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GEN Z EXITS JANTAR MANTAR ON A HIGH

Pradhan resigns as education minister

RAJESH KUMAR ■ New Delhi

After a month-long massive student agitation in Delhi seeking his resignation over exam irregularities and NEET paper leaks, Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Saturday resigned. Pradhan handed over his resignation to Prime Minister Narendra Modi while President Droupadi Murmu accepted the resignation late in the evening.

The announcement comes amid escalating protests across the country calling for the minister to step down. He announced the move on his social media handle just hours before the third round of talks between the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) and the Centre.

Pradhan, who was also one in the list of the troubleshooter for his party BJP, is the second Union Minister in the Modi Government since it came to power in 2014, when a sitting minister quit in face



IT WAS NOT A MATTER OF INDIVIDUAL PRESTIGE FOR HIM WANTED TO PREVENT ANTI-NATIONAL FORCES FROM EXPLOITING THE SITUATION AT JANTAR MANTAR

—DHARMENDRA PRADHAN

of public outcry and demand. The first was MJ Akbar, who stepped down as minister of State for external affairs in 2018 after sexual harassment allegations surfaced against him during the #MeToo movement.

In his two-page resignation letter addressed to the country's youth, Pradhan said that he made the decision to resign to ensure that "anti-national" forces do not exploit the decision and to ensure that the "national unity" remains intact.

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People celebrate after Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan resigned and took responsibility for the NEET paper leak on Saturday

PTI

PRALHAD JOSHI TO BE NEW EDUCATION MINISTER

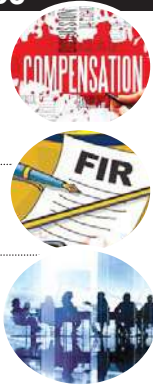
Indian President Droupadi Murmu said in a press communique that she had directed Pralhad Joshi, a Cabinet minister, to be assigned the charge of the education ministry on the advice of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.



I accepted the responsibility with a sense of duty and humility

DEMANDS

- Government has also agreed to provide honourable compensation to the families of those who committed suicide
- Withdrawal of FIRs in Delhi and other BJP-ruled States
- The two sides will again meet after four weeks to work on broader reforms in the examination system



CJP ends protest after Govt accepts demands

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Ending their 36-day agitation, the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) on Saturday called off its protest "with immediate effect" and asked supporters at Jantar Mantar to return home. This call was made after the Government accepted their key demands, including the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and assurances for FIRs withdrawal in Delhi and other BJP-ruled States.

The resignation of Pradhan

was the CJP's core demand over the NEET paper leak. The two sides will again meet after four weeks to work on broader reforms in the examination system.

CJP spokespersons Saurav Das and Ashutosh Ranka, flanked by Union Ministers JP Nadda and Jitendra Singh at the press conference at the Constitution Club of India in New Delhi, shortly after the third round of talks between the two, said the CJP ended the protest in "good faith" that the Government would keep its word on the demands.

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Union Ministers JP Nadda and Jitendra Singh and CJP spokespersons Saurav Das and Ashutosh Ranka, during a joint press conference in New Delhi

PTI



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—RAHUL GANDHI



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BJP backs Pradhan, hails his legacy

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

BJP leaders acknowledged Dharmendra Pradhan's contributions after he resigned as Union education minister, with Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju describing his journey as a "testament" to lifelong engagement with public life and student welfare.

BJP president Nitin Nabin said Pradhan's decision to step down reflects the "highest standards" of integrity and selfless service in public life, asserting that the party stands firmly with him. Nabin said that as Union education minister, Pradhan played a "pivotal role" in reforming India's education landscape.

He further said that he successfully implementing the "landmark" National Education Policy (NEP 2020), among other initiatives.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation was a reflection of the fact that safeguarding the future of the country's students and youth is of "paramount importance" for Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the NDA Government. Singh said Pradhan resigned from his post taking into account the views and sentiments of the country's youth and students.

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Parliament to take up anti-paper leak Bill



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Tightening the noose around individuals, service providers and organised gangs involved in paper leaks, the Centre has proposed longer jail terms, steeper fines, and time-bound investigation and disposal of trials and appeals.

The bill, The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Amendment Act, 2026, is expected to be introduced in Parliament on Monday. According to the Lok Sabha Secretariat, Union Minister Jitendra Singh will move the Bill in the House. The

draft legislation was circulated among MPs shortly before the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.

According to the statement of objects and reasons, the amendments have been proposed in view of recent incidents of question paper leaks and examination malpractices.

Under the proposed law, individuals found resorting to unfair means will face imprisonment of five to 10 years, compared with the existing punishment of three to five years. The maximum fine has also been increased from ₹10 lakh to ₹50 lakh.

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Pradhan's exit reflects Govt's failure: Oppn

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Opposition leaders described Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation on Saturday as an overdue admission of failure following weeks of intense student protests, terming the move as the first major dent in the ruling Modi Cabinet's stubbornness.

Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi said Pradhan was a symbol of corruption and "it is good that he is gone".

He described the student protest as a fight between "the past" represented by Prime Minister and the RSS, and the future of India.

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India's sacred Buddhist jewel Sarnath joins UNESCO's World Heritage list

PRAMOD KUMAR SINGH ■ New Delhi

In a moment of profound national pride, the ancient Buddhist site of Sarnath in Uttar Pradesh was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List on Saturday. The decision came during the 48th session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee in Busan, South Korea, elevating Sarnath as India's 45th World Heritage property.

UNESCO announced the inscription with the statement: "New inscription on the # WorldHeritage List: Ancient Buddhist Site of Sarnath, #India." This recognition comes after a process that started in 1998, when Sarnath was first added to UNESCO's Tentative List. India submitted its official application in January 2025 for the 2025-



26 cycle, leading to the recent vote after review by ICOMOS experts.

Sarnath is about 10 kilometres from Varanasi. It is home to the Deer Park, known in ancient texts as Mrigadava or Rishipatana, where Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha, gave his first sermon around 528 BCE. Here, he "turned the Wheel of the Law" (Dharmachakra Pravartana), teaching the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path to his first five disciples. The Buddhist Sangha began at this site.

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The World Heritage site includes two main parts: the Chaukhandi Stupa and the Archaeological Remains of Sarnath. The remains include the Dhamekh Stupa, thought to mark the spot of the first sermon, the Dharmarajika Stupa, the Mulagandhakuti Vihara, and the remains of the Ashokan Pillar, whose Lion Capital is now India's National Emblem. These monuments were built from the pre-Mauryan period through the 12th century CE.

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CCEA approves construction of six-lane tunnel on NH-148AE

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has approved the construction of a six-lane tunnel on NH-148AE, known as the Dwarka Road Tunnel. The project, to be executed by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) under the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH), will cover 8.1 km at an estimated cost of ₹6,969.67 crore.

Developed under the Hybrid Annuity Mode (HAM) as part of the NH(O) Scheme, the tunnel will connect the Shiv Murti Interchange on the Dwarka Expressway (NH-

248BB) to Nelson Mandela Marg in Vasant Kunj.

The corridor will create an access-controlled route between West and South Delhi, improving traffic flow for vehicles from Gurugram, Dwarka, IGI Airport, and West Delhi. The project includes a 3.14-km twin-tube tunnel, with a 1.98-km section running beneath the Southern Ridge, designed to minimise impact on the area's ecological landscape.

The Dwarka Tunnel Corridor will connect the Dwarka Expressway directly to South Delhi, reducing reliance on congested routes including Dhaura Kuan-IGI Airport-Mahipalpur,

Chhatarpur-Mahipalpur, and Rangpuri. The project is expected to improve traffic flow and decrease travel times for residents, airport passengers, and commercial vehicles. The corridor will also strengthen integration between Delhi and Gurugram, improving access to key residential areas, commercial centres, institutional hubs and the Indira Gandhi International Airport.

Together with NHAI's proposed AIIMS-Mahipalpur Elevated Corridor, the corridor will improve connectivity between Delhi and Gurugram, providing better access to residential areas, commercial centres, institu-



tional hubs, and the Indira Gandhi International Airport.

Along with the proposed AIIMS-Mahipalpur Elevated Corridor, which will link the tunnel to the Barapullah

connect to several of the capital's iconic destinations, including Qutub Minar, Mehrauli Archaeological Park, Hauz Khas Heritage Complex, Humayun's Tomb, Lodhi Garden and Chhatarpur Temple. It will also facilitate smoother travel to Bharat Mandapam, India Gate and other major venues that host international conferences, exhibitions and cultural events. The project aims to reduce congestion near the airport and other traffic bottlenecks, which is expected to improve travel times for visitors and support the city's hospitality, tourism, and conference sectors.

As the primary gateway to

the National Capital, the Indira Gandhi International Airport serves as the main entry point to the National Capital. The new corridor will improve connectivity between the airport and areas such as the diplomatic enclave, business districts, convention centres, and institutional hubs.

The project is expected to provide faster and more predictable travel for international delegates, business travellers, and investors by improving links between the airport, Dwarka, Gurugram, and South Delhi, with an environmentally sensitive design. The 3.14-km twin-tube tunnel, including a 1.98-

km section beneath the Southern Ridge, enables critical transport infrastructure to be developed while preserving Delhi's valuable green cover and minimising surface disruption. This approach reflects MoRTH's commitment to balancing infrastructure development with environmental stewardship.

More than an urban road project, the Dwarka Tunnel Corridor is intended to improve connectivity, reduce congestion, and integrate key transport corridors in the National Capital Region. The project is expected to support urban mobility and economic activity in Delhi and surrounding areas.

DAMB demolishes 450 sq ft illegal structure at Narela

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Delhi Agricultural Marketing Board (DAMB) launched a comprehensive anti-encroachment and seizure drive across multiple mandis in Delhi on the orders of its vice-chairman, demolishing a 450-square-foot illegal temporary structure at APMC Narela using a JCB. During the drive, a total cash fine of ₹9,800 was collected from violators, and hundreds of kilograms of vegetables and fruit from illegal stalls were seized.

All seized perishable produce was donated to orphanages, old-age homes, gurukuls, and cow shelters rather than destroyed.

The drive was conducted jointly by officials of the Agricultural Produce Market



Committees, along with police and administrative forces, with action taken across APMC Narela, APMC Shahdara, APMC Azadpur, APMC Keshopur, and the Ghazipur Fish Market under the Delhi Fish, Poultry and Egg Marketing Committee.

At APMC Narela, the most significant structural action was taken, with a bulldozer

used to completely demolish an illegal temporary structure spread across approximately 450 square feet.

At APMC Shahdara, four drives were conducted between June 24 and July 20, resulting in seizure of 385 kilograms of fresh vegetables, issuance of nine challans, and collection of ₹1,900 in on-the-spot fines. The left-

over and additional seized material from Shahdara was sent to the Waste to Energy Plant at Ghazipur for scientific and eco-friendly disposal to generate electricity.

At APMC Azadpur, Asia's largest fruit and vegetable market, operations conducted on May 30, June 30, and July 15 resulted in the seizure of 11 boxes of apples, 65 boxes and 2 crates of mangoes, 27 boxes of plums, 10 boxes of watermelons, and more than 1,000 kilograms of vegetables, including cauliflower, onions, bottle gourd, potatoes, tomatoes, and cucumbers, from illegal stalls blocking pathways.

Hundreds of boxes of seized fruits and vegetables from Azadpur were donated to old age homes, gurukuls in Delhi, and as cattle fodder to cow shelters in Kheda Khurd.

DU releases second UG seat allocation list

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Delhi University on Saturday released the second round of undergraduate seat allocations under the Common Seat Allocation System (CSAS), with 24,814 candidates receiving fresh allotments. According to the university, 88,584 candidates are live in the second round.

While 24,814 candidates received fresh allotments, 30,682 secured upgrades to higher-preference programmes or colleges. A total of 15,265 candidates had frozen their seats after the first round.

Candidates shortlisted in the second round have been asked to accept their allotted seats by 11.59 pm on Sunday, July 26, while the deadline for payment of admission fees is 11.59 pm on Tuesday, July 28.



The university also opened the portal for applications to the Spot Round for two-year postgraduate programmes. Only candidates who do not hold a seat in any programme at the time of the Spot Round declaration are eligible to participate.

Applications for the Spot Round will remain open until 4.59 pm on Sunday, July 26. The latest developments follow the completion of the

first round of undergraduate admissions, in which the university confirmed admissions for 63,756 candidates.

Of these, 15,265 candidates froze their allotted seats, while 48,153 opted for an upgrade to higher-preference programmes or colleges in subsequent rounds.

Earlier, the university had reported that over 81,900 candidates had accepted the seats allotted in the first round,

with 61,932 confirming their admissions by paying the requisite fees before the payment deadline. The first allocation list had offered seats to 93,033 candidates against more than 71,000 undergraduate seats available across 221 programmes in 67 colleges for the 2026-27 academic session.

The allocations were made from among over 2.08 lakh candidates who completed Phase II of the CSAS admission process by submitting their programme and college preferences. Candidates who opted for the upgrade option in the first round were considered for higher-preference choices in the second allocation round, while those who froze their seats retained their earlier allotments. The new academic session at the University of Delhi is scheduled to commence on July 28.

CJP protest leaves Jantar Mantar, CP markets deserted

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Shops and stalls around Jantar Mantar, usually bustling with shoppers, have worn a deserted look through the week as the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) protest disrupted business, leaving traders with poor sales, empty parking lots and mounting concerns over their livelihoods.

The impact of the week-long protest has extended beyond traffic diversions and Metro station closures, with traders in the Jantar Mantar

flea market and Connaught Place saying they have witnessed one of the weakest business weeks in recent months. Adding to commuters' difficulties, several visitors and traders said autorickshaw drivers were charging higher fares because of road diversions and congestion around central Delhi.

Many shopkeepers said they either kept their shops shut on several days or saw barely any customers walking in. On Saturday afternoon, when the market would normally be crowded, only a



handful of stalls remained open while most shutters were down.

"We open our shop every morning hoping business will

improve this whole week, but there are hardly any customers. Some days, we don't even make our first sale," said Ramesh Kumar, who

sells clothes at the flea market. Another trader, Prem Prakash, who has been operating a garment stall for years, said internet restrictions in the area added to their difficulties.

"Most customers prefer paying digitally. But, with poor internet connectivity, transactions keep failing. Many people simply leave because they don't have cash," he said. Shopkeepers also blamed traffic congestion and security restrictions for keeping visitors away.

"People don't want to get

stuck in traffic or walk long distances after road closures. Even regular customers have stopped coming this week," said Vijay Mehta, who runs a perfume shop near Jantar Mantar.

Several traders said the market had remained largely inactive from Monday to Friday, with business dropping sharply compared to normal days. "We survive on daily sales. Losing an entire week during the tourist season hurts small vendors like us the most," said Sunil, who sells jewellery.

Nearly 150 million Indians affected by hair loss, says Akshay Batra

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Nearly 150 million Indians are estimated to be affected by hair loss, making it a growing health concern, according to Akshay Batra, Vice Chairman and Managing Director of Dr Batra's Healthcare. He said the condition is increasingly affecting people in their twenties and thirties due to stress, genetics, hormonal imbalances, nutritional deficiencies, pollution and changing lifestyles.

"Hair loss is much more than a cosmetic issue. It can

significantly impact confidence, self-esteem and emotional well-being. Early diagnosis and timely medical intervention are essential for better outcomes," Batra said.

Dr Batra's has launched HairGain, a personalised hair restoration programme that uses advanced diagnostics and targeted therapies to address the root causes of hair loss. He also advised people experiencing persistent hair fall to seek professional medical advice instead of relying on unverified remedies.

PUBLIC NOTICE
I, Rashmi Singh D/o Sri Gandhi Singh Kapoor R/o J-43, South City 1, South City-1, Gurugram, Haryana, 120001. I have purchased a property bearing Original Allotment Letter and payment receipts pertaining to Unit Nos. 1-3/202/ and 1-3/205/ Project Azalia, Situated at: 1/Hues Sector 68, Azalia/Ajmalpur- Tikli Road, Badli/Shaheed, Gurugram, Haryana-120001. I have requested to M/s DSC Estate Developers Pvt. Ltd. to issue the duplicate allotment letter of said property, if anybody or financial institutions have objection, please write to M/s DSC Estate Developers Pvt. Ltd. at above mentioned address within 15 days.

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This is to inform general public that Mrs. Anjali Kaur has acquired second floor without roof rights "the said floor", Built on Property No. WZ-64-A, area measuring 75 Sq. Yds. falling in Khata No. 1677, situated at Village Keshopur, Colony known as Guru Nanak Nagar, New Delhi by way of POA documents G.P.A. AT-5 will dated 01.09.2008. Now, Mrs. Anjali Kaur intends to sell above said property to Mr. Tarun Saxena on Sale Deed basis and availing a loan on above said property from Axis Finance Ltd. in case anyone has any objection, the same may be raised within 7 days of this publication to Mr. Ajit Sharma (Advocate), Partner of AccuLaw Source LLP, Unit No. S-24 2nd Floor, built on Plot No. 4 and 5, Ansal Utility Commercial Center, Paschim Vihar, New Delhi-110063 or contact : +91 9560309909 (M).

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SN	System Tender No.	Name of Work/Description of Work	Probable Amount of Contract
I.	195913 (1st Call)	CONSTRUCTION OF HOCKEY TURF AT STADIUM MUNICIPAL CORPORATION , KORBA (C.G.)(DMF Fund)	Rs. 1109.78 Lakh

The details can be viewed directly from the Government of Chhattisgarh <http://eproc.cgstate.gov.in> from 21.07.2026 at 20.30 Hours. (IST) onwards.

Sd/-
Commissioner
Superintendent Engineer
Municipal Corporation
Korba (C.G.)

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Main Portal: <http://eproc.cgstate.gov.in> KORBA

NIT No:- 413/2026		Dated:-21.07.2026	
SN	System Tender No.	Name of Work/Description of Work	Probable Amount of Contract
I.	195916 (1st Call)	CONSTRUCTION OF SYNTHETIC TRACK AT P.G COLLEGE, KORBA MUNICIPAL CORPORATION , KORBA (C.G.) (DMF Fund)	Rs. 1431.97 Lakh

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General Public is hereby informed that Mrs. Kanti Devi W/o Mr. Hukam Singh as the owner of the Plot area measuring 558 Sq. Ft. part of Sale No-118, Maug-Patibala, Chhatarpur, Tensil Dohri, Dist-Gurgaon Budh Nagar, UP by virtue of Khatoun/ or Last Year 1422-1427 and 1428-1433. There are 41 others co-sharers in Gata No-118 and Mrs. Kanti Devi W/o Mr. Hukam Singh is selling the aforesaid property out of her share to Mrs. Shivani W/o Mr. Sushil Kumar. Now, Mrs. Shivani W/o Mr. Sushil Kumar is financing the said property from Motilal Oswal Home Finance Limited. If any body has any charge/interest/lien in the said property or any kind of dispute kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 7 days of the present.

Sahajal Sheikh, Advocate
Senior Legal Manager, North Eye Advisors
B-220, 2nd Floor, Noida One, Tower-B, Sector-62, Noida, UP-201309 Email id:-ncr@notheeye.co.in, Contact No:-7254177027

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ALSO AT: Vinay Madan R/o Sri Balaji Garments, 1075/2, Main Bazar, Najafgarh, Delhi-110043	(1), 09-12-2025 (2), 22-07-2026 (3), 23-07-2026 (4), 24-07-2026 (5), 25-07-2026 (6), 26-07-2026 (7), 27-07-2026 (8), 28-07-2026 (9), 29-07-2026 (10), 30-07-2026 (11), 31-07-2026 (12), 01-08-2026 (13), 02-08-2026 (14), 03-08-2026 (15), 04-08-2026 (16), 05-08-2026 (17), 06-08-2026 (18), 07-08-2026 (19), 08-08-2026 (20), 09-08-2026 (21), 10-08-2026 (22), 11-08-2026 (23), 12-08-2026 (24), 13-08-2026 (25), 14-08-2026 (26), 15-08-2026 (27), 16-08-2026 (28), 17-08-2026 (29), 18-08-2026 (30), 19-08-2026 (31), 20-08-2026 (32), 21-08-2026 (33), 22-08-2026 (34), 23-08-2026 (35), 24-08-2026 (36), 25-08-2026 (37), 26-08-2026 (38), 27-08-2026 (39), 28-08-2026 (40), 29-08-2026 (41), 30-08-2026 (42), 31-08-2026 (43), 01-09-2026 (44), 02-09-2026 (45), 03-09-2026 (46), 04-09-2026 (47), 05-09-2026 (48), 06-09-2026 (49), 07-09-2026 (50), 08-09-2026 (51), 09-09-2026 (52), 10-09-2026 (53), 11-09-2026 (54), 12-09-2026 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Celebrations erupt as Pradhan resigns, CJP withdraws agitation

KHUSHI MEHROTRA
■ New Delhi

Within minutes of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation on Saturday afternoon, the mood at Delhi's Jantar Mantar transformed from one of defiance to celebration before gradually giving way to an orderly dispersal as the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) called off its month-long agitation over the NEET controversy.

As vehicles streamed towards Jantar Mantar, patriotic songs blared from loudspeakers while supporters raised slogans celebrating what they described as a hard-fought victory. At 2:18 pm, when news of Pradhan's resignation reached the protest site, students hugged each other, danced, waved flags and burst into chants.

The CJP announced the immediate withdrawal of its protests across the country after a meeting with Union Ministers JP Nadda and

Jitendra Singh, claiming the government had accepted all its key demands, including Pradhan's resignation, withdrawal of FIRs registered in Delhi and BJP-ruled States, compensation for families of students who allegedly died by suicide after the examination controversy, and further discussions on examination reforms.

Addressing a joint press conference, CJP spokesperson Saurav Das said the group was ending the agitation "in good faith" and that the government had agreed to provide written assurance by Tuesday. The two sides are scheduled to meet again after four weeks to discuss a five-point charter on broader education reforms.

Union Health Minister JP Nadda said the government had agreed that no retaliatory action would be taken against protesters and that FIRs registered in connection with the agitation would be withdrawn. He also said compensation would be provided



CJP supporters celebrate after Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan resigned and took responsibility for the NEET paper leak at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi

to affected families within existing rules.

Back at Jantar Mantar, volunteers immediately began cleaning the protest site. "Long live student unity. Abhijeet bhaiya and everyone else led

with conviction, and we got his resignation," a CJP volunteer said while picking up discarded banners and plastic bottles.

The emotional high point came when CJP founder

Abhijeet Dipke, who had led the movement after returning from the United States, announced Pradhan's resignation to thousands of supporters. Overcome with emotion, Dipke fell to his knees as the

crowd erupted in cheers. Despite repeated announcements by volunteers and police, many protesters lingered, reluctant to leave the site that had become the epicentre of the nationwide movement.

The internet shutdown in parts of central Delhi added to the confusion, with several students approaching journalists to verify whether reports of the minister's resignation were genuine or merely rumours. Soon afterwards, loudspeaker announcements by both CJP volunteers and Delhi Police urged protesters to return home peacefully. Metro stations that had remained shut during heightened security arrangements were reopened to facilitate dispersal.

Special Commissioner of Police (Law and Order) Devesh Chandra Srivastava appealed to protesters to cooperate with police personnel and maintain peace while leaving the area. "The dispersal of the public has begun. All our

senior police officers and personnel are at the scene. We have opened some metro stations to facilitate dispersal," he said. Speaking to The Pioneer, Special Commissioner of Police Ajay Chaudhry said the police's priority was to ensure the protest site was cleared peacefully and that no one was injured during the dispersal. He urged students to cooperate with police, as the agitation had officially been withdrawn by the CJP.

Even amid the celebrations, memories of the police crackdown during the Parliament march on July 20 remained fresh. Parth, a college student at the protest, welcomed the minister's resignation but questioned the use of force by security personnel during the demonstrations.

"We welcome the resignation, but the action by the police injured many and should be questioned," he said, adding that the movement had disproved stereotypes that "Gen-Z is lazy."

The month-long agitation,

which began on June 20, had evolved into much more than a conventional political protest. Alongside fiery speeches and slogans, students used music, poetry and dance to express their anger over alleged examination irregularities and repeated paper leaks, turning Jantar Mantar into a vibrant space of artistic resistance.

The movement gathered momentum after activist Sonam Wangchuk was removed from his hunger strike by police on July 18, culminating in a massive march to Parliament on July 20 that witnessed lathicharge and the use of tear gas. Saturday's resignation and subsequent agreement between the government and the CJP marked the end of one of the capital's longest-running student-led protests in recent years.

By evening, volunteers had started cleaning the area, and the crowds had thinned. Additionally, all Delhi metro stations were operational by Saturday evening.

After Pradhan's exit, Dipke thanks CJi Surya Kant

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

It ended where, in many ways, it had begun. Moments after Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan resigned on Saturday, Abhijeet Dipke, founder of the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), thanked Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant.

It was Surya Kant's "cockroach" remark during a Supreme Court hearing that had inadvertently given the movement its defining symbol. A word intended to ridicule protesting students was instead embraced by them, becoming an identity around which a nationwide campaign would eventually take shape.

Cockroach emojis flooded social media, memes appeared overnight, artists sketched caricatures, and satirical posters circulated on campuses. Dipke transformed the insult into the Cockroach Janta Party, which began as a satirical social media page before emerging as the face of the student movement.

Even when one of its social media accounts was taken down, it returned with another account titled "Cockroach is Back", carrying the tagline, "Cockroaches never die." Unlike many



CJP Founder Abhijeet Dipke celebrates at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi

student agitations of the past, this one first gathered momentum online before spilling onto the streets.

The "cockroach" quickly evolved into one of the country's largest digital communities. CJP today has around 26.3 million followers on Instagram, against about 14.8 million for the Congress and 9.5 million for the BJP.

Reels, memes, livestreams and constant updates from the protest site carried the movement far beyond those directly involved in organising it. As its popularity grew, several of its social media handles faced restrictions and takedowns, triggering legal challenges and debates.

The first indication that the online support could translate into public mobili-

sation came on June 6, when students gathered at Jantar Mantar. Similar demonstrations soon followed in several cities as campus groups and local volunteers organised solidarity protests, discussions and public meetings.

The movement entered a new phase on June 20. Armed with permission for a daylong demonstration, students from across Delhi and other states flocked to Jantar Mantar.

When the protest ended, they refused to disperse despite repeated police announcements declaring the gathering illegal. What was meant to be a one-day protest gradually turned into a round-the-clock sit-in that has continued since.

As days passed, student outfits, particularly Left

groups such as AISA, AISF, SFI and KYS, joined the sit-in. Food, drinking water and medical assistance were supplied on a war footing. Many came just to spend a day, a night or even a few hours at Jantar Mantar before returning home.

