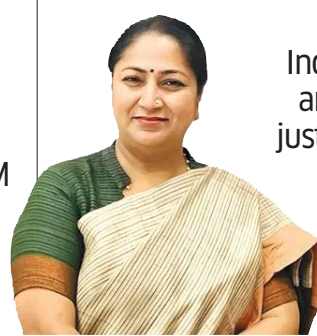


 PAGE 6 NATION Arunachal achieves 100% home electrification: CM	 PAGE 7 USP India must become an AI creator, not just a user: Delhi CM	 PAGE 9 GLOBAL Vance endorses Ramaswamy for Ohio Governor	 PAGE 11 SPORTS 2nd Test: Gill, Jaiswal eye big knock in India's push for series win	 AGENDA
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BJP backs Vande Mataram's legacy

Nitin Nabin asks office-bearers to prioritise Yuva Samvad, engage continuously with youth



Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a meeting with newly appointed office-bearers and national functionaries of the party at BJP Headquarters in New Delhi

RAJESH KUMAR ■ New Delhi

The BJP on Saturday adopted a 10-point political resolution to uphold the honour, dignity, legacy and national status of the complete Vande Mataram as the National Song of Bharat and as an immortal symbol of India's national consciousness and freedom struggle and condemned the

Congress's decision to restrict the singing of the national song to its first two stanzas. The ruling party said no party or individual was bigger than the Constitution or the laws made by Parliament. The party resolved to highlight Mahatma Gandhi's description of Vande Mataram as an "anti-imperialist cry" linked to the

"purest national spirit" and oppose attempts to subject the National Song to "communal pressure, political appeasement or narrow vote-bank considerations". The resolution was adopted at the BJP's first meeting of the newly appointed office-bearers under national president Nitin Nabin, saying a nation-

PM MEETS NEW BJP OFFICE-BEARERS

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi met the BJP's newly appointed national office-bearers at the party headquarters in New Delhi on Saturday. Sharing pictures from the meeting on X, PM Narendra Modi said organisational meetings are an opportunity to exchange ideas and strengthen the party's connect with people. "Organisational meetings are all about new ideas and perspectives aimed at strengthening the party and deepening its connection with the people. Great interaction with fellow party colleagues and

the new organisational team," PM Modi wrote on X after the meeting. The meeting was the first introductory interaction between PM and the newly constituted national team, marking the beginning of the office-bearers' new tenure. The meeting came days after the BJP announced its 65-member national team under party president Nitin Nabin. The new team includes 51 new faces and marks the party's first major organisational reshuffle of this scale since 2015, when Amit Shah was BJP president.

CONTINUED ON >> P4

wide campaign will be launched to take the history, meaning, national significance and glorious legacy of Vande Mataram to every corner of Bharat. This comes days after the Congress Working Committee (CWC) reaffirmed its 1937 decision to sing only the first two stanzas of the song at party

programmes. The resolution marks a strategic ideological escalation. The resolution described Vande Mataram as India's National Song, an expression of reverence for Bharat Mata, the mantra of the freedom struggle and the immortal symbol of India's national consciousness.

CONTINUED ON >> P4

After NEET, MCC plays truant; States in limbo over admission process

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA
■ New Delhi

After the NEET row, thousands of successful candidates waiting to become future doctors are facing a harrowing experience due to inordinate delays in the medical colleges' counselling process, which is certainly hampering the academic year.

The results of the re-NEET exams were declared on July 16, and according to Union Health Ministry directives, the admission counselling process by the Medical Council Committee (MCC) was to begin within one week.

Health Minister JP Nadda on July 29 had reviewed preparedness for NEET-UG Counselling 2026 and directed officials to ensure a transparent, fair and merit-based admission process while taking proactive measures to address candidates' concerns.

It reviewed the readiness of the Medical Counselling Committee (MCC) for counselling of All India Quota (AIQ) and other seats under



its purview. He also stressed on facilitating smooth functioning of the counselling portal throughout the admission process.

During the review meeting, Nadda assessed the counselling schedule, IT infrastructure, cyber security preparedness, grievance redressal mechanisms, candidate facilitation measures and coordination with participating institutions.

The 15 per cent quota from all-India Government institutions like AIIMS, AFMC, States' Government Medical Colleges, and Deemed universities medical colleges is to be announced by MCC, but it has revised dates thrice in one week, ultimately delay-

ing the counselling process by the States' counselling board for admissions in medical and dental colleges within their territories.

As per records, most of the States are ready with their announcement of results (read: seat allocation) but cannot declare due to the MCC's delayed process. Uttar Pradesh State Medical Council is yet to announce the counselling process, though the candidates registered almost a fortnight ago, while the Jharkhand Medical Counselling Board has been facing a regular technical glitch, giving the registered candidates nightmares.

CONTINUED ON >> P4

GREAT OFFERS!

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PIONEER IN SHORT

WOMEN SUFFER MORE FROM PAPER LEAKS: RAHUL

A young Maharashtra Public Service Commission (MPSC) aspirant on Saturday told Congress leader Rahul Gandhi that women candidates suffer more because of exam-related malpractices as they have a "deadline" and face pressures of marriage and family.

Speaking at the Congress's youth outreach programme 'Chhatron Ki Goonj' here, she urged the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha to support a group of students demanding cancellation and re-conduct of an examination following a question paper leak. Sharayu Chopde, who introduced herself as a pharmacist and MPSC aspirant, said the examination was held on March 20-22, but students learnt that the paper had been leaked.

They approached MPSC officials and a complaint was filed, with the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) now probing the case, she said.

FULL REPORT ON P4



JeM seeks recruits after Op Sindoor failures

PRAMOD KUMAR SINGH
■ New Delhi

The Pakistan-supported terrorist organisation Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) is reportedly employing tactics that leverage personal tragedies and calculated expressions of sympathy to replenish its ranks, according to fresh intelligence received by Indian security agencies.

The designated terrorist group, which experienced substantial losses during India's 'Operation Sindoor' last year, has transitioned its strategy to depict the deaths within its leadership's families, specifically that of Masood Azhar, as acts of noble sacrifice aimed at radicalising and attracting recruits. The messages claim Indian attacks destroyed JeM's

facilities in Bahawalpur and killed several of Azhar's relatives, including his brother, sister, son, and grandchildren. JeM leaders are using these losses to show their commitment and encourage recruits to join and seek revenge.

On May 7, 2025, the Indian armed forces launched Operation Sindoor in response to the April 22 attack in Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir. That attack, carried out by Pakistan-based terrorist groups, killed twenty-six civilians, most of them tourists.

In retaliation, the Indian military struck nine terrorist camps and related sites in Pakistan and Pakistani-administered Kashmir, including those run by JeM and Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT).

CONTINUED ON >> P4

Amit Shah takes up BJP promise on Darjeeling hills

PRAMOD KUMAR SINGH
■ New Delhi/Siliguri

On Saturday, Union Home Minister Amit Shah led a high-level meeting at a resort in Sukna, near Siliguri, to discuss a lasting political solution for the Darjeeling, Kurseong, and Kalimpong hills. This move aims to fulfil a major Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) promise made before the election.

On the final day of Shah's three-day visit to North Bengal, the meeting included West Bengal Chief Minister Suvenudh Adhikari, Darjeeling MP Raju Bista, and BJP representatives from the three hill constituen-



Union Home Minister Amit Shah along with West Bengal Chief Minister Suvenudh Adhikari and others during a meeting with different stakeholders and representatives of hill areas of West Bengal in Siliguri

cies: Noman Rai (Darjeeling), Bharat Kumar Chhetri (Kalimpong), and Sonam Lama (Kurseong). Also present were Bimal Gurung

and Roshan Giri from the Gorkha Janmukti Morcha, along with Man Ghising from the Gorkha National Liberation Front. Senior State

officials and ministers also joined the discussions.

