulation of currency.

The Mela witnessed enthusiastic participation from customers and members of the public, who availed themselves of the facility to exchange currency for fresh coins and lower denomination notes.

The initiative aimed to improve the availability of small denomination currency and promote awareness about currency-related matters among the public.

The event concluded successfully, reflecting Punjab National Bank's continued commitment towards customer service, financial literacy and support for RBI's currency management initiatives.

PM disburses ` 2,400 cr under PM-VBRY; Noida hosts regional outreach event

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n Noida/New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday disbursed incentives worth ` 2,400 crore under the Pradhan Mantri Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana (PM-VBRY), benefiting more than 15 lakh individuals across the country and reinforcing the Government's focus on employment generation and social security coverage.

The main programme was held at Vigyan Bhavan in New Delhi, while regional outreach events were organised simultaneously at 200 locations nationwide. In Noida, the Ministry of Labour and Employment conducted a special programme at the NIOS Auditorium in Sector-62, attended by beneficiaries, employers, industry representatives and Government officials.

The Noida event was graced by Gautam Buddha Nagar MP Dr Mahesh Sharma,



who described the PM-VBRY as a "win-win" initiative for both employees and employers. Around 300 participants attended the programme, including 250 beneficiaries, 50 employers, representatives of industry associations, public representatives, state Government officials and officials from the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO).

During the event, employers distributed 18 appointment letters to newly recruited workers, highlighting the

scheme's role in facilitating formal employment opportunities. Addressing beneficiaries and stakeholders from Vigyan Bhavan, Prime Minister Modi said the PM-VBRY was more than an employment scheme and served as a bridge between aspiring young workers and industry. He noted that the programme was unique in supporting both first-time employees and employers who generate new jobs.

"Prime Minister Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana is much more

than an employment scheme. It is an initiative designed to strengthen the aspirations of young people entering their first jobs while creating a robust bridge between industry and the workforce," the Prime Minister said.

According to the Prime Minister, nearly 70 lakh new jobs have been created under the scheme so far, with an equal number of first-time workers brought under the social security net. He added that around 20 lakh young people have completed six months in their first jobs, while nearly 10 lakh beneficiaries have already received incentives after reaching this milestone.

More than ` 2,000 crore has been directly transferred to beneficiaries' bank accounts under the programme, he said, describing the support as both financial assistance and recognition of the efforts and aspirations of India's youth.

Sadbhavana Old Age Home offers free care to destitute, childless elderly

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n Rajkot

Sadbhavana Old Age Home in Rajkot has announced free admission for childless, destitute, bedridden and seriously ill elderly individuals, including those suffering from cancer and coma, as it expands operations at its new Vinubhai Bachubhai Nagrecha Campus, which is being developed as one of the world's largest residential care facilities for senior citizens. Located on the Rajkot-Jamnagar Highway near Paddhari, the 30-acre campus is designed to provide free lifelong care, accommodation and medical support to up to 5,000 elderly and dependent residents.

The project, estimated to cost ` 500 crore, features 1,400 rooms spread across seven towers with 11 floors each and is being developed with a built-up area of nearly 20 lakh square feet. According to the manage-



ment of Sadbhavana Old Age Home, the facility is aimed at supporting individuals who have no family support, including childless senior citizens, bedridden patients, people with disabilities and those suffering from serious illnesses.

including around 260 bedridden individuals who require intensive assistance and are dependent on daily nursing care.

Officials said the facility offers free accommodation, meals, healthcare services and personal care without charging residents any fees. The organisation admits eligible individuals irrespective of caste, religion or community, subject to institutional guidelines and capacity.

The new campus has been designed to provide comprehensive care and a community-oriented environment. Planned facilities include round-the-clock medical services, physiotherapy support, regular health check-ups, cultural and recreational activities, a library, game rooms, a grand auditorium, satsang hall and a temple complex intended to support residents' spiritual and emotional well-being.

The institution currently provides shelter and care to more than 700 residents,

FROM THE WORLD

Fighting persists in Lebanon as US-Iran deal is under threat

CANADA

Auto tycoon convicted

Austrian-Canadian billionaire and automotive business founder Frank Stronach was found guilty on Friday of sexual assault and indecent assault of two women decades ago.

MEXICO

Four dead body found

Mexican authorities were working on Friday to identify four bodies found on the outskirts of Mexico City as part of the search efforts to locate a married couple who disappeared in May while living in Chicago and Mexico.

KAREEM CHEHAYEB/ BASSEM MROUE

Israeli strikes on southern Lebanon on Saturday killed at least 16 people, including two children, hours after reports emerged of a ceasefire agreement.

The persistent fighting threatened an interim agreement between the United States and Iran to end the war in the West Asia.

Lebanon's National News Agency said the strikes hit the southern town of Nabatiyeh and nearby villages. At least seven people remained trapped under the rubble, it said.

An Israeli military official said Hezbollah had fired more than 50 projectiles at Israeli forces in southern Lebanon overnight, prompting the military to start targeting the militant group there.

The official spoke anonymously in line with regulations. The army said it struck dozens of Hezbollah targets and militants in southern Lebanon, including rocket-launching positions and Hezbollah command centers.

On Friday, Israeli ambassador to Washington, Yechiel Leiter, said on X that Israel "remains firmly committed to an immediate ceasefire" if Hezbollah honors the agreement and ceases hostilities.

On Saturday, Hezbollah said it had committed to the ceasefire but blamed Israel



A resident walking past the rubble of buildings damaged in Israeli strikes as barber Wissam Srour, right, searches for belongings from his barbershop in the southern port city of Tyre, Lebanon

for violating it several times on Friday night. A statement issued by the group's military wing said it would abide by the ceasefire but would also repel attacks by Israeli troops.

A conflict that could sink the US-Iran deal

Hezbollah and Israel went to war just days after the US and Israel launched strikes on Iran on February 28, with Hezbollah firing rockets and drones at civilian communities in northern Israel and Israel seizing large swaths of southern Lebanon.

The interim US-Iran agreement signed this week has already reopened the Strait of Hormuz, which Iran had closed as the war unfolded - cutting off the global economy from significant supplies of oil and natural

gas. The deal also envisages the relaunch of talks on Iran's nuclear program, a core issue in the war.

Neither Israel nor Hezbollah are signatories to the deal, which calls for a halt to military operations in Lebanon and for the country's sovereignty to be respected. With the fighting continuing, the accord is under threat and US-Iran talks in Switzerland, planned to start Friday, have been delayed, with no new date announced.

A new round of US-backed talks between the Lebanese government and Israel is expected to take place in Washington next week.

A strike on the village of Barish killed four members of a family, parents and two children. In Arab Salim village, a body was pulled from a destroyed house, and in the villages of Doueir and Kfar Rumman, drone strikes killed a person on a motorcycle and a Lebanese soldier.

Plumes of smoke rose into the sky over southern Lebanon Saturday and Israeli jets flew low over the coastal city of Tyre. The city's residents told The Associated Press they were relieved that

Tyre had been spared in recent days but the sounds of Israeli planes reminded them the war is not over. Many doubted a ceasefire - even if agreed on - would hold.

"Our entire lives would change if there's a ceasefire," said Hussein Khoshman, a Tyre resident.

Netanyahu's office did not immediately comment on the ceasefire efforts. On Friday, Netanyahu posted on X that, on his orders, the Israeli army had "struck powerfully" 150 Hezbollah targets, killing dozens of militants.

Iranian, US officials cancel travel

Iranian officials did not travel as planned to Switzerland, insisting that the fighting in Lebanon must stop before the talks can take place. US Vice President JD Vance also postponed his trip.

On Saturday, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei told the semi-official ISNA news agency that Pakistan's interior minister will arrive in Iran as part of continued negotiation efforts.

Because the initial deal was signed digitally earlier this week, the talks in Switzerland were not urgent, and plans were underway to hold a meeting in the coming days, he said.

ISRAELI STRIKE HITS GAZA CITY APARTMENT, KILLING 2 CHILDREN, SAY HEALTH OFFICIALS

Deir Al-Balah : An Israeli strike early Saturday killed at least two children in the Gaza Strip, Palestinian health officials said. Despite an October ceasefire between Israel and the militant group Hamas, the enclave has seen near-daily Israeli attacks that have killed over 1,007 Palestinians, the Gaza Health Ministry said.

sitting at home. The rocket fell on us without a warning," said their cousin, Mohammad Safadi, who had a forehead wound. He said both he and his wife were wounded in the attack. "This ceasefire the occupation and the negotiation team speak of ... is this really a ceasefire? We are civilians. I never held a weapon," Safadi added.



Israel-Hezbollah deadly war deaths exceed 4,000, says Lebanese ministry

ASSOCIATED PRESS

The death toll in the latest Israeli strikes on Lebanon has now surpassed 4,000, country's health ministry announced on Saturday.

Mediators were scrambling to halt the fighting between Israel and the militant Hezbollah group after a heavy exchange on Friday killed at least 47 people in Lebanon and four Israeli soldiers.

An Israeli military official said Hezbollah had fired more than 50 projectiles at Israeli forces in southern Lebanon overnight.

The official spoke anonymously in line with regulations. Israel's army said it



struck dozens of Hezbollah targets and militants in southern Lebanon, including Hezbollah command centres.

Pakistan minister Mohsin Naqvi lands in Iran

SAJJAD HUSSAIN

Pakistan's Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Saturday reached Iran unannounced - the first visit to the country by a senior Pakistani official after Washington and Tehran signed an agreement aimed at restoring peace in West Asia.

Naqvi reached Mashhad in Iran on Saturday, reported Geo News, without disclosing further details.

Later, Iranian media reported that Naqvi was on his way to the Capital city, Tehran, to hold talks with senior Iranian officials.



Naqvi is expected to discuss the upcoming technical-level talks between Iran and the US. The US and Iran signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) this week, which led to the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz and marked the beginning of a 60-day negotiation window aimed at restoring peace in West Asia.

Washington and Tehran, which were expected to begin on June 19, but were postponed. Axios reported on Saturday that White House envoy Steve Witkoff was on his way to Switzerland, where the first round of talks after the MoU signing is expected to take place, with focus on Iran's nuclear stock. It further cited an unnamed source saying Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi is also planning to travel to Switzerland.

GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF FISHERIES, ASSAM MEEN BHAWAN::GUWAHATI-16:: ASSAM

The Directorate of Fisheries, Assam, Guwahati, invites e-Tenders from the intending contractors / firms / suppliers for execution / supply of '23 Fishery Project (Additional Infrastructure in Department Farm) under RIDF XXVIII (2022-23) Rejuvenation of Namati Departmental Fish Farm under RIDF-XXVIII' with an estimated amount of INR 1,23,96,000.00.

Table with 2 columns: Offline Mode and Online Mode. Includes details about the tender process and contact information for the Director of Fisheries, Assam.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the General Public on behalf of our client i.e. DCB Bank Ltd. that Mr. Brijang Bansal is claiming to be the owner of First Floor without Roof rights. Part of Built up Property No. 487, addressing 31/89 Sq. Yds. in Block & Pocket A-2, situated at Sector 4, Rohini, Delhi-110085.

The Sirda Central Cooperative Bank Ltd. H.O. Sirda. Corrigendum SHORT TERM RE-TENDER NOTICE. Table with 4 columns: Sr. No., Name of Work, Start Date & End Date, Opening of Technical & Financial Bid.

GOVT. OF ASSAM OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER, P.W.D. (N.H. WORKS) CHANDMARI, ASSAM: GUWAHATI-3

No. NHR. 16/2026/3 PRESS NOTICE The Chief Engineer, PWD, (NH-Works), Assam, Chandmari, Guwahati-3 on behalf of Governor of Assam, invites online bids at the e-Tendering portal 'assamtenders.gov.in' for the National Highway works mentioned below under Govt, registered contractor of appropriate class having similar nature of works to be implemented under Deposit Work: -

Table with 3 columns: Sl. No., Name of Work, Appx. Value of work. Details of road improvement and safety works.

Note: Value of work is approximate only & may differ for which no claim will be entertained. The Contractors/Bidders must be registered on the www.assamtenders.gov.in for participating in the Bidding process other details may be seen at the e-procurement website i.e.

Pak court sentences 4 leaders of Imran Khan's party to 10-year jail, ex-FM Qureshi acquitted

M ZULQERNAIN

A Pakistan court on Saturday sentenced four senior leaders of jailed former premier Imran Khan's party to 10-year imprisonment in a case related to the 2023 riots, while it acquitted ex-foreign

minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi. Violent protests erupted across the country on May 9, 2023, mainly in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, following the arrest of former cricketer-turned-politician Khan.

for their role in attacking and burning police vehicles in Mughalpur area of Lahore. The verdict, which was reserved on Thursday, was pronounced by Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) Judge Manzer Ali Gill. The convicts have been lodged in Lahore's Kot Lakhpat Jail since 2023 and have earlier been sentenced in other cases related to the riots.

Shah Mahmood Qureshi. Yasmin Rashid, former Punjab minister Mian Mehmoond Rasheed, and former Senator Ejaz Chaudhry were convicted

AXIS BANK LTD. Branch Office - Axis Bank Limited, SBB LOAN CENTER SCO-221, 2nd Floor, Paramej Tower, Sector-12, Karnal-132001. POSSESSION NOTICE UNDER SARFAESI ACT 2002. Where as the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of Axis Bank Ltd. Under the Securitisation, Retention of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notice upon the Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)/ Mortgagee(s) mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The Sirda Central Cooperative Bank Ltd. H.O. Sirda. Corrigendum SHORT TERM RE-TENDER NOTICE. Table with 4 columns: Sr. No., Name of Work, Start Date & End Date, Opening of Technical & Financial Bid.

GOVT. OF ASSAM OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER, P.W.D. (N.H. WORKS) CHANDMARI, ASSAM: GUWAHATI-3. No. NHR. 16/2026/3 PRESS NOTICE. The Chief Engineer, PWD, (NH-Works), Assam, Chandmari, Guwahati-3 on behalf of Governor of Assam, invites online bids at the e-Tendering portal 'assamtenders.gov.in' for the National Highway works mentioned below under Govt, registered contractor of appropriate class having similar nature of works to be implemented under Deposit Work: -

The Sirda Central Cooperative Bank Ltd. H.O. Sirda. Corrigendum SHORT TERM RE-TENDER NOTICE. Table with 4 columns: Sr. No., Name of Work, Start Date & End Date, Opening of Technical & Financial Bid.