Another turning point came on June 28 when Sonam Wangchuk joined the agitation and began a hunger strike along with six student activists. His arrival widened the movement's appeal beyond campuses.

Parents, teachers, academics, retired civil servants, lawyers, artists and public figures began visiting Jantar Mantar. Daily medical bulletins on Wangchuk and the student hunger strikers became closely followed updates, keeping the agitation in public focus even on days without major demonstrations.

Wangchuk expanded the movement's appeal, and the government's response could hardly contain it.

Visuals of Wangchuk being removed from the protest site, his subsequent hospitalisation and repeated police action against demonstrators spread rapidly across social media. The images drew criticism from opposition parties, civil society groups and public figures and brought fresh supporters

to the protest site. The July 20 march towards Parliament became another defining moment. As thousands of students marched despite heavy barricading, forces dispersed the crowd using baton charges and tear gas. Tasers and pellet guns made a show. Protesters refused to leave the site even after the crackdown. Images and videos of the police excesses circulated widely online.

In the days that followed, protests sprouted in Mumbai, Indore, Nagpur, Kolkata and many other cities. Members of the Indian diaspora held demonstrations abroad.

The protest developed a language distinctly its own. Students answered criticism with memes, satire and parody. Some asked for selfies with police, others gave them flowers.

Mahatma Gandhi's Dandi March, Dr BR Ambedkar, Bhagat Singh and the Constitution were heroised. The national anthem was sung before police barricades, poetry was recited, and Bollywood songs were danced to.

Many of those coming to Jantar Mantar had never interacted with Dipke or CJP before. They came after watching videos online, following Wangchuk's health updates, and witnessing the police action.

Tear gas fired, officers injured as violence erupts minutes before Pradhan's resignation

KHUSHI MEHROTRA
■ New Delhi

Shortly before the announcement of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation on Saturday, violence was reported near the CJP protest site at Sansad Marg. According to police, some protesters threw stones and water bottles at police personnel and members of the media. Security forces responded by firing tear gas shells and dispersing the crowd.

The incident began around 2 pm when a group of protesters reportedly became aggressive. Police sources stated that stones and water bottles were thrown at security personnel and journalists present at the site. A cameraperson from ABP News was reportedly injured during the incident.

Speaking to The Pioneer at Jantar Mantar, a Delhi Police personnel, requesting anonymity, said, "We had to control the crowd as they were throwing stones and filled water bottles at police and media. No lathicharge was done; we only used tear gas."

Police sources said that after the stone-pelting, security personnel used a mild lathicharge to prevent



An injured police official being taken following stone-pelting at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi

further escalation and disperse the crowd. Special Commissioner of Police Anil Shukla of the Special Cell was among those injured while supervising crowd management at the protest site, according to police sources.

Two other police officers were also injured and taken to hospital. Their condition is reported to be stable. Police said the violence began when senior officers moved closer to regulate the crowd and maintain security. At that point, a section of protesters reportedly began pelting stones. The injured officers were taken for medical treatment.

The stone-pelting led to brief disorder in the area before police pushed protesters back and restored order. Additional reinforcements were deployed at key loca-

tions, and senior officers continued to monitor the situation. The Delhi Police maintained that its priority remained ensuring peaceful demonstrations and maintaining law and order at Jantar Mantar.

According to police, 15 FIRs have so far been registered across police stations in New Delhi district in connection with incidents linked to the ongoing protests.

More than 200 police personnel have sustained injuries since the agitation began, while over 65 protesters have also been injured. Police said legal action is being taken against those found responsible for the violence. Security remains heightened in and around Jantar Mantar and the Sansad Marg area to prevent further incidents.

All 18 Delhi Metro stations reopen after CJP ends protest

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

In a big relief to office goers, students and others, all 18 Delhi Metro stations in central Delhi, which had remained shut due to security reasons, reopened on Saturday after the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) withdrew its protest, ending four days of restrictions. In a post on X, the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) announced that all metro stations were now open and normal entry and exit had resumed.

The stations reopened after Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan resigned, after which the CJP announced the withdrawal of its protest and demonstrators began dispersing from the Jantar Mantar area.

The stations that had remained closed over the past



four days were Lok Kalyan Marg, Rajiv Chowk, Patel Chowk, Ramakrishna Ashram Marg, Barakhamba Road, Supreme Court, Seva Teerth, Janpath, Mandi House, Central Secretariat, ITO, Delhi Gate, Indraprastha, Khan Market, Jor Bagh, Shivaji Stadium, Jhandewalan and New Delhi. The stations had been shut due to security arrangements in central Delhi amid the CJP protest, which drew large gatherings near Jantar Mantar over the past few days.

The CJP has led a sit-in at Jantar Mantar since June 20, demanding accountability over the NEET-UG 2026 paper leak and irregularities in the CBSE's on-screen marking process, besides seeking wider reforms in the conduct of public examinations.

Facing spiralling protests for his ouster over the NEET issue, Pradhan resigned on Saturday, saying it is not a matter of "individual prestige" for him and he wanted to prevent anti-national forces

from exploiting the situation at Jantar Mantar and across the country. Soon after Pradhan's resignation, the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) on Saturday called off its 36-day protest at Jantar Mantar over the NEET issue with immediate effect, saying the Government has accepted all its demands. The two sides will again meet after four weeks to work on broader reforms in the examination system, the CJP said.

Announcing the withdrawal of the protests with immediate effect from all sites across India, CJP spokesperson Saurav Das said, besides Pradhan's resignation, the government has also agreed to provide "honourable" compensation to the families of those who committed suicide and withdrawal of FIRs in Delhi and other BJP-ruled states.

Social media amplifying false claims on CJP protest: Police

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Delhi Police on Saturday alleged that misinformation and fake content linked to the ongoing CJP protest at Jantar Mantar were being amplified through social media, including by accounts operated from Pakistan, and said more than 400 such handles had been identified and blocked.

Addressing a press conference, Central Delhi Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Rohit Rajbir Singh said the student-led protest had seen extensive use of social media, particularly Instagram, to disseminate information, but claimed several posts circulating online were "false,



misleading and deceptive."

"For the past several days, a protest has been taking place at Jantar Mantar under the banner of the Cockroach Janta Party. A significant feature of this protest is the extensive use of social media, particularly Instagram. It has become a significant source of news and updates for today's young generation," Singh said.

He said the spread of misinformation on social media could adversely affect law

and order, urging people to verify information before sharing it.

"We all know that information on social media can quickly go viral. However, not every post, video and photo is necessarily accurate. Therefore, it's essential to fact-check any information before trusting it or sharing it further. The Delhi Police is also constantly monitoring social media," the DCP said.

Police officials said they had been using their own social media platforms to counter fake news, AI-generated videos, deepfakes and edited clips related to the protest to provide fact-based information and prevent the spread of misleading narratives.

Pradhan made significant contributions to education system: CM



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Saturday said that Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan had made significant contributions and had brought meaningful reforms to the education system.

Earlier in the day, Pradhan resigned from his post following the Cockroach Janta Party-led student protests across the country for his ouster over the NEET paper leak controversy.

"Dharmendra Pradhan Ji has fulfilled every responsibility in his public life with dedication, honesty, and complete devotion. As Union Education Minister, he made a significant contribution to the effective implementation of the National Education Policy 2020," Rekha Gupta said in a post on X.

She said education in Indian languages received a boost under Pradhan's tenure, while technical and higher education expanded, creating new opportunities for students.

RAF chief directs personnel to follow crowd-control protocols after Jantar Mantar protest

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The chief of the Rapid Action Force (RAF) has instructed personnel and field commanders to adhere to graded crowd-control measures following allegations of excessive force during the student protests at Jantar Mantar.

The use of pellet guns and other specialised weapons has been prohibited during the force's deployment in the national capital.

Four individuals, including a reporter from Outlook Magazine, reportedly sustained pellet gun injuries.

One 19-year-old victim may lose his eyesight.

According to officials, RAF Inspector General Seema Dhundhia chaired a virtual review meeting on Wednesday after videos circulated on social media allegedly showing RAF personnel knocking down protesters and assaulting individuals who had disengaged from the protest. Dhundhia told officers that the level of force used during the July 20 "Sansad Chalo" march did not conform to the RAF's prescribed standards or its training protocols. She instructed all personnel to strictly adhere



to the force's "Use of Force" guidelines, emphasising that crowd-control measures must be proportionate to the situation and adopted in a graded manner.

An officer present at the meeting said the IG directed unit commanders to instruct field personnel that measures such as lathi-charge, tear gas, and other approved

crowd-control techniques should be used progressively and only when justified by the situation. The review followed widespread criticism of the security forces' handling of Monday's protest, when allegations were made regarding the use of pellet guns against demonstrators and the employment of disproportionate force during crowd dispersal.

Reportedly showing RAF personnel using force against people separated from the main crowd, deliberately pushing individuals to the ground and striking those moving past police barri-

cades. "Such actions run contrary to the RAF's established work culture and image and cannot be justified under any circumstances," an official quoted the IG as saying during the meeting.

Dhundhia also instructed officers and personnel not to make statements to the media. Officials said the review identified shortcomings in communication. RAF sector headquarters reportedly did not receive complete information regarding the operational strength and deployment of each company during Monday's protest, when 14 RAF companies were

deployed in the capital.

The IG instructed that personnel recently transferred from conflict zones such as Jammu and Kashmir should not be assigned crowd-control duties in Delhi without adequate familiarisation and training.

Officials said Dhundhia observed that personnel from special operations areas work in different operational environments. Deployments in states such as Delhi, Bihar, Assam, and Maharashtra require a more balanced approach focused on crowd management and sensitive policing.

IN FOCUS



People from the Maharashtrian community participate in a Dindi Yatra dedicated to Lord Vitthal on the occasion of Ashadhi Ekadashi in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh

PTI

TN CM proposes Cauvery talks with Karnataka

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Chennai

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay has proposed bilateral talks with his Karnataka counterpart to seek an amicable solution to the long-standing Cauvery river water-sharing dispute, a move that has drawn criticism from farmers' organisations and political parties in the State.

As Vijay is scheduled to visit the neighbouring state on August 3 for talks with Karnataka Chief Minister D K Shivakumar, DMK president M K Stalin said the Chief Minister must not get entangled in the "conspiracy web of negotiations" with the Congress-led Government in Karnataka over Cauvery water issue. "This poisonous experiment must not be undertaken. Negotiation efforts will only serve to undermine the rights we have legally fought for over decades. It will lead to setbacks in the court," Stalin said on 'X' reacting to the development.

This was precisely why DMK firmly rejected such proposal in the past, he claimed. "We will convene



an all-party meeting, consult farmer associations and take the next step. I urge the CM to abandon the decision to go to Karnataka for the negotiations," Stalin said.

AIADMK chief Edappadi K Palaniswami demanded Vijay to convene an all-party meeting for a consensus on exercising TN's rights. Also, views of farmer representatives and legal experts should be

taken into account.

"Karnataka must act in accordance with Supreme Court's final verdict. Refusing to provide us our rightful share of Cauvery water is reprehensible," Palaniswami said in a statement here.

Former Chief Minister M G Ramachandran had held direct talks with Karnataka in the late 1970s and 1980s, drawing on his personal rapport and political goodwill to secure the immediate release of water outside the judicial process. His unannounced visits, breaking political convention, helped Tamil Nadu secure water, sources said. Vijay has written to Shivakumar seeking an appointment in Bengaluru, and the latter has agreed to the meeting.

Confirming the development, Tamil Nadu Agriculture Minister R Vinoth told reporters on Friday that Vijay would visit Bengaluru on August 3 for bilateral talks on the long-pending Cauvery dispute and the proposed Mekedatu dam project. "Karnataka has extended an official invitation to the Chief

Minister (Vijay) to visit the state," Vinoth told reporters in Kumbakonam. On the Mekedatu dam project, Vinoth reiterated Tamil Nadu's firm stand. "We have maintained this stand all along. We will never allow it to be constructed," he said. The invitation follows recent diplomatic overtures from Karnataka.

On June 18, Shivakumar had expressed his readiness to discuss the Mekedatu issue with Vijay.

This will be the first visit by a Tamil Nadu CM to Karnataka for bilateral talks on the Cauvery issue in several years.

The previous DMK government, despite being allied with the Congress, had maintained that bilateral talks with Karnataka would not yield results and that the issue should be resolved through legal means. Political observers view Vijay's initiative, undertaken after accommodating the Congress in his Cabinet, as an attempt to revive direct political engagement between the two states after nearly a decade. The bilateral talks are

expected to be closely watched in the changed political scenario following the formation of the TVK-led coalition government.

Sources said Vijay hopes to make progress on the Cauvery issue before the government's maiden Budget session begins on August 5.

Arguing that negotiations outside the statutory framework would bypass the legal mechanism established by the Supreme Court, the Tamil Nadu Cauvery Farmers Association, led by P R Pandian, urged Vijay to press the Centre to secure the release of 27.5 TMC ft of water from Karnataka, a demand earlier raised by DMK president M K Stalin. PMK leader Anbumani Ramadoss also opposed any talks with Karnataka on the Mekedatu dam project.

Tamil Nadu has been opposed to Karnataka's move to construct the balancing reservoir at Mekedatu in that State, claiming it would affect its interests. The project proposes to meet the drinking water requirements of Bengaluru, besides hydel power generation.

MP to set up fast-track courts for paper leaks

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

■ Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh Government will establish four fast-track courts to ensure the speedy disposal of cases related to paper leaks, examination irregularities and other education-related matters, with a target of resolving them within three months, Chief Minister Mohan Yadav announced on Saturday.

Addressing the media at the State Assembly, Yadav said the Government stands firmly with students and remains committed to safeguarding their interests. The proposed fast-track courts will be set up in Bhopal, Indore, Jabalpur and Gwalior,



Madhya Pradesh Assembly Speaker Narendra Singh Tomar, Chief Minister Mohan Yadav paying floral tribute to the portrait of former chief minister Govind Narayan Singh on his birth anniversary in Bhopal

PTI

making Madhya Pradesh the first state to create a dedicated judicial mechanism for the swift resolution of examination-related cases.

The chief minister said the move reflects the state's

commitment to delivering timely justice to students and restoring confidence in the examination system.

He added that the Government would also develop Standard Operating

Procedures (SOPs) to ensure future NEET examinations are conducted in a more transparent, secure and efficient manner. Referring to the NEET paper leak controversy, Yadav said the Centre acted promptly by constituting a Special Investigation Team (SIT), registering cases and arresting the accused across the country, followed by the conduct of a fresh examination. He said the Government's priority is to protect the interests of students and maintain the integrity of competitive examinations. Highlighting the state's education reforms, Yadav said Madhya Pradesh was the first state to implement the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

SARANSH BHATT ■ New Delhi

The internet exploded with memes after Dharmendra Pradhan resigned as union education minister. Social media users flooded X, Instagram and Facebook with jokes, reactions, and viral posts, with many celebrating the resignation as a step towards accountability and victory of the CJP movement.

The moment quickly became one of the biggest online talking points across the country. On the other hand, netizens also came in support of the minister, questioning the credibility of the protests.

As one user wrote, "Cockroaches won..."



CJP supporters during a protest over examination irregularities at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi

PTI

Democracy won! *Jai Hind*", and several others wrote similar posts expressing their happiness. Calling it a defeat of the Government, as a user posted, In the face of the youth's struggle, the dictator-

ship had to bow down." Netizens were now calling for the resignation of Nitin Gadkari, following the ethanol controversy, as a user posted, "Nitin Gadkari, we are coming for your res-

ignation next." Users on social media platforms also criticised Pradhan's resignation, as one user wrote, "This is unfortunate, Dharmendra Pradhan ji. You shouldn't have resigned under pressure from some cockroaches..." Netizens also applauded his tenure as education minister, particularly his contributions to changes in the country's education system. Later, the Cockroach Janta Party met with the Centre for another round of talks and announced that all their demands have been accepted by the Government and urged protestors to go back home as they withdraw the agitation in goodwill.

Pradhan resigns as education minister

Pradhan said he is disturbed to see the series of events that have unfolded in the last 10 days and sent his resignation to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "I took responsibility of NEET paper leak from day one," he said.

He also said that anti national forces should not be allowed to take advantage of situation at Jantar Mantar and across country. His resignation shows that he has resigned taking moral responsibility on his own and was not sacked. It also suggests that the Government was keen on giving him a dignified exit.

"I have been dedicated to students, teachers, and education reform for more than four decades. I have always believed that a strong, inclusive, and visionary education system is the very foundation of a strong nation. I deeply respect the aspirations, emotions, and just expectations of the country's youth. Realising the dreams of India's young generation has been a moral commitment of all of us in political and social life. I express my gratitude to the Hon'ble Prime Minister for the opportunity he gave me to serve the nation under his visionary leadership," Pradhan said.

Pradhan said that the Government took immediate cognisance when irregularities in the NEET-UG examination came to light. "However, irregularities came to light in the NEET-UG examination held on 3 May 2026. The Government of India took immediate cognisance of this, handed over the investigation to the CBI, cancelled the examination, and announced a new date for the re-examination. Alongside this, it was decided that from next year the examination would be conducted in CBT (Computer-Based Test) mode," he added. In his letter, Pradhan also accused "certain individuals" of misleading students.

"However, during this time too, certain individuals occupying positions of responsibility tried to mislead students and create obstruction, which caused me deep anguish. I have always been an unwavering believer in the strength of our democracy, and I have always held deep respect for the aspirations, dreams, and expectations of the youth. They are not only India's future, but also the bearers, builders, and architects of a new and developed India," he added.

India's sacred Buddhist jewel Sarnath joins...

After that, the site was destroyed and forgotten until it was rediscovered. Prime Minister Narendra Modi called the inscription "a proud moment for every Indian." He highlighted Sarnath's link to Lord Buddha, whose "timeless message of wisdom, compassion and harmony inspires the world." The Prime Minister said this recognition honours India's civilisational and spiritual heritage and is likely to inspire more people to connect with the Buddha's teachings.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath also hailed the inscription of Sarnath in Uttar Pradesh on the UNESCO World Heritage List, and termed it a shining reflection of the State's glorious spiritual and cultural legacy.

In a post on X, Yogi Adityanath said, "Sarnath's inscription on the @UNESCO World Heritage List is a proud moment for every Indian and a shining reflection of Uttar Pradesh's glorious spiritual and cultural legacy. Uttar Pradesh wel-

comes the world to experience this eternal heritage."

Union Minister for Culture and Tourism, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath also acknowledged the milestone. With this addition, three of the four principal Buddhist pilgrimage sites, Lumbini in Nepal, the Mahabodhi Temple at Bodhi Gaya, and Sarnath, are now included on the World Heritage List. Nominated under criteria (iii) and (vi), Sarnath is recognised for its outstanding universal value as a testament to the Buddha's life and teachings, as demonstrated by centuries of religious construction and devotion.

India is now sixth in the world and second in the Asia-Pacific region with 45 World Heritage sites (37 cultural, 7 natural, and 1 mixed). The Archaeological Survey of India, which has worked on Sarnath for over 150 years, is ready to support sustainable tourism and protect the site's authenticity.

This inscription is both an honour and an invitation. Pilgrims and travellers from countries like Japan, Thailand, Sri Lanka, and Myanmar visit Sarnath, where the site continues to share its message of peace and mindfulness. Sarnath's lasting importance is seen in its historic monuments and ongoing spiritual meaning.

CJP ends protest after Govt accepts demands

With one demand already met, the CJP spokespersons said the Government has assured them that police cases filed against students would be withdrawn, no action would be taken against them in future, and maximum compensation as per rules and regulations would be given to the families of students who died by suicide over the NEET paper leak.

"As the Government accepted all our demands after 36 days of protests, we appeal to everyone to peacefully withdraw from protest sites and go home," Ranka said. Das said they have shared a draft of the demands with the Government and the Government will share a written guarantee by Tuesday. In a post on X, the CJP also added, "CJP's 5-point exam reform charter will be considered by the Government and the CJP will meet with the Government to discuss these reforms further."

Nadda said the CJP representatives came to the meeting with a written draft in which they presented certain points regarding the cases filed during the agitation. Nadda said a copy of the FIRs filed so far will be provided to the CJP and no action will be taken.

"The Government will give 'honourable compensation' within rules to the families of the students who committed suicide after the NEET test cancellation and ensure withdrawal of all FIRs registered against the protesters," he said

On the five-point charter presented by the CJP delegation, Nadda said the Government would "think deeply" about the suggestions for reforms in the education examination system. "This five-point charter, which you gave me, is related to reforms in education examinations. Regarding it, we have to say that we will think deeply about your charter for reforms in education examinations and, after talking to your delegation, we will try to do whatever we can. So these were their demands. I think the Government has sympathetically considered all the demands they had made and has also accepted them," he added. Soon after the CJP called off their agita-

tion, the Internet was restored in the area and entry gates for Rajiv Chowk, Mandi House and Central Secretariat metro stations were also reopened.

Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi in a press briefing congratulated the students for the victory saying, "Dharmendra Pradhan had to go, and it is good he went. But now, concrete steps will have to be taken by the government to change education system." He also added that the RSS has captured Indian education system and thus "If CJP is at fault, then RSS is at fault equally." The CJP has led a sit-in at Jantar Mantar since June 20, demanding accountability over the NEET-UG 2026 paper leak and irregularities in the CBSE's on-screen marking process, besides seeking wider reforms in the conduct of public examinations.

The protests gained momentum after police on July 18 forcibly shifted activist Sonam Wangchuk, who was on a hunger strike at Jantar Mantar since June 28, to Safdarjung Hospital.

BJP backs Pradhan, hails his legacy

"This resignation is a testimony of the fact that for Prime Minister Narendra Modi and our Government, safeguarding the future of our students and youth is of paramount importance," the Defence Minister said in a social media post.

Several other Union ministers, including Jitendra Singh, Piyush Goyal, Virendra Kumar, Giriraj Singh and G Kishan Reddy, also lauded Pradhan's contributions, saying his tenure reflected a strong commitment to strengthening the education ecosystem.

While Singh said Pradhan's tenure as the education minister reflected a strong commitment to strengthening the education ecosystem, guided by "conviction, energy and a clear sense of purpose", Goyal said Pradhan has consistently demonstrated commitment, discipline and a "deep connect" with the people, especially with the aspirations of India's youth, from his early association with student movements to his distinguished roles in public life and governance.

BJP national general secretary Vinod Tawde said a strong nation is defined by its education system and Pradhan has always accorded the utmost importance to this idea throughout his public life. Tawde said Pradhan's journey in public life, which began with student movements, reached a significant milestone when he assumed the role of the country's education minister. Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis also praised Dharmendra Pradhan for stepping down from his post, saying the BJP leader placed national interest above personal considerations. Chhattisgarh CM Vishnu Deo Sai also lauded Pradhan's contribution to governance and said his decision to resign reflected his unwavering commitment to moral values and principles in public life.

BJP MP Manoj Tiwari praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, terming Pradhan's exit as an unprecedented and empathetic gesture toward Gen Z and the nation's youth.

Parliament to take up anti-paper leak Bill

The Bill also proposes stricter penalties for service providers involved in conducting public examinations. The maximum fine has been

increased from ₹1 crore to ₹5 crore, while the period during which a defaulting service provider can be barred from conducting public examinations has been doubled from four years to eight years. The Bill proposes the minimum jail term for offences committed by individuals, as well as directors, senior management personnel or persons in charge of service providers conducting public examinations, has been increased to three years. In cases involving organised crime, the minimum imprisonment has been proposed at seven years.

If an investigation establishes that an offence was committed with the consent or connivance of any director, senior management personnel or person in charge of a service provider, such individuals would be liable to a minimum imprisonment of five years, extendable up to 10 years. The proposed maximum fine has also been increased from the existing Rs 1 crore to ₹5 crore.

The Bill empowers the Central Government to constitute a Special Task Force (STF) to investigate offences under the Act wherever necessary. It also introduces time-bound criminal proceedings. Investigations by the police, a Central Investigating Agency or the proposed STF must be completed within two months.

The Bill requires every state government and Union Territory Administration to designate Special Fast Track Courts for offences under the Act. These courts will conduct day-to-day hearings, and trials must be completed within three months from the filing of the chargesheet. Pending cases under the Act will also be transferred to these courts and disposed of within three months from the date of transfer. States and Union Territories will also be required to appoint Special Public Prosecutors to conduct prosecutions before these courts.

"For the purposes of providing a speedy trial on day-to-day basis, every State Government and Union territory Administration shall, in consultation with the Chief Justice of the concerned High Court, by notification, designate a Court of Session, to be a Special Fast Track Court to try offences under this Act.

(3) A Special Fast Track Court designated under sub-section (2) shall, while trying offences under this Act, also try other offences connected thereto with which the accused may be charged under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 or any other law for the time being in force, at the same trial," said the Bill.

The proposed legislation also creates a separate appellate mechanism. Appeals against judgments of the Special Fast Track Courts will lie before a Division Bench of the High Court comprising two judges. Such appeals are to be disposed of, as far as possible, within three months of admission. Appeals are ordinarily required to be filed within 30 days, although the High Court may condone delays of up to 90 days.

"Every appeal under sub-section (1) shall be heard by a bench of two Judges of the High Court and shall, as far as possible, be disposed of within a period of three months from the date of admission of the appeal," it said.

According to the Statement of Objects and Reasons, the amendments are aimed at strengthening the legal framework by enhancing punishments, making investigations and trials time-bound, establishing dedicated fast-track courts, and providing a specialised appellate mechanism to deal with offences relating to public examinations. On Friday, the Union Cabinet cleared the bill for its introduction in Parliament.

Pradhan's exit reflects Govt's failure: Oppn

Gandhi said he was confident that "the future of India will defeat the past". He also urged the prime minister to apologise to the students of the country for the "atrocities" committed on them during the agitation.

Addressing the media outside Sonia Gandhi's 10, Janpath residence soon after Pradhan resigned, Rahul said his party held Home Minister Amit Shah directly responsible for the violence against students, and for authorising the use of lethal weapons like pellet guns against them. He also accused the RSS of capturing India's education system and making it hollow like termites. "It has to go."

On the other hand, Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray and his cousin, MNS chief Raj Thackeray, said the rally organised by the two parties in central Mumbai on Sunday will take place as planned to congratulate the country's youth. The youth have brought the country out of the "atmosphere of fear", Uddhav Thackeray said at a joint press conference following Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation over the NEET paper leak issue.

While Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and Shiromani Akali Dal termed Pradhan's resignation as a victory for the youth, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) said Pradhan's resignation was "just the beginning" and claimed that more such resignations would follow, while the Congress termed it a "victory for crores of students across the country".