The event carried strong symbolic meaning. August 22 marks the anniversary of the 1988 Gorkha Accord, which created the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council. Bista described it as "a historic day for the Gorkha community and for Darjeeling." He said the representatives spoke about the community's 40-year struggle, the loss of over 2,000 lives, violence against women, and the displacement of more than 5,000 people, along with issues affecting Darjeeling, the Terai, and the Doora. Chief Minister Adhikari then explained the state govern-

ment's position, after which Shah outlined the next steps.

GJM general secretary Roshan Giri told reporters that the Home Minister made it clear the resolution would be "a constitutional one." A committee led by Pankaj Kumar Singh, appointed by the Centre in 2025, will finalise the next proposal to submit to the Government of India. Bista also confirmed that a panel from the Ministry of Home Affairs, headed by Singh, will prepare the agreement.

For almost 40 years, the demand for a separate Gorkhaland State has influenced politics in the hills.

CONTINUED ON >> P4

Bulletproof shield for 52 UP leaders ahead of 2027 polls

PRAMOD KUMAR SINGH
■ New Delhi/Lucknow

Authorities in Uttar Pradesh have issued bulletproof jackets to 52 political leaders as part of enhanced security measures before the 2027 Assembly elections, according to sources familiar with the arrangements.

The recipients include Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Samajwadi Party President Akhilesh Yadav, and Bahujan Samaj Party President Mayawati. Additionally, 11 State ministers have been



provided with the protective equipment, including Sanjay Nishad, Nand Gopal Gupta 'Nandi', Om Prakash Rajbhar, and BJP leader Aparna Yadav. Further, security cover has

been extended to other BJP leaders, including Swatantra Dev Singh, Jaiveer Singh, and Mahendra Singh. The cost of each jacket is estimated at approximately ₹10 lakh.

The distribution occurred in two phases, with eight leaders receiving jackets in the first phase and 44 in the second. This procurement and allocation constitute part of a broader review of security protocols for political figures and prominent persons within the State.

In addition to the 52 leaders equipped with jackets, sources indicate that a total of 98 individuals across Uttar Pradesh will receive security under various categories.

CONTINUED ON >> P4

Delhi horror: Family dispute ends in engineer's murder

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

A matrimonial dispute between husband and wife over administering medications to their infant led to the killing of the former by several family members of the latter. A 31-year-old software engineer was reportedly assaulted and killed by members of his wife's family in the Nihal Vihar area of outer Delhi on Friday.

The deceased has been identified as Vinay Gupta, who was employed as a software engineer with a multinational corporation in Noida. He married a 31-year-old woman three and a half years ago, and

the couple has twin children, a boy and a girl, who are approximately 4.5 months old. The wife is a homemaker.

According to police reports, a disagreement arose between Gupta and his wife on the morning of the incident. Sources indicate the dispute centred on administering medication to one of the infants. Following the conflict, the woman contacted her family members, who subsequently arrived at the residence.

Family sources allege that around 11 am, six relatives from the wife's side-including her two brothers, sister-in-law, father, and an uncle-came to the residence



ostensibly to discuss issues in the marriage.

Gupta's mother stated she had temporarily stepped away

to prepare water and refreshments for the visitors when the assault occurred. Upon returning, she found her son being

attacked and attempted to intervene, pleading with the assailants to cease their actions. Despite her efforts, the beating persisted.

Family members further claim that the assailants strangled Gupta, forcibly brought him to the ground, and repeatedly struck and stomped on his chest, causing severe injuries to his lungs. They described the attack as a calculated conspiracy, alleging that CCTV cameras within the house had been disabled before the incident.

Gupta's father reportedly sustained a thumb fracture while attempting to defend his son. A neighbour later rushed Gupta to a hospital,

where medical professionals declared him dead.

Police confirmed that Gupta had sustained critical injuries that led to his death. A case has been registered under Sections 103(1) (murder) and 3(5) (common intention) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

Four individuals have been detained-identified as wife, her two brothers, and her sister-in-law-currently being interrogated regarding their roles in the incident. A forensic team examined the scene and collected evidence. The corpse has been sent for post-mortem examination to establish the precise cause of death.

CONTINUED ON >> P4



Student death leaves IIT Delhi campus in shock

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

A student pursuing a Master of Science in Physics at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi tragically died on Saturday morning following an alleged fall from a multi-storey building on the institute's campus. The incident has prompted widespread shock and concern among the student body, prompting reflections on mental health and well-being amid academic pressures.

According to an initial investigation conducted by officers from the Kishangarh police station, the deceased entered the IIT Delhi campus via the main gate at approximately 8 am. He proceeded to the Lecture Hall Complex, took an elevator to the sixth floor, and is believed to have fallen from the building's front.

CONTINUED ON >> P4



1984 Delhi murder case: Man held after four decades in UP

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

A 65-year-old man on the run for over four decades and wanted for a 1984 murder in Delhi has been arrested by the Crime Branch in Uttar Pradesh, police said on Saturday.

Police said they arrested Natthu, alias Natthulal, a Hardoi resident, on August 18 when he was travelling from his village to Farrukhabad, ending his more than 42 years of evading police in the case registered at the Janakpuri police station.

"The case relates to the murder of one Ashok Kumar, whose body bearing multiple knife injuries was recovered from a park in Vikaspuri during the night of May 23, 1984," Special Commissioner of Police (Crime Branch) HGS Dhaliwal said.

After the killing, police



established Bhabhuti Prashad, also from Sitapur, was involved. They arrested him and recovered the knife allegedly used in the crime. Police said Natthu, however, evaded arrest and remained untraced for more than four decades.

The Crime Branch took up the task of locating him, formed a team, and spent several months examining old case records and conducting field verification in

the Sitapur and Hardoi districts to establish the accused's identity, movements, and whereabouts, the officer said.

During verification in the Pali area of Hardoi, officers learnt that Natthu was alive and occasionally visited his native village. On August 17, a person matching his description was spotted in the village, following which surveillance was mounted. Acting on intelligence, the

team traced him near his village and apprehended him. According to police, Natthu and Prashad were friends, while the deceased and Prashad belonged to the same village. Police said the murder was allegedly triggered by a dispute after Kumar made sexual overtures towards Prashad's wife.

"On the night of the incident, Natthu and Prashad allegedly consumed liquor together at a park and subsequently killed Kumar in furtherance of their common intention," the officer said.

Police said while on the run, Natthu worked at wholesale vegetable markets at different locations in Uttar Pradesh and maintained a low profile. He never married and lived alone. Police said he had also been named in an FIR registered in Farrukhabad in 2005. Further investigation is underway.

Yamuna floodplain: SC overturns 2017 NGT order against Art of Living, directs refund of ₹5 crore fine

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Saturday set aside a 2017 order of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) holding Sri Sri Ravi Shankar's Art of Living Foundation responsible for the damage caused to the Yamuna floodplain due to its World Culture Festival held here in 2016.

The top court also directed the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) to refund the ₹5 crore environmental compensation deposited by the foundation.

A bench of Justices Satish Chandra Sharma and NK Singh held that there is ample material on record to show that the event site was already in a dilapidated condition prior to its handing over to the Art of Living Foundation.

"The material on record actually goes on to prove that damage, if any, cannot be attributed to the appellant....



"The impugned judgement dated December 7, 2017, is set aside, along with all consequential and interim actions taken against the appellant herein. The appellant is entitled to a refund of the amount of ₹5 crore deposited by it to the DDA, in compliance of the tribunal's order dated March 9, 2016. The same shall be refunded by the DDA within four weeks from today," the bench said.

The apex court's order came on an appeal filed by Vyakti Vikas Kendra India, associated with the Art of Living

Foundation, challenging the NGT verdict.

Based on a committee report, the NGT had directed the Art of Living Foundation to deposit ₹5 crore, noting that the event had caused damage to the floodplain.