GOVT. OF ASSAM OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER, P.W.D. (N.H. WORKS) CHANDMARI, ASSAM: GUWAHATI-3. No. NHR. 16/2026/3 PRESS NOTICE. The Chief Engineer, PWD, (NH-Works), Assam, Chandmari, Guwahati-3 on behalf of Governor of Assam, invites online bids at the e-Tendering portal 'assamtenders.gov.in' for the National Highway works mentioned below under Govt, registered contractor of appropriate class having similar nature of works to be implemented under Deposit Work: -

PUBLIC NOTICE NOTICE is hereby given that Kanika Thakur claims to be owner and in possession of First Floor, Property no 394, West Guru Angad Nagar, Laxmi Nagar, Khureji Khas, Ilaqa Shahdara, Delhi-110092 (hereinafter called the said property) by virtue of Sale Deed dated 29.12.2025 reg vide Doc no 2025/5/11/1776 having purchased from Guizar Singh & said Guizar Singh had inherited the said property after the death of Amar Kaur by virtue of Relinquishment Deed dated 25.08.2003 reg Doc. No.5656 & said Kanika Thakur has agreed to sell the said Property to Isha Kalra and said Isha Kalra has agreed to create a mortgage in favour of our clients IDFC FIRST BANK LTD, Rajendra Place Branch, any person's having claim against the said Property, or any part thereof, by way of sale, exchange, mortgage (equitable/registered or otherwise), gift, trust, inheritance, lien or otherwise howsoever, are hereby intimated to notify the same in writing to us with supporting documentary evidence at the address mentioned below within 7days from the date thereof, failing which claim or claims, if any, of such person or persons will be considered to have been waived and/or abandoned and our client shall proceed with the disbursement of loan and subsequent creation of mortgage in respect thereof.

CRF celebrates 2nd anniversary

Chintan Research Foundation (CRF) celebrated its second foundation day on June 19, 2026. The event was graced by eminent personalities from various fields including political, bureaucracy, industry, academic and media and from diplomatic circles. Shishir Priyadarshi, President of Chintan Research Foundation (CRF); Pranav Adani, Director at Adani Enterprises; Erik Solheim, former Minister of International Development of Norway and Lok Sabha MP Shashi Tharoor delivered their speech and also released the annual report of CRF, which is supported by the Adani Group. CRF is a public policy think tank dedicated to fostering research, strategic dialogue and thought leadership. It brings together leaders from government, industry, diplomacy and academia to engage in conversations on India's long-term development priorities and global aspirations.

The Pioneer, country's oldest newspaper since 1865 and published across 10 cities, is strategically associated with CRF in amplifying these important conversations and creating a platform that bridges policy, governance, business and public discourse.



H.E. Mr. Riaz Hamidullah, High Commissioner of Bangladesh to India



H.E. Elchin Huseynli, Ambassador of Azerbaijan to India



Pooja Kapur is Additional Secretary and G20 Sous Sherpa in the Ministry of External Affairs of India



Senior Diplomat



Dr. Mazin Al Masoudi



H.E. Dr. Philipp Ackermann, Ambassador of Germany



H.E. Yousef Abdelghani, Ambassador of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan



Senior Diplomat



Mr. Oday Hatem, CDA, Iraq Embassy



The Pioneer's Prashant Tewari with High Commissioner of Rwanda to India Jacqueline Mukangira and a diplomat from the African country.



Dr. Mazin Al Masoudi, HOM Arab League Mission, Dr. Wael Awwad from India and Arab Countries Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (IACCIA), General Consular Comor Islands K L Ganju



Anil Sooklal Ambassador of South Africa with a senior diplomat



Norwegian Ambassador to India May-Elin Stener and a senior diplomat from the Arabian country



CRF President Shishir Priyadarshi with former IPS RK Pachnanda



The Pioneer's Prashant Tewari, senior BJP leader Sudhanshu Mittal, Senior advocate Arun Bhardwaj, Director Corporate Affairs - South Asia VFS Global Sanjeet Joher



Mariano Agustin Caucino Amb of Argentina to India greets Prashant Tewari.



Pranav Adani, Prashant Tewari and Shishir Priyadarshi



Bolivia declares emergency to clear protester blockade

PAOLA FLORES/ ISABEL DEBRE n La Paz

President Rodrigo Paz on Saturday declared a State of emergency that gives the military broad power to remove road blockades that have put a stranglehold on fuel and food supplies in Bolivia's seat of Government and other major cities.

A wave of protests over the last five weeks has called for Paz to step down over austerity measures imposed by the government, including the cancellation of fuel subsidies, and other issues. The demonstrations have unleashed violent confrontations between dynamite-wielding demonstrators and riot police, leading to at least 365 arrests and 37 injuries, according to authorities. At least 17 people have died, most of them linked to



a lack of medical care caused by transportation disruptions, according to Bolivia's ombudsman's office and human rights organisations. Barricades erected on key roads have effectively isolated the city of La Paz, triggering fuel and food shortages, paralysing transportation and preventing patients from reaching hospitals — causing at least seven deaths for lack of medical attention, the Government says. "This is not a state of emergency to restrict people's lives. It is a state of emergency to give people back their freedom," the president said in a televised address to the nation. As businesses closed over the course of the protests, supermarket shelves emptied, and hospitals ran out of oxygen, calls from some sectors of society escalated for Paz to restore order through force. On Friday night, Paz

signed an agreement with one of the labour unions, whose leaders called for the blockades to be lifted. But other protesters have demanded that Paz resign and refused to negotiate.

Paz said that the State of emergency is intended to guarantee fuel supplies, which have become increasingly scarce as road-blocks have left tanker trucks stranded.

The decree prohibits "blocking streets, avenues, roads and highways in ways that affect transportation and supplies," and orders the armed forces to temporarily support the police "in restoring order, reopening roads and protecting the population." The state of emergency doesn't limit due process rights or constitutional guarantees and allows people to continue their daily activities, according to the decree.

The state of emergency will last 90 days, but could be lifted earlier if "violence and threats against the population come to an end," the government said in a statement. Paz came to power in November, ending almost 20 years of uninterrupted rule by Bolivia's Movement Toward Socialism party, or MAS, which delivered the country's worst economic crisis in a generation.

A centrist who triumphed over more conservative candidates, Paz promised to resolve chronic fuel shortages and replenish the central bank's almost-empty coffers, while protecting the social welfare that represented a pillar of MAS' popularity. But his austerity measures, most significantly the elimination of long-standing fuel subsidies, have exacerbated biting inflation. (AP)

President Zelenskyy returns Poland's highest State Honour amid row over World War II history

ASSOCIATED PRESS n Warsaw

Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelenskyy has returned Poland's highest state honour, after the Polish president stripped him of the award as a politically charged dispute over World War II history resurfaced.

Ukrainians believed the order "was meant for the Ukrainian People and our army," Zelenskyy wrote in a social media post explaining the gesture. "Today, I sent the Order back to the President of Poland. I believe the future will confirm the respect Ukrainians deserve."

The message published on X is accompanied by photos of the Polish order and a postal receipt that it was about to be mailed to the Polish presidential office.

President Karol Nawrocki decided to strip Zelenskyy of the Order of the White Eagle



over the Ukrainian leader's decision to name a military unit after a Ukrainian paramilitary organization accused of massacring Poles during WWII. Former Polish President Andrzej Duda bestowed the award on Zelenskyy in 2023 for services to security, resilience and the defence of human rights. Zelenskyy issued a decree on May 26 naming a unit of Ukraine's Special Operations Forces after the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, or UPA, which operated during the 1940s and 1950s and has been accused in Poland of mass killings. "For the majority of Polish society, the Ukrainian Insurgent Army remains above all a formation responsible for cruel crimes against the citizens of the Polish Republic during World War II," Nawrocki said in a 13-minute address on social media.



BRIEFLY

Neymar expected to return from injury and play against Scotland



Neymar is expected to return from a right calf injury and play for Brazil in its final World Cup group match, coach Carlo Ancelotti said. Neymar missed Brazil's first two games of the tournament, including Friday's 3-0 win over Haiti. Ancelotti said Neymar would go through individual training on Saturday, train with the team on Monday and "will be available" for Brazil when it closes Group C play against Scotland on Wednesday in Miami Gardens, Florida. Neymar is Brazil's career scoring leader with 79 goals in 129 international appearances. The 34-year-old midfielder has yet to practice in full sessions with the team since reporting to Brazil's squad while nursing the calf injury. Looking to play in his fourth World Cup, Neymar had tests on his calf last Monday to determine the progress of the injury that he sustained while playing for Brazilian club Santos. (AP)

Iran: Being treated unfairly; WC travel schedule isn't unique



Iran's World Cup team says it's being unfairly made to travel to matches the day before games and return immediately after, but that schedule itself isn't uncommon among teams. So how does it work, with 48 teams criss-crossing 16 cities across three countries? Iran has been forced to comply with what White House FIFA task force head Andrew Giuliani said were previously mandated rules stemming from the war, but those restrictions also align with FIFA guidelines for general team travel. Team Melli made the 204-km charter flight from Tijuana International Airport to Los Angeles International Airport the day before its opening 2-2 draw against New Zealand on Monday, a typically short trip that team captain Mehdi Taremi said instead took five hours, including security and immigration checks. Iran returned to Mexico right after the match, which ended about 8 pm (local time). The team had hoped to stave off travel for a day after the game. The team's request to travel to LA two days before Sunday's match against Belgium was also denied, the federation said late Thursday, adding that it will lodge a complaint with FIFA. In a statement, the federation noted Sunday's earlier kickoff - noon - and said it believes "such restrictions are inconsistent with the principle of providing equal conditions for all participating teams and may negatively affect teams' preparation processes". (AP)

India thrash Chile 6-0 to enter Women's Nations Cup final, to face New Zealand

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Auckland

Navneet Kaur and Deepika struck a brace each in India's dominant 6-0 win over Chile that propelled the side to the final of the FIH Hockey Women's Nations Cup in Auckland on Saturday.

Navneet Kaur (6th, 13th) and Deepika (14th, 18th) struck two goals apiece, while Neha (32nd) and Rutuja Dadaso Pisal (39th) also found the target as India notched up their fourth successive win in the tournament. Captain Salima Tete, who was named player of the match, had a key role in India's emphatic win with her all-round display. India



will face hosts New Zealand in the title clash on Sunday after the hosts defeated United States 4-1 in shoot-off following a 1-1 draw at the end of regulation time. India controlled possession from the start and took the lead through Navneet,

ANDREW DESTIN in Seattle

Christian Pulisic's injury absence didn't hurt the Americans one bit. The U.S. national soccer team found a way to advance to the knockout round without the injured forward on the field, beating Australia 2-0 for its second straight victory at the largest World Cup in history.

"C.P. is a fantastic player - the quality and the leadership that he gives us," said Folarin Balogun, who scored two goals in the 4-1 victory over Paraguay on June 12.

"We didn't have him today, but I think you saw we're still capable to go out there and get a result and put up a performance." Pulisic, who plays

for AC Milan and has 33 goals in 87 international appearances, missed Friday's match because of a calf injury.

To play without a superstar like Pulisic could have derailed previous American teams in World Cup play. But much has changed since the last time they served as World Cup hosts in 1994, when they advanced by being one of the best third-place teams. They then lost to eventual champion Brazil in their next match, which was in the round of 16.

At this year's 48-team tournament, the U.S. has won consecutive games for the first time at a World Cup since 1930. The Americans have scored six goals, one off



their record for most in a single World Cup, and received contributions throughout their roster.

Alex Freeman, the youngest player on the team at 21 and son of Super Bowl champion Antonio Freeman, gave the Americans a 2-0

lead in the 43rd minute off a set piece.

Freeman headed in a deflected shot by Sergino Dest for his first career World Cup goal. The goal was confirmed after a video review. "(He) is doing a fantastic job," coach Mauricio

Pochettino said of Freeman.

"The evolution is massive. He's so humble. He wants to learn. He always listens. He's a player that you really enjoy being with him. Not only coaching, but being with him." The U.S. took a 1-0 lead in the 11th minute after a run down the left sideline by Balogun. He directed a centering pass towards striker Ricardo Pepi, who started in place of Pulisic. The ball never reached Pepi, deflecting off Australia defender Cameron Burgess and into the Socceroos' net for an own-goal. "I want to be dangerous, I want to create opportunities," Balogun said.

"It might not always be myself that scores, but if I can

force an error that gives us the lead, then for me it's like a goal as well. It was a special start to the game to give us the momentum." The Americans did not score again after halftime, but the manner with which they so thoroughly dominated Australia in the opening 45 minutes left a lasting impression on Socceroos coach Tony Popovic. "It did not surprise us because their quality is clear," Popovic said.

"Their power is clear. Their athleticism is clear. They are not surprising in what they did." Expectations will only increase for the U.S. as they rack up more victories and momentum builds around the team. (AP)

Vinicius Junior's offensive spark gets Brazil back on track after lackluster World Cup opener

LUIS ANDRES HENAO/ COLLIN BINKLEY in Philadelphia

Vinicius Junior showed why he's the most valuable player for five-time World Cup champion Brazil, scoring one goal and helping to create two others in a 3-0 victory over Haiti.

The soon-to-be 26-year-old left winger scored at the end of the first half on a breakaway, casually flicking the ball past Haitian goalkeeper Johny Placide. He also assisted on one goal by Matheus Cunha and set up a rebound that led to another here on Friday night.

Vinicius' breakout performance brought Brazil back in



the wake of a 1-1 draw against Morocco last week that left coach Carlo Ancelotti apologizing to fans. After applying steady pressure against Haiti in the opening minutes, Brazil

later, he set Cunha up with a long feed that Cunha drove into the net.

In the third minute of injury time, it was Vinicius who corralled a long pass and easily won the 1-on-1 matchup with the diving goalkeeper. He nearly had another assist halfway through the second half with a one-touch pass to an open Gabriel Martinelli, who launched the ball off the post.

Before the game, the player nicknamed "Vini" had said he thought he had more to show in the tournament - even after scoring the goal that brought Brazil even with Morocco. (AP)

Canada's Crepeau says he resisted fans urging him to attempt a shot in World Cup win

ANNE M PETERSON in Vancouver (Canada)

Although he saw little action in Canada's World Cup victory over Qatar, there was a moment when goalkeeper Maxime Crepeau was almost persuaded to get more involved in the offense.