AAP leader and Punjab Finance Minister Harpal Singh Cheema said, "Resignation of Dharmendra Pradhan is a powerful indictment of youth power," and the BJP has bowed before it. Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) senior leader Bikram Singh Majithia said moral responsibility has finally been fixed and asserted that the time has come to hold the Bhagwant Mann Government accountable for the paper leaks that had allegedly taken place in the State.

Left leaders hailed it as a "historic victory" for the student-youth movement, while asserting that the struggle would continue until all the protesters' demands were met.

CPI(M) general secretary MA Baby congratulated students and youth across the country on what he described as a "major victory", saying Pradhan's resignation was "only the first step". CPI(ML) Liberation general secretary Dipankar Bhattacharya took a jibe at Pradhan, saying it was the "only sensible thing".

Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) MP Manoj Jha called for structural changes in the country's examination and educational apparatus and urged the government to replace what he termed a compromised system with a transparent one. "This is just the beginning. The first peak of the arrogance and stubbornness that defined Modi Ji's cabinet has finally fallen today. This victory belongs to the spirit of the youth, their freedom, and their relentless questions," Jha said.

Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal said the BJP has never known how to govern this country and they have been governing only through fear, force and prosecutions. He slammed the BJP ministers who praised Pradhan after his resignation and said all these ministers have no relevance as their only interest is in winning elections.

No compromise on Gurugram’s cleanliness, beautification: Nayab Saini

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Saturday said that cleanliness, beautification and planned urban development of Gurugram are among the State Government's highest priorities.

Chairing the meeting of the District Public Relations and Grievances Redressal Committee, he directed officers that there would be no compromise with the city's cleanliness and aesthetics. He directed officers of all construction agencies and concerned departments to ensure that Construction and Demolition (C&D) waste is disposed of only at designated sites and in accordance with scientific norms.

Haryana Industries and Commerce Minister, Rao Narbir Singh, Pataudi MLA,

Bimla Chaudhary, Sohna MLA, Tejpal Tanwar and Gurugram MLA, Mukesh Sharma. A total of 15 grievances were taken up during the meeting, of which 13 were resolved on the spot, while directions were issued to keep two cases pending until the next meeting. The Chief Minister asked the concerned officers to submit status reports on the pending cases in the next meeting.

The Chief Minister laid special emphasis on the prompt and effective resolution of complaints received through the CM Window. He said that he personally reviews complaints lodged on the portal regularly and directed all officers to deal with every complaint seriously, impartially and within the prescribed timeline. He warned that any negligence, indifference or mala fide

conduct on the part of officers would invite strict action.

The Chief Minister said that whenever a citizen approaches the Government with a grievance, it becomes the responsibility of the Government and the administration to ensure its resolution. He directed all officers to treat public interest as their highest priority and dispose of complaints on the CM Window with sensitivity so that citizens receive timely relief.

During the meeting, members of the Residents' Welfare Association (RWA) from Wazirpur Enclave in the Municipal Corporation Manesar area highlighted several civic issues before the Chief Minister. They informed him that although the colony had been regularised by the Government, it continued to face shortages of basic amenities such as



sewerage, street lighting, drinking water and paved internal roads. They also sought strengthening of the power infrastructure and enhancement of electricity load in view of the increasing population.

Taking serious note of the grievances, the Chief Minister directed officers of the concerned departments to

conduct a joint survey of the colony and ensure that the issues are resolved on priority. He said providing basic civic amenities to citizens is the Government's foremost responsibility. He made it clear that negligence in development works would not be tolerated and directed all departments to work in coordination and complete the required

works within the stipulated time frame so that residents receive relief at the earliest.

Members of an RWA from Sector-83 informed the Chief Minister that a builder was disconnecting electricity connections of residents who had not paid maintenance charges. They said such actions were causing unnecessary hardship to families.

Taking serious note of the matter, Nayab Singh Saini directed the concerned authorities to ensure that no builder resorts to disconnecting electricity supply to any residence for the recovery of maintenance charges. He warned that any builder found indulging in such arbitrary practices would face strict action in accordance with the law.

The Chief Minister said there could be no compromise with the basic rights of citizens and

that all such matters must be dealt with strictly as per legal provisions.

A complainant from Sector-102 informed the Chief Minister that a builder was dumping Construction and Demolition (C&D) waste in the open, leading to violations of environmental norms.

Taking serious cognisance of the complaint, the Chief Minister directed officers to initiate strict action, in accordance with the rules, against any individual or agency found illegally disposing of C&D waste. He further directed that the entire cost of removing illegally dumped C&D waste should be recovered from the concerned builder or organisation.

The Chief Minister directed officers to ensure that within one month no C&D waste is found dumped in the open anywhere in Gurugram. He

also directed that notices be issued to builders violating the rules, penalties imposed as per the law, and an effective mechanism put in place to prevent recurrence of such violations.

Gurugram Mayor, Raj Rani Malhotra, Principal Advisor, Urban Development Department, DS Dhesi, GMDC CEO PC Meena, Commissioner of Police, Shibas Kaviraj, Municipal Corporation Gurugram Commissioner, Pradeep Dahiya, Deputy Commissioner, Uttam Singh, HSPV Administrator, Vaishali Singh, Municipal Corporation Manesar Commissioner, Pradeep Singh, OSD to Chief Minister and Additional Director, Information, Public Relations and Languages Department, Vivek Kalia and other officers also remained present on this occasion.

Army to boost veteran healthcare in Nagaland

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Kohima

In a major boost to healthcare infrastructure for the ex-servicemen fraternity in Nagaland, the Station Commander of Zakhama Military Station attended the Bhumi Pujan ceremony on Friday for the construction of a permanent building for the Ex-Servicemen Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS) Polyclinic in Kohima.

The ceremony marks the commencement of a long-awaited infrastructure project aimed at enhancing the quality and accessibility of medical care for veterans and their dependants across Kohima and its adjoining districts. Following the ceremony, the Station Commander inspected the polyclinic's temporary premises at Sainik Bhawan. During the visit, he reviewed the existing medical infra-



structure and commended staff for ensuring a swift, seamless relocation that prevented any disruption to healthcare services for beneficiaries.

He also held interactions with Director of Raiya Sainik Board, the Officer-in-Charge of the polyclinic, and administrative personnel to discuss measures for veteran welfare in the region. A defence spokesperson stated that the visit reaffirmed the Indian Army's commitment to ensuring high-quality healthcare delivery for veterans and their families, adding that the upcoming permanent facility will substantially improve medical outreach in Nagaland.

Assam flood death toll rises to 62, 7 lakh affected

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Guwahati

The flood situation in Assam remained grim on Saturday even as the water level has started to recede in some parts, while 62 people have died of the deluge and over 7.05 lakh people are affected in nine districts, officials said.

According to the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) bulletin on Friday late night, 14 more people lost their lives in the deluge during the last 24 hours, taking the toll to 62 this year.

Charaideo district witnessed seven people, including two women, drowning in flood waters; followed by six, including one woman, in Sivasagar; and one each in Jorhat, it added.

According to the authority's daily flood report, more than 7,05,100 people have been affected in Charaideo, Dhemajai, Dibrugarh,



Golaghat, Hojai, Jorhat, Karbi Anglong, Nagaon and Sivasagar districts.

Sivasagar is the worst-hit district with nearly 3.5 lakh people affected, followed by Charaideo with almost 1.9 lakh people and Jorhat with more than 1.3 lakh people reeling under floodwaters.

The flood situation has improved marginally since Thursday, when over 7.21 lakh people were affected across 11 districts.

Assam Chief Minister

Himanta Biswa Sarma said his Government is yet to deliver relief materials to at least 80,000 flood-affected people even as the situation remained critical with many rivers continuing to rise following incessant rains.

"We are trying very hard to reach all the people with relief items, but still many are left out. In Nazira Assembly constituency, 30 per cent area or around 50,000 people are not reachable. In Sivasagar, 20 per

cent of the area or 30,000 people are inaccessible. The count may be 10,000 more or less (from the 80,000 affected yet to be reached)," he said.

BJP MLA Mayur Borgohain painted a grim and helpless picture of the administration's flood relief efforts in Sivasagar district's Nazira subdivision during a review meeting.

He said the state machinery has not been able to reach the worst-affected areas of his Nazira constituency and around 30 per cent of the affected people are yet to receive any relief.

At present, the Dikhou river at Sivasagar, Dhansiri at Nanglamuraghat, Dhansiri at Numaligarh and Kushiyaara at Sribhumi are flowing above the danger level.

Around 856 villages are under water and 56,606.78 hectares of crop areas have been damaged across Assam, the ASDMA said.

Key UKNA cadre arrested in Manipur joint operation

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Imphal/Churachandpur

In a major breakthrough for anti-insurgency operations in Manipur, a joint team of the Indian Army, Assam Rifles, and Manipur Police apprehended a high-ranking United Kuki National Army (UKNA) cadre from Molnom village in Churachandpur district on Thursday.

The apprehended individual, identified by police as 45-year-old S Palal Thadou, alias Lalboi Singson, was reportedly serving as the self-styled finance secretary of the outlawed outfit. Officials described him as a "high-value target" who was actively involved in firing incidents and managing large-scale extortion operations carried out by the UKNA across the region.

Acting on precise intelli-



gence regarding his presence in Molnom village, security forces cordoned off the area in a swift, coordinated operation and took him into custody. Incriminating materials, including extortion notes and a mobile phone, were recovered from his possession.

A defence spokesperson stated that the successful joint operation marks a significant setback to insurgent activities in the district and will contribute substantially toward restoring peace and stability in the region.



INDIAN ARMY

KARGIL VIJAY DIWAS

COMMEMORATING THE COURAGE, VALOUR AND SACRIFICE OF OUR BRAVEHEARTS



Lieutenant
Manoj Kumar Pandey PVC
1/11 GR (Posthumous)



Captain
Vikram Batra PVC
13 JAK RIF (Posthumous)



Rifleman
Sanjay Kumar PVC
13 JAK RIF



Grenadier
Yogendra Singh Yadav PVC
18 GRENADIERS



"ON KARGIL VIJAY DIWAS
I BOW TO EVERY VALIANT SOLDIER
WHO FOUGHT FOR INDIA TILL
THE VERY LAST BREATH.
THEIR HEROIC SACRIFICES INSPIRE US."

-Narendra Modi, Prime Minister





BATTLE OF TOLOLING

Indian Army operations to recapture Tololing involved nearly three weeks of intense fighting under extremely difficult terrain and weather conditions. The relentless assault culminated in the capture of Tololing by 0600 hours on 13 June 1999. The victory marked a pivotal turning point in Operation Vijay and paved the way for subsequent successes in the Drass Sub-Sector.



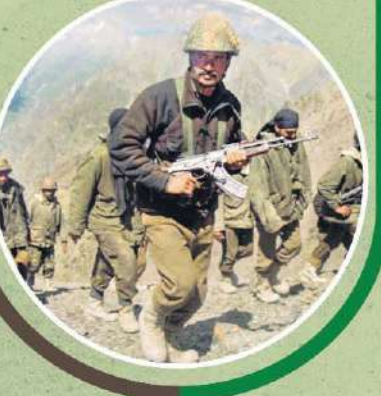
OPERATIONS IN KAKSAR

In the Kaksar Sub-Sector, Indian patrols moving to verify reports of intrusion encountered well-entrenched Pakistani troops in the winter-vacated areas. Subsequent patrols and search operations revealed the seriousness and extent of the intrusion. The sector witnessed intense fighting as the Indian Army launched sustained operations to evict the intruders.



OPERATIONS IN BATALIK

The recapture of Point 5203 was an important early success in the Batalik Sub-Sector and paved the way for subsequent operations against the Khalubar Ridgeline and other enemy-held positions. Sustained operations by the Indian Army progressively restored control over the occupied heights in the sub-sector.



BATTLE OF KHALUBAR

The Khalubar Ridgeline dominated the Batalik area and key enemy supply and escape routes. Indian artillery destroyed enemy sangars and disrupted their communication and logistics. The battle witnessed extraordinary courage and some of the most heroic acts of valour during Operation Vijay.



BATTLE OF TIGER HILL

Tiger Hill was a dominating feature overlooking the Dras area. Its recapture was one of the Indian Army's most important objectives during Operation Vijay. Following a daring multi-directional assault, the feature was captured on 04 July 1999.



BATTLE OF POINT 4875

Located in the Mushkoh Valley, the Point 4875 complex was a strategically important objective comprising several dominating features. Indian Army troops fought with exceptional courage to recapture the enemy-held positions during intense operations from 4 to 7 July 1999.

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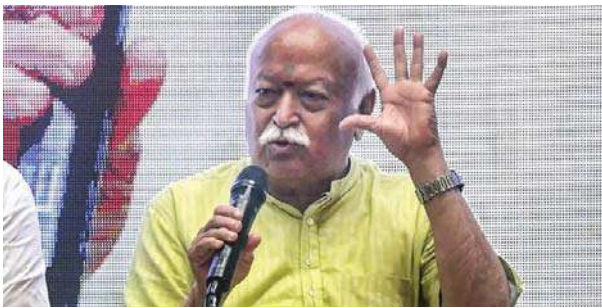
Children need support, not guilt when failing: Mohan Bhagwat

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat emphasised that young people need emotional support rather than criticism when they fail. He stated that values are acquired by observing parents and elders, not through formal instruction. "Today's terminology refers to IQ and EQ. Emotional intelligence is of primary importance. Intellectual ability alone is insufficient. There are numerous instances of highly intelligent individuals who do not succeed in life because they are unable to cope with setbacks," Bhagwat stated. He also encouraged parents to model appropriate

behaviour regarding social media use, noting that children tend to emulate what they see at home and learn from adults. Following his lecture on *Yuganukul Matrutva* (Contemporary Motherhood) at a Vishwamangalya Sabha event on Friday, Bhagwat stated that parents should focus on developing their children's character from an early age and gradually grant them increased autonomy as they mature. "Values cannot be imposed. They are absorbed naturally by observing the conduct of elders. They are not accepted merely because someone says, 'This is good, so do it.' They become part of one's character only through

observation and practice," he said. Bhagwat referenced traditional Indian parenting practices, stating, "Our elders used to say that until the age of five, children should be treated like little kings and queens; between the ages of five and sixteen, they should be disciplined appropriately; after sixteen, they should be treated like friends. This is because, by that stage, youngsters have developed the ability to understand and think independently." He asserted that emotional intelligence matters more than intellectual ability when facing setbacks. Bhagwat said children need reassurance, not guilt, when they fail. "If a child fails an exam, they



already know it. There is no need to keep repeating it. Instead, the child should feel supported. Parents should say, 'Don't worry. We are with you. Next time, you will succeed. Let us see what needs to be done.' That is what children need," he said. Bhagwat emphasised that young people should be

encouraged to persevere after failure. "Every child should be taught that even if you fail, you must get up and move forward. That confidence should come from the family. If families provide such support, children will naturally become strong and capable," he stated. Responding to questions

about protecting children from social media and maintaining emotional closeness, Bhagwat noted that mothers especially have a natural ability to foster emotional bonds. "The only thing required is to keep communication alive. Through constant dialogue, parents understand their children's minds." He added, "Children should feel so connected that they can speak to their parents without reservation." Bhagwat spoke about the growing influence of social media, saying its harmful effects are clear in society, but not everyone is affected. "However, it is also evident that some individuals remain unaffected by it. It is inaccurate to claim that everyone is

influenced. While many are, some consciously choose to limit their consumption of such content and reduce their use of social media," he said. He suggested that parents should seek to understand the reasons why some young people are unaffected by social media, while others are influenced by it. "The difference lies in a person's disposition. As I mentioned earlier, that disposition is formed during the first stages of life through the influence of elders at home and by observing and imitating them," Bhagwat said. He stated that children should not be exposed to harmful content and noted that adults are also frequent-

ly influenced by the media they consume. "Today, films often carry the label 'For Adults Only.' That does not mean the content is bad for children but good for adults... In reality, even adults are often influenced by it... Therefore, we must develop this ability in them to discern," he said. "If you do not want your children to watch such content or hear abusive language, you should not watch or listen to it either. After all, what do we lose by avoiding it? Children imitate what they see. If we adopt the right way of living, they will naturally follow, and it will gradually become part of their character," Bhagwat said.

ED raids multiple cities in online betting, fraud probe

PRAMOD KUMAR SINGH
■ New Delhi/Mumbai

The Enforcement Directorate's (ED) Mumbai office led major searches under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002, targeting a large group involved in online betting, gaming, and investment fraud. Raids took place in Mumbai, Pune, and Bengaluru. Investigators seized key documents, digital devices, and other evidence, and froze bank accounts connected to the suspects. The operations were carried out primarily under Section 17 of the PMLA. This provision empowers the Director or any officer not below the rank of Deputy Director, based on information in their possession and after recording reasons to believe in writing, to authorise searches of any building, place or other premises where records or proceeds of crime related to money-laundering are suspected to be kept. Officers may seize



such records or property, break open locks if necessary, and examine persons found in possession of relevant material. These powers allow investigators to recover digital devices and documents, helping them collect evidence of how money from illegal betting and fraud was

moved and laundered through the regular financial system. If they cannot physically seize something, such as a bank account, Section 17(IA) of the PMLA allows officers to freeze it so the money cannot be moved or used without permission. By freezing several bank accounts, investigators make

sure that suspected illegal money is secured for further checks and possible legal action. After seizing or freezing assets, officers must follow Section 17(2) by sending their reasons and evidence to the Adjudicating Authority in a sealed envelope. They also need to get permission to keep the assets within the deadlines set by Section 17(4) and related rules, such as Section 20. This case deals with money laundering under Section 3 of the PMLA. This section covers actions like hiding, owning, using, or making illegal money look legal. Online betting and investment fraud often earn money through crimes like cheating, which are listed in the Indian Penal Code and covered by the PMLA. Because of this, money-laundering laws apply, and Section 4 explains the penalties. These laws allow the ED to act quickly in different places without needing court approval for searches, but officers must record their

reasons to ensure fairness. The raids in several cities show that the group is organised, using digital platforms to collect money from investors by promising high returns and then moving the funds elsewhere. Freezing accounts at this stage is an important step to stop assets from being moved or hidden. Next, authorities may temporarily take control of properties under Section 5 of the PMLA if they believe the property comes from crime and could be hidden or transferred. This is part of the ED's ongoing effort against illegal online betting and investment fraud that take advantage of India's growing digital payment system. The ED has taken strong action to disrupt the syndicate's operations, protect potential victims, and move the investigation toward prosecution and the eventual confiscation of illegal assets. Further analysis of the recovered material will determine the next steps under the Act.

RS Chairman inaugurates Prarambh orientation for new members

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Rajya Sabha Chairman CP Radhakrishnan on Saturday inaugurated the two-day Orientation Programme 'Prarambh' for newly elected and nominated Members of the Upper House following the 2026 biennial elections. The event was attended by Deputy Chairman Harivansh, Members of Parliament, Secretary-General PC Mody and senior secretariat officials. Sixty-seven members entered the House for the first time. In his inaugural address, Radhakrishnan congratulated the new members and highlighted their presence on a weekend as a sign of commitment to parliamentary duties. He described the Rajya Sabha as the cornerstone of India's federal democracy, uniting diverse regional voices under the Constitution, the vision of "Nation First" (Rashtra



Pratham), and the goal of a Viksit Bharat by 2047. He stressed that every policy framed, question asked, law enacted or discussion held has the power to improve countless lives and transform generations. "Debates, discussions or even disruptions must always lead to a decision," he said, urging protection of Question Hour and Zero Hour and cautious use of Rule 267 only in rare cases with House consensus. Drawing from his own experience, he recalled how committee work led to the Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme for the textile

industry. He advised continuous learning of rules, procedures, budgets and ethics, and called on members to embrace AI and digital tools such as Vani Setu for real-time interpretation. Deputy Chairman Harivansh earlier welcomed the members, noting their entry during Amrit Kaal and their role in holding the Government accountable while building a developed India by 2047. Radhakrishnan wished the participants a fruitful programme and an enriching legislative journey in service of the nation.



12 horticultural crops get GI tags in Madhya Pradesh

UMESH NIGAM ■ Bhopal

In a landmark achievement that positions Madhya Pradesh at the vanguard of agricultural intellectual property protection in India, twelve of the State's horticultural crops have received Geographical Indication tags in a single instance—the first time any State in the country has secured GI recognition for such a substantial cluster of horticultural produce simultaneously. The development carries far-reaching implications for tens of thousands of farmers whose livelihoods are anchored to these regionally distinctive crops, endowing their produce with legally enforceable provenance protection and opening the pathway to premium pricing in domestic and international markets. The GI tag is not a mere certification. It is a legal instrument that binds a product's identity irrevocably to its geographical origin—ensuring that only producers cultivating within the designated zone can market their produce under the protected nomenclature. For Madhya Pradesh's farming communities, this translates into a formidable competitive advantage: the right to charge a premium on the strength of certified origin, distinctive quality and the accumulated wisdom of generations of traditional cultivation practice. The twelve crops that have received this recognition span the remarkable agro-cli-

matic diversity of the state, from the fertile alluvial plains of the Narmada valley and the volcanic black soils of the Malwa plateau to the elevated tracts of the Vindhya range. Tomatoes, onions, garlic, coriander, fenugreek, ginger and allied horticultural produce—each carrying characteristics of flavour, aroma, colour and nutritional composition attributable to the specific soil chemistry, water quality and microclimate of their native growing zones—now carry the imprimatur of GI protection. The achievement aligns with the state government's ambitious target of expanding horticultural cultivation to 30 lakh hectares by 2030—a goal that the GI recognition is expected to meaningfully accelerate by enhancing market credibility, attracting agri-processing investment and strengthening the case for dedicated cold chain infrastructure in horticultural belts across the State. Agricultural experts have described the simultaneous tagging of twelve crops as a watershed moment, arguing that GI protection is among the most potent instruments available to insulate farmers from price volatility, combat cheap imitations and build enduring brand equity for regional produce in export markets. For Madhya Pradesh, a state steadily reimagining its agricultural identity, this is not merely a certification—it is a declaration of provenance, pride and economic intent.

Assam Police bust Pak-based Bhatti terror network, 3 held

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Assam Police has busted a terror module linked to the Pakistan-based Shahzad Bhatti Network (SBN) and arrested three alleged operatives in the northeastern state, officials said on Saturday. Addressing a press conference here after a cabinet meeting, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said this is the first time Pakistan-based suspected jihadi elements were caught in the State. "We have arrested three jihadis linked with Pakistan. So far, we have been arresting jihadis having links with Bangladesh. This is the first time we have nabbed jihadi elements having direct links with Pakistan," Chief Minister added. "Further investigation is in progress," he added. Speaking about the exercise, STF Senior Superintendent of Police Pranab Kumar Pegu said the operation was launched on the basis of

An Assam Police spokesperson said the Special Task Force (STF) conducted a coordinated operation on Friday with assistance from the district police of Dhubri, Chirang, and Barpeta. "During the operation, the STF apprehended one suspect each from Dhubri, Chirang and Barpeta districts," he added. The operation also resulted in the seizure of five mobile phones, seven SIM cards, Aadhaar cards, bank passbooks, debit cards and incriminating documents, the official said. "The Pakistan-based terrorist-criminal network is allegedly involved in recruitment, online radi-



credible intelligence regarding the activities of the Shahzad Bhatti network. "The Pakistan-based terrorist-criminal network is allegedly involved in recruitment, online radi-

calisation, reconnaissance, logistics, espionage, illegal procurement of arms, establishment of sleeper cells and facilitation of terrorist activities in different parts of the country," he Pranab Kumar Pegu.

Arunachal gets first State Veterinary Polyclinic in Itanagar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Itanagar

In a landmark step for animal healthcare in the state, Arunachal Pradesh on Wednesday inaugurated its first-ever State Veterinary Polyclinic at Itanagar. The facility was jointly inaugurated by Gabriel D Wangsu, Minister for Animal Husbandry, Veterinary & Dairy Development, and Manish Kumar Gupta, IAS, Chief Secretary to the Government of Arunachal Pradesh. Established as a modern, multidisciplinary centre, the State Veterinary Polyclinic has been designed to bridge a long-standing gap in specialised veterinary services for companion animals in the Itanagar Capital Region and adjoining districts. Speaking at the event, Minister Wangsu said the polyclinic reflects the Government's commitment to "strengthen veterinary infrastructure, promote responsible pet ownership, and ensure animal welfare is treated as an integral part of public health." He added that with rising pet ownership in urban



areas, access to advanced diagnostics, surgery and emergency care was no longer a luxury but a necessity. Chief Secretary Manish Kumar Gupta described the inauguration as "a significant milestone" in the State's healthcare roadmap. "This facility will not only treat animals, but will also play a crucial role in disease surveillance and prevention at the human-animal interface," he said. The polyclinic will offer comprehensive services under one roof: preventive care, diagnostics, treatment, surgical procedures, and 24x7 emergency veteri-

nary services. It will also function as the nodal centre for the scientific management of stray dogs in the Capital region. Key components include Animal Birth Control (ABC) programs, mass anti-rabies vaccination drives, sterilisation camps, and systematic disease surveillance. Officials said the initiative aligns with the national "One Health" approach, which recognises the link between human health, animal health, and the environment. By controlling zoonotic diseases such as rabies at the source and ensuring humane management of the stray dog population,

the polyclinic is expected to contribute to safer communities directly. The Department of Animal Husbandry, Veterinary & Dairy Development stated that trained veterinary surgeons, para-vets, and support staff have been deployed, and the centre is equipped with modern operation theatres, diagnostic labs, and isolation wards. Animal welfare groups and pet owners in Itanagar welcomed the move, calling it "long overdue." With this facility, Arunachal joins a growing list of States investing in dedicated urban veterinary infrastructure.

Gujarat flood: 35 dead in 2 days; restoration speeds up

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Ahmedabad

Thirty-five rain-related deaths have been reported in Gujarat in the past two days, officials said on Saturday even as the downpour in the State eased, prompting authorities to speed up work on damage assessment surveys and post-flood cleanliness. Twenty-nine of these deaths have taken place in Valsad and Navsari, two of the worst affected districts, with over 7,000 persons rescued in the last few days, they added. As flood waters began receding, authorities started work on surveying damage to crops, houses and public properties as well as cleaning and spraying of pesticides to prevent spread of water-borne diseases, officials pointed out. "A total of 35 rain-related deaths have been reported so far in the State in the last two days as bodies washed away in flood waters were recovered and missing persons were accounted for after the rain stopped



and rescue operations concluded," Relief Commissioner Gaurang Makwana said. He said most of the deaths occurred due to drowning and being swept away by strong currents. More than 7,000 people were rescued, with the highest numbers coming from Navsari and Surat. Around 42,000 people were relocated, he said, adding that rescue operations were now drawing to a close. As many as 18 teams of NDRF and 32 teams of the State's SDRF were deployed in different affected districts for rescue and relief operations along with teams of Indian Army, Coast Guard and local swimmers.