The top court said the tribunal got swayed by the expert committee's report that massive preparatory work was going on at the site and went on to conclude that by undertaking such work, the appellant had severely damaged the floodplain.

"This conclusion was

reached by the tribunal without examining the contemporaneous evidence regarding the pre-existing damaged condition of the floodplain and the conspicuous failure of authorities to implement its earlier judgement in the Yamuna matter.

"Moreover, the finding was based on a report which was of a sweeping nature and was based on a subjective assessment of the members," the bench said. The court also slammed the DDA for granting permission to hold the event on an active floodplain and directed it to continue the work towards the rehabilitation of the Yamuna floodplain, as directed by the NGT.

"The manner in which permission was granted by the DDA to hold the event on an active floodplain of the river cannot be approved. It was not only avoidable but was also not consistent with the precautionary principle and the doctrine of public trust.

₹75 lakh daylight robbery cracked; six men, two juveniles held

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

A woman was tied up, gagged and held at knife-point inside her Ashok Vihar home as a gang of robbers ransacked the house for nearly half an hour, but a month-long recce and a carefully planned escape came undone after police tracked the suspects across Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab.

Six men and two juveniles have been apprehended in connection with the August 19 daylight robbery in which around ₹75 lakh in cash and valuables were allegedly looted, with police recovering ₹51.52 lakh and three mobile phones worth around ₹2.33 lakh, an officer said on Saturday.

Police said one of the

minors emerged as the alleged mastermind. The juvenile, they said, used to work with the victim's husband but was fired for financial misconduct. For this, he held a grievance against him.

It also came to light that the same juvenile was previously involved in a 2023 murder case registered at Ashok Vihar police station.

According to the police, the robbery took place around 11:35 am on August 19 at the residence of 54-year-old Neera Verma in Ashok Vihar. Her husband Manoj Kumar had left for his factory around 9 am, while their twin daughters left for their wholesale store in Chawri Bazar around 11:30 am.

Soon after the daughters left, Verma heard the lift



arrive at her floor. When she opened the door, she found two men near the staircase. They asked her for drinking water. Sensing something suspicious, she refused and tried to close the iron gate. The two men allegedly forced it open, dragged her inside and overpowered her.

One of them took her to a room and tied her legs with her chunni. The other allegedly pulled out a knife from a backpack and threatened her.

Two more associates then entered the house, one carrying a bag and another armed with a knife. The accused allegedly used brown packing tape to bind the woman's hands and feet and gagged her to prevent her from raising an alarm.

While one accused stood guard over her, the others searched the house for nearly 20 to 25 minutes and packed cash and valuables into their bags.

The money allegedly included business earnings and savings kept for the marriage of Verma's daughters. The robbers also took handbags and clutches containing personal documents and additional cash before fleeing, the officer said.

Police said the accused had conducted reconnais-

sance of the house and the family's movements for nearly a month. A final recce was allegedly conducted a day before the robbery.

Police also found that some of the conspirators stayed at a hotel in Sawan Park to assess the situation and finalise their plan. They had initially attempted to gain entry by posing as delivery boys but later abandoned the attempt.

After the robbery, the accused deliberately dispersed in different directions to evade detection. A portion of the cash was taken to Deepak's residence in Dilshad Garden, where the proceeds were divided among the conspirators. Later, some travelled to Amritsar and Ghaziabad, while others stayed in Delhi.

Real celebrates the beautiful bond of siblings this Raksha Bandhan with 'Real Greetings'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Real, packaged fruit juice and beverage brand from Dabur India Ltd, celebrates Raksha Bandhan with its latest campaign, 'Real Greetings'.

The campaign features a digital film capturing the love, banter and support between siblings. From bickering and teasing to affection and quiet support, the film highlights how siblings may not always express love in words, but are always there for each other.

Mayank Kumar, Vice President Marketing, Dabur India Ltd, said: "With 'Real Greetings', we wanted to celebrate a bond that is felt in a glance, a smile and a gesture."

Monisha Prasher, GM Marketing - Foods & Beverages, Dabur India Ltd, said: "'Real Greetings' celebrates expressions of love that make the sibling bond special." The campaign is being amplified across digital platforms, inviting consumers to share their messages and memories.

151 held in four-day crackdown on street crime in east Delhi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Delhi Police has arrested and apprehended 151 people during a four-day enforcement drive in east Delhi targeting street crime, illegal arms, drugs, gambling and other criminal activities, an officer said on Saturday.

"Operation Aaghat" was conducted from August 17 to 20 across the district, with police teams carrying out intensive patrolling, vehicle checking, surveillance and CCTV-based investigations, a



senior police officer said. Twenty-nine cases were registered under the Arms Act and 29 people arrested, with police recovering pistols, country-made firearms, 11 live cartridges and 21 knives. Police also registered 32

cases under the Gambling Act and apprehended 63 people, recovering Rs 23,131, the officer said.

Four people were arrested in four cases registered under the NDPS Act, leading to the recovery of 1.199 kg of charas and 532 grams of cannabis. Twenty cases were registered under the Excise Act, resulting in the arrest of 20 people.

The drive also led to the recovery of 27 motorcycles and scooters and the detection of 16 motor vehicle theft cases.

कार्यालय अधिशासी अभियन्ता, केन्द्रीय भण्डार, उत्तराखण्ड जल संस्थान, जल भवन, बॉ, ब्लाक, नेहरू कालोनी, देहरादून
पत्रांक:-535 / ई-निविदा / 2026-27 दिनांक:- 22.08.2026

ई-निविदा सूचना

उत्तराखण्ड जल संस्थान की ओर से केन्द्रीय भण्डार, देहरादून द्वारा निम्न कार्यो हेतु ई-निविदा, टू-बिड सिस्टम (तकनीकी बिड एवं कार्मिशियल बिड) आधार पर निम्नानुसार आमंत्रित की जाती है।

निविदा सं.	कार्य विवरण	घरोडर धनराशि रु.	ई-निविदा प्रस्तावित करने की तिथि एवं समय	उपरोक्त करने की प्रारंभ एवं अंतिम तिथि एवं समय	तकनीकी बिड खोलने की तिथि एवं समय	निविदा की वैधता	बि-बिड मीटिंग की तिथि एवं समय
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
09/26-27		1,33,000.00	25.08.2026 from 11:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.	02.09.2026 from 11:00 a.m. to 09.09.2026 upto 5:00 p.m.	10.09.2026 upto 5:00 p.m.	11.09.2026 at 11:00 a.m.	90 days at 11:00 a.m.
15/26-27		2,24,000.00	25.08.2026 from 11:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.	02.09.2026 from 11:00 a.m. to 09.09.2026 upto 5:00 p.m.	10.09.2026 upto 5:00 p.m.	11.09.2026 at 11:00 a.m.	90 days at 11:00 a.m.

ई-निविदा से सम्बन्धित समस्त जानकारीयें व शर्तें उत्तराखण्ड की वेबसाइट www.uktenders.gov.in एवं विमागीय वेबसाइट <http://ujs.uk.gov.in> पर ऑन लाइन देखी / प्राप्त की जा सकती है। अधिशासी अभियन्ता

ARMY PUBLIC SCHOOL, SRINAGAR BB, CANTT., BATWARA (J&K)- 190004 Website: www.apssrinagar.co.in

TENDER NOTICE

1. On behalf of the Chairman APS, Srinagar sealed two bid quotations separately i.e Technical and Commercial bids are hereby invited from experienced vendors for supplying and installation of 11 units of Hot and Cold Air Conditioners of 1.5 tonnage in the classrooms of Foundation Wing Army Public School, BB Cantt, Srinagar alongwith stabilizer and full electric wiring complete job duly fitted with main electric board of school.