Crepeau, speaking to reporters on Friday after Canada's dominant 6-0 win the day before, addressed the final moments of the match, when he delivered the ball up the field and red-clad fans in the crowd at BC Place bellowed, "Shoot!" "I swear I had the little devil here saying do it and



the little angel said just pass the ball and go back," he laughed. "I heard the crowd and I was like, 'Oh no, I'm not doing it.'" Crepeau didn't see a shot on goal from Qatar during Canada's first-ever World Cup victory. Canada all but sealed its spot in the knockout round with one final group match

remaining, on Wednesday against Switzerland. "Max's presence was really important yesterday. But let's be honest, he hardly had anything to do," coach Jesse Marsch said.

"I don't think in World Cup history, there's been such a dominant performance. That's the truth. I think our team will take a lot of confidence from that, and Max will as well."

The match was chaotic, with a pair of red cards taking Qatar down to nine players and a devastating injury to Canada midfielder Ismael Kone, who broke the tibia and fibula in his left leg

on a tackle from behind by Assim Madibo.

Crepeau was among the teammates who rushed to Kone's side. He could certainly relate to both the physical and emotional pain that Kone was going through.

In 2022, Crepeau broke his right leg during extra time of Los Angeles FC's MLS Cup victory over the Philadelphia Union.

Crepeau was taken from the field by ambulance and later underwent surgery.

The injury knocked the goalkeeper out of the 2022 World Cup, where he was expected to back up Milan Borjan. (AP)

Paraguay beats Turkey 1-0 despite being down a man

JOSH DUBOW in Santa Clara (US)

Matias Galarza scored 65 seconds into the game for the fastest goal at this year's World Cup and Paraguay held on for a 1-0 win over Turkey after playing a man down for more than half the match.

The win on Friday night assured the United States would win Group D and eliminated Turkey from any chance of advancing to the knockout round with its second straight loss. Paraguay will face Australia in the final match of the group stage next Thursday with second place in the group on the line. Paraguay will need to win to finish second.

"It's unforgettable," Galarza said. "This is the most beau-



tiful stage in the world, playing amongst the best. I'm so proud. I hope that Paraguay is happy."

Paraguay was short-handed after Miguel Almiron was issued a red card late in the first half for violating a new rule banning players

from covering their mouth during a confrontation.

But goalkeeper Orlando Gill made several key saves to preserve the lead in a game when Turkey 32-7 edge in shot attempts at goal. "It was very hard," midfielder Andres Cubas said. (AP)

PARAGUAY'S ALMIRON BECOMES 1ST PLAYER RED-CARDED AT WC FOR COVERING HIS MOUTH

Paraguay midfielder Miguel Almiron became the first player issued with a red card at the World Cup for covering his mouth, getting sent off during a confrontation late in the first half against Turkey. The infraction came during first-half stoppage time in the Group D match on Friday night when Almiron and Mert Mulder exchanged words following a foul near midfield. Almiron covered his mouth while saying something to Mulder, who immediately appealed to referee Ivan Barton for punishment. Barton went to video review and quickly ruled that Almiron would be given a red card and ejected under a new rule put in place for this year's World Cup. "According to the law, if you cover your mouth you're sent off. Red card," coach Gustavo Alfaro said.

"There's nothing I can do about that. Unfortunately, we can't issue a new opinion on this." Paraguay led 1-0 at the time and held on for the win despite playing a man down for the entire second half. Alfaro said he tried to cheer Almiron up after the game, telling him his absence brought out the "fighting spirit" of the team. "He apologised to the players for his mistake," Alfaro said. "He knew about the situation he had left his teammates in with his actions. ... It happened and it happened." (AP)

Neeraj finishes fourth in his season-opening event in Doha Diamond League

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Doha

Forced to delay the start of his season due to an injury, Indian javelin throw ace Neeraj Chopra finished a creditable fourth in the Doha Diamond League event here. The 28-year-old Chopra produced a best of 85.69m in his third attempt, which placed him fourth in the end in his season-opening event on Friday night.

He breached the 82.61m qualifying distance set by the Athletics Federation of India for the upcoming Commonwealth Games. He was earlier named in the 32-member Indian team for the Glasgow CWG (July 23 to August 2). Chopra has been

hampered by a back injury which he sustained before the World Championships in Tokyo in September 2025.

He was competing here for the first time after finishing eighth in the World Championships. He has been training in Switzerland since May 25 after a rehabilitation stint in Turkey.

"Happy to be back on the field. 85.69m felt good, and ready for the season ahead!" Chopra said in a tweet.

Rising Sri Lankan star and world leader Rumesh Tharanga Pathirage won the title in the star-studded field with a throw of 88.68m, while two-time world champion Andersen Peters of Grenada was second with 86.38.

American Curtis

Thompson, who won a bronze in the Tokyo World Championships, was third with 85.99m.

This was the first time Chopra has not finished in top-two in a Diamond League event in the last four years. He has been in top two in all the DL meetings he had participated since finishing second in Stockholm in June 2022 with a throw of 89.94m.

His first DL win came in Lausanne in August the same year. In Doha, he won the title in 2023, before finishing second in 2024 and 2025.

Chopra began with a foul and was placed fourth after his second round throw of 82.77m, which sealed his 2026 Commonwealth Games berth. He did even better in



his third attempt, sending his spear to 85.69m, and

jumping up one place to third. But once the 23-year-old

Pathirage took the lead with his fourth round throw of 88.68m, Chopra was pushed down to fourth place.

Pathirage, who has been in the form of his life this season, was at the fourth spot at the halfway stage, after modest throws of 82.62m, 84.63m and 80.53m.

But he proved why he is the hottest javelin thrower this season with his fourth round effort of 88.68m, which was followed up by 84.47m and 81.35m. This was his second DL win. He had won the title in Rome earlier this month with a monster throw of 92.62m which is the currently the world leading distance.

He became only the fourth Asian and 28th overall to breach the coveted 90m

mark. He has had two more 89m-plus throws this season. He had come into the Doha DL after winning the prestigious Golden Spike meet in Ostrava, Czechia, with a throw of 86.57m.

It was Pathirage's back to back Diamond League win, having won in Rome earlier.

"2026 has been a very good season so far, but I wasn't able to get a massive throw today. However, I will keep trying my best and I'm glad I had a win today. I'm happy in this Doha Diamond League, it was one of my dreams to compete here as the first ever Sri Lankan in the Wanda Diamond League circuit," Pathirage said.

For Chopra, the lengthy injury-forced absence from

competition affected his rhythm, and he could not replicate his stunning performance here last year, when he breached the coveted 90m mark with a throw of 90.23m, while finishing second. It was only the third meeting between Chopra and Pathirage and their first on the Diamond League stage. The head-to-head record now stands 2-1 in favour of the Sri Lankan.

Chopra won gold in the NC Classic which he hosted in Bengaluru in July 2025, while Pathirage had finished third with 84.34m. In the Tokyo World Championships last year, Chopra ended a disappointing eighth while Pathirage finished seventh 84.38m.



Jaiswal, Rohit shine in India's win over Afghanistan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Chennai

Yashvini Jaiswal and Rohit Sharma activated their free-flowing mode while making an unbeaten 110 and 79 respectively, backing up Prasadh Krishna's career-best 5 for 23 as India played Afghanistan by nine wickets in the third and final ODI here on Saturday. The victory helped India sweep the three-match ODI series 3-0.



Jaiswal, who could not have timed his second ODI hundred. Realistically, neither Rohit

nor Jaiswal, who could not have timed his second ODI hundred no better, have

nothing to prove but their immediate situation made it mandatory for them to make

this outing count. Rohit needed a substantial innings to keep the swelling competition for his place at bay for the time being, and Jaiswal needed a big score to keep himself in contention for India's thickly populated top-order. They merged their personal goals in a stunning exhibition of one-day batting for the team's cause on this night. Rohit was a tad slow to begin his innings, but soon discovered the kind of shots that earned him the sobriquet — Hitman.

The Mumbai batter took a liking for Afghanistan's premier spinner Rashid Khan, clobbering him for flicked four and a swept six in succession.

The enviable timing of Rohit was on full view when he smashed Rashid inside out over the covers for a six, eliciting a wistful smile from the bowler.

Jaiswal, on the other hand, was at ease from ball one, careening pacer Azmatullah Omarzai for three boundaries, as a 9-ball first over produced 23 runs, including five penalty runs which India acquired after Shahidi was found guilty of repeatedly running on the danger area.

There was a pulled six off pacer Fareed Ahmed and some velvety drives off spinner AM Ghazanfar as he reached his fifty in 38 balls, and his partner went past the milestone in 47 balls.

Women's T20 WC: India face South Africa test in Manchester



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Manchester

MANDHANA'S NEW POWER GAME TO BE TESTED AGAINST SA

India will look to build on their excellent start to the ICC Women's T20 World Cup when they take on a dangerous South Africa side in a Group 1 clash at Old Trafford here on Sunday.

The Harmanpreet Kaur-led side began their campaign with a commanding 64-run win over Pakistan, with opener Smriti Mandhana and wicketkeeper-batter Richa Ghosh providing the batting impetus before Deepti Sharma produced a match-winning spell with a five-wicket haul.

India continued in the same vein against the Netherlands, beating them by a huge margin of 95 runs after an all-round show by the Asian heavyweights.

India, who are still chasing their maiden T20 World Cup title despite five semi-final appearances, will be keen to carry the momentum forward against a South African team known for their aggressive batting and quality bowling attack.

The contest could revolve around India's top order against South Africa's varied bowling attack. Mandhana's

ability to dominate the powerplay, coupled with the experience of Harmanpreet, and the big-hitting prowess of Shafali Verma and Richa Ghosh, will be crucial, while the Proteas will rely heavily on captain Laura Wolvaardt and their middle-order firepower to put pressure on the Indian bowlers.

Kohli's fitness test on June 22; Pandya out of England ODIs



KUSHAN SARKAR New Delhi

Star batter Virat Kohli is progressing well in his recovery from the right hamstring injury sustained during the IPL and will report to the BCCI Centre of Excellence (CoE) on June 22 for re-evaluation and further planning.

It has been learnt that a member of the CoE sports science team visited the United Kingdom to assess Kohli's fitness status before handing him a rehabilitation programme. Kohli resides in London with his family.

He had sustained a hamstring niggle during the IPL final against Gujarat Titans in Ahmedabad.

"Virat Kohli is progressing well following right hamstring injury sustained in the IPL. He was assessed by the CoE team in London and handed over the program to continue in the initial phase of rehab and he will report to the CoE on 22nd June 2026 for re-evaluation, further plan-

ning and subsequent clearance," the fitness update from CoE's sports science team sent to the selection committee and team management stated. "Virat will get the fitness clearance after a fitness test on Monday in Bengaluru. Before that he is doing a promotional event in Delhi on Sunday," a BCCI source aware of developments told PTI.

Incidentally in 2025, when Indian Test squad was in London, the support staff members had evaluated his fitness as he had back then already announced his retirement from red ball format. **Pandya won't travel to England**

Meanwhile, all-rounder Hardik Pandya hasn't recovered from the quadriceps strain sustained before the Afghanistan ODI series.

He is not in a position to bowl his full quota of overs and has been ruled out of the England ODI series. Pandya will more time before returning to full fitness. (PTI)

New Zealand edge Ireland by 4 runs to keep Women's T20 World Cup hopes alive

ASSOCIATED PRESS Southampton

New Zealand kept alive slim hopes of defending the Women's Twenty20 World Cup title by beating Ireland by four runs in a thriller to the last ball.

Ten dropped catches cost New Zealand its first two games against the West Indies and Sri Lanka, and it faced elimination with two group games remaining if it didn't beat Ireland, also winless. New Zealand recovered from 10-3 to post 140-6 on a last-ball six by Suzie Bates, the storied allrounder making her first appearance in the tournament only after fellow retiree-to-



be Sophie Devine became ill. New Zealand pacer Bree Illing bowled out with a sterling 1-18 but Ireland captain Gaby Lewis and Orla Prendergast played around her and Jess Kerr (0-23) in a partnership of 110 into the 18th over.

They put Ireland in sight of an historic first World Cup win after 19 defeats but Prendergast was caught near the boundary on 59. Lewis was still there on 58, though, until the next and 19th over when she gave Bates a catch at cover.

That left Ireland needing 15 runs from the last over to win and Bates conceded only 10 and restricted the Irish to 136-4. "It has been a disappointing start to the tournament so today was just about body language and turning up," said New Zealand captain Melie Kerr, the player of the match.

"We need to turn and believe we can still win games of cricket." Ireland chose to bowl first and Prendergast and Aimee Maguire reduced New Zealand to 10-3 in the fourth over. Melie Kerr picked up the pace with 30 and Brooke Halliday and Izzy Sharp combined for 62 in 50 balls.

'Don't want to be known as man of comebacks, hope I'm here to stay this time'

BHARAT SHARMA New Delhi

India leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi doesn't want to be known as a man of comebacks in his stop start international career that saw him missing the last three T20 World Cups despite being on the selectors' radar.

Back in the side again after the completion of another World Cup cycle, the 25-year-old from Jodhpur is hoping to get a longer rope this time around. Interestingly, he has been picked ahead of Kuldeep Yadav in the squads for the Ireland, England and Asian Games tour.

He is the only specialist spinner in the side alongside Varun Chakaravathy with Axar Patel and Washington

Sundar performing the roles of an all-rounder.

A good IPL usually leads to India selection in the shortest format but Bishnoi did not have the best of times in the latest IPL where he was benched for the second half of the tournament with rookie Yash Raj Punja playing ahead of him.

To be fair to Bishnoi, he has a decent international record with 64 wickets in 44 games at an impressive economy rate of 7.40 runs per over. He has also been ranked number one in the ICC rankings. In an interaction with PTI, a determined Bishnoi said he would do all in his powers to secure a spot in the 2028 World Cup in Australia and New Zealand as the management tries



Ravi Bishnoi

who keeps making comebacks," he said. Bishnoi is yet to speak to Shreyas and coach Gautam Gambhir on the upcoming assignment as the team is currently involved in an ODI series. In his mind, he has absolute clarity about his

role. "Cricket is all about competing and making comebacks. And you keep your preparation complete. Try to be ready for any situation, for any series or upcoming games. When you are backed, your role is to be ready and do well. Which I always try to do," Bishnoi, who is managed by SSpark Sports led by Rajeev Khanna, said. Bishnoi last played for India in January this year before missing the bus for the World Cup at home. To be not considered for three World Cups in a row was disappointing but Bishnoi said he did not have an option other than to keep working on his craft with coach Shahrukh back home.