PROSPECT



A delegation of the Assam Cricket Association, led by President Taranga Gogoi and Secretary Sanatan Das, called on CM Himanta Biswa Sarma at Lok Bhawan and contributed ₹50 lakh to the Chief Minister's relief fund

NTPC board approves raising up to ₹12,000 crores via NCD issue

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

State-run power giant NTPC's board has approved a proposal to raise up to ₹12,000 crore through issuance of non-convertible debentures (NCDs).

The Board of Directors of the company, at its meeting held on Friday, July 24, 2026, approved the issue of non-convertible debentures up to ₹12,000 crore, in one or more tranches through private placement in the domestic market, the company said in a regulatory filing on Friday evening.

The company said the issuance period will commence from the date of passing of the special resolution until completion of one year thereof or the date of the next Annual General Meeting in the financial year 2027-28, whichever is earlier.

The size, tenor, listing details (BSE and/or NSE), coupon/interest rate, security, if applicable, and other applicable details will be decided at the time of issue of each tranche/series, the filing said.



In another filing, giving operational and financial highlights in the April-June quarter this year, the company said its group installed capacity has increased to 90,904 MW as on June 30, 2026, from 82,646 MW as on June 30, 2025. NTPC Group capacity addition was 1796 MW in the first quarter of this fiscal.

The commercial power generation rose to 93.63 billion units (BU) in the quarter from 91.06 BU in the same period a year ago.

It maintained a plant load factor (PLF or capacity utilisation) of 76.71 per cent at coal-based plants in the quarter, up from 75.16 per cent a year ago.

The all-India PLF was 70.32 per cent at coal-based plants in the first quarter.

The average tariff was ₹4.86 per unit in the quarter compared to ₹4.87 per unit a year ago.

From Tiger Hill to Operation Sindoor: What Kargil built



Every year on the twenty-sixth of July, India pauses to remember the men who fought and died to reclaim the heights of Kargil. For those of us who have served in uniform, that anniversary carries a weight that does not diminish with time. It also carries a question that is seldom asked plainly: when India found itself fighting a war it had not anticipated, against an adversary dug into positions of commanding advantage, which country stood beside it without hesitation? The answer, now part of documented military history, is Israel.

The spring of 1999 exposed a series of critical gaps in India's military preparedness. Pakistani forces, occupying ridgelines in the Kargil-Dras sector at altitudes that made conventional ground assault costly in the extreme, had to be dislodged under strict orders not to cross the Line of Control. The Indian Air Force was tasked with providing precision air support to ground troops attempting to scale positions under fire. The problem was accuracy. Unguided munitions fired at targets on steep, narrow ridgelines from aircraft operating in confined airspace were not producing results. The Mirage 2000H fighter had the capability to deliver laser-guided ordnance, but the integration of the Litening laser designator pod was incomplete, and India, still under sanctions following the 1998 Pokhran nuclear tests, had limited avenues to resolve the gap quickly.

Israel was one such partner. Ignoring pressure from the United States and other Western governments to delay arms shipments, Israel supplied India with



Soldiers hoist national flag after recapturing Tiger Hill

FILE PHOTO

the Litening pods and the laser-guided munitions needed to equip its Mirages. It also supplied 155mm ammunition for the Bofors artillery guns that were the backbone of the ground campaign, and Searcher and Heron unmanned aerial vehicles that gave India its first sustained reconnaissance capability over enemy positions at high altitude. On June 24, 1999, a Mirage 2000H used a Litening pod to guide laser-directed munitions onto Pakistani Army command and control structures atop Tiger Hill. It was the first combat use of laser-guided bombs by the Indian Air Force. The conflict turned. Tiger Hill was taken.

That moment matters not simply as military history. It established the foundational character of the India-Israel defence relationship: reliable, operationally responsive, and unconditioned by political calculation. India's experience with several of its traditional suppliers during Kargil was instructive in precisely the opposite direction. The relationship that followed was shaped by that lesson.

In the years after Kargil, India built its inventory of Israeli systems deliberately. Heron and Searcher UAVs provided persistent surveillance along the Line of Control. Phalcon airborne early warning systems extended India's aerial situational awareness. Spike anti-

tank guided missiles reached ground forces. Spice-2000 guided bomb kits, a further Israeli precision munition, were employed in the February 2019 Balakot strike targeting Jaish-e-Mohammed training infrastructure in Pakistan. The relationship deepened through each of these acquisitions, but what it had not yet achieved was the formal transition from buyer-seller to co-developer.

Operation Sindoor in May 2025 marked a further threshold. Indian strikes on Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed infrastructure employed Israeli-made Harop loitering munitions and Spice-250 precision bomb kits. The Harop, a loitering munition that collapses the interval between reconnaissance and strike into a single system, demonstrated a doctrinal evolution in India's counter-terror and cross-border strike capability that the lessons of Kargil had made necessary. The hardware carried Indian doctrine and Israeli technology in the same airframe.

This is the strategic continuum that the February 2026 Jerusalem Summit has now addressed institutionally. When Prime Ministers Modi and Netanyahu formally elevated the bilateral relationship to a Special Strategic Partnership for Peace, Innovation and Prosperity, they did not create something new. They gave permanent structure to

something already proved in combat.

The Industrial R&D and Innovation Fund, established at the summit as a co-development mechanism, is the instrument through which the transition from buyer to co-producer will be governed. The stated objective of both governments is the joint development of unmanned systems and counter-drone platforms under the Make in India framework, with the ambition of third-market export. This is not a future aspiration. It is the logical next stage of a trajectory that began in 1999 and has run without interruption through every major test of the relationship since.

The counter-terrorism dimension of the partnership deserves equal emphasis. Prime Minister Modi formally thanked Prime Minister Netanyahu at the summit for Israel's support in India's fight against terrorism. That expression of thanks rests on a foundation built over decades, through intelligence sharing, Special Forces training cooperation, and a common understanding of the threat that neither country has ever been able to afford to reduce to diplomatic abstraction.

On this anniversary of Kargil Vijay Diwas, it is worth stating plainly what the historical record shows. When India needed a partner that would not calculate its risks or weigh its commitments against external pressure, Israel was one of them. Twenty-seven years later, the architecture of that partnership is stronger, more capable, and more institutionally embedded than at any previous point in its history. The men who reclaimed Tiger Hill deserve to be remembered alongside the relationship their war helped build.

The writer (Vir Chakra) is a 1971 war hero and the National President of the Rashtriya Sainik Sanstha

Galgotias University hosts Japanese delegation to explore collaborations



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Greater Noida

Galgotias University welcomed a high-level delegation of government officials, industry leaders and academic experts from Japan, along with representatives of the Governments of India and Uttar Pradesh, for discussions on academic and research collaboration. The talks prioritised three technologies central to the global sustainability agenda, Green Hydrogen, Electric Vehicles and Semiconductors, while keeping the door open to partnerships across a much wider range of disciplines.

The deliberations explored joint research programmes, technology exchange and academic partnerships, opening new pathways for the University's students and researchers to contribute to clean energy, sustainable mobility and next-generation manufacturing. The engagement reflects the growing role of universities as bridges between global policy leadership, advanced research and emerging talent.

Dr Dhruv Galgotia, CEO, Galgotias University, said, "Hosting such a high-level delegation on our campus is a proud moment for the University. It also demonstrates the growing importance of Greater Noida as a critical academic, industrial and transportation hub. We intend to convert these discussions into joint research

projects, exchange programmes and industry partnerships that our students and faculty can participate in directly."

India and Japan share a natural affinity rooted in centuries of civilisational and cultural exchange and reinforced today by common democratic values and complementary strengths. Japan brings deep expertise in precision manufacturing, clean energy technology and industrial innovation, while India offers scale, a vast pool of young engineering and research talent, and one of world's fastest-growing economies.

As the two nations deepen their Special Strategic and Global Partnership, academic and research collaborations are emerging as new avenues of engagement alongside trade and investment. Joint research programmes, faculty and student exchange, co-supervised doctoral work and university-industry partnerships are increasingly the channels through which the two countries turn shared intent into shared innovation, and Indian universities are positioning themselves at the centre of this exchange.

The visit also comes at a time of deepening cooperation between UP and Japan in clean energy and advanced manufacturing, positioning state as emerging hub for green hydrogen, EV components and semiconductor investment.

Assam CM attends State-level workshop on Agriculture Infrastructure Fund

TONY DAS
■ Guwahati

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma attended the State-level Workshop on the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF) at Jyoti Bishnu International Kala Mandir in Guwahati on Saturday. Farmers, Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs), agri-entrepreneurs and representatives of banks and financial institutions from across Assam participated in the workshop-cum-awareness programme.

The Agriculture Infrastructure Fund, launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on August 9, 2020 under the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, is a flagship Government of India scheme that provides interest-subsidised loans for post-harvest management and community farming assets. Under the scheme, eligible individuals and institutions can avail loans of up to ₹2 crore per project with a 3% annual interest subvention for up to seven years, along with collateral-free credit guarantee support.

Addressing the gathering, the Chief Minister said that the scheme was launched with the objective of promoting value addition to agricultural produce and creating modern agricultural infrastructure. He said the initiative encourages farmers not only to produce crops but also to process, store and market them through facilities such as warehouses, cold storages, custom hiring centres, drones, sensors, pumps, hydroponics, aeroponics, polyhouses, milling units and oil extraction units. He added that of the ₹1 lakh crore allocated nationally under the scheme, nearly ₹95,000 crore has already been utilised by farmers across the country.

The Chief Minister said that one of the biggest challenges faced by farmers in accessing institutional credit is the



requirement of collateral. He noted that the Credit Guarantee Fund created under the scheme addresses this concern by providing guarantee cover to banks, thereby enabling collateral-free lending to farmers. He also observed that Assam's Credit-Deposit Ratio has improved from 32% to 70%, though there remains scope to increase it further to around 90%.

Explaining the financial benefits of the scheme, Dr Sarma said that the Government provides a 3% interest subvention on loans up to ₹2 crore and the lending rate is capped at 9%. While beneficiaries are ordinarily required to contribute 10% of the project cost under the scheme, he announced that the Assam Government will bear 5% of the beneficiary contribution. In the case of Farmer Producer Organisations, the State Government will bear the entire 10 per cent beneficiary share. He further informed that beneficiaries can also simultaneously avail benefits under other Government schemes, including PM-KUSUM, PMFME, MIDH and RKVY.

Referring to Assam's allocation under the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund, the Chief Minister said that the State has been allotted ₹2,050 crore, against which loans worth ₹1,181 crore have already been sanctioned to 893 farmers, FPOs and agri-entrepreneurs. Of this, ₹736

crore has already been disbursed. He highlighted several successful beneficiaries who have secured loans of up to ₹13 crore under the scheme and noted that Nagaon district has recorded the highest number of beneficiaries at 131.

The Chief Minister stated that Assam can still avail nearly ₹900 crore from its existing allocation. He further informed that the Government of India has approved an additional ₹1 lakh crore under the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund nationwide and expressed confidence that Assam would strive to secure an allocation of ₹4,000 crore in the next phase, up from around ₹2,000 crore earlier. Highlighting Assam's vulnerability to floods, Dr Sarma stressed the need to diversify beyond traditional paddy cultivation and promote horticulture and high-value agricultural products. He pointed to the growing demand for rice storage facilities across the state and the significant potential for expanding mustard oil processing in the State.

The Chief Minister also highlighted opportunities for value addition through processing of ginger and pineapple from Karbi Anglong and Dholai, Assam lemon, Bhutjolokai, red rice, mushrooms from Kokrajhar and other local agricultural products. He said traditional organic tea processed using indigenous methods has a

distinct market demand and mentioned that tea processing is also an eligible activity under the scheme.

Sharing his recent experience from Japan, Dr Sarma noted the widespread use of eco-friendly bamboo toothbrushes in hotels and said that bamboo can be used to manufacture nearly 180 products, including toothpaste. He also referred to bamboo oil production at Numaligarh as an example of the State's emerging value-addition potential.

Expressing satisfaction that more than 800 entrepreneurs have already come forward under the scheme, the Chief Minister called upon the youth of Assam to take advantage of the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund and contribute towards building a self-reliant Assam. He also urged Ministers, MLAs, Agriculture Department and banks to intensify awareness campaigns so that more young entrepreneurs from every part of the State can benefit from the scheme.

Agriculture Minister Pijush Hazarika, P&RD Minister Atul Bora, Environment & Forest Minister Jayanta Mallabaruah, Minister for Tea Tribe & Adivasi Welfare Rameswar Teli, Minister for Social Justice & Empowerment Ashwini Ray Sarkar, Minister for Veterinary & Animal Husbandry Nilima Devi, Minister for Housing & Urban Affairs Kaushik Rai, MP Bijuli Kalita Medhi, MLAs Diganta Kalita, Rupak Sarma, Chakradhar Gogoi, Bijoy Gupta, Milan Das, Shashikanta Das, Prakash Das, Bikan Chandra Deka, Kishore Nath and Tapan Das, Joint Secretary, Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of India, Anbalagan P., Commissioner & Secretary, Agriculture Department, Government of Assam, Aruna Rajoria, senior officials and agri-entrepreneurs from across the State were present on the occasion.

NCRTC honours Kargil heroes with tribute event at Begampul Namo Bharat Station

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC) on Saturday paid tribute to the brave soldiers of the Indian Armed Forces, honouring their indomitable courage, valour and sacrifice, on the occasion of the 27th Kargil Vijay Diwas. A programme was organised on Saturday at Begampul Namo Bharat Station, in which school students and NCRTC officials participated.

The Chief Guest of the programme was Colonel Rajesh Tyagi (Retd.), who was part of the 4 Jat Regiment during the Kargil War. He has been conferred with numerous honors, including the Sena Medal, for his outstanding military contributions and distinguished service. He is currently



serving as the Director of Subharti Defence Academy.

Colonel Tyagi shared his experiences from the war with the audience and recounted inspiring stories of the bravery of Indian soldiers. He encouraged the students to strengthen their spirit of patriotism and pursue their dreams with confidence by becoming physically and mentally strong.

To familiarise young

people with the significance of Kargil Vijay Diwas, a drawing activity on the theme "Guarding the Borders" was also organised for the students. Through their artwork, the students paid tribute to the brave soldiers who continue to guard the country's borders in difficult terrains and adverse conditions without regard for their own lives. Some of the artworks created by the students will

also be displayed at Begampul Namo Bharat Station for commuters and the general public.

The programme also featured a musical performance by youth band Abhigav , making the occasion even more memorable. Through patriotic songs, the band paid tribute to the courage and valour of the Indian Armed Forces and filled the entire atmosphere with a spirit of patriotism.

Kargil Vijay Diwas is observed every year on 26 July to commemorate India's victory in the Kargil War of 1999. During the military campaign, known as Operation Vijay, the Indian Army regained control of strategic positions in the Kargil region that had been occupied by Pakistan-backed infiltrators near the Line of Control.

ONGC starts drilling first deepwater well in Mahanadi offshore basin under Samudra Manthan mission

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

State-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) on Saturday commenced drilling its first deepwater exploratory well in the Mahanadi offshore basin, marking the start of an ambitious campaign to tap India's deep and ultra-deepwater hydrocarbon resources. ONGC spudded exploratory well, MN-DW18-I-H-D under the government's Samudra Manthan mission, the firm said in a statement.

The well is being drilled around 23 nautical miles from the Konark discovery off the Odisha coast, building on ONGC's recent Utikal and Konark discoveries that have strengthened the hydrocarbon prospectivity of the Mahanadi Offshore Basin.

The drilling campaign forms part of the push to accelerate exploration of



India's offshore oil and gas reserves. In his Independence Day address on August 15, 2025, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had called for harnessing country's untapped offshore hydrocarbon potential.

In line with that vision, the government has opened nearly one million square kilometres of previously restricted offshore areas for exploration, paving the way for fresh acreage to be offered under upcoming rounds of the Open Acreage Licensing Policy (OALP).

India's eastern and western offshore basins, extending to

water depths of up to 3,000 metres, are estimated to hold more than 5,600 million metric tonnes of oil equivalent (MMTOE) of hydrocarbon resources. Recent exploration successes in the Cauvery, Mahanadi and Andaman basins have further strengthened the outlook for offshore exploration, according to the statement.

To support the deepwater exploration programme, ONGC in January this year launched its flagship Deepwater Exploration Mission Centre, DeepX, in Mumbai. The centre integrates

the company's geoscientific expertise, advanced interpretation capabilities, specialised training and global collaborations under its "One Company, One Data" philosophy. The company said the commencement of drilling marks the beginning of one of India's most challenging deepwater exploration campaigns, aimed at boosting domestic oil and gas production, reducing import dependence and strengthening the country's energy security.

"The commencement of drilling marks the beginning of one of India's most challenging deepwater exploration campaigns. Every prospect evaluated, well drilled and discovery made will contribute towards enhancing domestic production, reducing import dependence and strengthening India's energy security and self-reliance," statement said.

Russian, Ukrainian report 14 dead in latest attacks

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Kyiv

Ukrainian attacks on holiday camps in the partly Russian-occupied Zaporizhzhia region have killed 11 people, Moscow-installed officials said on Saturday, while authorities in Ukraine's northeastern Sumy region said a Russian drone strike killed three people. Four chil-

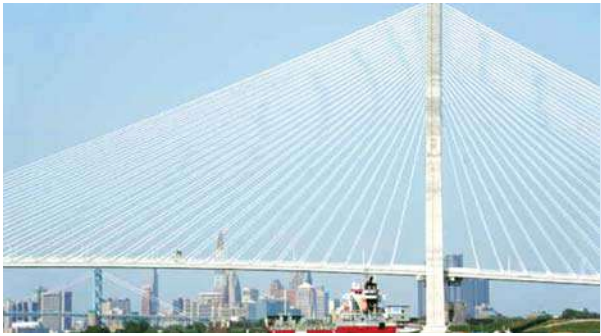
dren were among the 10 people killed in the attack on the resorts, Yevgeny Balitsky, the Kremlin-installed regional head, said on Saturday, adding that 14 people were wounded. Ukraine did not immediately comment on the attack. Sumy regional head Oleh Hryhorov said on Saturday three people were killed

when a large fire broke out after a Russian drone struck a "civilian facility," adding that the victims were drivers for private Ukrainian postal and courier service Nova Poshta. Russia's defence ministry said it attacked a "storage and launch site" for Ukrainian drones in the Sumy region. In Zaporizhzhia, in southeastern Ukraine, a



Russian drone attack late Friday hit a shopping centre, causing a fire that spread over a 500-square-meter area and injuring several people, regional head Ivan Fedorov said. A major Russian attack on Friday on a site hosting a defence industry event near Kyiv killed at least 10 people and wounded nearly 100 others.

Canada celebrates completion of new Detroit River bridge



ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Windsor

Canada on Friday celebrated the completion of a new bridge to the US over the Detroit River, a multibillion-dollar, multiyear project that will serve as a critical path for trade and casual travel between the countries. With the six-lane Gordie Howe International Bridge dominating the skyline behind them, officials lined up in Windsor, Ontario, to hail what one described as "one of the most significant infrastructure achievements in Canada's history." Traffic opens Monday." Some days are remembered because they mark the end of a journey. Others are remembered because they mark the beginning of something entirely new. Today is both," said Chuck Andary, interim

CEO of the Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority, which will operate the bridge. Missing from the event: US and Michigan representatives. Canada scratched a joint gathering after President Donald Trump this week suddenly announced 50 per cent tariffs on Canadian goods entering the US. A soloist sang the national anthem, "O Canada," but the US anthem was not performed. "It's regretful that we're at this point in time with our trade relationship. We're hopeful for better days ahead," Windsor Mayor Drew Dilkens told WXYZ-TV in Detroit a few days ahead of the ceremony. More than 70 per cent of Canada's exports go to the US, making America its largest trade partner, and Detroit is the No. 1 port for truck traffic on the US-Canada border, according to the US Department of Transportation.

SpaceX launches Starship on another test flight



MARCIA DUNNAP ■ Cape Canaveral

Towering 407 feet (124 metres), Starship soared from the company's base at the southern tip of Texas. NASA monitored the flight, a critical step toward using the Starship as a lunar lander for moon crews. Elon Musk's SpaceX replaced six of the 33 engines on the first-stage booster after they failed to ignite last week, resulting in a last-second launch abort. The previous Starship flight in May also experienced engine trouble, which prevented the booster from making a controlled return. It was the 13th flight of

the world's biggest and most powerful rocket, and the second this year of the new version dubbed V3. Like the previous demo that climbed as high as 125 miles (200 kilometres), neither the booster nor spacecraft was being saved, instead ditching into the sea. The booster was bound for the Gulf of Mexico and the stainless steel, retro-looking spacecraft for the Indian Ocean more than 10,000 miles (16,000 kilometres) from where the hourlong flight began. The Starlinks had a job to do before reentering over the Indian Ocean. Their solo-flying time was expected to be no more than 20 minutes. (AP)

ICC prosecutor ousted over misconduct

MOLLY QUELL ■ The Hague

Supporters of the International Criminal Court (ICC) were trying to chart a course forward on Saturday, a day after the global institution was plunged into uncharted territory following the ouster of its chief prosecutor over allegations of sexual misconduct. A lengthy and bruising process ended swiftly and decisively on Friday, when a large majority of the court's 125 member states voted to remove Karim Khan from his post. The British barrister was accused of sexual misconduct with a female aide, as outlined by the AP in a series of stories, allegations he has steadfastly denied. According to documents seen by the AP, Khan engaged in a sexual relationship with the woman and tried to prevent her from pursuing her allegations.



Khan's removal comes at a time when the court is already facing daunting challenges, including a campaign by the United States to "dismantle" the ICC, which was established to prosecute people responsible for humanity's worst crimes. Several countries where the ICC has open investigations met together on the sidelines of the event on Friday to discuss the ways out of any potential impasse created by Khan's removal, according to three senior diplomatic officials familiar with the discussions. One of the officials said a number of states began planning for how to move forward before the final votes were tallied. "Whether Khan is removed or not, we must bring everyone back together," the official said. They all spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to speak on the record. A special session at UN headquarters in New York was scheduled to take all of Friday. Instead, a morning motion that would have made it harder to oust Khan failed and diplomats quickly moved forward to vote on removal, several hours ahead of schedule, according to three diplomats familiar with the proceedings. (AP)

Southern China on alert for Typhoon Noul as Hong Kong cancels flights

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Hong Kong

Typhoon Noul is bringing winds and heavy rain to southern China and Hong Kong over the weekend, with the region on high alert and dozens of flights cancelled. Hong Kong's Observatory said Noul, which had intensified with maximum sustained winds of 140 kph near its centre, was moving on Saturday steadily across the northeastern part of the South China Sea and edging closer to the coast of eastern Guangdong. The city's observatory forecasts Noul could make landfall Sunday morning around the vicinity of the southern Chinese cities of Huizhou and Shanwei, bringing strong winds and squally showers to parts of the region. China's weather centre, meanwhile, expects Noul to make landfall between late Saturday and early Sunday. Hong Kong airport's website showed more than 150 flights had been cancelled for Saturday and Sunday. As Noul approaches Hong Kong, parts of a large scaffolding on a high-rise building col-



lapsed on Saturday afternoon, local police said, adding that initial reports indicated there were no injuries. China's National Meteorological Centre expects parts of southeastern Guangdong and the southern coast of Fujian will experience heavy rain over the weekend.