2. The Tech Bid should contain the details of Company, valid GST Registration Certificate and PAN Card. Technical specifications of the proposed 1.5 Ton Hot & Cold ACs , including make/ model, warranty and after-sales service. Details/ specifications of the proposed stabilizers.

3. The vendors are requested to visit the site mandatory before submitting their quotation in order to see the actual site and scope of work for the electric fitting work & complete installation process. The school reserves the right to cancel the call for quotation without assigning any reason. The last date for submission of quotations is **01 Sep 2026**. For any query contact during all working days between **10 a.m. to 03 p.m at 0194-2468224**.

Sd/- Principal

PUBLIC NOTICE

General public is hereby informed that my client, **VIKRAM KUMAR** son of Shri Arun Kumar Prasad alias Arun Kumar, resident of F-11, Block-F, Radhey Puri, Krishna Nagar, Delhi, do hereby notify for Public at Large that he is executing the Will Deed of Late Shri Arun Kumar after his death who expired on dated 18/04/2026, in favour of Mr. Vikram Kumar, any person/s have any objection/claim (s) interest for the Will deed registration of aforesaid Will of Late Shri Arun Kumar, may contact the undersigned within 03 days from the publication of this notice. Calling which the claim of any of such person will be considered to have been waived and/or abandoned and the Will Deed shall be registered and application with immediate effect.

KARTIK SRIVASTAVA Advocate, Delhi High Court (D-2802/2020)

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Follow us on [@SCoRailway](https://www.scor.indianrailways.gov.in)
Website: www.scor.indianrailways.gov.in

TENDER NOTICE No: VSKP-TRS-RT-08-2026-27

For and on behalf of the President of India, the undersigned invites E-Tender for the following works.

(i) Name of work with its location: Dismantling, Overhauling, Cleaning, assembling, testing, inspection & exterior painting of 1750 LPM Main compressor of three phase electric locomotives for a period of three years at EL/SVSKP. (ii) Value of Tender: Rs. 91,58,855.76/- (iii) Earnest Money to be deposited: Rs. 1,83,200/- (iv) Cost of Tender Form : Rs. 5,900/- (v) Address of the office: Sr. Divl. Electrical Engineer (TRS), Electric Loco Shed, South Coast Railway, NAD Post, Visakhapatnam-530009 (vi) Completion period of the work: 3 years (36 months) (vii) Bidding system: Two packet system (e-tendering) (viii) Tender closing date and time: 15.09.2026 at 15.00 hrs.

Website particulars: <http://www.irops.gov.in>
Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (TRS), SCoR-A248 Visakhapatnam

For further tender conditions/ details and for downloading the tender documents. Please visit website at <http://www.irops.gov.in> www.scor.indianrailways.gov.in

Public Notice

This is to inform the general public that Mrs. Heena Bano is the owner of the Property/Plot no. 2-A/32, B.P. NIT, area measuring 54 Sq. Yds., Situated at Urban within MC Limit, Old City, Village Badkhal, Tehsil Badkhal, District Farrukhabad, Haryana through Sale Deed dated 29.07.2026 as doc. no. 3353 executed by Mr. Mukesh Kumar in favour of Mrs. Heena Bano in respect of said plot.

Mrs. Heena Bano is in the process of mortgaging the said plot with SBI India Credit Co. Ltd. Any objections or concerns regarding this transaction should be raised within a period of 7 days from the date of this public notice. Any objections submitted after the completion of this 7-days period will not be considered binding with respect to the said property or the interests of our client.

If anyone wishes to raise an objection, please do so within the stipulated 7-days period by contacting Last Verifier/Notary (Advocates & Legal Consultants) at Office No. 11, 1st Floor, Building No. A-44/A, Sector-65, Noida, Uttar Pradesh-201301. Landline: +9102-04499731, e-mail: accounts@lnorth.in

Form No. INC-26
(Pursuant to rule 30 of the Companies (Incorporation) Rules, 2014) Advertisement to be published in the newspaper for change of Registered office of the company from one state to Another Before the Central Government Northern Region

In the matter of sub-section (4) of Section 13 of Companies Act, 2013 and clause (a) of sub-rule (5) of rule 30 of the Companies (Incorporation) Rules, 2014 AND

In the matter of M/S ALTROCRYPT PRIVATE LIMITED having its registered office at Plot No. S-258 Basement Greater Kailash-1, Greater Kailash, South Delhi, New Delhi, India, 110048. Petitioner

Notice is hereby given to the General Public that the company proposes to make application to the Central Government under section 13 of the Companies Act, 2013 seeking confirmation of alteration of the Memorandum of Association of the company in terms of the special resolution passed at the Extra ordinary general meeting held on 21/08/2026. Plot No S-258 Basement Greater Kailash-1, Greater Kailash, South Delhi, New Delhi, India, 110048 to enable the company to change its Registered Office Shifted from the territory of Delhi to the territory of Bihar, ROC: Patna, and Shifted to the State of Bihar, ROC: Patna.

Any person whose interest is likely to be affected by the proposed change of the registered office of the company may deliver either on the MCA-21 portal (www.mca.gov.in) by filing investor (vi) complaint form or cause to be delivered or send by registered post of his/her objections supported by an affidavit stating the nature of his/her interest and grounds of opposition to the Northern Regional Director at the address B-2 Wing, 2nd floor, P-1, Decadentay Antyodhya Bhawan, New Delhi, CGO Complex, New Delhi-110003 , within fourteen days of the date of publication of this notice with a copy to the applicant company with a copy of the applicant company at its registered office as mentioned below:

For and on behalf of the ALTROCRYPT PRIVATE LIMITED AMBIDIPAR KARTIK SRIVASTAVA Director and Shareholder (DIN: 09149373) Place: New Delhi ARUN KUMAR SHARMA Date: 23.08.2026 Director and Shareholder (DIN: 10347480)

THE SIRSA CENTRAL COOPERATIVE BANK LTD: H.O. SIRSA

CORRIGENDUM
SHORT TERM RE-TENDER NOTICE

Sr. No.	Name of Work	Start Date & End Date	Opening of Technical & Financial Bid
1	Supply and Installation of 29 computer set Approx Amt. Rs. 2900000/- Earnest Money Deposit Rs. 29000/-	21.08.2026 at 10.00 AM To 08.09.2026 upto 05.00 PM	09.09.2026 At 12.30 PM

The Tender forms (non transferable) contains terms & conditions and specifications/job descriptions of the above mentioned work may be downloaded from website <https://etenders.hry.nic.in> and <https://sirsadccbb.bank.in>

**General Manager
CB Sirsa**

FORM G
INVITATION FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST
Blackberry Overseas Private Limited
Operating In Manufacturing and Trading of Bathroom Accessories
(Under Regulation 36A (1) of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (Insolvency Resolution Process for Corporate Persons) Regulations, 2016)