"It is everyone's dream to play in the World Cup. To win

it. It is my dream too. Even though I have missed the World Cups, I have more opportunities. So I will try not to miss this time. I should make it count.

"And when you miss, it is not like suddenly someone is playing in my place. But India won the World Cup. Whoever plays in my place, they did really well.

"You know how good the competition is going on right now in the Indian team. It is competitive. I have only one goal in life. When I get a chance, I should be prepared and deliver myself. Then I shouldn't have those regrets that I didn't get that chance," he said. Having said that Bishnoi is only human and he does feel dejected when life is not going his way. (PTI)



BCCI Secretary Devajit Lon Saikia joins Jay Shah Chairman, ICC on a visit to Colombo and interacts with cricketing legends Sanath Jayasuriya, Roshan Mahanama and Sidath Wettimuny, along with leading cricket administrators of Sri Lanka on Friday

'Fit Pandya can be invaluable for India's WC plans'

SUMAN RAY Chennai

Former India batter WV Raman believes a fit Hardik Pandya can provide India a crucial edge in the 2027 ODI World Cup, with his ability to contribute as a batter and a bowler offering the team much-needed flexibility in the big-ticket event.

Raman, however, stressed that Pandya's role will depend on his ability to maintain fitness levels, while also calling on the team management to use the next 12 to 15 months to experiment and finalise the squad and define individual roles ahead of the tournament.

"I believe that he can be a terrific cricketer for the Indian team. The flexibility he can provide if fit and able to bowl



Hardik Pandya (left) and WV Raman (Right)

10 overs is invaluable. But I think it will all come down to the fitness levels he can maintain," Raman told PTI Videos in an exclusive interview here. "Even for this Afghanistan series, he was picked in the squad, but unfortunately, he was pulled out at the last minute because of injuries,"

he observed. India have around 15 ODIs before the World Cup, and Raman feels those games should be used to identify the right combination and address the team's repeated struggles in knockout matches. Raman believes the team management must enter an "experimental

mode" over the next year.

"Having reached the knock-out stage eight times and succeeded only twice shows that the team management needs to look at various options and get into an experimental mode," he said. "The 12 to 15 months leading up to the tournament are very important. They must utilise all bilateral series to try different combinations. This will help players discover themselves and allow the management to assess their main strength, bench strength and possible options as the World Cup approaches," he added.

India have won the ODI World Cup twice - in 1983 and 2011 - but lost finals in 2003 and 2023 besides suffering semi-final exits in 1987, 1996, 2015 and 2019. (PTI)

England rocked early at 54-3 as daunting chase begins at The Oval

FOSTER NIUMATA London

England was 54-3 against New Zealand in an unlikely fourth-innings chase of 463 at tea on day four of The Oval test on Saturday.

New Zealand was bowled out for 362, England scooping up the last four wickets in 6.1 overs after lunch.

That set England 463 to win the test and clinch the series with a match to spare; a total far above the world record chase of 418 by West Indies against Australia at St. John's in 2003 and way above England's best chase of 378 against India in Birmingham in 2022.

The alternative was to bat out four-plus sessions for a

draw. Neither scenario looked likely as New Zealand's pace attack made immediate inroads under cloud cover.

Kyle Jamieson removed Emilio Gay and his replacement Jacob Bethell in the fourth over.

Gay on 11 flicked straight to midwicket into the hands of Rachin Ravindra, who was mobbed by his teammates after dropping three sitters in the series, including one in the first innings. Bethell went for a four-ball duck when he missed Jamieson and was plumb on the front pad.

Ben Duckett survived an umpire's call on a Jamieson delivery that would have



clipped leg stump, but he added only four more runs when he was out to a poor shot on 9 just 15 minutes before tea. Duckett toe-ended a pull at Will O'Rourke straight to Matt Henry at mid-on.

Captain Joe Root was on 24 with vice captain Harry Brook on 9 at the break.

Root was almost gone before he scored when an edge off Jamieson fell just short of second slip. His second run brought up his

14,000th in tests, only the second man to the milestone after Sachin Tendulkar. Jamieson had 2-10 from five overs and O'Rourke had 1-16.

Earlier New Zealand lost three wickets before the clouds parted but was 345-6 at lunch. With Mitchell was Nathan Smith on 30 off 35 balls.

Their intimidating second innings lead was already far above what England has ever chased successfully in a fourth innings, 378. The Black Caps added 93 runs in 25 overs against bowling that was finding some nip with a ball 60 overs old, especially from Jofra Archer and Josh Tongue, England's most experienced quicks. (AP)

All eyes on Sooryavanshi as India A face Sri Lanka A in final

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Dambulla

Smartering from an ill-tempered defeat in their previous meeting, India A will look to settle scores when they take on Sri Lanka A in the final of the tri-series on Sunday, with teenage sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi set to be in the spotlight once again.

Tempers had flared after Sri Lanka A edged India A in a Super Over in their last league game in Dambulla, with Sooryavanshi involved in an on-field altercation with Sri Lanka's Vishen Halambage at the end of the



match. After the game was tied at the end of 50 overs, Sri Lanka A scored 16 in the Super Over and then restricted India A to nine, with rookie pacer Kugathas Mathulan, a slinger in the mould of Matheesha Pathirana, keeping

Sooryavanshi and Suryansh Shedge quiet.

The tension spilled over after the match ended. Halambage and Wanuja Sahan were seen exchanging words with the departing Indian batters, with visuals showing Shedge pointing his bat towards Halambage before Sooryavanshi turned back and got into a heated exchange with the Sri Lankan player. The two were then seen shoving each other before wicketkeeper Niroshan Dickwella stepped in to separate them, in ugly scenes rarely witnessed in an A team match.



Love hidden in silence

This Father's Day, leave the gifts aside, sit with him in the quiet, and finally ask who he was long before he became your dear Papa

SAKSHI PRIYA

We sit across the room from the men who raised us and let the silence hang heavy. It happens in homes everywhere. A son or daughter can chat endlessly with the postman or a stranger on the bus, yet five minutes alone with their dad feels like trying to speak a forgotten language. The love is absolutely there, buried deep in the chest, but it stays buried. Instead of asking the questions that actually matter, families stick to the safest scripts imaginable. They discuss the rain outside, the price of petrol, or the football scores, completely ignoring the massive distance growing right in the middle of the living room. It is simply easier to talk about the traffic than to ask an older man how he really feels.

Bringing a child into the world is just biology. **Anyone can become a father. But it takes a tremendously special person to be a Dad, to truly earn the sweet name Papa.** These men carried the financial and emotional weight of an entire household. They wore out their working shoes and their spirits just so the next generation could walk a little lighter.

Society rarely stops to look at fathers as artists in their own right. They are the true, quiet masters keeping a family's personal history alive. For years, they poured all their energy into building a secure platform for their children to shine. They gave away the spotlight. Now, these gifted creators find themselves with zero stage left to stand on. Their quietness across the dinner table is not coldness. It is a forced silence. It happens when a man spends forty years putting his own needs at the very back of the queue. Just like the dying traditions of old

performers, if the younger generation never bothers to sit down and learn their stories, an entire culture disappears. The history of the family dies with them.

Grown kids hesitate to dig deeper because they grew up seeing these men as unbreakable walls. Reaching for a softer side feels like a massive risk. So, the calendar pages turn. January bleeds into December. Communication shrinks to quick text messages on birthdays or rushed phone calls that brush right past the truth. People trick themselves into believing the clock has stopped. They think they have an endless supply of weekends left to ask about his youth, his failures, or just to say thank you without making it uncomfortable.

Tomorrow is the biggest liar we know. Waiting for the harsh fluorescent lights of a hospital ward to finally grab his ageing hand is a regret you will never wash off. Funerals are full of bitter tears falling on fresh dirt from children who thought they had more time. They definitely cry for the man they lost. But they cry much harder for the conversations they ran away from.

Why do we let the clock tick away without asking the men who raised us who they really are? This Father's Day cannot just be another quiet afternoon of forced smiles. Break the routine. Walk right into the room where he sits. Pull up a chair. Turn the mobile phone completely off. Give him back the floor. Let him finally speak his own history. If things get painfully quiet, do not run away. Keep your feet planted right there until the heavy air cracks and he finally starts talking. Find out what he actually hoped to do with his life, long before he traded his younger days to pay for your school



ILLUSTRATIONS: VISHAKHA

jumpers and hot meals. Swallow the nerves and force that brutally honest chat while the man is still breathing right across from you.

For those whose fathers have already passed on, this day brings a different kind of quiet. If his favourite chair sits empty in the corner of the house this year, do not hold the tears back. Let them fall, but let them be tears of deep gratitude. That heavy, crushing ache sitting right in the middle of the chest is nothing but proof of an incredibly beautiful bond. He is watching from somewhere peaceful. His chest is bursting with pride at the person left behind to carry his legacy forward. The roots he planted are still growing.

Real communication is never neat. It scares us, but it is the only bridge to the men who sacrificed their own stories for ours. Time runs out faster than the mind can process. Open your mouth while his ears can still catch the sound. Let the water wash out the heavy regret and the stubborn silence. Every Papa who skipped sleep so his kids could dream deserves to be heard. To the fathers sitting at the kitchen table today, and to the ones we keep in our hearts, thank you. You live on in every step we take. **Happy Father's Day to the dads who gave us everything they had.** You are loved, you are missed, and we will never forget the weight you carried to get us here.

WHAT WE CAN ACTUALLY GIVE

- Skip the fancy watches and aftershave this Sunday. Hand him the only thing he actually wants but is too proud to request. Time. Pull up a chair right next to him. Ask him who he was long before he took on the heavy title of Dad. Treat him like the quiet keeper of your family history. Let his true voice fill the room today.
- Take him for a quiet morning drive with no destination. Roll the windows down and just listen to his favourite old songs together.
- Hand him a blank notebook to quietly write down things he never told his parents and life advice for the grandchildren without pressure.
- Cook his favourite childhood meal from scratch. Set the table nicely and let him share stories about his own parents over hot food.
- Sit on the porch and clean his old tools or shoes. Doing a simple physical task side by side naturally gets him talking.

Suffering speaks every language

Opening the National School of Drama's new collaborative theatre season, *Storm* brought a powerful Indo-Russian artistic exchange alive on stage

TEAM VIVA

By the time Ostrovsky finally wrapped up *The Thunderstorm* back in 1859, he had birthed something notoriously tough to pull off—a hard look at the Russian merchant class and the quiet cruelties that kept it running. It has never been a comfortable watch. You might expect a text this old to feel a bit dusty by now, but this bold new adaptation, *The Storm*, strips away the period baggage to give a historic script a startling, urgent voice.

Keeping an audience captivated for nearly four hours requires rare mastery, and this recent staging achieves exactly that. Born from a unique artistic dialogue between the National School of Drama (NSD) and Moscow's Russian Institute of Theatre Arts (GITIS), this Hindi adaptation proves both visually arresting and emotionally draining in the best possible way. Under the precise scenography and direction of Russian theatre veteran Alexander Khukhlin, alongside associate director Shekhar Kanwat, the fictional riverside town of Kalinov materialises on stage with a heavy, oppressive authenticity.

The story follows Katerina, a gentle, highly spiritual woman choking under the harsh rules of a traditional household and her terrifying mother-in-law, Kabanikha. Amitabh Srivastava's sharp Hindi translation, the deep sorrow of the Russian original feels entirely at home in its new language.

Because Khukhlin built the play through heavy improvisation during

rehearsals, the young cast brings a raw, unsettled energy to the floor. Mamta Jaiswar plays Katerina with a quiet, breaking grace, perfectly pinning down the deep ache of a woman desperate for freedom and love. Across the stage, Mahak Bhargava dominates the room as the terrifying matriarch. The sprawling ensemble adds massive weight to the claustrophobia. Pankaj Kumar Sharma captures the helpless tension of Tikhon, while Saurabh Kumar Pandey and Dashrath Das tackle the complexity of Boris. Strong supporting turns by Piyush Verma (Dikoy) and Aditian Kalta (Varvara), backed seamlessly by Ishan Jindal, Srikanth Kamlekar, Sunil Bhadu, and Shruti Sharma, carry that relentless tension straight through to the end.

Behind the scenes, the technical execution is just as sharp. Deep, shadow-drenched lighting guided by Vishala R. Mahale works beautifully alongside Riya Panwar's costumes and Shubham Singh's immersive sound design to reflect Katerina's chaotic state of mind. Sitting through a production of this magnitude requires patience, yet the evocative staging and sheer physical effort of the young cast keep the viewer completely locked into the tragedy. This project succeeds brilliantly as a cultural bridge, proving that the brutal human search for personal liberation translates across any border.



PHOTOS: PANKAJ KUMAR

ART CORNER



PHOTOS: PANKAJ KUMAR

Finding home in India

For Julia Usmanova, home was never just a birthplace, but a feeling reflected through her artworks inspired by India

SAKSHI PRIYA

Belonging is rarely about where a person is born. For Russian artist Julia Usmanova, it is a landscape discovered entirely through the senses. Curated by Neena Gulati, *When India Became Home* lays this entire transition bare. The exhibition, running at New Delhi's Bikaner House until 23 June 2026, anchors itself on Usmanova's specific series, *Bilateral Layerings*. To tie

her cold Russian upbringing to the years she spent absorbing the streets of Kolkata and Delhi, she leans entirely on the Indian female form. Talking to the artist strips away the standard gallery speak. Usmanova is quick to point out that the women she paints are never just passive subjects. They are looking right back at you, acting as the quiet observer and the focal point all at once.

The emotional anchor of the collection rests within a single moment of clarity. Usmanova recalled sitting in her Russian studio after a trip, suddenly realising she felt deeply homesick for India.

“I SUDDENLY REALISED THAT I FEEL HOMESICK FOR INDIA; IT BECAME MY SECOND HOME.”
—JULIA USMANOVA

That exact flash of longing birthed *Tiger*, a dreamlike piece where a great striped beast softly cradles a sleeping woman. The animal merges Siberian and Royal Bengal heritages, acting as a clear emblem of her dual cultural existence.