United Nations weighs in on Delhi demonstration

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ United Nations

The United Nations has said it is "aware" of the students' demonstrations in New Delhi and that it is important that people wishing to protest peacefully be allowed to do so without any fear of harassment, arrest or injury. Stephane Dujarric, Spokesman for Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, was replying to a question on Friday about the UN's position on the youth-led protests in India. "We're obviously very much aware of the protests that we've seen in New Delhi," said Dujarric. "It is important that people wishing to protest peacefully be allowed to do so



without the fear of harassment, the fear of arrest, or the fear of injury." He also said it is incumbent on security forces, "there as it is everywhere," to ensure that those rights are protected. India's Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan resigned on Saturday after

weeks of protests over exam paper leaks. The protests were spearheaded by the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) - a satirical collective that turned into a national movement in weeks. It started on June 20 in New Delhi's Jantar Mantar, with CJP taking up the issue of the NEET exam

Strike paralyses Ebola treatment centre in Congo

PROSPER HERI NGORORA/ CONSTANT SAME BAGALWA ■ Bunia

Health workers at an Ebola treatment centre in eastern Congo went on strike Saturday over payment issues, disrupting care for patients in the epicenter of the country's rapidly growing outbreak. The number of confirmed cases of Ebola in Congo has reached 2,973, including 1,309 deaths, according to government data released Friday in what authorities say is the fastest-growing outbreak on record. Activities at the Elikya Ebola Treatment Center in Bunia, Ituri province, were largely paralysed after doctors, nurses and security staff stopped work. About a hundred health workers protested outside the treatment centre on Saturday. They said the unpaid bonuses were undermining morale and disrupting patient care,



and called on Congolese authorities to settle the arrears so they could resume their work. In a statement issued Friday, staff said they had unanimously voted to strike from Saturday until "concrete solutions" were found to resolve "two months of unpaid performance

bonuses". Last week, health workers at Bunia General Hospital, the region's largest medical centre, went on strike over unpaid salaries. Some had told said they have not received any payment since they started work at the onset of the outbreak. The World Health Organisation says more than 100 healthcare workers have been infected since the beginning of the outbreak. The Central African nation has been battling the Ebola outbreak caused by the rare Bundibugyo virus since May 15. A total of 766 patients remain in isolation or in hospitals, while 540 have recovered so far, according to data from Congo's Ministry of Health. The eastern province of Ituri accounts for nearly 90% of confirmed cases. The outbreak continues to spread faster than health officials can track despite an expanding

response. A key challenge is that health authorities have yet to identify the outbreak's patient zero, while displacement from armed conflict and mining-related movements have made it difficult to trace thousands who have come in contact with infected individuals. The response is being hampered by a funding gap, attacks on health centres, an ongoing conflict in eastern Congo and mistrust among local communities. Response efforts have also been challenged by the lack of approved vaccines or treatments for the Bundibugyo virus, unlike the more common Zaire virus for which there is a vaccine and which was responsible for most of Congo's past 16 outbreaks of the disease. Enrollment in a highly anticipated study of two possible Ebola treatments recently started in Ituri. (AP)



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सार्वजनिक सूचना

निम्नलिखित भूमि यमुना एक्सप्रेसवे औद्योगिक विकास प्राधिकरण द्वारा ग्राम हसनपुर लड़की में लिंक एक्सप्रेसवे के अन्तर्गत आ रहे खसरो पर आपसी सहमति के आधार पर काश्तकारों से क्रय किया जाना प्रस्तावित है। क्रय हेतु काश्तकार, गाटा संख्या, क्षेत्रफल व काश्तकार का हिस्सा निम्नलिखित तालिका में अंकित है:-

(ग्राम – हसनपुर लड़की लिंक एक्सप्रेसवे के अन्तर्गत)

क्रम. सं.	काश्तकार का नाम	खाता संख्या	खसरा संख्या	गाटे का कुल क्षेत्रफल (हे० में)	तहसील की आख्यानुसार काश्तकार का भाग	तहसील की आख्यानुसार काश्तकार का हिस्सा (हे० में)	लिंक एक्सप्रेसवे के अन्तर्गत आने वाले गाटा का कुल हिस्सा (हे० में)	लिंक एक्सप्रेसवे में जी०आई०एस० के अनुसार काश्तकार का हिस्सा (हे० में)
1.	श्रीमती दयारानी पत्नी बसन्त कुमार निवासी सी-42, साई इन्क्लेव, चिपियाना बुजुर्ग	98	92	0.3990	में से	0.2530	0.4839	0.1021
2.	तेजप्रताप भाटी पुत्र भूपाल सिंह निवासी निलौनी शाहपुर	98 253	92 112	0.3990 0.6540	में से में से	0.0499 0.0818	0.4839 0.4946	0.0202 0.0207 0.0409
3.	सौरभ भाटी पुत्र भूपाल सिंह निवासी निलौनी शाहपुर	98 253	92 112	0.3990 0.6540	में से में से	0.0499 0.0818	0.4839 0.4946	0.0201 0.0207 0.0408
4.	ओमकार सिंह पुत्र जसवन्त निवासी प्रकाशनगर गोंडा उत्तरी पूर्वी दिल्ली	213	93	1.0200	में से	0.0283	0.8322	0.0283
5.	महेश कुमार पुत्र जसवन्त निवासी प्रकाशनगर गोंडा उत्तरी पूर्वी दिल्ली	213	93	1.0200	में से	0.0283	0.8322	0.0231
6.	मकेश कुमार पुत्र जसवन्त निवासी प्रकाशनगर गोंडा उत्तरी पूर्वी दिल्ली	213	93	1.0200	में से	0.0283	0.8322	0.0232
7.	श्रीमती सुखवती उर्फ सुखवीरी पत्नी लोहरे सिंह निवासी रौनीजा	213	93	1.0200	में से	0.0283	0.8322	0.1032
8.	श्री राजपाल सिंह पुत्र गंगासहाय निवासी कुटवाया तहसील जेवर जिला गौतमबुद्धनगर	139	95	0.6880	में से	0.0950	0.0353	0.0050
9.	कैलाश सोलंकी पुत्र राजकुमार सोलंकी निवासी ऊँचा गांव बल्लभगढ़ फरीदाबाद हरियाणा	217	104	0.8240	में से	0.0412	0.3354	0.0168
10.	चन्देश पुत्र पुत्र राजकुमार सोलंकी निवासी ऊँचा गांव बल्लभगढ़ फरीदाबाद हरियाणा	217	104	0.8240	में से	0.0412	0.3354	0.0168
11.	अजित कुमार पुत्र लखपत निवासी ग्राम हसनपुर लड़की	92	105	0.4060	में से	0.2030	0.3908	0.1954
12.	प्रदीप कुमार पुत्र लखपत निवासी ग्राम हसनपुर लड़की	92	105	0.4060	में से	0.2030	0.3908	0.1954
13.	अरविन्द पुत्र शिवचरण निवासी ग्राम हसनपुर लड़की	259	107	0.9210	में से	0.3070	0.0237	0.0079
14.	राकेश पुत्र शिवचरण निवासी ग्राम हसनपुर लड़की	259	107	0.9210	में से	0.3070	0.0237	0.0079
15.	हरीशचन्द्र पुत्र शिवचरण निवासी ग्राम हसनपुर लड़की	259	107	0.9210	में से	0.3070	0.0237	0.0079
16.	श्री उषा सिंह पत्नी शिवपाल सिंह सोलंकी निवासी ग्राम हसनपुर लड़की हाल निवासी बी-28 से० 52 नोएडा गौतमबुद्धनगर	253 125	112 267	0.6530 2.0990	में से में से	0.2177 0.8360	0.4946 0.0867	0.0549 0.0073 0.0622
17.	सीमा यादव पत्नी संजय कुमार निवासी 33 चिपियाना बुजुर्ग गौतमबुद्धनगर	253	112	0.6540	में से	0.1635	0.4946	0.0412
18.	अरुण कुमार पुत्र जगपाल सिंह निवासी ग्राम हसनपुर लड़की	06	269	0.2920	में से	0.0324	0.2812	0.0157
19.	श्रीमती शिमलेश सोलंकी पत्नी सतीश सोलंकी निवासी बसंतकुंज डी-5/510	06 155 138	269 272 391	0.2920 0.7820 2.2250	में से में से में से	0.0081 0.0218 0.0420	0.2812 0.4122 0.3757	0.0079 0.0114 0.0071 0.0264
20.	अजित कुमार पुत्र जगत सिंह निवासी ग्राम हसनपुर लड़की	51	343/2	1.2790	में से	0.0800	0.0776	0.0049
21.	नरेन्द्र कुमार पुत्र रनवीर सिंह निवासी ग्राम हसनपुर लड़की	51	343/2	1.2790	में से	0.1599	0.0776	0.0048
22.	मनोज कुमार पुत्र जगत सिंह निवासी ग्राम हसनपुर लड़की	51	343/2	1.2790	में से	0.0799	0.0776	0.0048
23.	महेश पुत्र पदम सिंह निवासी ग्राम हसनपुर लड़की	51	343/2	1.2790	में से	0.1066	0.0776	0.0065
24.	रविन्द्रपाल सिंह पुत्र रनवीर सिंह निवासी ग्राम हसनपुर लड़की	51	343/2	1.2790	में से	0.1599	0.0776	0.0048
25.	श्रीमती राजवती पत्नी जगत सिंह निवासी ग्राम हसनपुर लड़की	51	343/2	1.2790	में से	0.0799	0.0776	0.0048
26.	श्रीमती कमला पत्नी पदम सिंह निवासी ग्राम हसनपुर लड़की	51	343/2	1.2790	में से	0.1066	0.0776	0.0065
27.	सुनील पुत्र जगत सिंह निवासी ग्राम हसनपुर लड़की	51	343/2	1.2790	में से	0.0800	0.0776	0.0048
28.	सुरेश पुत्र पदम सिंह निवासी ग्राम हसनपुर लड़की	51	343/2	1.2790	में से	0.1066	0.0776	0.0065
29.	श्रीमती शशिबाला पत्नी बिरेंद्रपाल सिंह निवासी ग्राम हसनपुर लड़की	11	344	2.4680	में से	0.0633	1.0637	0.0272
30.	श्रीमती रेखा पत्नी देशराज सिंह निवासी मिर्जापुर तहसील सदर जनपद गौतमबुद्धनगर	11	344	2.4680	में से	0.1265	1.0637	0.0823

प्रस्तावित भूमि प्राधिकरण के नियोजित लिंक एक्सप्रेसवे के अन्तर्गत होने के कारण क्रय हेतु प्रस्तावित है।

- उक्त भूमि को क्रय करने हेतु तालिका में अंकित काश्तकारों द्वारा सहमति प्रदान की गयी है जिसके क्रम में प्राधिकरण द्वारा उक्त भूमि आपसी सहमति के आधार पर क्रय की जानी प्रस्तावित है।
- प्रस्तावित भूमि को प्राधिकरण की 84वीं बोर्ड बैठक की मद संख्या 03 के अनुसार रूपरे 4300.00/- प्रति वर्ग मी० की दर से सम्बन्धित भूस्वामी के पक्ष में भूगतान किया जाएगा।

डिप्टी कलेक्टर/विशेष कार्याधिकाारी

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FROM THE WORLD

CANADA

15 years jailed for AI killer

A contract killer, who is already serving a life term for the murder of a former suspect in the Air India (AI) Kanishka bombing, has been sentenced to an additional 15 years in prison by a Canadian court.

Tanner Fox, 25, was sentenced on Wednesday after pleading guilty to the manslaughter of 41-year-old Chad Colivas of Abbotsford in British Columbia, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation reported .Police said Colivas was found with gunshot wounds at his home on 2022, and later died of his injuries.

Fox was arrested in 2023 along with 30-year-old Laetitia Acera. Acera pleaded guilty to break and enter and was sentenced to 4 years in prison, followed by two years of probation, while Fox pleaded guilty to manslaughter with a firearm in April

CHINA

Five killed in loess collapse

Five people were killed and three others injured after a large amount of loess collapsed onto a village in north China's Shanxi province, burying a house, authorities said on Saturday.

Loess is a wind-deposited sediment composed mainly of silt, along with clay, sand and calcium carbonate. The incident occurred on Friday evening in Haoyi village in Dicun township of Hongtong County in Linfen city, located on the Loess Plateau. The house was buried after the loess collapsed, killing five people and injuring three others, county-level emergency response authorities said.Rescue teams comprising local police, firefighters and medical personnel pulled out all eight people trapped under the debris, the state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

Five of them were found without vital signs, while the three injured were hospitalised and are in stable condition, the report said. (PTI)

Houthis fire missiles at Saudi in response to strikes on Hodeida

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Cairo

Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels said they fired missiles and drones on Saudi Arabia in response to Saudi airstrikes on the strategic Red Sea city of Hodeida, in another escalation over vital shipping routes in the Middle East while the United States and Iran continue to vie for control of the Strait of Hormuz.

Brig Gen Yahya Saree, the Houthis' military spokesman, said in a prerecorded statement on Saturday that the attack targeted facilities of Aramco, the world's largest oil company, in the Red Sea cities of Yanbu and Jizan.

There was no immediate comment from Saudi Arabia. The Kingdom's civil defense said alerts sounded multiple times early on Saturday in Yanbu and Jizan. There were no reported strikes overnight in Iran, in an apparent break of nearly two weeks of consecutive nights of US attacks, though tension remains high following a recent escalation between the two countries over Hormuz.

The rising tension in the Red Sea has threatened to further choke global shipping, because the rebels have said they would close the Bab el-Mandeb Strait to Saudi-linked shipping.



That strait, at the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula, is a vital shipping chokepoint, connecting the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden. Around 12 per cent of the world's trade, including a quarter of global container traffic, passes through the narrow.

The Houthis targeted two Saudi oil tankers in the Red Sea this week. In response, Saudi Arabia struck the port city of Hodeida in Yemen, the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen said early Saturday. The strikes late Friday hit the city's port as well as the state-run telecommunications corporation, injuring two people, said Anees al-Asbahi, a spokesman for the Houthi-run health ministry.

The Saudi-led coalition fighting in Yemen said it didn't hit the port but struck "legitimate military targets" in Hodeida province, which "were linked to threats to commercial vessels in the Red Sea."

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi called for "diplomacy and dialogue" to solve the Yemen conflict without "military confrontations" in an interview published on Saturday in the State-run Iran newspaper. (AP)

Bill introduced in US Senate seeks 3-year pause on H-1B visas, codify \$100K fee

SAGAR KULKARNI

■ Washington

A US senator has introduced a bill in the Senate that seeks to pause issuance of new H-1B visas for three years and codify the \$100,000 fee imposed by the Trump administration, which was struck down by a federal court.

US Senator Tim Sheehy, a Republican from Montana, said the US should not be issuing visas that make it easier to undercut the rights of American workers.

The H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ highly skilled foreign workers in speciality occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise. American technology companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees each year from countries like India and China. "The H-1B programme was created to address workforce shortages for specialised, difficult-to-fill positions — not to displace qualified, hardworking Americans with cheaper, foreign labour," Sheehy said in a statement .

"My legislation, the End H-1B Abuse Act, restores the programme to its original intent



US Senator Tim Sheehy

and puts American workers first by closing loopholes that incentivise abuse, strengthening guardrails and prioritising our national security interests," he said.

Sheehy described the End H-1B Abuse Act as "a critical, proactive step" to protect American workers, curb H-1B fraud, and address what he called national security risks created by a programme that has operated for years with inadequate guardrails.

The proposed legislation is supported by the Immigration Accountability Project and the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR).

The bill seeks to pause

new H-1B visas for three years and then restart the programme under far tighter limits and higher standards.

It also seeks to codify President Donald Trump's \$100,000 fee for each H-1B petition.

The Boston-based First Circuit Court of Appeals on Friday denied the Trump administration's motion to stay US District Judge Leo T Sorokin's June 8 ruling that struck down the fee, terming it an unlawful tax not authorised by Congress.

The bill also proposes to permanently replace the random lottery in statute with a wage-based selection system and bans concurrent employment and third-party staffing-agency models.

It also seeks to end the "dual intent" provision for H-1B visa holders and prevent H-class visa holders from bringing dependents.

The proposed legislation would also bar federal agencies from sponsoring or employing non-immigrant visa holders. In addition, it seeks to eliminate work authorisation for foreign students and certain exchange visitors by ending Optional Practical Training-style programmes. (AP)

Iran reports no new US strikes as tensions remain high

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Cairo

Iran reported no strikes overnight into Saturday, an apparent break from nearly two weeks of consecutive nights of US attacks, but tensions remain high following a recent escalation over control of the strategic Strait of Hormuz.

Iranian Health Ministry spokesperson Hossein Kermanpour posted on X, saying that "Iran had a peaceful night," without any attacks reported. The US Central Command didn't immediately respond to a request for comment. However, unlike the previous 13 nights, it did not announce new strikes.

Sirens sounded multiple times early Saturday in Saudi Arabia's Yanbu and Jizan provinces, which house crucial oil facilities on the Red Sea, according to the Saudi Civil Defence. It said the sirens were because of a "potential danger" that was later lifted, without providing



further details. Bahrain also sounded missile alerts early Saturday, but no casualties have been reported.

A tenuous ceasefire that appeared to halt major operations in the conflict that started with American and Israeli attacks on Iran seemed to unravel early July. Iran was accused of striking three ships in the strait. The US responded by striking dozens of targets in Iran, which retaliated by firing at Arab states in the region.

The Strait of Hormuz, a crucial passage for world energy supplies effectively shut down by Iranian

attacks, has been at the centre of the conflict. The US military fired Friday on a merchant vessel in the Gulf of Oman that was trying to breach its renewed blockade of Iran's ports, while Iran targeted US-allied Gulf Arab countries.

Iran's Houthi allies targeted two Saudi oil tankers in the Red Sea this week, raising concerns the group may again try to block Red Sea shipping routes. In response, Saudi Arabia struck the port city of Hodeida in Yemen, the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen said early Saturday.



A tourist uses a hand fan to cool off during a heat wave as people gather on Areopagus Hill with the Acropolis in the background in Athens

35 people killed after buses collide in Syria, State media reports

ASSOCIATED PRESS

■ Damascus

At least 35 people have been killed and dozens injured after two buses collided on a highway linking the Syrian Capital with the eastern province of Deir el-Zour on Saturday, State media reported.

Around 30 people were injured in the crash between a civilian bus and an Interior Ministry bus on the desert highway, the SANA news agency



cited a health ministry official as saying. Syrian military helicopters were reported to be involved in

the operation at the scene. The cause of the collision was not immediately known.

Small plane crashes into German home, 1 dead, 1 missing

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Berlin

At least one person died and a second one appeared to be missing after a small plane crashed into a home in northern Germany on Saturday, police said.

For reasons that are still being investigated, the small plane lost altitude and crashed into the roof of a single-family home in a residential neighbourhood in Ganderkesee in Lower Saxony, police in the nearby city of Oldenburg said.

According to police, the plane was carrying two people. One person was killed in the crash and rescue personnel were searching for the missing individual, German news agency dpa reported.



11 tourists rescued after speedboat sinks in Indonesia

MOHAMMAD TAUFAN ■ Palu

Indonesian rescuers found alive 11 European tourists and a local crew member who went missing after their speedboat apparently broke apart and sank in rough weather off a bay on Sulawesi island, officials said Saturday. Search teams continued looking for the vessel's Captain.

The vessel departed a dive resort in Tojo Unauna regency of Central Sulawesi province bound for Marisa Port in the neighbouring Gorontalo province but failed to arrive as scheduled, said Heriyanto, Head of the Gorontalo Province Search and Rescue Office.A local tour guide reported the missing boat to the search and rescue



office at 3.40 pm (local time) on, prompting an immediate search operation, said Heriyanto, who, like many Indonesians, uses a single name.

"Concerns arose when their speedboat had not arrived by afternoon," Heriyanto said. "We immedi-

ately launched a search mission overnight."

Five Dutch nationals, three Germans, a Czech man, a Belgian man, a French woman and two Indonesian crew members were on board, according to Indonesian authorities.

There was no immediate

comment from the national embassies of the tourists.

Heriyanto said dozens of search and rescue teams were deployed in a search operation covering approximately 300 square nautical miles of waters along and around Tomini Bay, a renowned marine tourism destination, with dozens of islands dotting its vast waters, based on the tour boat's route projections. A thermal-imaging drone and diving equipment were also being used in the search, he said.

Indonesia's meteorological agency forecast generally clear skies in the area, but rescuers on Saturday have faced challenging sea conditions, including strong winds and waves reaching up to 2.5 metres (8 feet) high. (AP)

France deploys massive cargo aircraft to dump flame retardant on wildfire

MARK CARLSON/EMMA DA SILVA/ JOHN LEICESTER ■ Lege-Cap Ferrer

France was preparing to use a massive specially adapted cargo aircraft to dump flame retardants on Saturday on a wildfire that has forced the evacuation of tens of thousands of people, including from some suburbs of the wine region city of Bordeaux.

Interior Minister Laurent Nunez said the hulking A400M aircraft will join what is expected to be a "long and very difficult" battle against the blaze raging in the Gironde region of western France. That blaze and another wildfire in the Landes region have together forced 197,000 people to evacuate, he said. With winds expected to shift in a westerly direction on Saturday afternoon, potentially driving the fire closer to Bordeaux, fire crews and authorities



were digging trenches, using retardants and taking other steps to block it, Nunez said. He said the fire was about 30 kilometres west of the city.

The government mobilized soldiers to join the battle against the flames and rushed in 1.5 million face masks to protect against choking smoke. The

prefect of the Gironde region that includes Bordeaux ordered the evacuation of parts of three of the city's western suburbs. Other towns and villages further west of the city were also ordered to evacuate.

Prime Minister Sebastian Lecornu described the fires as unprecedented and said the Gironde blaze had become so strong that it was generating its own winds. "Our priority is clear: protecting human lives," he posted on X, adding that evacuation orders "must be respected without delay."

He said firefighting teams were being reinforced Saturday with the addition of hundreds of soldiers and that breathing masks to filter out smoke particles were being rushed to the Gironde region for those exposed to the clouds of potentially noxious fumes. (AP)

Georgia's Okefenokee Swamp among new additions to join UNESCO's World Heritage list

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Seoul

The Okefenokee Swamp in Georgia, an ornate 13th-century Buddhist temple in Thailand and tidal flats in western South Korea were among several sites added to the World Heritage List on Saturday at a UN committee meeting in South Korea.

The UNESCO meetings in Busan, which continue through next Wednesday, are reviewing dozens of other nominations, including the D-Day landing beaches in France, Mount Olympus in Greece and the ancient Japanese capitals of Asuka-Fujiwara.



The Okefenokee Swamp is regarded as one of the world's largest freshwater ecosystems, encompassing a vast network of wetlands that supports exceptional biodiversity and serves as the source of two major rivers. Its largely undisturbed peat beds preserve a 5,000-year record of environmental change, making the swamp both a globally significant natural habitat and a valuable source of information on long-term environmental change, according to a UNESCO description.

While the World Heritage designation places the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge alongside iconic US

landmarks such as the Grand Canyon, some locals have opposed the listing, fearing it would increase UN involvement in managing the site. "We accept this inscription not as a finish line, but as a commitment to keep the Okefenokee wild, resilient, and thriving for generations to come," said Kim Bednarek, executive director of the non-profit Okefenokee Swamp Park that's worked with the US government on the refuge's nomination package.

Wat Phra Mahathat Woramahawihan, a 13th-century Buddhist temple in southern Thailand known for its 78-metre stupa and dis-

tinctive architecture, was also inscribed on the World Heritage List, becoming Thailand's ninth site.

UNESCO has described the temple as an outstanding example of Theravada Buddhist architecture that remains a living place of worship, preserving religious traditions that draw large gatherings of devotees. While the World Heritage listing is expected to dramatically increase visitors to the temple, Kanop Ketchart, mayor of Nakhon Si Thammarat City, said officials are prepared to address potential infrastructure and capacity challenges. "We

have prepared our infrastructure, buffer zoning and evacuation plan to fit all the requirements of UNESCO," he said. "More importantly, the people are getting used to all this process for almost 10 years. So they are very much looking forward to (it)."

South Korea's Foreign Ministry said the expanded designation of the tidal flats "reaffirms the importance of international cooperation for the conservation of the Yellow Sea ecosystem and the East Asian-Australasian Flyway," a major migratory bird route that stretches from the Arctic through Asia to Australia and New Zealand. (AP)

BRIEFLY

Cape Verde’s Vozinha to join Chile club Colo Colo



One of the breakout stars at the World Cup has a new home in Chile – Cape Verde goalkeeper Vozinha has signed a contract with Colo Colo, the South American country’s biggest soccer team. The 40-year-old Vozinha became one of the most talked-about players at the World Cup with a string of remarkable saves against top teams such as eventual champion Spain and defending champion Argentina.

“Welcome. We’re waiting for you,” the club wrote Friday on its social media pages in a post that quickly sparked excitement not only among Colo Colo supporters but across Chile, where the national team failed this year to qualify for a third consecutive World Cup.

Anibal Mosa, president of Blanco y Negro, the company that manages the Chilean club, had confirmed shortly before that the goalkeeper, who had no contract with any team during the World Cup, will arrive in Chile soon.

“Vozinha is going to be a Colo Colo player. In the next few days, he will travel to Chile, undergo the necessary medical examinations, and then be presented here at the Estadio Monumental,” Mosa told media, referring to Colo Colo’s home stadium in Santiago, Chile’s capital.

(AP)

Atletico signs South Korea WC midfielder Lee Kang-In



South Korea midfielder Lee Kang-In has agreed to join Atletico Madrid from Paris Saint-Germain, the Spanish club said Saturday. Atletico said the player would sign a contract through June 2031. The transfer fee was undisclosed but it is reportedly between 35 and 40 million euros (\$39.8 million and \$45.5 million). The 25-year-old Lee played all three group-stage games at the World Cup, where South Korea failed to advance after losing twice.

Born in Incheon, Lee moved to Spain when he was 10 to join Valencia’s training academy and ended up playing 62 games for the club. After a stint with Mallorca, he joined PSG in 2023, scoring 16 goals in 124 appearances.

He will now play for an Atletico side that finished La Liga in fourth place and reached the Copa del Rey final last season. Lee will help fill the creative void left by Antoine Griezmann, who has left for the MLS as Atletico’s all-time top scorer.

(AP)

Lyonnes signs Barcelona’s Salma Paralluelo



French women’s champion OL Lyonnes signed Spain forward Salma Paralluelo from Barcelona on a four-year contract on Saturday. Lyon announced the signing on X.

A standout junior athlete, the 22-year-old Paralluelo scored twice for Barcelona when it routed Lyon 4-0 in the Champions League final in May, and helped Spain win the World Cup in 2023. Paralluelo is also a world champion at Under-17 and Under-20 level, and finished third in the Ballon d’Or voting in 2023 and 2024. “Wanted by Europe’s top clubs, Salma Paralluelo has chosen to join the Lyon project to open a new chapter in her career and continue her development at the highest level,” the French champion said. The club has won the women’s Champions League a record eight times and is recruiting strongly under president Michele Kang. It has signed goal-scoring midfielder Caroline Weir from Real Madrid, goalkeeper Maria-Luisa Grohs from Bayern Munich and Sweden international Johanna Rytting Kaneryd from Chelsea.

(AP)

CWG: Rupa, Pinki shine in Lawn Bowls competition

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Glasgow

Rupa Rani Tirkey and Pinki Singh maintained India’s impressive momentum in the Lawn Bowls competition at the Commonwealth Games with a third straight win, while Putul Sonowal tasted his first defeat after back-to-back victories, here on Saturday.

The Indian duo of Rupa and Pinki continued their dominant run, prevailing over Tonga 2-0 in tie-breaker of women’s pairs third round match in Section B to stay on course for a berth in the semi-finals. Rupa and Pinki won the first set 5-2 against Tonga’s Paris Baker and Milika Nathan. Tonga made the brighter start, taking a 1-0 lead after the opening end.

Lead Paris Baker produced an excellent opening spell, leaving India under pressure despite Rupa complet-



ing her three bowls. India responded strongly in the second end through excellent teamwork between lead Rupa and skip Pinki.

Rupa delivered a superb second bowl to help India edge ahead in the second end and level the scores at 1-1, with three ends remaining in

the opening set. India maintained their dominance to claim the first set 5-2. Tonga, however staged a remarkable comeback to take the second set 6-4 and force a tiebreaker thanks to some fine work by lea Baker and skip Nathan the pair taking a 6-0 lead after three ends.



Rupa Rani and Pinki tried hard to come back but fell short. In the tie-breaker though, the Indians rose to the challenge with Rupa putting the team ahead and Pinki closing it out.

Rupa and Pinki will face their Namibian counterparts in their fourth round match

in Section B on Sunday.

India and England both have three wins in as many games in Section B of the women’s pairs sectional play but the latter are ahead on set count. Sonowal loses his third round match

Sonowal made a gritty fight but lost his men’s singles

third round match to Izzat Shameer Dzulkeple of Malaysia. Sonowal lost 0-2 (4-8, 8-9) to his Malaysian opponent in the Section D match that lasted around one hour at the Scottish Event Campus (SEC) Hall 3.

After losing the first, Sonowal trailed 5-9 in the second but made a remarkable recovery in the ‘End 7’. But that was not enough as the Indian lost the second set by a thin margin.

The 43-year-old Assam Police officer grabbed the headlines on Thursday by defeating reigning world champion Ryan Bester of Canada in the opening round, but was pushed to the limit before overcoming Falkland Islands’ Cecil Alexander in a tie-break in the second round of Section D.

He is now in the second spot in the Section D standings and faces Shaun James Parnis of Malta on Sunday.

Mannat works on technique after maiden pro triumph

AMIT KUMAR DAS
■ New Delhi

Rory McIlroy’s perseverance in completing a career Grand Slam has left a lasting impression on India’s teenage golfer Mannat Brar, who is focused on refining her game and building physical strength as she aims to compete with the world’s best.