RELEVANT PARTICULARS

1. Name of the corporate debtor along with PAN/ CIN/ LLP No.	Blackberry Overseas Private Limited CIN : U51909DL2010PTC329742
2. Address of the registered office	G-11, North Square Mall Netaji Subhash Place, North West, New Delhi, Delhi, India, 110034
3. URL of website	N/A
4. Details of place where majority of fixed assets are located	WZ-60, Mukham Garden, Ram Nagar, Tilak Nagar, New Delhi - 110018
5. Installed capacity of main products/ services	-Trading of home décor, lights, sanitary ware products along with involved in undertaking solid waste management work contracts (The above information is as per the information received from suspended management of CD)
6. Quantity and value of main products/ services sold in last financial year	Nil (Company is not operated since 2024)
7. Number of employees/ workmen	Nil (Company is not operated since 2024)
8. Further details including latest available financial statements (with schedules) of two years, lists of creditors, relevant dates for subsequent events of the process are available at	Detail can be sought by emailing to: cirp.blackberry@gmail.com
9. Eligibility for resolution applicants under section 25(2)(h) of the Code is available at	07.09.2026
10. Last date for receipt of expression of interest	17.09.2026
11. Date of issue of provisional list of prospective resolution applicants	22.09.2026
12. Last date for submission of objections to provisional list	02.10.2026
13. Date of issue of final list of prospective resolution applicants	07.10.2026
14. Date of issue of information memorandum, evaluation matrix and request for resolution plans to prospective resolution applicants	07.11.2026
15. Last date for submission of resolution plans	cirp.blackberry@gmail.com
16. Process email id to submit EOI	Registration Number: UDYAM-DL-04-0002632 Enterprise Type: Small Date of UDYAM Registration: 18.11.2020
17. Details of the corporate debtor's registration status as MSME	Sd/- (Bhavna Bansal) IBBI Reg. No. IBBI/PA-001/IP-P-02716/2022-2023/14150 Resolution Professional for M/s Blackberry Overseas Private Limited Address: E-9/23, LGF, Vasant Vihar, New Delhi-110057. E-mail id: bhavnanbansal@yahoo.com Date: 23.08.2026 Case Specific Email ID: cirp.blackberry@gmail.com Place: New Delhi Mobile No: +91-9212016744

Public Notice

Notice is hereby given on behalf of Mr. Uday Prakash Pandey to inform the public at large that Mr. Uday Prakash Pandey is purchasing the Flat No.202, Second Floor (RHS), without roof rights, measuring 75 sq. yards., on Property No. RZF-125B, Kharsa no.88/911, village Palam, colony Mahavir Enclave, New Delhi-110045 from Mrs. Neelam & Mr. Sumit Kumar who became the owners through Sale Deed dated 21.05.2018 (Doc. no. 5152). Now, the said property is to be financed and mortgage by Aditya Birla Housing Finance Ltd., Noida. That, Original Sale Deed dated 08.10.2018 executed by Mr. Amit Jain & Mr. Ramesh Kumar Aggarwal in favour of Mrs. Banani Datta & Mr. Piyush Kant Datta, vide Doc. No.12487, Book No.1, Vol. No.5570, pages 143-147, dated 08.10.2018, SR-IX, New Delhi has lost and FIR also lodged vide FIR dated 20.08.2026, LR No.555213/2026, Delhi Police. So, to comply the requirements of BANK/NFEC, we give this public notice that if any Person having any type of claim/right/interest/creating mortgage over the said property, may inform in writing, at the address mentioned below, about his objections, within 15 days from today, failing which it shall be presumed that the said property is free from all type of Encumbrances, except.

Lucern Legal LLP
B-93B, Second Floor, Opp. SBI Bank Sector 2, Noida, UP-201301>Contact No: 020-4269373

I, Pankaj Singh, R/o D103, Ajnara homes, sector 16 B, Noida extension, Gautam Budha Nagar, 201306, Uttar Pradesh have changed my name to Pankaj Kumar Singh for all purposes.

Civic body plans heritage status for Mughal-era sarai

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Beneath the Modi Mill flyover on Delhi's Mathura Road, amid traffic and concrete, a forgotten ruin may hold the remains of an 18th-century sarai built by a Portuguese woman who once occupied an extraordinary position in the Mughal court. It is an unlikely setting for a building of such history. Inside a green space maintained by the PWD beneath the flyover, sections of walls, an arched opening, fragments of an old building and a well that still holds water are all that may remain of "Sarai Juliana", an 18th-century travellers' inn built by Dona Juliana Dias da Costa.

Dr Aqil Ahmed, member secretary of the MCD's Heritage Cell, identified the ruins as the possible remains of the sarai and said the civic body is planning to notify the structure as a heritage site.

Such recognition could give official status to a monument

whose name has survived in Sarai Julena, the urban village in southeast Delhi's Okhla, even as the sarai itself was believed to have disappeared.

Historical research records that Juliana built the sarai in Okhla in 1720, during the reign of Muhammad Shah "Rangeela", as a rest house for European travellers. The account appears in Juliana Nama, a book by former National Museum director Raghuraj Singh Chauhan and archivist Madhukar Tewari, who traced Juliana's life through French, Portuguese, Persian and Urdu sources.

The location is the first piece of the puzzle.

Long before Mathura Road became an urban highway, it was part of the overland route connecting the north-western frontier to the Mughal heartland. Developed under Sher Shah Suri, the route was known as the Sadak-e-Azam, or Great Road. It ran through Peshawar, Lahore, Delhi and Agra towards Bengal, later



Ruins of the wall believed to be part of Sarai Julena, an 18th-century travellers' inn that once stood along the route through Delhi

forming the basis of the Grand Trunk Road.

"For someone travelling in the 17th or 18th century, this was a journey across a vast and connected world. Travellers and caravans crossed the Khayber route towards Peshawar and Lahore

before moving towards Delhi and Agra. Merchants, soldiers, officials, pilgrims and European travellers used the road network, carrying goods and possessions over distances that today are covered in hours but then took days," Ahmed said.

The road was supported by wells, trees, kos minars and sarais where travellers and their animals could stop.

"That is why the sarais were built on the main road. People travelling long distances needed a place to stay, and they also needed a place for

their animals," Ahmed said.

He said the structure was a substantial establishment with at least 15 rooms, separate areas for animals and different kitchen arrangements for vegetarian and non-vegetarian travellers.

A circular well a short distance from the ruined walls provides another clue. "The upper portion has been repaired with cement and covered with a metal grille, but the old lining survives and water can still be seen below. Hence, the well is one of the most important identifying factors," Ahmed said.

The remains also contain Lakhori bricks — small, thin and flat bricks widely used in Mughal-period construction — along with irregular pieces of stone.

Ahmed said the surviving construction and old arch indicate that the original building was considerably larger.

"The arch work came from these bricks," he said.

The structure belonged to a

chain of important stopping places around Delhi. Arab ki Sarai, beside Humayun's Tomb, is among the best surviving examples, while Sarai Kale Khan was another important stop on the southern approach. Azimganj Sarai, now inside the Delhi Zoo, also survives.

"Other sarais, including those associated with Lado Sarai and Katwaria Sarai - the urban villages in south Delhi - were situated away from the main arterial route and therefore did not occupy quite the same position as establishments on the main road," Ahmed said.

Juliana's choice of location was therefore practical as well as strategic. By then, she had acquired unusual access, wealth and influence in the Mughal court. The woman behind the sarai is considerably harder to place at the beginning of her life.

Juliana Nama records conflicting accounts of her origins. One theory places her family

among Portuguese prisoners captured at Hooghly after Shah Jahan's attack in 1632; another connects them with Cochin; a third suggests that Juliana was associated with a Portuguese surgeon who came to the Mughal court.

What the book does establish is the remarkable position she eventually occupied.

A Christian Portuguese woman with medical knowledge, Juliana treated women of the royal household and was entrusted with the education of royal children, becoming a link between the Portuguese and Mughal courts.

Among the princes whose education was entrusted to her was Muazzam, Aurangzeb's second son and the future Emperor Bahadur Shah I. According to Juliana Nama, Juliana was 17 and Muazzam 18 when she became his tutor. The authors write that the "seeds of a life-long affair were sown" between them.

Driver kills passenger with bricks over fare dispute in west Delhi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

A refusal to pay a fare of around ₹1,000 triggered a quarrel inside a van that turned fatal when a driver beat the passenger with bricks and an earthen-pot-like object before dumping the body on the roadside in the Naraina area here, police said on Saturday.

During questioning, accused Rajinder Kumar alias Annu, 59, told police that he picked up the deceased from IFFCO Chowk in Gurugram, Haryana, in the van on August 17, an officer said. According to police, the dispute broke out during the journey over payment of the fare, allegedly around ₹1,000.