Her memories of West Bengal breathe heavily through *Jasmine*. Inspired by late-night walks through rainy Kolkata streets, Usmanova explained that the painting captures a half-asleep woman enveloped by white blossoms, catching the intense, fleeting gaze of a stranger met just once. This quietude carries over into *Drying clothes*, which captures the blissful, silent hour after lunch when the world rests. In *Solitude*, she builds a beautiful tension between the stable profile of a woman and a dissolving background of paint drips, while *Midday and Midnight* and *Fog* explore deeper psychological realities and the quiet spaces of the subconscious.

Usmanova handles her brush with an affectionate grace, proving that human connection easily bypasses national borders to offer a shared language of love.

Let it Pour

Forget hiding inside until the clouds clear, make the pouring rain your personal runway

TEAM VIVA

A sudden downpour usually signals the immediate death of good taste. City streets instantly flood with tragic plastic ponchos and absolutely ruined suede shoes. The general public surrenders entirely to the damp gloom. They pack away their favourite pieces

and settle for looking completely miserable until the clouds clear. However, a seasoned style veteran knows a little water never destroyed a brilliant ensemble. Let the weather throw a massive tantrum. The monsoon season actually offers the ultimate styling challenge. Master the art of wet weather dressing and watch the gloomy streets transform into a personal runway.

Your raincoat is what people see first so make it count, go for a tailored coat in a solid colour that works, skip the neon chaos and keep the lines clean and strong. Your bag needs protection too during the monsoon, and your pet is getting soaked just like you are, so think about what actually matters when the rain comes down. It's not just about looking good out there, it's about staying dry together, all of you, through the whole thing.

Umbrellas demand the exact same editorial eye. Ditching flimsy promotional freebies covered in loud

abstract prints is an absolute requirement. A clear dome umbrella straight from the streets of Tokyo looks exceptionally chic and keeps the face entirely visible. Or grab a rich burgundy umbrella to make a miserable grey morning look incredibly elegant.

You cannot mess around with shoes when the streets turn to slush. Leaving fragile flats at home and pulling on heavy chunky boots in dark earthy shades gives necessary traction and adds a tough edge to an outfit. Beneath all that heavy outerwear, pure breathable cottons fight off the terrible Indian humidity. Smart layering, like placing a sharp shirt under a water resistant trench coat, ensures the wearer always steps into a room looking put together. The sticky weather will definitely ruin a good mood, but a carefully planned outfit stays entirely intact.



- ### GUIDE TO MONSOON STYLING
- **Layering Smart:** Keep thin, breathable cottons right against your skin because the humidity is absolutely ruthless. Let the coat carry the actual look.
 - **Keeping It Grounded:** Buy boots in dark olive or charcoal. They hide the inevitable mud stains and still look great.
 - **Accessorising with Intent:** The modern commuter treats an umbrella exactly like a luxury handbag by carrying one solid colour piece everywhere.
 - **Skippping Skinny Jeans:** Humidity and wet denim create a total nightmare so relaxed trousers cropped above the ankle work perfectly.



PHOTOS ARE FOR REPRESENTATIVE PURPOSE ONLY

MUSIC



FEEL IT. HEAR IT. LIVE IT.

TEAM VIVA

Every year on June 21 the calendar brings around World Music Day. It started casually back in 1982 when France turned its streets into stages. What began as a local experiment became a stubborn global habit. We argue constantly these days, but a familiar tune still silences a room. Just look at any modern playlist. A routine morning shuffle might drag you through the quiet deep-seated grief of Gulzar's *Tere Bina Zindagi Se* sung with heartbreaking clarity by Lata Mangeshkar and Kishore Kumar right before dropping you into the acoustic ache of Hozier's *Cherry Wine*. Heavy *qawwalis* share space with modern rap. You also cannot ignore the absolute chokehold BTS has on the world. The group from Seoul killed the language barrier proving nobody cares about translations when a hook hits hard.

That jump across genres makes perfect emotional sense. A good track takes over the minute conversation runs dry. Icons from Michael Jackson and Queen to Sonu Nigam and Shreya Ghoshal built the actual soundtrack to our brightest days and darkest moments. Basquiat nailed it by saying art fills a room while music fills the hours. Borrowing lyrics to explain your own life feels like the purest love language and that deserves its very own dedicated day indeed.

FOR SUGGESTIONS, FEEDBACK OR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, PLEASE WRITE TO US AT FEATURES@DAILYPIONEER.COM

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In our age there is no such thing as 'keeping out of politics.' All issues are political issues, and politics itself is a mass of lies, evasions, folly, hatred and schizophrenia.
- George Orwell

New Delhi
June 21, 2026

NAXALITE MOVEMENT

VISHALANDHRA

JP MOVEMENT

ANTI-HINDI

INDIA AGAINST CORRUPTION

Jan Andolan: Of Promises and Pitfalls

Mass movements remain indispensable to democratic life. They awaken societies, challenge complacency, and push governments toward reform. But history shows that mobilising people is often easier than transforming institutions. Lasting change requires not only protest but also patient policymaking, consensus-building, and effective governance. The street may ignite change, but only institutions can sustain it.

Off track: Whither the Socialist Movement and its disciples?



PUSHPENDRA
Former Professor TISS, Mumbai

in power, that can be credited with having the greatest impact on Indian politics in the post-Independence era. It dislodged Congress from power in the Centre for the first time. Under the overall guidance of Jayaprakash Narayan, it called for Sampurn Kranti (an overall change, not just a change in the party in power). Many leaders who rose to stature and in power positions emerged from this movement. Lalu Prasad Yadav and Nitish Kumar, the two most prominent politicians in Bihar, and many other leaders who played leading roles in the movement, were then students. They rightly call themselves the product of the 74-movement. Two important streams branched out from the movement - the socialists and the Hindu nationalists. Lalu, Nitish, and Mulayam Singh Yadav (who too emerged from the student movement of the late 1960s) represented the socialist stream and remained key political figures for more than four decades. Now the reign of their ideology and party has passed down to their sons and daughters and other family members.

Today, when the Bharatiya Janata Party is in power, with or without them, in their respective states, people wonder what happened to the ideals of socialism - Sapt Kranti and Sampurn Kranti? How much socialism did these tall leaders themselves practise? Abolition of caste was on the agenda of Sapt Kranti. This was best theorised and advocated by Ambedkar in his long essay, Annihilation of Caste. History is witness that both socialists and Ambedkarites used caste as a mobilisation strategy to fight against caste oppression. In the process, they gave prominence to caste as a powerful identity. Now, more than five decades of socialist political practice show how individual castes have sought caste as their crucial identity marker and used it to bargain for representation in the political system. Sadly, socialist leaders after Lohia focused on representation and patronage to their individual castes, not even the caste category to which they belonged. Dalits remained off the agenda of the socialist leaders. Hence, castes remain fragmented and compete with each other for resources and patronage. Ironically, annihilation of caste is no longer on the agenda of socialists in contemporary India.

However, it is the student movements of 1974, which gradually culminated in a people's movement against the Congress

CONTINUED ON >> P11



THE MOVEMENTS THAT ROCKED THE

VISHALANDHRA MOVEMENT: Sparked intense regional mobilisation in the 1950s for a separate Telugu-speaking state carved out of Madras State, culminating in the death of freedom fighter Potti Sriramulu and the creation of Andhra Pradesh in 1953.

ANTI-HINDI AGITATIONS: Widespread protests primarily led by the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) in Tamil Nadu (peaking in 1965) against making Hindi the sole official language, which solidified Dravidian politics and secured constitutional safeguards for federal languages

THE NAXALITE MOVEMENT: Originating as a peasant uprising in the village of Naxalbari, West Bengal, in 1967, the movement sought to overthrow the Indian state through armed rebellion and redistribute land and resources to marginalised tribal communities

BIHAR MOVEMENT (J.P. MOVEMENT): A massive 1974 student-led protest against government corruption and economic stagnation in Bihar, spearheaded by Jayaprakash Narayan. It evolved into a broader "Total Revolution" movement that unified opposition parties.

INDIA AGAINST CORRUPTION (IAC): A nationwide civil movement in 2011 led by Anna Hazare and civil society activists, demanding the implementation of a strong Lokpal (ombudsman) bill. It utilized mass hunger strikes and social media to capture public sentiment, reshaping the contemporary political landscape.

The long shadow of Emergency: India has moved on. The BJP hasn't!



RACHIT SETH
Parliamentary researcher and communications expert

Fifty-one years after the proclamation of the Emergency, India continues to debate one of the most controversial chapters in its democratic history. That debate may be legitimate. The Emergency deserves scrutiny, criticism and historical examination. What is less understandable, however, is why the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) continues to treat it as if it were a contemporary political issue rather than a historical event whose verdict has long since been delivered by both the people and history itself. In fact, the recent if the recent backsliding of democracy in India is taken into account, it is the BJP which as imposed an Undeclared Emergency. Breaking political parties, engineering defections, iron hand on a large section of the media ownership, crony capitalism, throttling institutions and misusing agencies - are all the characteristics of the Emergency, which, many would argue, are still in place

Being a student of Indian politics, I have often had debates (both online and offline) on the Emergency. The majority of the arguments against it either come from the people who have a diametrically opposite ideology and political philosophy from mine, or the rest come from people who have not dug deeper into the reasons of imposition of the Emergency and are only indoctrinated by superficial trappings. In fact, many of the Congress contemporaries too, are more often than not uncomfortable in delving or discussing the Emergency.

The Congress party has never claimed that the Emergency was without fault. Over the decades, its top leadership, including Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi and Former PM, Dr Manmohan Singh, have publicly acknowledged excesses commit-

ted during that period. Indira Gandhi herself sought the judgment of the people by calling elections in 1977 and accepted the electorate's verdict when she was defeated. The Congress leadership has repeatedly expressed regret over that chapter of history.

Yet every year, particularly around June 25, the BJP and its ecosystem attempt to revive the Emergency as a political weapon. The purpose is not historical reflection. It is a political mobilisation. A government confident in its present would not need to constantly campaign against a government that ceased to exist nearly half a century ago. Any serious assessment of the Emergency must begin with an understanding of the circumstances that preceded it. History cannot be examined selectively.

The early 1970s were marked by extraordinary instability. India faced economic distress, inflation, food shortages, the after-effects of war and severe drought conditions. Political agitations were intensifying across the country. In Gujarat, the Nav Nirman movement began as a student protest but quickly evolved into a larger political campaign demanding the dismissal of an elected government.

The question is worth asking: how does a student movement transition from protesting fee hikes to demanding the removal of a government that enjoys a legislative majority? Such developments did not occur in a political vacuum.

After the resignation of the Gujarat government and the imposition of President's Rule, opposition leaders saw an opportunity to replicate the model elsewhere. Jayaprakash Narayan, whose personal integrity commanded enormous public respect, emerged as the central figure of a nationwide movement seeking what he called "Sampurna Kranti" or Total Revolution.

The moral appeal of JP's movement was undeniable. However, the methods adopted by sections of the opposition increasingly moved beyond conventional democratic politics. Calls for bandhs, gheraos, parallel structures of authority and sustained disruption became common features of political mobilisation.

CONTINUED ON >> P11

How does a student movement transition from protesting fee hikes to demanding the removal of a government? Such developments did not occur in a political vacuum



Why mass movements matter – and why they often fade away

Any mass movement is born out of frustration and deep distrust with the system: When the genuine grievances and hardships of the people go unheard while the people in power look the other way, people find themselves shouting slogans on the streets. That is the making of a mass movement. India and the world has seen several mass movements that shaped the world as we know it today – from India's freedom struggle and the

American civil rights movement to people's resistance to apartheid. Mass movements are necessary because they create pressure that established systems often resist. And when power does not listen people have to shout at the top their voice. Yet, many mass movements eventually lose momentum, often causing chaos and confusion and disrupting society without rectifying the problems they set out to confront. Without a

coherent ideology and systematic plan of action the movement die their own death without bringing about the change they sought. Once immediate goals are partially achieved, enthusiasm tends to wane. Internal divisions, leadership rivalries, ideological differences, and the absence of a clear long-term roadmap weaken solidarity. Another challenge lies in collective emotions: anger and hope can ignite a movement, but they are insufficient

to sustain it. Institutions, organisations, and patient political engagement are required to convert street protests into enduring change. However, the history of social change suggests that while movements may fizzle out, their ideas rarely disappear. They leave behind altered public consciousness, inspire future generations, and plant seeds that may bloom in another era. After all, political systems are works in progress!

"WE ALWAYS HAVE HOPED THAT AMERICAN DIPLOMACY DEPLOYS ITSELF IN DIALOGUE AND PERSUASION RATHER THAN BY ULTIMATUMS. THAT IS THE PATH WE WANT IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS."
— MAHMOUD ABBAS

Dropping the 'Indo': What America's Pacific Pivot means for India



KRIPA NAUTILYAL

When the United States Department of Defence quietly announced the reversion of its largest combatant command from U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM) back to U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM), on the eve of the multilateral G7 summit, it framed the change as administrative housekeeping - a tribute to the command's heritage dating to 1947. Few in Washington's diplomatic circles bought that explanation. Fewer still in New Delhi.

The deletion of a single prefix - "Indo" - unravels nearly a decade of carefully constructed strategic signalling. When the Trump administration inserted that word in 2018, it was a deliberate geopolitical act, stitching together two oceans into one theatre and formally positioning India as a central pillar of American grand strategy. The Biden and early Trump years built upon that architecture. The 2026 reversion dismantles it. This is not bureaucratic tidying. It is a recalibration of American priorities - and India must read it as such.

From a grand strategic vision, the focus has been reduced to a tactical level.

The "Indo-Pacific" concept was born of ambition. It was designed to dissolve the artificial boundary between East and South Asia, draw India into a unified strategic matrix, and signal to Beijing that the entire arc from the Persian Gulf to the Pacific was under coordinated American attention. It was, at its core, an exercise in expansive geopolitical engineering.

That era is over. The contemporary security environment has forced Washington into hard choices. With finite military resources stretched across Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and East Asia simultaneously, the Pentagon can no longer sustain the pretence of uniform strategic engagement across such an enormous canvas. By reverting to Pacific Command, Washington is making a pointed admission: the acute military challenge from China is

concentrated not across the vast Indian Ocean, but in the tight geography of the Western Pacific - the Taiwan Strait, the South China Sea, the First Island Chain.

This is a shift from geographic breadth to operational precision. American command structures, logistics chains, and deployment doctrines are being optimised for one scenario above all others - a high-intensity conflict with China in the Pacific, fought alongside formal treaty allies Japan and the Philippines. The Indian Ocean, and by extension India, falls outside that primary frame.