The 19-year-old from Chandigarh, who clinched her maiden professional title at the Hero Women’s Pro Golf Tour event in Bengaluru last month after overturning a seven-shot deficit in the final round, says she often looks to the Northern Irishman for inspiration. “I always idolised Rory McIlroy a lot. And even now, just, I think yesterday or day before, I was just seeing a random interview of his, which was before he won the Masters ...

“...it was some interviewer asking him that, you must have wanted to win the Masters at this point. And he said, ‘I’ve not won,



but it’s not from a lack of trying. I think these words, it’s really stuck with me because as golfers, we all want to win,” Brar told during an interview. “Sometimes we try too hard, but we never try too less. And that’s something I see in myself also, that results really don’t matter, but to keep knocking on doors, to keep working hard towards that one goal, it’s something I really admire in Rory. Brar’s victory in Bengaluru only strengthened the belief she had carried for years.

“I believed I could win

this tournament even two or three years ago. It was just a matter of chance that I didn’t,” she said. “I obviously I have performed very well. And when I was an amateur on the national circuit, being an amateur, and I always believed that I can win and might sound cliché to say this, but I always knew that I’m a winner. “So winning, I think just brought in the trophy. But the belief I had in myself of being a winner was always there.” While still an amateur, Brar had finished tied 11th at the Indian Open in 2024. In April this year,

she finished as the top female competitor (Tied-4th overall) in a mixed-field professional event at the IGPL Invitational Congo.

Reflecting on the impact of Indian Golf Premier League (IGPL) on her career, she said: “The IGPL has been incredible. Playing alongside men for the same prize money is rare in women’s sport and very validating.

“It also allowed me to learn from experienced golfers like Udayan Mane.” Brar, who is working under renowned coach Jassi Garewal at the Roundglass Academy, said the past year has been about making technical improvements while becoming physically stronger. “I’ve been with him for more than five years and we’ve been really working on my swing. He’s always told me that, I have great feel. I am very artistic. I can play. I can manage to play good golf. But he wants to get me to play good golf by being technically sound,” she said.

(PTI)

At Lord’s, Minister Mandaviya underscores India’s push to host 2036 Olympics

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ London

Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya used a visit to the iconic Lord’s Cricket Ground to underscore India’s ambitious bid to host its first Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2036, saying the country is committed to bringing the world’s biggest sporting spectacle to Ahmedabad.

Mandaviya, who was in the UK this week for the inauguration of the 2026 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, was greeted for a tour of the world-famous stadium and exhibits including the Prudential Trophy and the Ashes.

“The relationship between MCC (Marylebone Cricket Club) and India is one of the most important in the game,” said MCC Chief Executive and Secretary Robert Lawson, who welcomed the minister to the ground on Friday.

“Cricket holds a unique place in the hearts of millions across India, and there



is a deep affection and reverence for Lord’s among Indian players and supporters alike. That passion for the game is something we are always proud to celebrate. “We were delighted to share some of the ground’s rich history, from the famous Honours Boards, including the recently added achievements of India’s women’s cricketers, to iconic pieces of memorabilia such as Sourav Ganguly’s shirt and the Prudential Trophy,” he said.

Lawson presented Mandaviya, who was accompanied by Indian High Commissioner to the UK P. Kumaran, with one of

the match balls from England’s recent ODI against India at Lord’s as a “small memento” of his first visit. “We look forward to continuing to strengthen the longstanding friendship between MCC and Indian cricket,” added Lawson.

Rahul Kale, the MCC member who facilitated the visit with the High Commission of India in the UK, expressed great enthusiasm over the evolving India-UK partnership in the sphere of sports.

“From Lord’s to every cricket ground in India, the MCC’s relationship with Indian cricket stands as a symbol of mutual respect,

shared passion, and a commitment to the global growth of the game,” said Kale. Earlier, the Consulate General of India in Edinburgh hosted an Indian diaspora reception in Glasgow in honour of the ministerial visit.

“The minister warmly welcomed the community and encouraged everyone to cheer for and support Team India at the Commonwealth Games 2026,” the Consulate said.

On Friday, India opened its medals tally at the Games with para powerlifter Jhandu Kumar clinching a bronze in the men’s heavy-weight final. A 123-member Indian team in participating in the Glasgow Games, which opened on Thursday and will run until August 2.

During his UK visit, Mandaviya also reaffirmed India’s readiness to host the 2030 Centenary Commonwealth Games in Ahmedabad as a “historic, sustainable, and memorable edition” of the sporting fixture.

AITA, Administrator headed for showdown over constitution at Sunday’s EGM

AMANPREET SINGH
■ New Delhi

The All India Tennis Association’s (AITA) Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) on Sunday is likely to witness a confrontation between the federation and court-appointed Administrator Justice (Retd.) Gita Mittal, with the two sides deeply divided over the constitutional amendments that will determine the body’s future governance.

The document prepared by the AITA Executive Committee, accessed by PTI, shows that while numerous technical changes suggested by Justice Mittal have been accepted, several major governance proposals have been rejected in favour of the federation’s own draft. The EC repeatedly

argues that many of the Administrator’s recommendations either go beyond the National Sports Governance Act or are not required for statutory compliance.

While both seek to align AITA’s constitution with the National Sports Governance Act, 2025, they differ sharply on several key governance issues, including voting rights, the composition of the General Body and Executive Committee, athlete representation, tenure norms and powers of various committees.

The battle lines have effectively been drawn even before Sunday’s meeting, where Gita Mittal won’t be present but the observers appointed by her will watch the proceedings.

It has been learnt that both



parties have agreed on the procedural part of the EGM after a meeting on Saturday. It has also been learnt that the petitioners had moved court seeking elections in AITA state bodies first but the court allowed the existing

bodies to vote during election.

It may be mentioned that the court has allowed AITA to vote clause by clause on the amendments proposed by the Administrator.

Justice Mittal’s draft proposes a

governance model aimed at reducing the dominance of state associations by limiting each state Affiliate to a single vote in the General Body, increasing athlete representation and introducing several structural safeguards.

In contrast, the AITA is not favouring many such proposals, arguing they go beyond the mandate of the Sports Governance Act and dilute the role of the state associations.

State votes at the heart of dispute: Perhaps the most contentious issue is voting rights.

The Administrator has proposed reducing every state aAffiliate’s voting strength from two votes to one while expanding representation for Sportspersons of Outstanding Merit (SOMs). According to sources, AITA will

oppose the move, arguing that state bodies represent millions of stakeholders and should continue to enjoy two votes each.

The AITA is also not in favour of giving voting rights to associate Affiliates and opposes making National Sports Board registration a pre-condition for voting, pointing out that the Board itself has not yet been constituted.

Executive Committee composition another flashpoint: The two drafts also differ significantly on the structure of the Executive Committee.

Justice Mittal has proposed five seats for Sportspersons of Outstanding Merit, a cap on representation from any one state and additional representation for “state associations of distinction.”

AITA is in favour of retaining

only two SOM seats while arguing that additional reserved seats and state caps have no basis in the Act and could undermine democratic representation.

Women representation, tenure and age: The Administrator has sought higher reservation for women in the Executive Committee and proposed stricter tenure and age restrictions for office-bearers.

The AITA wants to stick to what it calls the statutory minimum under the Sports Governance Act, retaining four reserved posts for women and keeping the upper age limit at 75 years, citing international practice within the International Tennis Federation.

It may be mentioned that NSG Act does not allow candidates beyond the age of 70.

(PTI)

Tilak, Kishan, bowlers help India drub Zimbabwe by 90 runs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Harare

Power-packed fifties by Ishan Kishan and Tilak Varma worked well with bowlers' diligence as India trumped Zimbabwe by 90 runs in the second T20I to take an unsailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series here on Saturday. Chasing 220 was never going to be easy for the Africans and the fate of the match was sealed when they lost five wickets inside 9 overs.

Eventually they were bundled out for 129, well

short of India's 219 for five, which was constructed around Kishans' 81 and Tilak's unbeaten 60. The series win will also give new T20I skipper Shreyas Iyer a big relief after losing two consecutive series against Ireland (0-2) and England (0-4). However, Zimbabwe started the hunt in earnest through Brian Bennett (32, 19b, 3x4, 3x6), who creamed debutant pacer Yash Thakur for a six and four in a row.

But Thakur (2/30) extracted a quick revenge, as an attempted ramp did not go

past wicketkeeper Kishan. Once the first blood was drawn, Indian bowlers did not let the Zimbabwe batters off the hook.

There were little pockets of fight such as 20s by Ryan Burl and Tadi Marumani but nothing good enough to challenge the Indian bowlers for a sustained period.

Even part-timers Tilak and Abhishek Sharma (3/17) found themselves in the list of wicket-takers as India completed the stroll. But circumstances that led to the employment of part-timers



might just give India some worries. Pacer Prince Yadav (2/10 in 1.2 overs) walked off with a clutched hamstring, casting a shadow over such a dominant victory and raising another question about the team's injury management system.

The genesis of that landslide win was in India's intent-filled batting effort led by Kishan and Tilak. Asked to bat first India were in early trouble at 29 for two. But Kishan first made 66 runs for the third wicket with skipper Shreyas Iyer (25) and then a

94 for the subsequent wicket with Tilak as the tourists overcame the early wobble. Kishan paced his knock to a nicety as he focused on giving some stability to Indian innings. The left-hander brought his fifty in 31 balls, but the next 31 runs came in 13 balls as he pressed on the accelerator. The onside play was the hallmark of his innings, peppering the regions around mid-wicket with constant big hits. Off-spinner Bennett was clobbered for two fours to that part of the field while pacer

Brad Evans was punished for 4, 4 and a 6 through the onside. Tilak, on the other hand, doused the talks about his strike-rate for now, playing a sensational supporting innings and reached fifty in 23 balls.

The left-hander smoked Zimbabwe's best bowler Blessing Muzarabani for three fours in a row, and the third one was a peach - a nice, little dab behind the point using the bowler's pace. Brute power was on display too when Tilak lifted Evans for a six over mid-wicket.

Jadumani outclasses home favourite to enter pre-quarters



APARAJITA UPADHYAY
■ Glasgow

Unburdened by the need to shed 10 kg before every bout, India's Jadumani Singh registered a facile win against local favourite Aaron Cullen in the men's 55kg contest at the Commonwealth Games here on Friday.

Fighting in front of a partisan crowd, Jadumani was technically and tactically too strong for Cullen, beating the Scot by a unanimous decision to move to the pre-quarters, where he will take on Sumama Rehman of Pakistan. For years, every tournament began with a battle before Jadumani Singh even stepped into the ring.

The reigning national boxing champion would routinely shed nearly 10 kilograms to squeeze into the men's 50kg category, sacrificing strength, recovery and peace of mind in pursuit of success. "I was confident that I could do well in 55kg. Now I've had the experience of two-three competitions in this category and become the champion. So I feel better than

before," Jadumani had told PTI. That confidence was evident from the opening bell. Despite conceding a height advantage to Cullen, Jadumani dictated the pace with his aggressive approach, repeatedly stepping inside with crisp jabs and quick combinations.

He neutralised the Scotsman's reach advantage and landed the cleaner punches to comfortably pocket the opening round. Cullen attempted to use the vocal home support to mount a comeback, but Jadumani remained composed, mixing sharp counters with intelligent footwork to keep his opponent on the back foot.

The Indian maintained the pressure in the final round as well, leaving little doubt over the outcome before all five judges awarded him the contest by unanimous decision. It was an assured start to Jadumani's Commonwealth Games campaign and another indication that his move up in weight has made him a stronger and more confident boxer. (PTI)

Jhandu Kumar's bronze brings cheer after Tulika Maan doping shock

APARAJITA UPADHYAY
■ Glasgow/New Delhi

Jhandu Kumar's bronze in para powerlifting provided India the much-needed cheer after its Commonwealth Games campaign was jolted by the doping-related suspension of judoka Tulika Maan even before the competitions got underway here.

Until Kumar's success late in the evening in the men's heavyweight competition, doping remained the big talking point in India's campaign as last edition's silver medal-winning judoka Maan stood suspended even before landing in Glasgow due to three whereabouts failures. The country, though, was already assured of one medal after Olympic bronze-winning boxer Lovlina Borgohain got a bye into the middle-weight (75kg) semifinals.

From Bihar's Harnaut village

to international success: Kumar overcame a childhood marked by polio, poverty and years of odd jobs to fetch the bronze in the Scottish city, delivering the country's first medal of the competition.

The 28-year-old amassed 130.9 points to finish on the podium after successfully lifting 181kg and 190kg. He failed his final attempt of 196kg. The other Indian in the fray Sudhir (114.1) finished sixth. Nigeria's Idris Riluan scored 132.8 points to win the gold while Matthew Harding (131) took home the silver medal. Kumar's triumph capped a remarkable rise from Harnaut village in Bihar's Nalanda district, where he helped his parents sell vegetables to support the family after contracting polio at the age of five.

Easy for Jadumani in boxing: In boxing, Jadumani Singh registered a facile win



against local favourite Aaron Cullen in the men's 55kg contest. Fighting in front of a partisan crowd, Jadumani was technically and tactically too strong for Cullen, beating the Scot by a unanimous decision to move to the pre-quarters, where he will take on Sumama Rehman of Pakistan.

Good outing in lawn bowls: India's lawn bowls contingent continued its impressive start with both entries registering victories in their

respective sectional matches to strengthen their chances of progressing to the knock-out stage.

Women's pairs combination of Rupa Rani Turkey and Pinki Singh notched up their second successive win in Section B, defeating South Africa's Thabelo Muvhango and Jacqui Janse van Rensburg 2-0 (6-4, 7-5). The Indian duo had opened their campaign with a victory over Malta on Thursday.

In the men's singles, Putul

Budigina misses para swimming medal narrowly

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Glasgow

India narrowly missed out on a para-swimming medal after a brave Karthik Budigina finished fourth in the men's 100m Freestyle S13 final at the Commonwealth Games here on Friday.

In the able-bodied event, Olympian Srihari Nataraj's campaign suffered a setback as he failed to make the men's 50m backstroke final, finishing a disappointing seventh in the semifinals. Budigina settled for the fourth place with a time of 57.57 seconds.

Imam Ali, the other Indian participant in the event, ended in seventh place, clocking 1:03.73 in the medal



event. South African Nathan Hendricks claimed the gold medal in 54.54s, while Scotland's Stephen Clegg bagged silver with 55.16s and England's Matthew Redfern secured bronze in 56.86s. The S13 classification is for athletes with visual impairments.

In the men's men's 50m backstroke semifinals for able-bodied swimmers,

Nataraj ended his semifinal in seventh place with a time of 25.29 seconds. The top eight swimmers who qualified for the final had a timing of less than 25 seconds. Earlier in the day, Budigina and Imam Ali made the finals of the 100m freestyle S13 event after all the eight swimmers who competed in the heats got through. While Budigina

was third in the heats with a timing of 57.10sec, Ali was bottom of the heap with 1:05.32sec.

Budigina originally started his sports journey in rowing before transitioning to para-swimming during the COVID-19 pandemic. Nataraj had earlier qualified for the men's 50m backstroke semifinals, finishing joint 14th in heats.

Nataraj, a two-time Olympian who holds multiple national records, had clocked 25.52 seconds alongside Bermuda's Jack Harvey, just about making the semifinal start list, which comprises the top 16 from heats. The Indian was fifth in his eight-man heat. However, he could not clear the semifinals.

Michael Kim shoots 59 at 3M Open, 15th in PGA Tour history

MIKE COOK ■ Blaine (US)

Michael Kim shot the 15th 59 in PGA Tour history, making a 24-foot putt for birdie on the 18th hole at the 3M Open. Kim birdied the final four holes of his bogey-free round at TPC Twin Cities to get to 14 under for the tournament and open a three-shot lead over three players after two rounds on Friday.

Ben Kohles, who had a two-shot lead entering the day, shot a 69 to drop into a tie for second with Chandler Phillips (65) and Emiliano Grillo (67). Two bad swings cost Scottie Scheffler, and the world's top-ranked player was seven shots back after 70. Kim had the fourth 59 on tour since 2024. Jake Knapp was the last to do

so during the first round of the 2025 Cognizant Classic. Jim Furyk holds the tour record with a 58 at the 2016 Travelers Championship. "Today was an awesome day, but still, I'm only halfway there so still need to kind of get focused up for the weekend," said Kim, who shot 69 on Thursday.

Kohles' post-round interview was interrupted by a roar when Kim made his final putt. "That's sick," he said smiling. "There's a 59. I guess 62 wasn't as good."

Kim's mindset is to not play "too protective." That is not easy at the par-3 17th and par-5 18th where water lines each hole. "I just kind of told myself like, Hey, this is the way, this is the moment to get into the history books



and let's go for it, let's not try to luck our way into it, let's try to step up and hit some really good shots," he said.

Kim needed to make an uphill 24-foot putt with little break on the final hole to reach the magic number.

"I tend to leave those short when it's that uphill and I just,

last thing was just get it there, just don't leave it short," said Kim, who raised his hands and did a few fist bumps when the ball sank into the cup. Kim, whose previous career low round was 62, made five straight birdies beginning on No. 3 and added three in a four-

hole stretch beginning on Number 9. Eight of his birdies were from more than 10 feet.

"When you hit a putt and it does exactly what you kind of envisioned before you hit it, it's an awesome feeling. Felt like that all day out there," said Kim, whose lone tour win came at the 2018 John Deere Classic.

Second in the Valero Texas Open in April, Kim's best finish in 12 tournaments since was 17th, and he missed four cuts, including the past three weeks at the British Open, Scottish Open and John Deere Classic. Playing the previous five weeks, Kim thought about skipping this week's tour stop. "I felt decent energy-wise," Kim said, "so I went

home after I missed the cut at the Open, just spent a couple days relaxing and came up here and really happy I did." Kim and Kohles played in the morning before the wind picked up and gusts topped 20 mph. Afternoon scores reflected the change.

"Definitely wasn't a 59 out there. Maybe somebody playing really well could have shot 64, 63," Grillo said.

Scheffler was at 9 under before his approach shot found the water at No. 14, leading to a double bogey. His tee shot at the par-3 17th landed in the right rough, and a second shot from an awkward lie with the ball well below his feet skidded 34 feet past the hole, leading to a bogey. (AP)

India beat Tonga, stay on semi-final course

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Glasgow

The Indian duo of Rupa Rani Turkey and Pinki Singh continued its dominant run in lawn bowls competition, prevailing over Tonga 2-0 in tie-breaker of women's pairs sectional play (Section B) to stay on course for a berth in the semifinals at the Commonwealth Games here on Saturday.

Rupa and Pinki won the first set 5-2 against Tonga's Paris Baker and Milika Nathan. Tonga made the brighter start, taking a 1-0 lead after the opening end. Lead Paris Baker produced an excellent opening spell, leaving India under pressure despite Rupa Rani Turkey



completing her three bowls. India responded strongly in the second end through excellent teamwork between lead Rupa and skip Pinki.

Rupa delivered a superb second bowl to help India edge ahead in the second end and level the scores at 1-1, with three ends remaining in

the opening set.

India maintained their dominance to claim the first set 5-2. Tonga, however staged a remarkable comeback to take the second set 6-4 and force a tiebreaker thanks to some fine work by lea Baker and skip Nathan the pair taking a 6-0 lead after

three ends. Rupa Rani and Pinki tried hard to come back but fell short. In the tie-breaker though, the Indians rose to the challenge with Rupa putting the team ahead and Pinki closing it out.

In Bowls, 'Skip' is the team captain, and usually the most experienced player. He or she determines the game plan, and also plays the final two bowls of one 'end'. There are five ends in a set.

'Lead' is the first player to bowl, responsible for placing the mat. He or she sends the bowls as close to the target as possible, before the 'Skip' comes in.

Both Rupa and Pinki were part of the Women's Fours team that won gold in the 2022 Birmingham CWG.

India Test squad for Sri Lanka tour to be picked next week; Jasprit Bumrah's fitness in focus

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Bengaluru

Pace leader Jasprit Bumrah's fitness will be keenly discussed as India's squad for the upcoming two-match Test series against Sri Lanka is set to be announced next week. India will open the tour with the first Test at Galle on August 15 before travelling to Colombo for the second Test on August 23.

Bumrah sat out of the recent series-deciding third ODI against England at the Lord's after suffering an impact injury and reactive swelling on his left knee.

"We are monitoring his recovery process. The Test



series is still some three weeks away, so he has enough time to recover and join the team in Sri Lanka," a source close to the development told PTI.

However, the Indian squad will reach Sri Lanka by

August 4 and is scheduled to play a four-day match at the Nondescripts Cricket Club in Colombo to acclimatise to the conditions.

But it remains to be seen whether Bumrah can travel with the squad in the first

week of August. However, veteran all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja is set to return to the Shubman Gill-led side after playing an ODI against New Zealand in January, as his all-round skills will be of great value against Sri Lanka. Jadeja was overlooked for the recent three-match one-day series against England, which lost 1-2.

While pace duty is set to be shared between Bumrah, Mohammed Siraj and Prasadh Krishnan, seasoned Kuldeep Yadav should be leading the spin department along with left-arm spinner Manav Suthar, who had an impressive debut against Afghanistan recently.

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The Pioneer AGENDA

We live in a society
exquisitely dependent on
science and technology,
in which hardly anyone
knows anything about
science and technology.
— Carl Sagan

India Innovates

From inventing zero to powering billions of digital transactions through UPI, India has consistently turned everyday challenges into creative, scalable solutions for the world. Its spirit of innovation draws strength from the fusion of ancient wisdom and cutting-edge technology. Whether through the digital revolution, remarkable achievements in space exploration or grassroots ingenuity, India has demonstrated a unique ability to adapt technology to its diverse and complex needs

GYANESHWAR DAYAL

India has been a country of seekers. In ancient India, exploration was a way of life. It had strong traditions of study of astronomy, medical science, mathematics, and metallurgy, which fuelled its growth and made it one of the richest nations in the world. However, somewhere down the line, that zeal faded and India fell behind in the race of scientific achievements. We missed the Industrial Revolution and became dependent upon the West for products, machinery and technology that always came with caveats. After independence, Jawaharlal Nehru took the initiative to launch India into scientific orbit again: space, Atomic research and other cutting-edge technology initiatives were launched. Though modest at that time, over the years they grew into institutions that we can be proud of. The seeds of innovations were always present in India's DNA, but now those seeds are sprouting.

On July 17, Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged off India's first indigenously built hydrogen-powered train on an unassuming 89-kilometre stretch between Jind and Sonipat in Haryana. Barely a day later, a Hyderabad-based startup's Vikram-1 rocket lifted off from Sriharikota and settled into a 450-kilometre orbit, making Skyroot Aerospace the first private Indian company - and India only the third nation after the United States and China — to reach orbit with a privately built launch vehicle. These two events were representative of India's resurgence as an innovating nation. It captured something real: India's technological ambitions are no longer confined to white papers and five-year missions. Across railways, space, defence and semiconductors, indigenous innovation is beginning to show up in hardware, balance sheets and export invoices.

A rocket and a railway: Twin symbols of a wider shift

The hydrogen train, christened "NaMo Green Rail," is a retrofitted ten-coach Diesel Electric Multiple Unit powered by a 1,200-kilowatt fuel cell system that combines hydrogen and oxygen to generate electricity, releasing only water vapour. Designed by the Integral Coach Factory to specifications drawn up by the Research, Design and Standards Organisation, and fuelled by an electrolysis-based green hydrogen plant at Jind, it places India alongside Germany, Japan, China and the United States among the small group of countries running hydrogen-powered passenger rail - part of Indian

Railways' stated ambition to be net-zero by 2030.

Vikram-1's achievement is more structurally significant. Its four-stage vehicle - three solid-fuel stages topped by a liquid-propellant kick stage - carried technology-demonstration payloads for Skyroot itself and three other Indian startups. ISRO and IN-SPaCE supplied testing facilities, trajectory support and the launchpad, but the vehicle, the capital and the commercial risk were private. Skyroot became India's first space-technology unicorn after a \$60-million funding round in May, and the government now counts more than 400 space startups nationwide, with an official ambition to grow the domestic space economy nearly fivefold, from roughly \$9 billion to \$44 billion, over the next decade. The company is already developing the larger Vikram-2, slated for a first flight in 2027 with roughly three times the payload capacity - a sign that Skyroot is building for a launch cadence, not a single demonstration flight.

Hardening the strategic edge

Parallel gains are visible in defence. In May, DRDO successfully flight-tested an Agni-series missile fitted with Multiple Independently Targetable Re-entry Vehicle technology from Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Island off Odisha - a capability that lets one missile engage several separated targets, and one that only a small number of nuclear-armed states possess. The test came almost exactly a year after Operation Sindoor, the May 2025 clashes with Pakistan that exposed both militaries' growing reliance on drones and accelerated India's own unmanned-systems programme.

That acceleration is now visible in the numbers. The armed forces' UAV inventory grew from under a dozen platforms in 2020 to more than 140 across nine categories by March 2026, and the defence ministry is preparing what industry bodies describe as its largest-ever drone order, worth upward of \$2 billion and reserved for domestic manufacturers. Indigenous programmes such as the stealth Ghatak combat drone are moving from design toward public demonstration.

The production and export numbers reinforce the picture. Defence output touched a record Rs 1.78 lakh crore in FY26, up 15.6 percent on the year and more than double the FY21 figure, according to the Ministry of Defence. Exports climbed 62.66 percent to ₹38,424 crore, spanning BrahMos missiles, Akash air-defence systems, Pinaka rocket launchers and Swathi radars sold to more than 80 countries. Yet the limits of self-reliance remain visible too: HAL's indigenous Tejas Mk1A fighter, ordered 83-strong in 2021, has faced repeated delivery delays tied to General Electric's F404 engine supply chain - a reminder that even flagship "Make in India" platforms still lean on foreign propulsion.

The race for digital sovereignty

Semiconductors and artificial intelligence form the third leg of this story. The Union Cabinet's mid-July approval of "Semicon 2.0" extends the ₹76,000-crore India Semiconductor Mission into equipment, design IP and R&D centres, building on a portfolio that has already drawn roughly ₹1.64 lakh crore in approved investment



THIS HYDROGEN TRAIN HAS 3200 HORSEPOWER, AND INDIA'S HYDROGEN TRAIN IS ALSO THE LONGEST. THE HYDROGEN TRAINS CURRENTLY OPERATING AROUND THE WORLD HAVE ONLY 3 OR 4 COACHES. AND FOR THE FIRST TIME, INDIA HAS MADE ITS MARK ON THE WORLD BY OPERATING A HYDROGEN TRAIN WITH 10 COACHES

— Prime Minister Narendra Modi

R&D

India's biggest strengths

- Space technology has become India's flagship scientific success, combining high reliability with low-cost innovation.
- Affordable engineering allows India to achieve globally competitive outcomes at significantly lower costs.
- Digital public infrastructure, AI deployment and biotechnology provide strong foundations for future innovation.