The passenger allegedly refused to pay, leading to a quarrel inside the vehicle in West Delhi, police said.

Rajinder allegedly assaulted him with bricks and an earthen-pot-like object, inflicting fatal injuries, police said. After committing the crime, he called his wife, Kamini Makhija, 50, and son, Laksh Makhija, 28, to hide the body, police said.

The officer said the two allegedly assisted him in concealing the deceased's clothes and dealing with the vehicle used in the crime. All three were subsequently arrested on Friday night.

Police learned about the incident when the Naraina police station received a PCR



call about the body in the Naraina Vihar area, the officer said. Police reached the spot and found an unidentified man, aged around 35 years, lying naked and blood-stained on the pavement near the wall of a government school. Police said the man suffered a deep injury on the right side of his head, along with multiple body injuries. Blood scattered around the spot indicated a violent assault.

"Investigators also noticed a distinctive heart-shaped tattoo with an arrow on the victim's left forearm, bearing the names 'Anand' and 'Renu', which became an initial clue in establishing his identity," a senior police officer said.

The crime team and Forensic Science Laboratory team inspected the scene and collected evidence before shifting the body to Deen Dayal Upadhyay Hospital, where doctors declared him brought dead. After registering an FIR, police began the probe. Because the deceased's identity was

unknown and no eyewitnesses were apparent, police examined CCTV cameras installed around the crime scene and along roads leading to and from the area.

"Teams analysed around 500 CCTV recordings and noticed a Maruti Eeco moving suspiciously in the vicinity around the relevant time. The registration number was not initially clear, prompting police to track the vehicle through multiple cameras and reconstruct its route before and after the incident," the officer said.

Police eventually identified the vehicle as a Maruti Eeco and traced and apprehended its owner, Kumar, a resident of Naraina village.

Police recovered the van at the instance of Kumar's wife Kamini, while they recovered the deceased's clothes and shoes following information provided by his son, Laksh. Police said they are examining the vehicle as an important piece of evidence to establish the sequence of events leading to the killing and disposal of the body.

Construction underway for skywalk, FOB at Madhuban Chowk

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Construction of a skywalk and Foot Over Bridge (FOB) is underway at Madhuban Chowk to provide pedestrians with a safe and convenient way to move around the area.

The project, being developed by the Public Works Department (PWD) along the Outer Ring Road at a cost of ₹9.62 crore, is 60 per cent complete and is targeted for completion by November 30, 2026. Once completed, it will make movement between the metro stations and Rohini District Court more convenient and also help ensure smoother traffic flow on the Outer Ring Road.

According to Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, the skywalk-FOB will provide safe pedestrian connectivity between Pitampura Metro Station,



Madhuban Chowk Metro Station and Rohini District Court. It will make movement between these key locations easier for metro passengers, advocates, court staff, people visiting the court and local residents.

The facility is being built to enable pedestrian movement at a level



separate from the road. Once completed, pedestrians will not have to cross the busy Outer Ring Road at road level, improving their safety and reducing conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles.

A dedicated pedestrian route at Madhuban Chowk will also help improve traffic flow and reduce

congestion. The project will provide a safe and convenient pedestrian facility in an area where there is currently no grade-separated facility for crossing the road.

The chief minister said that with the opening of the Madhuban Chowk Metro Station, the facility will help improve connectivity between the metro network and important destinations in the surrounding area, while also strengthening last-mile connectivity. A safe pedestrian route between the metro stations and nearby destinations will also encourage greater use of the metro and promote sustainable, public transport-based mobility.

She said the Madhuban Chowk project is an important step towards safer pedestrian movement, better metro connectivity and stronger last-mile connectivity.

Individual TOD plots can be converted to freehold under MPD

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

An individual plot identified in the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) corridor can be converted into freehold under the Master Plan of Delhi (MPD)-2047, in a bid to encourage private-sector participation, among other objectives.

The freehold status accords absolute and complete ownership of the land in question and also of the structure upon it, as opposed to the lease model under which a governing authority, such as the DDA, would retain the ownership of the land while allowing its use by the leaseholder.

As per the master plan, the

entire TOD zone shall be declared as a Development Area to fast-track the approval of projects in the corridor.

"Individual plots forming part of a consolidated TOD plot, held on a leasehold basis, shall be deemed freehold, except institutional plots on leasehold, subject to clearance of all dues," the Master Plan of Delhi (MPD) states.

The Delhi Development Authority (DDA) shall be the nodal authority for approval of TOD projects and sanctioning of building plans, it adds. Many properties in Delhi are currently on a leasehold basis, which means ownership belongs to the DDA. But the MPD-2027 paves the way



for freehold ownership, free from leasing.

In a major push towards planned expansion, the Master Plan for Delhi-2047 proposes Land Pooling framework to facilitate integrated and infrastructure-led development of nearly 200 sq. km of Delhi's Urban Extension areas. The plan envisaged

road network of around 600 km, providing the backbone for connectivity and planned development across Land Pooling areas.

The new urban areas envisaged under the policy will provide for schools, health-care facilities, parks and green spaces, commercial centres and other public amenities and infrastructure, ensuring that housing development is accompanied by facilities required for a good quality of life.

The master plan also introduces inclusive zoning, permitting a mix of activities within residential plots based on the Right of Way (RoW) of roads. This will encourage

the creation of vibrant and self-sustaining neighbourhoods by bringing housing, economic activities and essential services closer together.

Another important provision is high-density mixed-use development along Urban Extension Road-II (UER-II) in Land Pooling areas. The plan envisages an integrated mix of logistics and warehousing, commercial and institutional activities and affordable housing along this major connectivity corridor, creating new opportunities for housing, investment and employment and supporting Delhi's emergence as a future-ready global capital.

IIT Delhi MSc Physics student dies after allegedly jumping from sixth floor

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

A 31-year-old MSc Physics student at IIT Delhi died on Saturday morning after allegedly jumping from the sixth floor of a building on the institute's campus, police said. PanIIT Chairman Prabhath Kumar expressed condolences to the student's family, friends and the IIT Delhi community, while urging students and young professionals facing difficult periods to seek support.

"Every student and young professional should know that no academic setback, personal struggle or difficult phase has to be faced alone. There is always value in reaching out, speaking to someone you trust and seeking support," Kumar said.

"Our institutions and communities must work together to ensure that every young person feels heard, supported and valued. In this difficult moment, our thoughts are with the student's family, friends and the entire IIT Delhi community," he added.

PanIIT offered its condolences following the student's death and expressed solidarity with those affected by the incident.

At around 8.33 am on



August 22, the Kishangarh police station received a PCR call reporting that a student had jumped from a building at the IIT Delhi campus. Police personnel immediately reached the spot and shifted the injured student to the IIT Delhi campus hospital, where he was declared brought dead.

The crime team and Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) team were called to the spot for inspection and collection of evidence.

During the preliminary inquiry, police identified the deceased as a 31-year-old student of the M.Sc. Physics Department at IIT Delhi.

According to the inquiry, the student entered the IIT Delhi campus through the main gate at around 8 am. He subsequently went to the Lecture Hall Complex, took a lift to the sixth floor and allegedly jumped from the front side of the building towards the Lecture Hall Complex.



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CBC 16101/13/0004/2627

Women candidates suffer more due to paper leaks, MPSC aspirant tells Rahul Gandhi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Pune

A young Maharashtra Public Service Commission (MPSC) aspirant on Saturday told Congress leader Rahul Gandhi that women candidates suffer more because of exam-related malpractices as they have a "deadline" and face pressures of marriage and family.

Speaking at the Congress's youth outreach programme 'Chhatron Ki Goonj' here, she urged the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha to support a group of students demanding cancellation and re-conduct of an examination following a question paper leak.

Sharayu Chopde, who introduced herself as a pharmacist and MPSC aspirant,

said the examination was held on March 20-22, but students learnt that the paper had been leaked.