There seems to be bilateral friction beneath the surface. However, Pentagon officials have been swift to reassure New Delhi that the command's geographic boundaries and force allocations remain technically unchanged. These assurances deserve scrutiny. The timing and manner of the announcement - dropped on the eve of key multilateral engagements of the G7 - suggest that Washington is comfortable sending an uncomfortable message.

The India-U.S. relationship has been drifting into more transactional territory for some time. India's refusal to condemn Russia's actions in Ukraine, its continued economic engagement with sanctioned states, and persistent disputes over trade and tariffs have quietly cooled what was once described as the "defining partnership of the 21st century." The rebrand does not cause this friction - but it mirrors it. When Washington decides to excise "Indo" from its most consequential military command without prior bilateral consultation, it signals that New Delhi's symbolic centrality to American strategy has limits.

Nowhere is the structural consequence of this shift more visible than in the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue. The Quad - comprising the U.S., India, Japan, and Australia - was positioned as the premier framework for maintaining a "free and open Indo-Pacific." That framing now looks increasingly hollow.

The Quad's core vulnerability has always been its internal contradictions. Japan and Australia are formal U.S. treaty allies with high military interoperability and shared threat perceptions. India is neither. New Delhi has consistently and correctly resisted transforming the Quad into a hard military alliance or an "Asian NATO." India's security calculus remains predominantly land-based - shaped by volatile

PENTAGON OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN SWIFT TO REASSURE NEW DELHI THAT THE COMMAND'S GEOGRAPHIC BOUNDARIES AND FORCE ALLOCATIONS REMAIN TECHNICALLY UNCHANGED

borders with both Pakistan and China - while its Quad partners view the challenge through a maritime, expeditionary lens.

Washington has drawn its own conclusions. The rapid maturation of AUKUS - the trilateral submarine and technology-sharing pact between the U.S., UK, and Australia - and the deepening institutionalization of the U.S.-Japan-South Korea trilateral alliance reveal where American strategic investment is actually flowing. These are tight, legally binding, technologically integrated arrangements built for hard deterrence. The Quad, by comparison, has gradually pivoted toward softer functional cooperation: vaccine delivery, climate technology, and infrastructure financing. Useful, but strategically peripheral. The security architecture of the Quad has been quietly hollowed out, and the USPACOM reversion makes that hollowing official.

For New Delhi, the retirement of the Indo-Pacific command title is a moment of strategic clarification - uncomfortable, but ultimately useful. Three implications stand out.

The most direct operational signal from Washington is that the U.S. expects India to serve as the primary, self-sufficient security provider across the Indian Ocean Region. American forces are anchoring westward in the Pacific. The maritime corridors stretching from the Bab-el-Mandeb to the Malacca Strait - critical for global energy flows and Indian trade - will increasingly be India's responsibility to secure. This demands urgent acceleration of naval modernisation, expanded maritime domain awareness, and a credible net-security-provider posture across the arc of littoral states in India's neighbourhood.

India's long-standing doctrine of strategic autonomy - often criticised in Washington as fence-sitting - looks considerably wiser in hindsight. If the United States can unilaterally reshape its strate-

gic geographic definitions based on shifting domestic priorities, then India's insistence on keeping its options diversified is entirely justified. A country that had subordinated its foreign policy to the Indo-Pacific framework would now find itself structurally exposed. New Delhi's investments in relationships with the Global South, its engagement with middle powers, and its refusal to be locked into exclusive alignments are not liabilities - they are insurance.

The most sobering implication concerns India's northern borders. The notion that India's maritime partnership with the West could generate effective leverage against Chinese pressure along the Line of Actual Control was always somewhat illusory. The USPACOM reversion strips away what remained of that illusion. Washington's hyper-focus on the Pacific theatre means that India's multi-front friction with Beijing - on land, in the Himalayas, and increasingly in the Indian Ocean through China's expanding naval presence - must be managed through India's own diplomatic and military tools. This demands a more pragmatic, direct bilateral approach to Beijing: neither naive accommodation nor performative confrontation, but clear-eyed strategic competition managed at arm's length.

A More Honest World Order

The transition from USINDOPACOM back to USPACOM closes the chapter on a romanticised vision of seamless Indo-Pacific solidarity and opens a more fragmented, transactional maritime order. Washington has signaled, unmistakably, that its strategic patience and military resources are finite - and that the Pacific comes first.

For India, this is neither a catastrophe nor abandonment. It is, in fact, a clarifying moment that strips away comfortable illusions about shared burdens and automatic American engagement. The challenge now is to translate that clarity into action: faster naval expansion, sharper diplomacy, and a foreign policy anchored in self-reliance rather than the expectation of external guarantees.

The oceans have bifurcated again. India must decide, quickly, what kind of power it intends to be in the one it calls its own.

The author is a retired Additional Director General of Indian Coast Guard.

WEEKLY MOON SIGN FORECAST | 21-27 JUNE

Finding Balance, Sharpening Focus and Seeing More Clearly

Dr Shanker Adawal
Astrologer, Author & Researcher



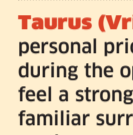
This forecast is based on your Moon Sign (Janna Rashi), which often reflects day-to-day emotional and instinctive patterns more closely than general Sun-sign readings.

Weekly Overview

The week opens with the Moon in Leo, encouraging self-expression, visibility and a desire to move forward with confidence. As the Moon enters Virgo, attention shifts toward practical matters, routines and organisation. The Libra phase brings greater focus on relationships, cooperation and finding balance in daily interactions.



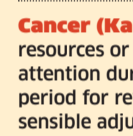
Aries (Mesh): The week begins with a more expressive and energetic tone, making it easier to communicate ideas or take initiative in matters that have been waiting for attention. As the week progresses, practical responsibilities may demand greater focus, particularly where routine tasks have been neglected. Midweek encourages cooperation and measured decision-making rather than working independently. By the weekend, emotional undercurrents may become stronger than expected.



Taurus (Vrishabh): Home, family matters or personal priorities may occupy your attention during the opening phase of the week. You may feel a stronger need for comfort, stability and familiar surroundings. As the Moon moves into Virgo, practical progress becomes easier and unfinished work may begin moving forward again. Midweek supports creativity and meaningful conversations.



Gemini (Mithun): Communication remains an important theme throughout much of the week. Discussions, meetings and exchanges of ideas may help clear confusion that has been lingering in the background. The Virgo Moon supports planning and attention to detail, making this a useful period for practical decisions. As the week moves into Libra, social interaction and collaboration improve. By the weekend, attention shifts toward health, routines or daily responsibilities.



Cancer (Karka): Financial priorities, personal resources or practical concerns may require attention during the opening days. This is a good period for reviewing commitments and making sensible adjustments where needed. Midweek encourages a more organised approach to daily matters. As Libra energy develops, family discussions or domestic responsibilities may become more noticeable.



Leo (Simha): With the Moon beginning the week in Leo, there may be a stronger desire to express your views and move forward with confidence. Others may pay closer attention to your ideas or leadership. Midweek encourages practical thinking and greater attention to details that may have been ignored recently. As the week progresses, communication becomes smoother and relationships feel easier to manage.



Virgo (Kanya): The early part of the week may encourage reflection before action. You may prefer observing situations carefully rather than becoming involved immediately. Once the Moon enters Virgo, energy improves and practical matters become easier to manage. This is a favourable period for organisation, planning and bringing structure to unfinished work.



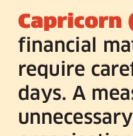
Libra (Tula): Friendships, networks and future plans may attract attention during the opening phase of the week. Some useful opportunities may emerge through conversations or social connections. As the week develops, you may prefer a quieter pace that allows greater reflection. Once the Moon enters Libra, confidence improves and relationships receive greater attention. This is a supportive period for restoring balance.



Scorpio (Vrishchik): Professional matters, responsibilities or long-term goals may demand attention at the beginning of the week. Others may look to you for guidance or clarity. Midweek encourages practical adjustments and a more organised approach to pending tasks. The Libra phase highlights cooperation and diplomacy, particularly in situations where different opinions exist. By the weekend, the Moon enters Scorpio, increasing emotional awareness and intuition. Trust your instincts, but avoid drawing conclusions before all facts are known.



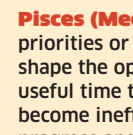
Sagittarius (Dhanu): The week opens with a broader perspective and a desire to look beyond immediate concerns. Travel, learning or future planning may become important themes. Midweek encourages practical effort and attention to details that support long-term progress. As Libra energy develops, teamwork and collaboration become more valuable. By the weekend, you may feel the need for additional rest or reflection. Not every answer requires immediate action. Sometimes clarity arrives when pressure is reduced.



Capricorn (Makar): Shared responsibilities, financial matters or practical obligations may require careful attention during the opening days. A measured approach will help avoid unnecessary complications. Midweek supports organisation and productive routines, allowing steady progress. As the Moon moves through Libra, professional matters may become more visible.



Aquarius (Kumbh): Relationships and important interactions may take centre stage at the beginning of the week. You may notice that cooperation produces better results than trying to manage everything alone. Midweek encourages practical problem-solving and greater attention to everyday responsibilities. As Libra energy develops, perspective broadens and conversations become more constructive. By the weekend, professional responsibilities may require greater focus. A calm and balanced approach will strengthen your position more than forceful action.



Pisces (Meen): Routine matters, health priorities or work-related responsibilities may shape the opening phase of the week. This is a useful time to improve systems that have become inefficient. Midweek supports steady progress and practical organisation. As the Moon moves through Libra, emotional awareness deepens and certain relationships may require greater honesty or understanding. By the weekend, Scorpio energy encourages introspection, learning and meaningful reflection.

FROM AGENDA COVER

Off track: Whither...

Sapt Kranti also advocated economic equality and women's emancipation. Needless to say, they failed to project any vision or plan for equality. They mindlessly followed the route of privatisation, liberalisation and globalisation. When in power, they did not invest adequately in the development of human resources among the backward castes and Dalits. The pre-existing trends of poor-quality schooling, health facilities, and skill training, landlessness, poorly paid, low-quality informal jobs, and low participation of women in the workforce did not reverse during their rule in their respective states. Nor did they fight for equality when they were part of the coalition of parties in power at the Centre. Since the 1990s, none of these leaders has made efforts to build labour organisations or participated in labour movements. Today, the states they ruled and India as a whole are more iniquitous than at any time in its post-Independence history. The theory of Sampoorn Kranti aimed at social reforms to eradicate corruption and political reforms to decentralise power. Both of these goals are even further distant from where Lalu Prasad, Nitish Kumar, and Mulayam Singh Yadav began their journeys.

It is not the failure of Jayaprakash Narayan or Ram Manohar Lohia that India could not take the path that would have led to the realisation of the ideas of Sapt Kranti and Sampoorn Kranti. Political theorists will continue to dissect these theories, find their strengths and weaknesses, and compare them with other theories that may seem more promising. But the Indian masses will definitely evaluate the performance of the practitioners of the kind of socialism propounded by Jayaprakash and Lohia. Alas, many times disciples prove unworthy of their gurus. Lalu, Nitish, and Mulayam are not Jayaprakash or Lohia.

Pushpendra is former Professor, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai

The long shadow of Emergency: India...

In Bihar, the movement escalated further. Despite concessions by the elected government, demands continued to expand. Political agitation gradually evolved into a challenge to the authority of constitutional institutions themselves. By late 1974, discussions of Janata Sarkars and Janata Adalats reflected attempts to establish parallel centres of political legitimacy. Equally significant were the railway strikes of 1974. What began as an industrial dispute soon acquired overt political dimensions. George Fernandes famously declared that a nationwide railway strike could bring the country to a standstill. In a speech mobilising railway workers, he stated: "Seven days strike of the Indian Railways - every thermal station of the country would close down. A ten day strike of the Indian Railways - every steel mill in India would close down and the industries of the country would come to a halt for the next 12 months... A fifteen day strike in Indian Railways - the country would starve."

The opposition's main aim was to wreck the economy and paralyse the administration. This is why they pitched their demands so high and displayed little interest in negotiation of their demands.

It was clear to the Government that the strike was politically motivated and was planned to paralyze the country. With its back to the wall, the Government had to defend the state and assert its right to govern. Indira Gandhi's Government came down heavily on the protesters. Thousands of employees were arrested and their families were driven out of their quarters.

There were also growing concerns about external interference. The Cold War context cannot be ignored. Following India's role in the creation of Bangladesh in 1971 and its nuclear test in 1974, relations with

major Western powers were strained. Intelligence assessments of the period reflected anxieties regarding foreign involvement in domestic political developments.

The immediate trigger, however, was the Allahabad High Court judgment of June 12, 1975, which invalidated Indira Gandhi's election from Rae Bareilly. While the Supreme Court granted a conditional stay, the political atmosphere had already become highly charged. What followed intensified the crisis. Opposition leaders organised nationwide campaigns against the government. Demonstrations, gheraos and civil disobedience were planned on a large scale. Most controversially, Jayaprakash Narayan publicly called upon the police, armed forces and civil servants not to obey what he considered unjust orders.

Jan Morcha - a motley group of 10 parties, with Morarjee Desai as Chairman was formed. In a rally in Ramlika Grounds, he asked the army, the police and the Government servants not to obey orders and challenged the Government to try him of treason.

He even said encouraged the military to plan a coup and gherao the PM's residence. For any elected government, such appeals would have raised serious questions about constitutional authority and state stability. On June 25, 1975, the Emergency was declared under Article 352 of the Constitution. It was a constitutional provision, though the manner of its use remains one of the most fiercely debated issues in modern Indian history.

What happened thereafter is equally well documented. Civil liberties were curtailed. Political opponents were arrested. Press freedoms were restricted. Excesses occurred, some undeniable and some exaggerated over time through political retelling. None of these actions should be dismissed or justified casually.

The Emergency remains a cautionary

lesson about the concentration of power and the fragility of democratic institutions. But that lesson has already been absorbed by Indian democracy. The people rejected the Congress in 1977. The Congress accepted that verdict. The party apologised. Indira Gandhi herself acknowledged mistakes. The democratic process functioned exactly as it was supposed to. Similar conditions or even worse conditions were created during the Morarji Desai Government too. But then it did not have a legal, Constitutional and Parliamentary sanction of the Emergency.