Areas where India still lags

- Advanced semiconductor fabrication (sub-5 nm chips).
- Frontier AI foundation models comparable to those from the US and China.
- Nobel Prize-level basic scientific research and R&D intensity.
- Commercialisation of university research and deep-tech startups at the scale seen in the US.
- Overall R&D spending remains around 0.7 per cent of GDP, well below countries such as South Korea, and the US, limiting the pace of scientific breakthroughs.

INDIA CLIMBED TO 38TH PLACE IN THE WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANISATION'S GLOBAL INNOVATION INDEX IN 2025

across a dozen projects. Assembly and testing plants run by Micron, Tata Electronics and CG Semi are now operational in Gujarat and Assam; the flagship Tata Electronics-PSMC wafer fab at Dholera, built with the Taiwanese technology partner and backed by an ASML equipment agreement, is targeting first silicon by the end of 2026 - at mature process nodes rather than cutting-edge ones, a realistic if modest opening move into fabrication.

Design work is advancing faster than fabrication: in February, Qualcomm announced the tape-out of a 2-nanome-

THESE TWO EVENTS WERE REPRESENTATIVE OF INDIA'S RESURGENCE AS AN INNOVATING NATION. INDIA'S TECHNOLOGICAL AMBITIONS ARE FOR REAL

tre chip design from its engineering centres in Bengaluru, Chennai and Hyderabad — now its largest engineering base outside the United States - a reminder that India's semiconductor story runs through advanced chip design as much as through its newer assembly lines.

In artificial intelligence, the IndiaAI Mission has onboarded more than 38,000 GPUs for subsidised access by startups and researchers, working toward a stated target of 100,000 by year-end, while government-backed Sarvam AI has released open-weight foundation models trained substantially on Indian-language data.

From milestones to momentum

These are not isolated technical feats; they are beginning to register in the wider economy. India's Production-Linked Incentive schemes, spanning fourteen sectors, had attracted cumulative investment of more than ₹2.4 lakh crore and generated ₹15.2 lakh crore in exports and roughly 14 lakh jobs by March 2026, according to the Commerce Ministry. Electronics manufacturing — anchored by mobile phones — has turned India from a net importer in 2014 into the world's second-largest producer, with output more than doubling since FY20. Defence tells a similar story: private industry's share of production rose from 22 to 24 percent in a single year, worth around ₹42,000 crore, as firms ranging from Adani Defence to smaller MSMEs enter a supply chain once dominated entirely by public-sector undertakings.

The cumulative effect shows up in India's climb to 38th place in the World Intellectual Property Organisation's Global Innovation Index in 2025, up from 81st a decade earlier — one of the longest-running "innovation overperformers" rel-

ative to its income level, in WIPO's own description. For an economy still classified as lower-middle-income, that ranking, paired with record defence exports and a functioning private launch industry, lends some empirical weight to the government's argument that India is moving from consuming imported technology toward producing and exporting it - with implications for high-skill employment, foreign investment in strategic sectors, and India's negotiating position in technology partnerships with the United States, Japan and the European Union.

The gaps that still need closing

The momentum, however, sits on uneven foundations. India's gross expenditure on research and development has been stuck near 0.64 percent of GDP for nearly two decades, the Economic Survey 2025-26 noted — against roughly 2.4 percent in China, 3.5 percent in the United States and almost 5 percent in South Korea. The shortfall is structural, not just financial: private industry contributes only about 41 percent of India's R&D spending, versus 75 to 79 percent in those three economies, and a large share of publicly funded research stalls in what the Survey calls the "valley of death" between laboratory prototype and market-ready product. A ₹20,000-crore Research, Development and Innovation fund announced in this year's budget is meant to address that gap, but utilisation of comparable past allocations has historically lagged well behind the money made available.

Other constraints are more familiar: slow-moving defence and space procurement cycles, uneven protection and commercialisation of intellectual property, a shortage of manufacturing-grade engineering talent even as design talent grows, and continued dependence on imported components — jet engines, lithography equipment, high-end GPUs - for the most demanding systems. Sustaining the present momentum will need deeper private R&D participation, faster disbursement of already-committed funds, procurement pipelines steady enough to justify industrial investment, and a deliberate push up the value chain from assembly and packaging toward design and fabrication.

INDIA'S MOST SIGNIFICANT SCIENTIFIC & TECHNOLOGICAL ACHIEVEMENTS (2021-2026)

SPACE EXPLORATION

Chandrayaan-3 soft landing near the Moon's south pole (2023): India became the first nation to land near the lunar south pole, opening new possibilities for future lunar exploration and resource studies.

Lunar landing nations: US, USSR/Russia, China, India and first at the south pole.

SOLAR SCIENCE

Aditya-L1 Solar Observatory (2023): India's first dedicated solar mission is studying solar winds, coronal heating and space weather that affect satellites and communication systems.

India is one of the few countries operating a dedicated solar observatory in space.

COMMERCIAL SPACE

Skyroot's Vikram-1 (2026): India's first privately developed orbital rocket reached orbit, marking the arrival of an indigenous commercial launch industry and validating space-sector reforms.

India has joined a very small group of countries with successful private orbital launch capability.

SEMICONDUCTORS

Indigenous space processors and NavIC chips: Development of the Vikram processor, indigenous ASICs and Gallium Nitride technologies reduces dependence on imports in strategic electronics.

India is rapidly strengthening chip design and strategic semiconductor capabilities.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

IndiaAI Mission and sovereign AI infrastructure: India has invested in public AI compute, multilingual foundation models and AI applications in healthcare, agriculture and governance.

India is fast emerging as one of the top five AI ecosystems by talent and scale.

GREEN TRANSPORTATION

India's first indigenous hydrogen-powered train (2026): Hydrogen fuel-cell rail technology offers a zero-emission alternative for non-electrified routes and supports India's net-zero ambitions.

India joins a select group-including Germany, China and Japan-experimenting with hydrogen rail systems.

QUANTUM TECHNOLOGY

Quantum Key Distribution (QKD) for secure communications: DRDO's successful field trials of indigenous QKD strengthen cybersecurity for defence and critical infrastructure.

India is among fewer than 20 countries actively developing operational quantum communication technologies.

BIOTECHNOLOGY & VACCINES

COVID-19 vaccines and biotechnology ecosystem: India developed indigenous vaccines, supplied doses globally and expanded biotechnology manufacturing and genomic capabilities.

India is one of the world's largest vaccine manufacturers and a major global biotechnology hub.

Andy Burnham: Will the new prime minister finally change Britain



SURJIT SINGH FLORA

Britain has a replacement prime minister, but there hasn't been enough patience for another false start in the country. On July 20, Andy Burnham became the United Kingdom's seventh prime minister in a decade after Keir Starmer resigned. The high turnover has rendered political change routine, even if the problems confronting households have become difficult to ignore.

Now the former mayor of Greater Manchester heads both the Labour Party and the government. His first message was blunt: ease pressure on households, restore public trust, stop Westminster politics running amok. That's a reasonable agenda, but it also raises the bar. Voters have heard pledges of rebirth before.

The transfer of power was swift. The test of power will not be.

Keir Starmer announced his resignation on June 22 after losing support among Labour MPs. He stayed on as caretaker prime minister while the party selected a successor, a period that gave Burnham time to prepare but offered little relief from the uncertainty already surrounding the government.

Burnham had returned to the House of Commons by winning the Makerfield by-election. He was sworn in as the constituency's MP on the same day Starmer announced he would step down. His return gave him a parliamentary base just as the Labour leadership contest began.

That contest was barely a contest. Burnham won unopposed on July 17 after receiving 379 nominations, more than 94 per cent of Labour MPs. With Labour holding 403 of the Commons' 650 seats, those numbers gave him a commanding mandate inside Parliament. They also removed one immediate obstacle, leaving him responsible for meeting expectations that his uncontested victory had raised. On Monday, Burnham met King Charles III at Buckingham Palace and accepted the monarch's invitation to form a government. That constitutional step made him prime minister.

He then arrived at 10 Downing Street with his wife, Marie-France van Heel, to a welcome from staff and supporters. Burnham had spent nine years as Greater Manchester mayor, from 2017 to 2026. He built a national reputation as the "King of the North," a title rooted in his criticism of London-centered decision-making. He must now prove that his regional politics can guide the whole country.

Outside No. 10, Burnham said Britain needs stability, hope, and public trust. The appeal was aimed at voters worn down by leadership churn and political fights that rarely improve daily life.

Yet trust won't return because a new prime minister uses calmer language. It will depend on whether the government can make decisions that people can see in their wages, housing costs, local services, and household bills.



‘What We Choose to See’ asks profoundly complex questions

TEAM AGENDA

Every generation inherits the same world, but no two generations see it in quite the same way. What changes is not merely technology or politics, but the lens through which we interpret them. Today, that lens is being shaped simultaneously by cinema, artificial intelligence and communication — three forces that influence not only what we know, but also what we believe, remember and ultimately choose to see.

Cinema has always been more than entertainment. It reflects our aspirations, preserves our histories, challenges our assumptions and quietly shapes our collective imagination. Artificial intelligence, meanwhile, is redefining how information is created, curated and consumed, raising questions that extend far beyond technology into ethics, governance, creativity and human

agency. Communication remains the thread that binds these worlds together. It is through communication that ideas gain meaning, policies gain legitimacy, institutions build trust and societies negotiate change.

Although these themes may appear distinct, they are deeply interconnected. Stories influence technology, technology transforms communication, and communication, in turn, reshapes the stories societies tell about themselves. Understanding one increasingly requires understanding the others.

Many of the essays in these pages first appeared in the columns of prominent newspapers. They were written in response to contemporary events, evolving debates and moments that invited reflection.

Beneath the immediacy of headlines lay enduring questions about perception, responsibility, innovation, culture and public discourse. Rather than presenting isolated commentaries, the writers sought to weave together a conversation about the forces that are quietly redefining our world.

The essays move across diverse landscapes. Some explore the changing language of cinema and the place of Indian storytelling on the global stage. Others examine the opportunities and dilemmas presented by artificial intelligence,

particularly as India seeks to shape an inclusive, ethical and globally relevant AI ecosystem. Several reflect on diplomacy, governance, media, public communication and the power of narratives in influencing institutions and societies. While the subjects vary, the underlying inquiry remains constant: how do ideas travel, how do perceptions form, and what responsibilities accompany those who shape them?

The world is changing too rapidly for certainty to be a lasting companion. Instead, we hope these essays encourage readers to pause, question familiar assumptions and engage more thoughtfully with the transformations unfolding around them. In an age defined by abundant information but increasingly fragmented attention, thoughtful observation has become an act of responsibility.

Cinema cannot be understood

without culture, technology cannot be separated from society, and communication is most effective when it is grounded in empathy, clarity and purpose.

The writers are deeply conscious that every essay represents only one perspective among many. They invite readers not merely to agree or disagree with our arguments, but to continue the dialogue — to question, to reflect and perhaps to see familiar issues through a different lens. If these pages inspire conversations that extend beyond the final chapter, they will have fulfilled their purpose.

Ultimately, this book is about perception. About recognising that the world is rarely defined solely by what happens, but by how we understand it. In an era of relentless information, perhaps the greatest challenge before us is not learning to see more, but learning to see better.

WEEKLY MOON SIGN FORECAST | 26 - 1 AUGUST

Reflect, Learn and Build with Quiet Confidence

Dr Shanker Adawal
Astrologer, Author & Researcher

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

Moon Watch

The Moon's quiet message for the week ahead. This week encourages quiet reflection before confident action. Learning from recent experiences and applying those lessons with patience can help create stronger foundations for the days ahead.

Weekly Overview

The week begins under the Scorpio Moon, encouraging thoughtful decisions and deeper understanding. Sagittarius then broadens perspective through learning and fresh ideas. By the closing days, Capricorn shifts attention towards responsibility, practical progress and building lasting stability.

Aries (Mesh): Professional responsibilities deserve careful attention during the opening days. You may gain more by observing situations than reacting quickly. Midweek supports learning, discussions and exploring new possibilities. As the Moon enters

Capricorn, practical planning and steady effort bring visible progress. A disciplined approach is likely to produce lasting results.

Taurus (Vrishabh): Relationships and shared responsibilities remain important throughout the week. Honest conversations can clear misunderstandings that have quietly lingered. Midweek encourages broader thinking and useful advice from experienced people. By the weekend, financial planning and practical decisions become easier. Patience will strengthen both confidence and stability.

Gemini (Mithun): Daily work and routine matters require steady organisation. Small improvements introduced now can make a noticeable difference. Midweek encourages meaningful discussions, learning and exchanging ideas. As the week progresses, emotional distractions begin to settle. A balanced approach helps you complete important tasks with greater confidence.

Cancer (Karka): Creative interests and personal relationships receive encouraging support during the opening phase. You may feel inspired to revisit an old idea or unfinished plan. Midweek favours travel, learning or exploring new opportunities. The weekend shifts focus towards practical responsibilities, helping you build stronger foundations for the future.

Leo (Simha): Family matters and personal priorities may require greater attention than usual. Practical conversations can help create better understanding at home. Midweek encourages confidence through learning rather than immediate action. As Capricorn energy develops, routine responsibilities become easier to manage. Consistent effort will be more rewarding than quick decisions.

Virgo (Kanya): Communication plays an important role throughout the week. Useful information may arrive through ordinary conversations or professional contacts. Midweek supports planning, writing and organising future work. By the weekend, creativity and confidence return naturally. Careful preparation now will make the next phase much easier.

Libra (Tula): Financial matters and practical responsibilities deserve balanced attention during the opening days. Midweek encourages cooperation and thoughtful discussions that help resolve pending issues. By the weekend, home and family become stronger priorities. Small improvements made now can create lasting comfort and peace of mind.

Scorpio (Vrishchik): The Moon begins the week in your sign, encouraging self-awareness and emotional clarity. This is a good period for reviewing priorities before moving ahead. Midweek brings optimism and a wider perspective through learning or meaningful conversations. The closing days support practical decisions that strengthen long-term stability. Take decisions with confidence.

Sagittarius (Dhanu): The pace gradually increases as the Moon enters Sagittarius. New ideas, learning opportunities and future planning receive encouraging support. You may find yourself thinking beyond immediate concerns. By the weekend, practical matters require greater discipline. A measured approach will help transform ideas into steady progress. Do weigh pros and cons before committing yourself.

Capricorn (Makar): Professional goals become clearer as the week unfolds. Early reflection helps identify what deserves your attention most. Midweek supports cooperation and careful planning before major decisions.

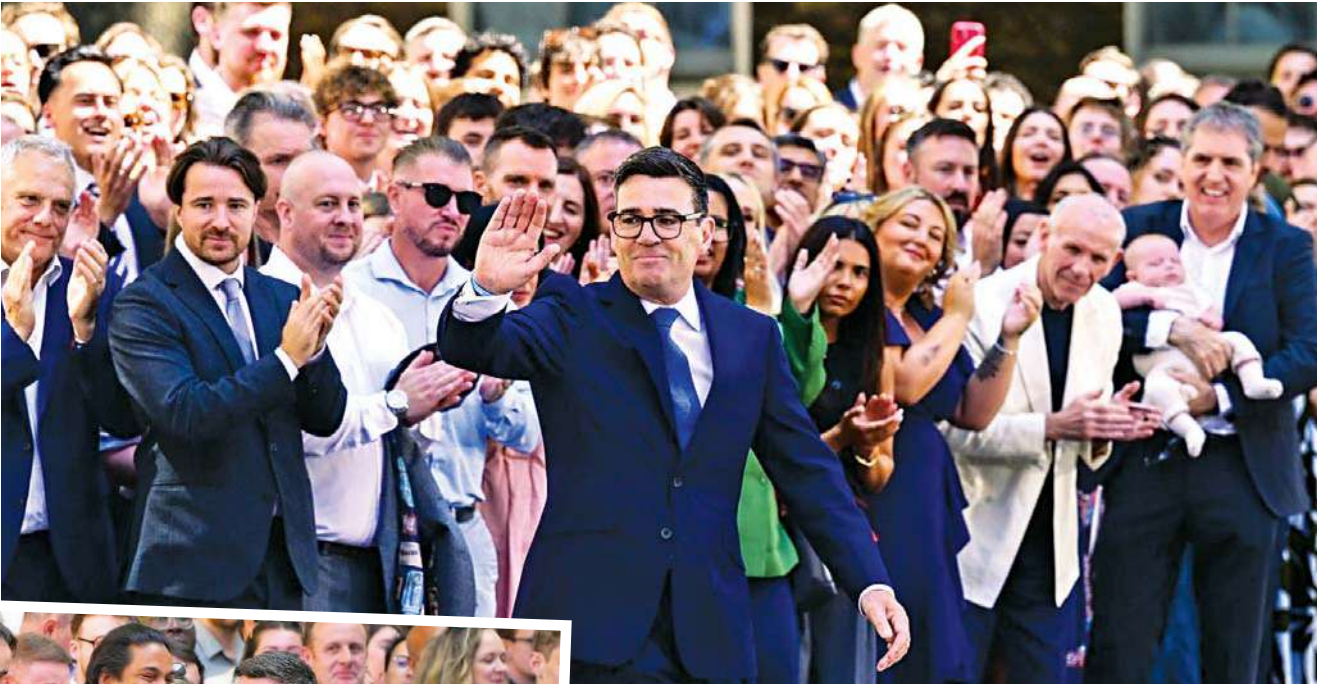
Once the Moon enters Capricorn, confidence grows naturally. Your patience and consistency are likely to attract appreciation from others. You will be appreciated for your efforts and good behaviour.

Aquarius (Kumbh): Friendships, teamwork and shared projects may become more active during the opening phase. Midweek encourages learning from different viewpoints and expanding your perspective.

As the weekend approaches, a quieter pace allows thoughtful planning. Avoid unnecessary pressure and focus on building steady progress instead. Do not get distracted by people who may not be favourable to you. It is good time to reflect on your life.

Pisces (Meen): The week encourages looking beyond immediate situations and understanding the bigger picture. Midweek supports meaningful conversations, travel or fresh learning experiences.

As Capricorn energy becomes stronger, attention turns towards long-term goals and practical responsibilities. Quiet confidence and patient effort will guide you towards lasting progress. Your success is guaranteed provided you remain focussed and do not indulge in unnecessary verbal duels.



now, while economic restructuring takes years and often produces political costs before it produces results.

He inherits high public debt, expensive public services, housing shortages, and inflation that still cuts into family budgets. None of those problems has a quick fix. A government can announce new spending in a day, but it takes far longer to build homes, train workers, expand services,

or raise productivity. The 10-year plan could put industrial policy back at the center of government. Burnham wants more British production and better routes into work for young people. However, the plan is still a promise, not a finished program. Its credibility will rest on funding, timelines, and whether ministers can protect it from the annual demands of crisis management.

Burnham's other defining pledge is to shift power out of Westminster and Whitehall. Regions, councils, and local communities would get a greater say over spending and public decisions. Supporters view that as a correction to decades of centralized government. Critics will ask whether local bodies have enough money and administrative capacity to take on more responsibility. That argument comes directly from Greater Manchester. As mayor, Burnham built his political identity around the claim that local leaders understand local needs better than distant departments. A bigger devolution settlement could affect transport, regional investment, public services, and local economic plans. It would also test whether central government is willing to give up control when local priorities clash with national ones.

Burnham has made ending rough sleeping one of his first priorities. His proposed approach includes more council homes, stable housing for people without a home, and stronger mental health support. The policy is more serious than a single housing pledge because street homelessness also involves addiction treatment, benefits, social care, local government funding, and routes into work.

The promise will be watched closely because it carries personal history. As Greater Manchester mayor, Burnham set a goal of ending rough sleeping by 2020. The target wasn't fully met. That failure doesn't make the national pledge meaningless, but it makes the standard harder to defend. A national government has greater resources than a mayoral authority, yet it also faces wider causes and more complicated delivery systems.

Burnham's pledge gives his government a clear early measure of success. It also exposes the gap between a speech and a functioning system. If ministers announce housing without providing support services, the most vulnerable people may move repeatedly between temporary accommodation, shelters, hospitals, and the street. Cabinet appointments are Burnham's

next major political decision. The Treasury, Home Office, Foreign Office, and energy brief will show where he wants continuity and where he wants a break. The choice of ministers will also reveal how much authority he plans to give regional figures and whether his government will reward loyalty, experience, or policy expertise.

Reports said he convened his first cabinet meeting on July 21 and replaced several Starmer allies. That is an early signal, not a verdict on the government. New personnel can alter the tone of an administration, but they can't resolve its financial and institutional limits.

Burnham must hold Labour together while reassuring markets and voters. He also needs experienced ministers who understand England's regions, not only Westminster's habits. A large parliamentary majority reduces the threat of an immediate rebellion, but it doesn't remove internal divisions over taxes, public spending, housing, migration, and foreign policy.

Burnham has said Britain will maintain its defense and foreign policy commitments, including support for Ukraine. Early calls with the U.S. president and Ukraine's president will carry weight, especially as European governments face growing pressure to spend more on defense. His room for maneuver will depend partly on whether those commitments can fit alongside his domestic promises.

At home, the harder arithmetic remains unchanged. Britain faces weak growth, high debt, strained public services, stubborn inflation, housing shortages, and public distrust. Labour's majority gives Burnham room to act, but it doesn't give him unlimited money or endless time. Recent prime ministers have learned that popularity can disappear faster than a policy paper can be published.

His challenge is simple to state and difficult to meet: turn broad promises into affordable decisions that improve life beyond Westminster. That requires more than a new tone at Downing Street. It requires departments to work together, councils to receive dependable funding, and ministers to accept that some popular demands cannot be met immediately.

Andy Burnham has arrived with a clear offer: cost-of-living relief, a 10-year national plan, more council housing, stronger mental health care, an end to rough sleeping, and more power for local communities. Those pledges speak to real grievances, especially in places that believe national politics has overlooked them. Still, voters will judge the government by delivery, funding, and visible results, not the atmosphere outside No. 10. The cabinet and the first policy announcements will show whether Burnham can restore confidence in British politics or simply become the eighth prime minister in the next decade. His success will depend on whether he can turn the authority of a strong parliamentary majority into steady, measurable government before public patience runs out again.

Surjit Singh Flora is a veteran journalist and freelance writer based in Brampton Canada

What We Choose to See

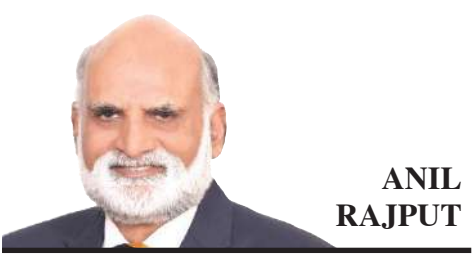
Our world is Cinema, AI and Communication



Author: Chaitanya K Prasad, Zoya Ahmad and Vaishnavie Srinivasan
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“A HEALTHY OUTSIDE STARTS FROM THE INSIDE”
— ROBERT URICH

Sawan: The sacred flavours of the monsoon



ANIL
RAJPUT

Some seasons announce themselves through abundance. Sawan arrives through patience and restraint. As rain darkens the earth and draws the scent of wet soil into homes, the sacred month asks the devotee to slow down and turn eating into an act of attention. In North India, Sawan begins on Thursday, July 30, 2026, under the Purnimanta lunar calendar. Across much of western and southern India, the corresponding month begins on August 13 under the Amanta system. It is not a single feast day with one prescribed menu, but a month-long discipline shaped by worship, fasting, pilgrimage, agriculture and rain. More than celebration, Sawan teaches patience. Its cuisine reveals how Indian households learned to respond to rain not by withdrawing from food, but by making food more thoughtful.

The month carries different names as it travels through India's languages and calendars. Its classical Sanskrit form is Shravana. Across much of Hindi-speaking North India it is commonly called Sawan or Saavan. Maharashtra and Gujarat generally use Shravan, while Shravana is familiar in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. In Bengal it is known as Srabon, in Odisha as Srabana, and in Assam as Xaun or Saon. Tamil tradition observes the corresponding seasonal period through Avani, although its solar calendar does not align exactly with the lunar month followed elsewhere. These differences show how one sacred season has been absorbed into many regional cultures.

The relationship between rain, food and the sacred reaches deep into India's civilisational memory. In the Rigveda, Parjanya is praised as the life-giving power of rain whose arrival makes plants rise and food spring forth for living beings. The Taaittiriya Upanishad later gives food an explicitly spiritual dignity, teaching that food must not be despised and presenting annam as fundamental to life itself. The familiar idea of "Annam Brahma" asks the eater to recognise food as part of the order sustaining creation. Later Puranic and devotional traditions placed Sawan especially under the grace of Shiva. The month recalls the Samudra Manthan, when Shiva consumed halahala to protect the worlds, and the tapasya of Parvati, whose devotion became a model of patience, resolve and sacred union. Jalabhishek, Sawan Somwar fasts and the Kanwar pilgrimage arise within this world of sacrifice and surrender.

Seasonal health traditions added another layer. Ayurveda's ritu-charya, or seasonal regimen, treats Varsha Ritu as a period when humidity, irregular weather and weakened digestive strength

require moderation. The Charaka Samhita advises attention to food and digestion during the rains, favouring preparations that are warm, digestible and appropriately seasoned. Religious vrata and Ayurvedic guidance are distinct traditions, yet they meet naturally in Sawan. The fast limits indulgence, while the season favours moderate quantities and freshly cooked food. Ginger is traditionally used to answer the sluggishness associated with damp weather, sesame is regarded as warming, coconut as cooling, jaggery restores quick energy after restraint, and ghee is used sparingly for nourishment and satiety. Sawan cuisine is therefore a seasonal dialogue between climate, agriculture, health and devotion.

Even the ritual ingredients carry meanings beyond taste. The three leaflets of bilva are often understood as recalling Shiva's trident, his three eyes or the three gunas. Milk is commonly associated with purity and cooling surrender, curd with fertility and abundance, honey with the harmony of different essences, and jaggery with sweetness in human relationships. Turmeric, especially important in the monsoon kitchens of the western coast, signifies auspiciousness, fertility and protection. Such meanings vary, but they reveal why an offering is never merely decorative. Its physical character, seasonal place and symbolic value belong together.

This logic also explains why ordinary grains disappear from many fasting kitchens. Wheat, rice and common pulses may be set aside as part of religious discipline, while ingredients placed in a different ritual category take their place. Rajgira, or amaranth, is a seed rather than a cereal grain. Kuttu is buckwheat, singhara flour is made from water chestnut, and sama is barnyard millet. They allow the devotee to eat within the boundaries of the vrata and produce a cuisine with techniques of its own.