They approached MPSC officials and a complaint was filed, with the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) now probing the case, she said. "We want a fair examination, because all the students here study day and night," she said, adding that Pune is a hub of MPSC aspirants, as students from across Maharashtra come to the city to prepare for competitive examinations for Government jobs.

Paper leaks have a different impact on women students, because they already face pressure about marriage and family responsibilities, Chopde pointed out.



Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi during the 'Chhatron ki Goonj' event in Pune on Saturday

BJP backs Vande Mataram's legacy

BJP's resolution mentioned that the party will strongly oppose the Congress decision to limit Vande Mataram to two stanzas. It will protect the honour, dignity and legacy of the full six-stanza Vande Mataram. It will reaffirm the 1950 Constituent Assembly declaration and the law passed by Parliament in 2026 giving statutory protection to the National Song at par with Jana Gana Mana.

In a post on X, Nabin said, "The Bharatiya Janata Party strongly condemns and unequivocally opposes the decision taken by the Congress Working Committee on 19th August 2026 to reaffirm its 1937 resolution and restrict the singing of Vande Mataram to its first two stanzas at Congress programmes."

The BJP resolution comes after the Congress Working Committee (CWC) on Wednesday decided to abide by its 1937 resolution on Vande Mataram, saying only two stanzas of the national song would be sung at all party events henceforth. The BJP would oppose any attempt to subject the national song to "communal pressure, political appeasement or narrow vote-bank politics", Nabin said. "No compromise on the honour and legacy of Vande Mataram will be accepted for political convenience or appeasement," he added.

The party called upon citizens to remember the song's role in inspiring generations during the independence movement and rejected any reduction of its legacy to contemporary political calculations.

The resolution condemned and criticised the Congress Working Committee's decision of 19 August 2026 to reaffirm its 1937 resolution and restrict Vande Mataram to its first two stanzas at Congress programmes.

The Congress could not override constitutional institutions or laws of the country, the BJP said in the resolution passed at a meeting of its new office-bearers here. The ruling party announced that it would launch a campaign to spread the significance of Vande Mataram to every corner of the country. "To remind the Congress that a resolution of its Working Committee cannot override the constitutional institutions or laws of the Republic of India, and that a political compromise of 1937 cannot be elevated above the constitutional settlement of 1950 and legislation enacted by Parliament in 2026," it said.

The resolution said to affirm the constitutional and statutory status of Vande Mataram as established by the Constituent Assembly's 1950 pronouncement and reinforced by Parliament's 2026 amendment extending statutory protection to the National Song equivalent to that accorded to the National Anthem. To reject every attempt to subordinate the National Song to communal pressure, political appeasement or narrow vote-bank considerations.

The resolution said the party will bring before the public the historical context behind restricting Vande Mataram, including objections by the Muslim League and the politics of communal and separatist demands. It will take Mahatma Gandhi's statement to the masses, where he had described Vande Mataram as an "anti-imperialist slogan" linked to the "purest national sentiment."

BJP workers will run a nationwide campaign to take the history, meaning and national importance of Vande Mataram to every corner of the country. A special awareness drive will be held among the youth so that the full National Song is not forgotten and future generations understand its deep link with India's freedom, struggle and sacrifice. No compromise on Vande Mataram's honour will be accepted for political convenience, the resolution said.

PM meets new BJP office-bearers

Earlier in the day, BJP President Nitin Nabin met the office-bearers and constituted a dedicated team to engage Gen Z through Yuva Samvad, in a bid to strengthen its engagement with young people and voters across the country. BJP national president Nitin Nabin, national general secretaries Smriti Irani and Vinod Tawde, Gujarat

Peace along border areas prerequisite for good relations with China: Jaishankar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

India and China have an interest in maintaining a "stable" bilateral relationship, External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar said on Saturday while asserting that the State of the border would naturally determine the State of the ties.

The external affairs minister said India will have to do business with the entire world, including China, with confidence while continuing to stand its ground as it did along the frontier.

"I think we went through a particularly bad patch between the summer of 2020 and the autumn of 2024, and that was primarily an outcome of the situation in the border areas," he said at the Economic Times World Leaders Forum.

Jaishankar said that "at the end of the day, peace and tranquillity in the border areas is a prerequisite for good relations, and the State of the border, to a very large measure, naturally would determine the State of the relations." The external affairs minister said the countries are "very big economies" and both coun-



tries are markets to each other in many ways as well as part of a supply chain.

"The world is competitive. We must build up our strengths. We have to do business with the entire world. That includes China too. But it is important we deal with them confidently and we stand our ground as we have stood in the the border," he said.

Jaishankar's remarks came in response to a question on the State of India-China ties. India and China rolled out a series of measures in the last over one year to rebuild their relationship after it came under severe strain following the deadly Galwan valley clashes in 2020 and the subsequent military face-off that lasted for more than four years.

In October 2024, the two

sides firmed up a disengagement pact for Depsang and Demchok, the last two friction points in eastern Ladakh. Days after the agreement was finalised, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping held talks in Kazan and took a number of decisions to improve the ties.

In August last year, Prime Minister Modi travelled to the Chinese city of Tianjin to attend the annual SCO summit. PM Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping held extensive talks on the sidelines of the SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organisation) Summit.

Jaishankar also extensively delved into economic aspects of India-China relations. "In many ways, we are markets to each other. We are, you know, part of a

supply chain. They (China) industrialise much faster and much bigger and much earlier," he said.

The external affairs minister rued that India could have taken the opportunity to deepen manufacturing and industrialisation over half-a-century back. "I would also say, at a political level, at a strategic level, both of us have an interest in maintaining a certain, I would say, stable relationship," he said.

Jaishankar also said that India has taken up with China issues relating to businessmen facing visa problems. The external affairs minister said India must work on its strengths. "We develop our strengths, which unfortunately, as I said, from the 1960s for half a century we did not do. We have to make up for the shortcomings," he said. "I think a stronger, a more 'Atma-Nirbhar' (self-reliant) India, a more industrialised India, a stronger and a more manufacturing India will be able to actually compete with China as it will with other major countries of the world.

To a question on US-China relations that has been billed as G2, Jaishankar called for looking at it "with some caution".

Newborn dies, 2 injured after baby warmer catches fire in Chhindwara hospital in MP

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Bhopal

One newborn died and two others suffered burn injuries after a baby warmer caught fire inside the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) of Chhindwara District Hospital in the early hours of Saturday. The incident occurred around 2 am, when sparks from the filament of the warmer's heating unit reportedly triggered the fire while the three infants were inside the equipment.

Hospital staff immediately responded to the fire and used firefighting equipment to bring the flames under control. The three affected newborns were taken out of the warmer and provided primary medical treatment before being referred to Jabalpur for specialised care.

According to hospital officials, one of the injured infants was in critical condition and required surgery. As a paediatric surgeon was not available at the Chhindwara facility, the critically injured baby was shifted to Jabalpur Medical College. The infant later died during treatment. The other two newborns, who



also sustained burn injuries, were referred to Jabalpur for further treatment.

Civil Surgeon Kanchan Dubey said the hospital staff acted promptly after noticing the fire. She said the injured babies were given immediate medical attention before being transported to Jabalpur under medical supervision.

The incident occurred in the hospital's neonatal unit, where several newborns were undergoing treatment. Staff members immediately evacuated the infants from the affected area following the fire, preventing the situation from escalating further. The hospital administration has ordered an inquiry into the incident to determine the exact cause of the fire.

FROM PAGE - 1

counselling process, then why these kinds of delays and dilly-dallying every passing year.