The same exists, perhaps in a different form, even today. That is why the contemporary obsession with the Emergency appears increasingly disconnected from India's present realities.

Young Indians today are concerned about employment, paper leaks, inflation, education, social harmony, economic opportunity and institutional accountability. They are not waiting for daily reminders about a political event that occurred half a century ago.

History should be studied, not weaponised. The irony is difficult to ignore. A party that invokes the Emergency every year often shows little interest in discussing contemporary concerns with the same intensity. The past becomes a convenient substitute for the BJP to avoid answering questions about the present.

The Emergency will always remain part of India's democratic story. It should be remembered honestly, debated rigorously and taught accurately. But it cannot become the sole lens through which contemporary politics is viewed. India has moved on. The Congress has moved on. Even history has moved on. The BJP, however, appears determined to remain permanently trapped in June 1975.

Rachit Seth is the founder of Policy Briefcase which provides parliamentary research & strategic communications support. He is a former National Media Coordinator of the Indian National Congress.

"THE DISCOVERY OF A NEW DISH
DOES MORE FOR HAPPINESS"
— BRILLAT-SAVARIN

RAJA PARBA

Odisha's celebration of womanhood, monsoon and pitha



**ANIL
RAJPUT**

In Odisha, the arrival of Raja Parba is felt before it is formally announced. Courtyards are swept, swings are tied to trees, girls dress in new clothes, feet are coloured with *alta*, homes fill with the fragrance of rice, jaggery, coconut and ghee, and the season softens under the promise of rain. Raja is one of Odisha's most loved festivals as it brings together nature, agriculture, food, leisure and femininity in a way that feels joyous and deeply thoughtful. It celebrates womanhood not as an abstract idea, but as a living force of creation, dignity and renewal. In a society where women's labour often sustains the household silently, Raja gives that labour a sacred pause and places feminine energy at the centre of celebration.

Raja Parba is closely associated with Mithuna Sankranti and the beginning of the monsoon season. Traditionally observed over three main days, Pahili Raja, Raja Sankranti and Basi Raja, it is followed in many households by Basumati Snana, the ceremonial bathing of Mother Earth. The belief behind the festival is strikingly beautiful. Mother Earth, or Basumati, is understood to undergo a period of rest and renewal, and agricultural work is paused as a mark of reverence. Ploughing, digging and other activities that disturb the soil are avoided. The earth is treated not as an object to be used, but as a living mother whose fertility sustains all life. This makes Raja more than a seasonal celebration. It is an agrarian philosophy, reminding us that human prosperity depends on respecting the rhythms of nature.

The festival also carries a rare cultural openness around menstrua-

tion and fertility. Raja places them within a language of honour, beauty and celebration. Young girls and women are encouraged to rest, dress well, play games, sing folk songs and enjoy decorated swings known as *doli*. In villages and towns, the sight of girls on swings, the sound of laughter, and the exchange of festive foods create a mood that is unmistakably Odia. Raja does not separate the body from the sacred or the household from the field. It recognises that fertility belongs to the earth, to women, to crops and to the continuity of family life.

If one food captures the soul of Raja Parba, it is pitha. Odisha has a rich pitha tradition throughout the year, but Raja gives it a special festive pride. Pithas are not merely sweets or snacks. They are expressions of season, skill and memory, often made from rice flour, coconut, jaggery, lentils, ghee, milk, cardamom and local ingredients transformed through steaming, roasting, frying or slow cooking. During Raja, the making and sharing of pitha becomes a family ritual. Older women pass down proportions by touch rather than measurement, younger members gather around the kitchen, and the finished pithas move from home kitchens to neighbourhood plates, community stalls and festive gatherings. The most iconic among them is Poda Pitha, often regarded as the signature taste of Raja. Its name comes from the idea of being burnt or baked, but its charm lies in the slow cooking that gives it a dark, caramelised crust and a soft, fragrant interior. Traditionally made with rice batter, jaggery, coconut, sometimes black gram, ghee, cardamom, ginger and pieces of coconut, Poda Pitha was once cooked overnight in an earthen oven or over a slow fire. The outer layer turns smoky and firm, while the inside remains moist and rich. Sliced and shared during Raja, it carries the warmth of the hearth and the patience of traditional cooking.



RAJA PARBA ENDURES BECAUSE IT ALLOWS ODISHA TO CELEBRATE JOY WITHOUT FORGETTING WISDOM. IT HONOURS THE EARTH BEFORE CULTIVATION, WOMEN BEFORE ROUTINE LABOUR, FOOD BEFORE CONSUMPTION AND TRADITION BEFORE SPECTACLE. ITS CUISINE TEACHES THAT HERITAGE DOES NOT SURVIVE ONLY IN GRAND FEASTS, BUT IN THE CAREFUL FOLDING OF COCONUT INTO RICE DOUGH, THE SLOW BAKING OF PODA PITHA, THE SHARING OF ARISA, THE STEAMING OF MANDA, AND THE LAUGHTER THAT GATHERS AROUND A SWING

Another beloved preparation is Arisa Pitha, made by combining rice flour with jaggery syrup and shaping the dough into discs that are fried until crisp at the edges and chewy within. Sesame seeds are often added for texture and aroma. Arisa Pitha has a festive sturdiness, which makes it ideal for storing and sharing. Its flavour comes from the careful handling of jaggery, which must reach the right consistency before the rice flour is mixed in. It reflects household expertise, because small changes in heat and timing can alter the final texture. Where Poda Pitha is smoky and Arisa Pitha is rich, Manda Pitha is softer and gentler. These steamed dumplings are usually made from rice flour dough filled with coconut and jaggery, sometimes scented with cardamom. The dough is shaped around the filling and steamed until tender. When opened, the filling releases the sweetness of coconut and melted jaggery. Manda Pitha is especially suited to the monsoon mood of Raja because it is comforting without being heavy. Its steamed form also shows the variety within Odia festive cooking, where celebration does not always require frying.

Kakara Pitha brings another texture to the Raja table. Usually made with semolina or wheat flour, and sometimes rice flour, it is filled with sweet coconut or chhena and then fried.

The outer layer becomes golden while the inside remains soft and fragrant. Some homes prepare Suji Kakara,

while others make versions with rice flour. Alongside it, Chakuli Pitha, a thin pancake made from a fermented batter of rice and black gram, brings a lighter savoury balance. It may be eaten with *dalma*, *ghuguni*, chutney, jaggery or milk, depending on the household. Its presence ensures that Raja cuisine is not only about sweetness.

The pitha tradition also includes varieties such as Chhunchi Patra Pitha, Muan Pitha, Enduri Pitha and Chandrakanti. Chhunchi Patra Pitha is delicate and thin, requiring skill to spread the batter lightly. Muan Pitha offers another festive variation of rice, coconut and sweetness. Enduri Pitha, more strongly associated with Prathamastami but familiar within the larger Odia pitha repertoire, is steamed in turmeric leaves, while Chandrakanti, made from green gram and sugar, is fried to a golden finish. Together, these preparations show why Raja cuisine is best understood as a whole language of pithas.

Even though pitha dominates the festival, Raja meals are often completed with savoury Odia dishes that reflect the comfort of home cooking. *Dalma*, made with lentils, vegetables and gentle spices, brings nourishment and balance. *Santula*, a lightly cooked vegetable preparation, offers simplicity after richer festive foods. *Ghuguni*, made from dried peas, is a popular snack and pairs well with Chakuli Pitha. In many households, *Chattu Besara*, prepared with mushrooms and mustard paste, or *Ambula Rai*, with dried mango and mustard, add the sharp, earthy flavours that Odisha is known for. Some families may also prepare *Mutton Jhola* or *Chingudi Jhola*, but the emotional centre of Raja remains the pitha platter.

Cooling drinks such as *Pana*, made in different household styles with fruits, curd, milk, jaggery or spices, suit the humid monsoon atmosphere. Some homes serve buttermilk, fruit-based sherbets or lightly spiced drinks that refresh guests between meals. Yet the most visible finishing touch of the festival is Raja Paan. Betel leaves filled with areca nut, sweeteners, spices and fragrant additions become part of the social pleasure of the occasion. To offer paan after pitha is to complete the rhythm of Raja hospitality.

Raja Parba endures because it allows Odisha to celebrate joy without forgetting wisdom. It honours the earth before cultivation, women before routine labour, food before consumption and tradition before spectacle. Its cuisine teaches that heritage does not survive only in grand feasts, but in the careful folding of coconut into rice dough, the slow baking of Poda Pitha, the sharing of Arisa, the steaming of Manda, and the laughter that gathers around a swing. At a time when conversations around women's dignity, ecological respect and cultural continuity are more important than ever, Raja offers a deeply Indian answer. To preserve Raja Parba is to preserve a way of seeing womanhood as sacred, the earth as living, and food as one of the most intimate carriers of civilisational memory.

(The writer is Secretary, Cuisine India Society)

Celebrating the soul of Odia cuisine

Will Odisha's fiercely guarded temple recipes vanish completely, or can this brilliant luxury dining revival save an ancient culinary heritage?



President, Cuisine India Society, Pushpesh Pant; Secretary, Cuisine India Society, Anil Rajput and Executive Member, Cuisine India Society, Amitabh Kant with Prashant Tewari of *The Pioneer*



(L-R) Officials of the Cuisine India Society: Treasurer, Manisha Bhasin; Secretary, Anil Rajput; Executive Member, Ramesh Abhishek; Executive Member and Ravi Capoor; President



(L-R) Ambassador of Bhutan to India, Major General Vetsop Namgyel; Former Marketing Director, Western Resort Country Club, Anita Rajput; and Secretary, Cuisine India Society, Anil Rajput

THE CUISINE INDIA SOCIETY BRINGS THE ROARING WOOD FIRES AND COMPLEX COASTAL FLAVORS OF ODISHA STRAIGHT TO NEW DELHI'S LUXURY DINING

SAKSHI PRIYA

If you are looking for the actual beating heart of Indian slow cooking, you have to look far beyond our glossy modern city setups and trace your way down to the eastern coastline, where generations of Odia temple cooks have spent centuries tending to massive, roaring wood fires. These unseen masters possess an almost stubborn patience, willing to stand through the blistering heat just to catch that exact, split-second moment when raw mustard oil finally breaks into a sharp, fragrant smoke, knowing exactly how to coax impossibly deep and complex flavors out of nothing more than a pinch of panch phoran. Yet, despite this incredible heritage, you seldom see these fiercely guarded regional plates on a five-star menu, which is exactly why the Cuisine India Society decided to step in and bring this ancient gastronomy straight into the luxury setting of ITC Maurya in New Delhi.

"Between traditions and new innovations, we aim to explore and celebrate Indian food as culture and medicine,

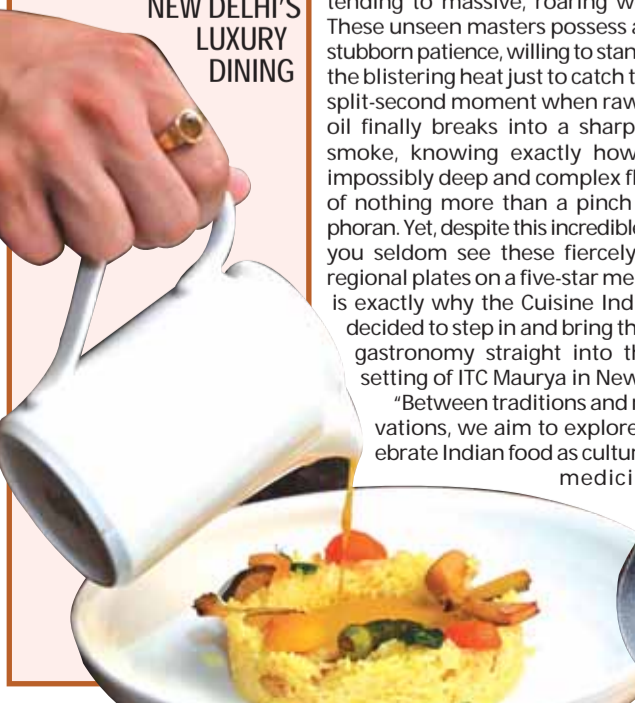
showcasing India's rich culinary diversity to the world," noted Anil Rajput, Secretary, Cuisine India Society.

The kitchen rolled out a massive spread anchored strictly in regional eating habits. Guests moved naturally from *eka-patra bhojana* (meal in a bowl) into the *mukhya khadya* (main course) before reaching the *mithana* (desserts). Every plate left guests craving the next. The *Pakala Bhat*, a cooling fermented rice staple, brought instant relief just as it has for generations. *Badi Chura* tartlets packed a serious punch of garlic and sun-dried lentils. In the *Chillika Chingudi Jhola*, fresh prawns bobbed in a fragrant coastal broth. The heavier courses followed suit. *Machha Besara* skewers offered charred fish coated in sharp yellow mustard, while the bamboo-infused mutton chops released an aromatic cloud of wood smoke the

second they hit the table. Dinner finished with petite *Chenna Poda*. This baked cottage cheese classic came bathed in a dark pool of nolen gur.

Corporate Chef Manisha Bhasin knew the weight of working with such historic recipes. "I'm not from Odisha myself, but the menu was shaped by expert Odia chefs — our focus was keeping the flavours true while making them accessible to modern palates."

Experiencing food like this matters. Society constantly watches brilliant traditional artists get pushed to the margins, leaving true masters of their craft with zero stage left to stand on. Seeing these ancient temple recipes command a packed, luxury dining room is a massive win for preserving cultural heritage. It proves that Odisha's history remains alive, loud, and incredibly delicious.