A North Indian Sawan Somwar meal may begin with Singhare ki Kadi, in which water chestnut flour is whisked into fresh curd, seasoned with cumin, ginger, green chilli and rock salt, and simmered until smooth. Some families avoid curd during the rains, while others accept it fresh and thoroughly cooked. Kele aur Singhade ki Tikki combines boiled raw banana with water chestnut flour and mild spices before the patties are shallow-cooked until crisp outside and tender within. A third savoury option, Sama ke Chawal ka Dhokla, uses soaked barnyard millet and curd to create a light, steamed preparation after a fast. Where fermented foods are avoided, the batter may be rested only briefly and raised with lemon or fruit salt.

The sweet side of the northern vrat kitchen is equally distinctive. Rajgira Sheera is made by roasting amaranth flour slowly in ghee before adding warm milk or water, jaggery and cardamom. Its dense, nutty texture makes a small portion satisfying after a day of restraint. Ramdana Laddoo uses popped amaranth bound with warm jaggery syrup, turning a fasting ingredient into a sweet that can be offered, stored and shared. In Mithila, where Madhushravani is



observed by newly married women through a disciplined cycle of worship connected with Gauri and serpent deities, Makhana Kheer gives the region's own ingredient a ceremonial place. Fox nuts are roasted in ghee, simmered in milk and scented with cardamom for the restrained meal after worship.

As Sawan moves westward, faral becomes more elaborate. Gujarat's Farali Pattice encloses coconut, roasted peanuts, raisins and green chilli inside a mashed potato shell, which is shallow-fried until golden and served with vrat-friendly chutney. Maharashtra's Rajgira Thalipeeth combines amaranth flour with boiled potato, peanut powder, cumin and chilli before it is patted by hand and cooked on a griddle. Both provide energy and texture while preserving the discipline of the fast. Maharashtra's Shravan is also marked by Mangala Gauri Tuesdays, when worship, songs and traditional games bring newly married women and their families together. Here the table moves from fasting to ritual celebration. Puran Poli wraps a filling of chana dal, jaggery, cardamom and nutmeg inside soft wheat dough, while Ukadiche Modak encloses coconut and jaggery within steamed rice flour shells. Shrikhand, made by straining curd and blending it with sugar, saffron and cardamom, cools the meal. These are not strict vrat foods, because Sawan does not impose one rule on every day. It moves between private restraint and communal joy, proving that discipline and festivity can belong to the same sacred month.

In Rajasthan and neighbouring regions, Hariyali Teej gives the monsoon one of its most recognisable sweets in Ghevar. A thin batter is poured into hot ghee so that it forms a crisp, honeycombed disc, which is then lightly soaked in syrup and sometimes crowned with rabri and nuts. Ghevar travels from maternal homes to married daughters, carrying affection across households. Its delicate structure absorbs sweetness without losing form, much like Sawan itself, which receives the abundance of rain while asking the individual to remain inwardly steady. Uttarakhand offers another expression of



this relationship through Shravan Harella. Families sow seeds before the festival and cut the young shoots as symbols of fertility, renewal and a hoped-for harvest. Clay images of Shiva and Parvati may be worshipped, bringing divine union into direct conversation with soil and seed. Harella is less a feast than an agricultural prayer, and its significance strengthens the central truth of Sawan cuisine: before food reaches the plate, it begins as rain, earth, patience and cultivation.

Along the Konkani coast and in Karnataka, fresh turmeric and colocasia leaves shape the monsoon table. Patholi, also called patoleo or eeradye, is made by spreading soaked rice paste over a turmeric leaf, adding coconut and jaggery, folding the leaf and steaming the parcel. When opened, the rice layer carries the leaf's deep monsoon fragrance. Its savoury companion, Patrode, layers colocasia leaves with a spiced rice and lentil paste before they are rolled, steamed and sliced into spirals. Karnataka's Nag Panchami traditions add Khara Kadubu, a steamed rice flour dumpling filled with seasoned lentils and coconut, and Tambittu, in which roasted grain or lentil flour is combined with jaggery, coconut and ghee. These dishes preserve hand skills that cannot survive through written recipes alone.

Farther south, Shravana and Varalakshmi Vrat create another rich offering tradition. In Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, Poornam Boorelu encloses a chana dal and jaggery filling inside a rice and urad batter before the spheres are fried until golden. Karnataka's Bele Holige, or obbattu, rolls a similar filling within a thin flatbread and serves it warm with ghee. Tamil homes prepare Sweet Kozhukattai, steamed rice flour dumplings filled with coconut and jaggery. The savoury side appears in Kosambari, made with soaked moong dal, cucumber, coconut and lime, and in Guggillu or Sundal, where cooked legumes are tempered with mustard seeds, curry leaves and fresh coconut. These preparations are offered before they are shared, turning prosperity from private possession into collective blessing.

Toward the month's close, the western coast celebrates Narali Purnima, when fishing communities offer coconuts to the sea before returning to maritime work. Narali Bhaat carries that gratitude into the home. Rice is cooked with coconut, jaggery, cardamom, cloves and ghee until the grains are fragrant and lightly coated. The coconut becomes more than an ingredient. It is an offering to the waters, a prayer for safety and a reminder that livelihood remains dependent upon nature's permission.

Sawan also travels through acts of service. During the Shrawani Mela, kanwariyas collect Ganga water at Sultanganj in Bihar and walk to



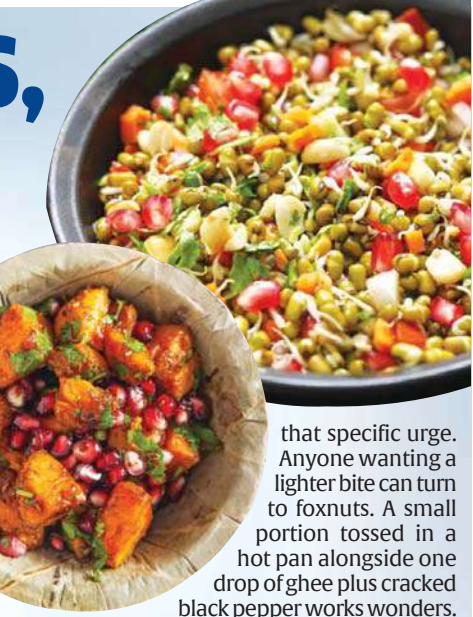
Baidyanath Dham in Deoghar, Jharkhand, observing austerity along the route. Community kitchens, fruit, water and simple sattvik meals sustain the pilgrimage, turning nourishment into seva. In Kashmir, the Amarnath Yatra similarly reveals a cuisine of hospitality through langars that feed pilgrims in difficult terrain. Here the sacred meal is defined not by rarity, but by the willingness to cook for an unknown traveller.

The beverages of Sawan remain closely tied to ritual and recovery. Panchamrit, prepared from milk, curd, ghee, honey and sugar, gathers several symbolic ingredients into one offering before it is received as prasad. Kesar Badam Milk restores energy gently after a fast, while cumin and ginger-scented Taak accompanies western Indian meals where household custom permits buttermilk. Southern offerings may include Panakam, a jaggery drink sharpened with dry ginger and cardamom. Tender coconut water, lemon water with rock salt and diluted fruit drinks also appear according to the rules of the vrat. The purpose is restoration without excess while preserving the stillness of the day.

Sawan is therefore not a single regional menu or an uninterrupted festival. It is patience made visible through food. It asks the household to recognise the rain praised since Vedic times, the sacred dignity of annam, the discipline of the vrata, the seasonal wisdom of ritu-charya and the labour hidden inside every ingredient. A water chestnut kadi, an amaranth laddoo, a turmeric-leaf sweet, a lentil-filled dumpling, coconut rice and ghevar can all belong to the same civilisational story without surrendering their regional identities.

To carry Sawan forward, we must preserve more than its dates and dietary practices. We must ensure that future generations understand why grains are set aside, how jaggery binds popped amaranth, how rice paste is spread across a turmeric leaf, how a kadubu is folded, why seeds are sown for Harella and why naivedyam is offered before anyone eats. These traditions will survive only when families continue to cook them, explain their meaning and invite younger generations into the kitchen. A custom remembered only through photographs eventually becomes nostalgia, but a custom prepared, offered and shared remains alive. The truest tribute to Sawan is to ensure that its sacred flavours, its spirit of patience and its reverence for the monsoon continue to pass from one pair of hands to the next.

(The writer is Secretary, Cuisine India Society)



When it rains, we crave

TEAM AGENDA

Monsoon showers transform the city. Heavy clouds gather. Suddenly, the stomach requires something hot, fried, heavily salted. Researchers attribute this sudden hunger shift straight to human biology. When grey skies steal the sunlight for consecutive days, the body suffers a temporary serotonin drop. The brain reacts fiercely to this deficit. It calls for fats, craving heavy carbohydrates to elevate those specific mood-regulating chemicals. Yielding occasionally to these rich urges makes complete sense. Plates piled high with crisp onion fritters, paired alongside scalding cups of crushed ginger tea, define the Indian wet season. The loud spit of hot oil mirrors the heavy downpour outside.

Consuming fried snacks nightly practically guarantees drag-

ging through the next day with severe lethargy, making the smartest move swapping out heavy grease for clever, punchy flavours while local vendors press spiced sweet potato patties onto roaring iron surfaces until thick, blistered crusts form. A heavy pour of sharp tamarind water completes the plate. People experience the brilliant, chaotic thrill of eating outdoors, completely avoiding those heavy calories. Steamed moong sprouts serve as another fantastic option. Tossed wildly with raw chopped tomatoes, fresh mint leaves, plus fiery green chillies, this bowl delivers a massive, satisfying crunch.

Timeless classics remain vital. We see the vendor charring fresh corn cobs black over open flames, applying a rough rub of lime alongside rock salt. This entire process requires absolutely zero oil. Steaming boiled peanuts dusted with chaat masala crush mid-afternoon energy slumps instantly. Warm roadside snacks offer a brilliant, earthy alternative to greasy packaged crisps. Long downpours mean people want to graze continuously. Dry-roasting chickpeas in sharp turmeric with red chilli powder answers

that specific urge. Anyone wanting a lighter bite can turn to foxnuts. A small portion tossed in a hot pan alongside one drop of ghee plus cracked black pepper works wonders.

These culinary traditions matter deeply, much like the wider cultural heritage we fight to preserve. History survives in these small daily acts. It lives within the crackle of roasting seeds, within spices bubbling away in a heavy pot. Damp evenings soon drop into freezing nights. Diners suddenly need proper comfort served in a bowl. Nothing heals a bone-chilling damp evening quite like a bowl of slow-simmered chicken broth thawing a person from the inside out, or perhaps a peppery mushroom broth spiked with crushed garlic working just as brilliantly.

The rainy months vanish fast. Eating an occasional fried treat remains a fine tradition, but keeping wholesome alternatives ready ensures a lively, balanced season.

Street vendors press spiced sweet potato patties onto roaring iron surfaces until thick, blistered crusts form

Discovering Türkiye's culinary traditions through authentic cuisine

TEAM AGENDA

Anatolian cuisine carries centuries of culinary history, shaped by diverse cultures and traditions that have passed through the region. From handcrafted mezze and aromatic kebabs to traditional desserts, its food reflects the rich regional heritage of Türkiye, where recipes, flavours and hospitality have been passed down through generations.

Bringing this culinary legacy to the Capital, "A Taste of Anatolia", an exclusive Turkish culinary festival at NYC, Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport, offered diners a gastronomic journey through the rich and diverse culinary heritage of Türkiye. Curated by eighth-generation Ottoman Chef Gökhan Eser Kesen, the festival



val showcased traditional regional recipes, signature delicacies and the warmth of Turkish hospitality. The festival was inaugurated by His Excellency Ali Murat Ersoy, Ambassador of the Republic of Türkiye to India, in the presence of diplomats, corporate leaders, media personalities and other distinguished

guests. The occasion celebrated not only Turkish cuisine but also the enduring cultural ties between India and Türkiye. Guests were treated to a carefully crafted Anatolian feast featuring an array of handcrafted mezze, succulent traditional kebabs, regional specialties and iconic Turkish desserts. Each dish offered a glimpse into the culinary traditions that have shaped the region over generations.

The dining experience was complemented by a vibrant ambience inspired by the colours, aromas and traditions of Türkiye, transporting diners to the heart of Anatolia. The festival also highlighted the growing appetite for authentic global culinary experiences in the Capital. Savouring the flavours of Anatolia in Delhi offered diners more than a meal; it became an experience celebrating culture, culinary craftsmanship and the enduring spirit of Turkish hospitality.

ANATOLIAN MEANS FROM OR RELATING TO ANATOLIA, THE LARGE HISTORIC REGION THAT MAKES UP MOST OF MODERN-DAY TÜRKİYE (TURKEY)



Carefully tend the garden of your mind

AMMA (SRI MATA AMRITANANDAMAYI DEVI)

The mind is a flow of thoughts. If there are no thoughts, there is no mind. If we wish to control our mind, we should become aware of our thoughts. We should always be alert about which thoughts to accept and which to reject. If not, they will become the cause of our ultimate ruin.

One day, a grandfather took his grandson to the zoo. There, they saw two lions in two cages next to each other. One of the lions would remain standing peacefully no matter who went near the cage. Even if someone tried to touch it, it would not become angry. It was obvious that the lion had become habituated to the presence of human beings.

The other lion would start to roar as soon as anyone went near. It would try to strike with its paws. Because of this, people would keep away from it. The grandfather asked, "Son, if these two lions were to fight each other, who would win?"

No matter how hard he thought, the grandson couldn't come up with an answer. Then, the grandfather said, "The lion that's fed more food will win."

Similar is the case with the thoughts in our mind. If we allow negative thoughts to proliferate, they will become strong. Negative qualities such as pride and anger will fill the mind. They will bring about inner and outer failure.

This indulgence in negative thoughts is the main cause of the violence, injustice and other problems that we see around us today. However, if we plant the seeds of positive thoughts, qualities such as love, compassion and patience will fill our hearts. Peace and contentment will blossom in society.

Often, we are not aware of the rise of thoughts. Weeds flourish where paddy grows. They should be rooted out at once. If not, they will absorb all the fertilizer and destroy the crops. Weeds proliferate very



WHEN ANGER AND HATRED
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quickly even when we don't pay any attention to them.

But we should give the crops we have planted sufficient water and fertilizer at the right time. We should spray insecticides to ensure that worms don't destroy the crops. It is thus necessary to tend them with utmost care and attention. In the same way, negative thoughts will flourish on their own; we don't need to try. However, in order to cultivate good thoughts, we need to make deliberate efforts.

Love, compassion and patience should become our very nature. Before this can happen, we should clear the weeds of egoism, selfishness, and likes and dislikes from the garden of our mind. We should evaluate each thought mindfully, reject the negative ones, and cultivate the positive ones.

Consider how hurt we feel if someone gets angry with us. For this reason, we should never become the cause of hurt to even one other person. Just as we feel so much happiness when someone behaves lovingly to us, we should be able to give others such happiness, too. If we have this attitude, we will be able to respond appropriately in any situation.

Love, patience and discrimination form the foundation of life. We need these more than learning or earning. If we have them, we will be able to gain everything else. Not understanding this truth, human beings are creating hell on this earth. It is the mind that illumines or darkens the path of life.

(Sri Mata Amritanandamayi Devi, known simply as Amma, is a spiritual master and humanitarian who has given her darshan in the form of a motherly embrace to more than 4 crore people. Listening to the cries of the suffering, Amma leads an NGO that reaches across more than 50 countries, working in the areas of healthcare, disaster relief, education, gender equality, and environmental restoration)



SADHGURU

Today, there is much talk about water scarcity and other ecological issues that humanity is facing. The fundamental behind all these problems is the human being. If any other species had perpetrated the kind of damage that we have to the planet, we would have found a way to deal with them. If billions of Martian locusts landed here and began to cut through all our trees, turn our soil into deserts, and suck the water out of our rivers — we would have definitely exterminated them. But the problem is not alien locusts. The problem is us.

Since we are the source of the problem, we can also be the source of the solution. We are a problem only because we are in an unconscious, compulsive mode of action. If we were conscious, we would naturally be a solution. This is why I have been working with United Nations agencies and other forces, and proposing this idea of a "Conscious Planet" movement.

Vote for Ecology

There are 5.2 billion people living in countries with the ability to vote and elect their nation's leadership. We are looking at how to get at least three billion people on board so that ecological issues become the issues that elect governments. We want to make these three billion people aware of at least five ecological aspects that must happen in their country, and two or three aspects that must not happen. If we do this, then ecology will become if not number one, at least the number two issue in election manifestos.

As a part of the Conscious Planet movement, I am trying to bring focus to the most important aspect of rejuvenating this planet: the soil. Everything you see as life on this planet — includ-



ing worms, insects, birds, animals, plant life, and ourselves - happens out of just thirty-nine inches of soil profile. The real damage is happening to this topsoil, which sustains every life that we know. If we can ensure the soil is organically rich and healthy, the planet will be capable of regenerating itself, and we will be able to manage the other problems, to a large extent.

Right now over 95 per cent of the global population have absolutely no awareness of the ecological disaster building around them. Ecological awareness is confined only to a small segment of people, and even among them, the idea of ecology is largely limited to using less water while showering or turning off the tap when brushing teeth. It is wonderful that people are conscious about what they are using, but this is not a comprehensive ecological solution. Only when ecology becomes an election issue, will it become government policy, and only then will there be large budgets allocated so that solutions manifest.

Restoring Ecology Is Profitable

If we want to make this happen, there has to be a marriage between economy and ecology. Today, we have structured society such that ecology and economy are in conflict with each other. If we pitch ecology versus economy, economy will always win. You can see this happening

everywhere in the world. But restoring ecology can actually be very lucrative. This is the essence of our Cauvery Calling campaign, to revitalize River Cauvery in southern India.

We have been looking at transitioning farmers from short-term farming to long-term agroforestry — tree-based agriculture, the practice of tree cultivation along with other crops. In this process, farmers would plant 2.42 billion trees in the Cauvery River basin. This will cover one third of the basin under shade, in turn increase ground water levels and bring back the river flow. Moreover, farmers will benefit from improved soil fertility, better crop yields, and above all, an exponential surge in their income. In the Cauvery basin, we have converted 263,306 farmers into tree-based agriculture and within five to seven years, their wealth has increased by 300-800 per cent. We want to make Cauvery Calling a demonstrable large-scale model that can be replicated for other rivers.

(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)

Awareness

Many of life's deepest regrets are born not from a lack of ability, but from a lack of awareness. A single careless moment can shatter years of effort, while one mindful moment can transform an ordinary life into an extraordinary one. True spirituality nurtures this awareness. It awakens the inner light that fills life with wisdom, purpose, and lasting peace

DR SWAMI GYANANANDDAS

Awareness is a small word, but its impact is immense. It is the silent light that guides human actions, decisions, and destiny. Bhagwan Swaminarayan states, "Awareness brings clarity, caution, and wisdom, while unawareness leads to confusion, negligence, and often disaster."

At its core, awareness means being conscious of oneself, of one's surroundings, and of the consequences of one's actions. It is not merely knowing something, but being attentive to what truly matters at the right moment. History, personal life, and daily experiences repeatedly prove that success walks hand in hand with awareness, and disaster often follows unawareness. An aware person observes, thinks, and then acts. An unaware person reacts blindly and brings disaster.

The very first journey of the majestic Titanic began on April 10, 1912. It set sail from Southampton, England, heading toward New York City, as the pride of human engineering. It was called unsinkable, and this belief settled deeply into the minds of its builders, officers, and passengers. However, 'unsinkable and unbreakable belief' in the form of overconfidence itself became the seed of tragedy.

On a cold, moonless night of April 14, 1912, the Atlantic Ocean lay calm and silent, almost deceptively peaceful. Beneath a sky scattered with stars, a

massive ship sliced through the dark waters with confidence and pride. Music played, lights glowed, and passengers slept without fear. Yet, hidden in that silence was danger. Ice warnings had been sent, but these signals were ignored, and speed was never reduced. The captain and crew underestimated the danger, trusting technology more than reality. Lifeboats were insufficient, emergency drills were ignored, and caution was replaced by overconfidence. In those quiet hours, it was not fate but unawareness that was steering the ship.

When steel met ice, the illusion of safety shattered, and within a few hours, the world learned a painful lesson: even the mightiest creations collapse when awareness is absent. The result was devastating: more than 1,500 lives were lost.

Awareness is not limited to grand events; it plays an equally crucial role in daily life. A driver who is aware of road conditions, traffic signals, and pedestrians prevents accidents. A moment of distraction, checking a phone or ignoring a signal, can turn an ordinary journey into a tragedy. Similarly, a student who is aware of time, priorities, and learning gaps succeeds steadily, while one who ignores these realities struggles despite talent.

In professional life, awareness determines growth and failure. A business leader who is aware of market trends, employee morale, and ethical responsibilities builds a lasting organization. On the other hand, unawareness of changing customer needs or internal problems slowly ruins even well-established companies. Many businesses fail not because of a lack of resources, but because leaders fail to notice warning signs in time.

Awareness also plays a deep role in human relationships. Being aware of others' emotions, words, and silences builds trust

and harmony. Many relationships break not because of hatred, but because of unawareness, unheard feelings, unnoticed pain, and ignored signals. A simple moment of attentive listening can save years of misunderstanding.

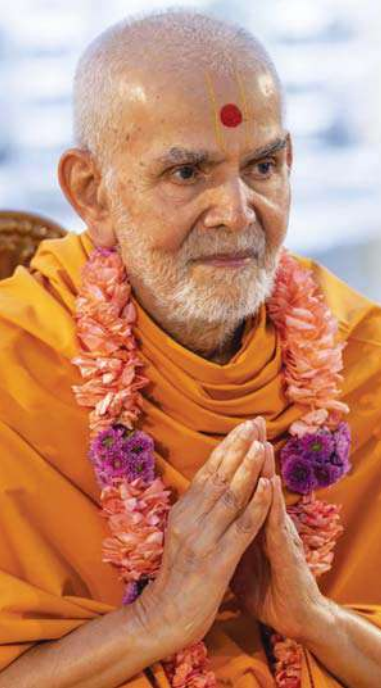
In personal growth, self-awareness is the foundation of success. A person who is aware of their strengths and weaknesses can improve steadily. Such awareness brings humility, learning, and balance. Unawareness, however, creates ego and stagnation. A person who never reflects on their actions repeats the same mistakes, blaming circumstances instead of correcting themselves.

Mahant Swami Maharaj states, "Awareness of one's thoughts, actions, and intentions purifies life. It transforms ordinary work into meaningful effort. Many teachings across cultures emphasize living with awareness, being present in the moment rather than drifting through life unconsciously. In contrast, unawareness is like walking in darkness. One may move fast, but without direction. The faster one moves without awareness, the greater the risk of falling."

Dr Raymond Williams, former Professor of Religion and Dean at Wabash College, Crawfordsville, Indiana (USA), once asked Pramukh Swami Maharaj, "You are a sadhu who has embraced the monastic life from a young age. Yet you lead a vast international organization engaged in more than 150 social and humanitarian activities. You travel across the world, meeting people of diverse cultures, faiths, and languages, while also helping them resolve the challenges of their daily lives. Such an extraordinary level of awareness and engagement seems almost impossible. How do you manage it?"

Swamiji replied, "God is the source of all strength. He inspires us and keeps us aware every moment. Every decision, every thought, and every action is guided by Him. We have simply surrendered our mind and body at His lotus feet and remain in constant communion with Him." Of course, when God dwells in the mind, awareness never sleeps, and every circumstance becomes guided by wisdom.

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



AT ITS CORE,
AWARENESS
MEANS BEING
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AND OF THE
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OF ONE'S
ACTIONS

Working Together for a Conscious Planet

GURU PURNIMA SPECIAL

How Do We Find A Guru?

Sometimes people are simply given the knowledge and their life blossoms

GURUDEV SRI SRI RAVI SHANKAR

Once, there was a very talented teacher. He was a great orator. He could speak and convince people very well. He had a fair knowledge of scriptures, and spiritual techniques too. But he did not feel complete. He was in search of a Master. Though he was honoured by the king, and the public, there was something that was out of reach. He just wanted to surrender to a Master, but who could he surrender to?

Only when time comes, does the Master arrive in one's life. Such a time had almost come for the teacher. When he was departing from the kingdom, the king said, "It's so far away, you cannot walk. You take my palanquin."

The man sat in the palanquin and started on his journey of seeking his Master. When he arrived in the town, he asked to be taken to the Master. Then, one of the men who was carrying the palanquin, came forward and said, "Here I am." The moment was one of eternal beauty. The man fell to the Guru's feet, and asked, "How could you do this? Since when are you carrying me?" The Guru said, "I heard that you are coming to see me. So I came half way to receive you."

The Master had come half the way and carried the palanquin of the disciple. He said, "You take one step towards the Master and the Master takes 10 steps towards you." But the disciple has to take that first step. That's the story of the tradition of Masters.

It is immaterial whether you choose the Master, or the Master has chosen you. When the time comes, everything falls in place. Sometimes people are simply given the knowledge and their life blossoms. Then there are others, who seek for wisdom, and then they get it. But anyone on the path of wisdom should know that they are the chosen ones.

It is very hard to get a human body. It's like winning a lottery. Then, once you get a human body, it is very hard to be interested in the spiritual path. Among millions, only a few will have that interest. And even when one is interested, it is very hard to get the right path, to get the right knowledge, the right Master. So, when everything falls in place, you are the luckiest.

There are so many people seeking it, and everyone doesn't get it.

This is why it is said, when you have come to the Master, you have taken a new birth. When your relationship with the Master and the tradition is established, you have a new life. That's why often people's names are changed once they come to a Master, to signify that he is not the same



“GURU IS A WITNESS TO ALL TYPES OF MIND, INTELLECT AND THOUGHTS – SARVADHI SAKSHI BHOOTAM”

- GURUDEV

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THE GURU IS NOT
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whether one comes to seek wisdom or whether the disciple is already a wise person. For a Guru, everyone is equal.

Often seekers ask me if one needs a living Master. It depends on the individual. If someone is connected to their Guru who has crossed over to the other side, they may not need it. But once you have a Master, you will see that the Master is an empty space, and all the other Masters are also with Him. Your relationship is only with the formless, but it gives an illusion to you that you are relating to the form.

At the same time, without the form, you can't see the formless. As you proceed on the spiritual path, you start relating with the energy, with the presence of Guru beyond the physical body. Once you have found a Guru, remember that he or she is always there with you, watching and giving you wisdom. Only the best will happen for you.