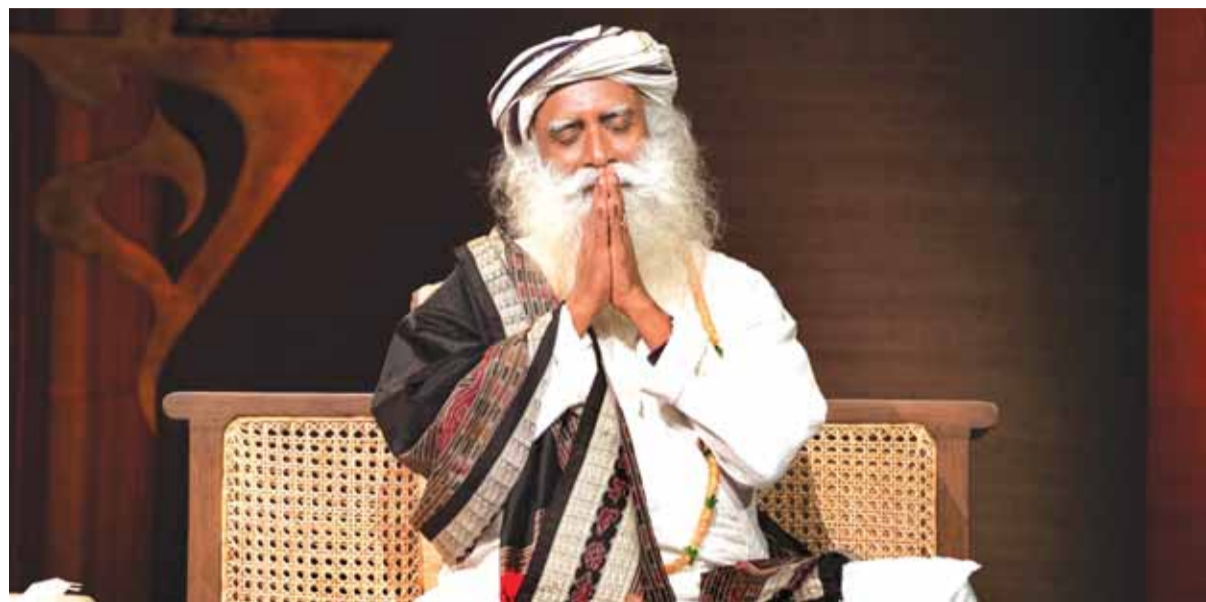


Prashant Tewari exchanges pleasantries with Amitabh Kant during the Odia cuisine showcase



Yoga - Taking the Next Step

All of us are alive, all of us are human beings. But all of us do not experience life to the same intensity because our pranic energies are not the same. Different people experience life in different levels of intensity



SADHGURU

The word "yoga" literally means "union." When you experience everything as one in your consciousness, then you are in yoga. To attain that unity within you, there are many ways. For example, there is hata yoga. Hata yoga means you start with the body. The body itself has its own attitudes, its own ego, its own nature. Apart from your mind, do you see, your body has its own ego? Suppose you say, "From tomorrow, I want to get up at five in the morning and walk on the beach." You set the alarm. The alarm rings. You want to get up but your body says, "Shut up and sleep." It has its own way.

So we start with the body. Hata yoga is a way of working with the body, disciplining the body, purifying the body, and preparing the body for higher levels of energy. All of us are alive, all of us are human beings. But all of us do not experience life to the same intensity because our pranic energies are not the same. Different people experience life in different levels of intensity.

For example, somebody sees a tree. A tree is just a tree. Most people don't even see it. Somebody sees the tree in more detail. An artist sees every shade of it. Somebody else not only sees the tree but also sees the Divine in it. Seeing is not the same because the level of intensity with which you experience life is not the same.

The whole process of yoga is to



HATA YOGA IS A WAY OF WORKING WITH THE BODY, DISCIPLINING THE BODY, PURIFYING THE BODY, AND PREPARING THE BODY FOR HIGHER LEVELS OF ENERGY. ALL OF US ARE ALIVE, ALL OF US ARE HUMAN BEINGS. BUT ALL OF US DO NOT EXPERIENCE LIFE TO THE SAME INTENSITY BECAUSE OUR PRANIC ENERGIES ARE NOT THE SAME. DIFFERENT PEOPLE EXPERIENCE LIFE IN DIFFERENT LEVELS OF INTENSITY

take you from something that you know, and take the next step into the unknown. We have made this yogic science almost like a physical science. Suppose you mix two parts of hydrogen and one part of oxygen, you get water. Even when a great scientist puts it together, it is water. Even if an idiot puts it together, it is only water. Similarly, in yoga too, if you do this, this, and this, only this will happen. Whether a great yogi does it or an ignorant person does it, it does not matter. If he does the practices and sadhana properly, the result is there to be seen.

In yoga, these systems have been identified. To start with, you work

with the body, then you move to the breath, then to the mind, then to the inner self. Like this many steps have been created. They are only different aspects. They are not really branches of yoga. In fact, we address all of them at once. It is important that in a very balanced way all of them are addressed at once, as one unit. Otherwise, if you work just with the body, it is only preparatory in nature. So, there is really no division as such. Yoga is a union of all these.

(Ranked amongst the fifty most influential people in India, Sadhguru is a yogi, mystic, visionary and a New York Times bestselling author. Sadhguru has been conferred the Padma Vibhushan by the Government of India in 2017, the highest annual civilian award, accorded for exceptional and distinguished service. He is also the founder of the world's largest people's movement, Conscious Planet- Save Soil, which has touched over 4 billion people)



America's Akshardham: A Beacon of Indian Culture and Spirituality

Carved in stone yet alive with timeless ideals, Akshardham stands majestically on American soil as the largest Hindu mandir of the modern world. Its grandeur reflects the brilliance of India's spiritual and cultural heritage, while its message transcends all boundaries, inviting humanity toward peace, harmony, selfless service, and universal brotherhood. More than a monument, it is a shining beacon of Sanatan Dharma for generations to come



DR SWAMI GYANANANDDAS

Thousands of visitors from around the world arrive in Robbinsville, New Jersey, and stand in awe before a sight few expect to encounter on American soil. Rising majestically against the skyline, BAPS Swaminarayan Akshardham, the modern world's largest Hindu mandir, captivates with its breathtaking grandeur and intricate artistry. Through its timeless message of spirituality, harmony, selfless service, and universal brotherhood, Akshardham is illuminating the Western world with the enduring wisdom of ancient Indian civilization.

The word 'Akshardham' means 'a timeless abode', a place that transcends the boundaries of time and geography. This profound vision was cherished by His Holiness Pramukh Swami Maharaj, the inspirer of the

project, who often expressed a simple yet powerful wish: that every person who enters Akshardham, regardless of faith, nationality, or background, should experience peace, inspiration, and inner upliftment. Today, that vision stands realized in stone.

Remarkably, the BAPS Swaminarayan Akshardham was built between 2011 and 2023 through the extraordinary efforts of 12,500 volunteers from across America. Millions of hours of selfless service were dedicated to transforming a dream into reality. Their contribution reflects one of the most cherished values of Indian culture, seva, or selfless service. Every carved stone and every architectural detail bears witness not only to artistic excellence but also to the devotion and sacrifice of countless volunteers.

Spread across more than 183 acres, the main mandir structure measures 255 feet in width, 345 feet in length, and rises to a height of 191 feet. Designed according to the principles of ancient

Hindu scriptures, the mandir embodies a harmonious blend of sacred architecture and spiritual symbolism. Its design includes one main shrine, twelve shrines, nine shikhars, and nine pyramidal shikhars, each representing profound spiritual ideals rooted in India's civilizational heritage.

Perhaps the most astonishing aspect of Akshardham is the journey of its stones. Built to endure for a thousand years, the monument incorporates nearly two million cubic feet of stone sourced from different parts of the world. Limestone arrived from Bulgaria and Turkey, marble from Greece, Italy, and Turkey, granite from India and China, and sandstone from India. These stones traveled across continents before reaching India, where skilled artisans meticulously carved them into intricate forms. The carved pieces were then transported to New Jersey and assembled like an enormous three-dimensional puzzle.

This remarkable international collaboration conveys a profound message: One World, One Family. The coming together of stones from different nations to form a single sacred monument beautifully symbolizes the unity of humanity and the harmony that can exist among diverse cultures and civilizations.

Visitors are immediately captivated by the temple's breathtaking artistry. More than 10,000 statues and statuettes adorn the complex, depicting spiritual themes, cultural motifs, ancient Indian musical instruments, and traditional dance forms. Every carving serves as a silent storyteller, preserving the artistic and philosophical treasures of India for future generations. The monument also houses the largest elliptical dome ever constructed in traditional stone architecture, demonstrating the extraordinary engineering capabilities embedded within ancient architectural traditions.

Among the many unique features of the campus is the Brahma Kund, a tra-

ditional Indian stepwell containing water collected from more than 300 bodies of water across the globe. The Brahma Kund beautifully symbolizes the spiritual and cultural union of two great nations, reminding visitors that while cultures may differ, the human quest for peace and meaning remains universal.

Beyond its architectural grandeur, Akshardham stands as a testament to responsible stewardship of the environment. The project incorporates sustainable practices, including a solar panel farm generating clean energy, environmentally friendly fly-ash concrete, and careful preservation of surrounding wetlands. These initiatives reflect the Hindu principle that nature is not merely a resource to be exploited but a sacred trust to be protected.

At a time when societies across the world are grappling with division, loneliness, and cultural uncertainty, the emergence of Akshardham carries a deeper significance. It stands as a reminder that progress need not come at the cost of tradition, and that modernity can coexist with spirituality. The monument offers visitors not merely a glimpse into India's glorious past but also a vision for humanity's future, one rooted in peace, understanding, service, and unity.

In this sense, the BAPS Swaminarayan Akshardham is not simply a temple in America; it is a beacon of civilization, illuminating hearts with the light of wisdom, harmony, and devotion. Yet as we admire its grandeur, we should remember that behind this extraordinary achievement stands the tireless dedication of Mahant Swami Maharaj, whose selfless efforts fulfilled Pramukh Swami Maharaj's cherished vision and transformed a dream into reality.

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

Sri Sri receives Luxembourg Peace Prize

Recognised for four and half decades of conflict resolution, trauma relief and inspiring millions across 182 countries to become ambassadors of peace



Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, global humanitarian, spiritual leader and founder of The Art of Living, has been conferred the prestigious Luxembourg Peace Prize by the World Peace Forum (WPF), an international network of peace activists, scholars and policymakers.

The honour recognises Gurudev's 45 years of tireless efforts in fostering inner peace, mediating long-standing conflicts, providing trauma relief in areas affected by violence and inspiring people across 182 countries to become instruments of peace. Over the past four decades, Gurudev has played a pivotal role in peace building initiatives in conflict regions across the world, while his programmes on mental well-being stress relief and human values have

touched the lives of hundreds of millions of people.

Receiving the award, Gurudev highlighted the importance of addressing the roots of conflict.

"The root cause of conflict is the absence of inner peace in individuals. Our experience in conflict zones has shown that societies need people who can build bridges, restore communication and rebuild trust. Such mediators are essential today. I would like to see every young person become a bridge wherever they find divisions in communities," he said.

He further underscored that peace should not be mistaken for passivity. "Peace is not complacency, and aggression is not bravery. True peace arises when one is both

aware and dynamic."

Addressing one of the greatest challenges facing humanity today, he noted, "Stress is one of the biggest enemies of humankind. A stress-free mind and a violence-free society are the foundations of lasting peace."

Gurudev strongly mentioned that peace requires as much attention as security, he added, "We often speak of peace and security in the same breath. Yet while enormous resources are devoted to security, far too little attention is given to cultivating peace."

The Luxembourg Peace Prize is awarded to individuals and organisations whose work has made a significant contribution to advancing peace, reconciliation and human dignity worldwide.

Heaven or hell? We have the power to choose

AMMA (SRI MATA AMRITANANDAMAYI DEVI)

When we ask the question, "Who are you?" we get a variety of answers. "I am a Hindu," "I am a Christian," "I am a Muslim," "I am an engineer," "I am a doctor." One factor pervades all these answers—the 'I.' For this 'I,' there is no name or form. It is that supreme principle that we variously refer to as Atma, Brahman, or God, etc.

When we say, "There is no God," it is like using the tongue to say, "There is no tongue." The very 'I' is saying, "There is no 'I.'" God resides in each and every one of us. That which pulsates in every living being, in every thing that moves, and in everything that does not move, is consciousness. God is like space. Space is everywhere.

This universe is sustained in space. Before we build a house, space is there. Once the house is complete, the space remains. The house is situated in the space that was previously there. Even when the house is demolished and all the debris is carried away, space remains.

Similarly, it is that supreme principle that ever remains in the past, in the present and in the future-without change. That is God.

Many people ask, "If God is all-pervasive, why can't we see it?"

Are we able to see electricity? No, but when we touch a live wire, we will receive a shock. We experience electricity. The God principle is also an experience. It is through this experience that we truly come to know God.

Sometimes, if we are standing behind a tree, the sun disappears from our view. At such a time we may say, "The sun is covered by the tree," but that isn't really the truth, is it? In reality, the tree is merely blocking our line of vision.

Similarly, it is our ignorance that prevents us from clearly perceiving God. God resides within us as the life-force and consciousness. The Supreme, whose very nature is bliss, is our



Atma. Even though God is all-pervasive, the mind's identification with the feelings of 'I' and 'mine' obstructs the perception of this reality. It is what keeps us shackled. We will never gain a sense of completeness from the external world, yet we continue to search. When we study, the thought is, "Will I pass?" After passing, the next thought is, "Will I get a job?" Once employed, we think, "Will I lose this job?" And the list of tensions goes on and on. We all know this cycle very well.

In distress, many women come and tell me, "Amma, I've turned 40 and have yet to get married. I still haven't found the right husband." Similarly, many men arrive with the same anxiety, saying, "Despite getting on in life, I've yet to find the type of woman I'm looking for. I'm still searching." In this way, they become disappointed; their lives are full of sorrow.

Reflecting on these struggles reminds me of a story. There was a man who travelled all over the world in search of a bride. In Spain, he came across a beautiful and intelligent girl, but she was not interested in worldly affairs.

Then, in Korea, he found another girl-one in whom there was beauty, intelligence, and an understanding of the

world. But he was hesitant to commit himself to her. In another country he finally found a girl who had all the qualities he desired.

"Were you able to marry this girl of your dreams?" Amma asked.

"No," the man replied with a tinge of grief in his voice.

"What happened?" Amma asked.

The reply he gave should stand as a lesson for every one of us. He said, "She was looking for the man of her dreams."

When we search for perfection outside, we are always going to be disappointed. What is it we human beings are looking for? Isn't it peace and happiness? For a little bit of peace, we are willing to run helter-skelter. But in doing so, we are transforming our inner world into a hell.

If lasting peace and happiness could really be attained through external objects and a life of luxury, wouldn't we have attained it by now? It isn't enough if we have air-conditioned cars and apartments; we should learn to air-condition our minds.

Peace, contentment, and happiness depend upon our own minds, not on external objects and situations. It is gaining control over the mind that is the foundation of happiness. We must always remember that heaven and hell are creations of the mind.