"I am surprised the government has not woken up to the casualties of the system even after massive protests recently. Why is there such a lackadaisical approach by the stakeholders for this annual ritual? I remember watching the news when the Government said the Health Minister has personally reviewed the MCC process and this year everything will be done smoothly," Shikha said, sharing her experience as she has been on her toes by visiting the websites of the MCC as well as four States where she has applied for her daughter's admission in a medical college. A chartered accountant, she rued the fact that, being from Uttar Pradesh, she will have to forego any colleges here as there is no sign of any admission process.

Sources in the UP Government said that the delay is due to arm-wrestling between the Government and the private medical colleges over the fixation of the annual fees in medical and dental colleges, which range from Rs 11 lakhs to even Rs 25 lakhs per annum.

"There is still disagreement, and it is likely to be solved within this week," a State Government official said. UP is the lone State in India which opens its medical college seats to all-India aspirants, and there is no quota system like State, NRI or management.

JeM seeks recruits after Op Sindoor failures

Many terrorists were killed, and several training and command centres that had not been targeted before were damaged.

Since the operation, Azhar has mostly stayed out of the public eye, leading people to wonder about his health and whereabouts. Instead of letting this hurt the group, JeM and its allies have used Azhar's absence to strengthen their message. They show potential recruits his past speeches and writings, telling them that joining JeM and fighting for Azhar is the right response to India.

Officials say this approach works better than similar messages from leaders such as Hafiz Saeed of LeT or Syed Salahuddin of Hizbul Mujahideen (HUM) because Azhar's story connects more deeply with some people.

The propaganda campaign is happening both in Pakistan and among vulnerable groups in India. Security agencies have noticed more digital content, like audio and video clips and written messages, aimed at radicalising young people and rebuilding JeM's membership after Operation Sindoor. The goal is to recruit new members and keep the group active, even though many fighters have left and their usual bases have been disrupted.

The Indian authorities are closely monitoring these activities. Using personal grief in recruitment signals a shift from focusing solely on operations to employing emotional tactics. Officials warn that while JeM is not an immediate threat after last year's damage, there is still a risk of long-term radicalisation, stating that terrorist bases are now open to strikes by India on both a physical and an ideological level.

As the security agencies keep an eye on the growing propaganda campaign, their attention is still concentrated on disrupting the networks that aim to turn loss into a motive for violence. This incident shows that while the degradation of physical capabilities is only one part of counter-terrorism operations, it is equally important to counter and oppose the narratives that support recruitment, as stressed by sources in the intelligence agencies.

Amit Shah takes up BJP promise on Darjeeling...

Earlier arrangements, such as the DGHC in 1988 and the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) in 2011, did not bring lasting peace, economic growth, or political stability. During the 2026 West Bengal Assembly election campaign, Shah repeatedly promised a "permanent political solution" within the constitutional framework, without separating the hills from Bengal, and also

pledged development projects for North Bengal.

Support from the GJM played a key role in the election. BJP candidates backed by the party won all six Assembly seats in Darjeeling and Kalimpong districts. Last month, Gurung and Giri met Adhikari in Kolkata to push for early talks. Now that the same party leads both the Centre and the State, hill leaders are hopeful that long-standing issues such as teacher appointments, tea-garden wages and closures, transport problems, and the future of the GTA can finally be addressed alongside the main political question.

Officials said the talks focused on establishing a lasting administrative framework that respects local aspirations and adheres to the Constitution. While no final decision has been reached, forming the committee under Singh marks a clear next step after months of discussions with mediators.

During Shah's visit, security arrangements for the Siliguri Corridor, also known as the Chicken's Neck, were reviewed. However, the hill meeting was the main focus of political discussions in north Bengal and raised hopes among Gorkha organisations that a permanent solution could finally be reached.

As the Home Minister left for Delhi, hill leaders stressed that the process must be inclusive and transparent. After many rounds of unrest and temporary deals in the area, Saturday's discussions mark an important step toward renewed cooperation between the Central government, the State Government, and key stakeholders in the Darjeeling hills.

Student death leaves IIT Delhi campus in shock

Emergency services were immediately summoned, and the student was transported to the campus hospital, where medical personnel declared him dead upon arrival. A police control room call reporting the incident was received at around 8:30 am, prompting a rapid response from the police team. Crime scene investigators and forensic experts were dispatched to collect evidence and examine the scene. No suicide note has been recovered from the location; however, a mobile phone found in the deceased's pocket has been seized for further examination.

Preliminary examination revealed no injuries aside from those consistent with the fall itself. Authorities are in the process of obtaining the student's counselling records and other relevant academic and personal information from institute officials to assist in the investigation.

The circumstances leading to the incident are actively being examined. All available information is under verification, and the investigation remains in progress. News of the incident spread quickly throughout the IIT Delhi campus, casting a sombre tone across hostels, classrooms, and communal areas. Students expressed profound shock and collective grief, with many engaging in conversations about the challenges associated with intense academic environments, isolation, and the importance of mental health support.

Within hours, informal discussions among students highlighted an increasing awareness of mental health issues in high-pressure academic settings. Several students emphasised the need for stronger peer support networks, more accessible counselling services, and open discussions about stress management.

Groups of students gathered near academic buildings, sharing memories of the deceased and offering mutual support. Faculty members and senior students have begun promoting the available support systems, including the institute's counselling services, and encouraging individuals experiencing difficulties to seek help without hesitation. The incident has also prompted broader discussions on balancing academic excellence with emotional resilience, with many calling for sustained institutional efforts to prioritise student welfare.

Police sources confirmed that the student's entry onto the campus was in accordance with standard security procedures at the main gate. CCTV footage from various locations, including the Lecture Hall Complex, is expected to be integral to the investigation. The recovered mobile

phone will undergo analysis for recent communications and digital traces. Authorities have emphasised that the investigation is being conducted with sensitivity. Efforts are underway to obtain counselling records from the institute's support services to determine whether the student had been receiving psychological assistance. Academic performance, attendance records, and interactions with faculty and peers may also be reviewed.

At present, no family members or associates of the deceased have provided comments; officials have indicated that next of kin are being notified through official channels. The body has been transferred for post-mortem examination.

Senior officers have reiterated that, although the preliminary assessment suggests a fall from height, all potential factors are being thoroughly examined. The absence of a suicide note and the injuries consistent with a fall are noted, but investigators remain open to all possibilities pending further evidence analysis.

As of Saturday afternoon, the police and forensic teams continued their work at the scene. Statements from security personnel and staff present at the Lecture Hall Complex are being collected. The case has been registered at Kishangarh police station and is under the supervision of senior officers. Further updates will depend on post-mortem findings, digital forensic analyses, and reviews of institutional records.

In response to this tragedy, the student community at IIT Delhi remains in mourning. Many hope that the incident will lead to increased emphasis on mental health resources and fostering a supportive campus environment. Police have appealed to anyone with relevant information to come forward and assist with the ongoing investigation.

Bulletproof shield for 52 UP leaders ahead...

The provision of ballistic protection is considered an additional layer beyond conventional armed escorts and does not necessarily imply an upgrade in security classification.

Officials stated that the jackets were allocated based on existing security categories ranging from Y to Z+. This assessment coincides with a period of increased political activity ahead of the 2027 elections, during which parties have begun organisational preparations, including leadership appointments and evaluations of social dynamics and candidate profiles.

Distribution of the jackets has been extended across party lines, encompassing both the ruling and opposition factions. Security officials confirmed that the jackets are modern protective equipment intended for leaders expected to engage extensively with the public during the electoral period.

No official statement has been issued regarding the specific selection or the intelligence considerations that influenced the decision. Information regarding additional protective measures or budget allocations for these items remains unavailable from official sources. This initiative reflects ongoing efforts by state authorities to strengthen security arrangements for political leaders as the electoral calendar approaches.

"Further details on the complete list of recipients beyond those already identified, as well as any deployment of supplementary personnel or technological measures, will be provided by the relevant security agencies in due course," well-placed sources told The Pioneer.

Delhi horror: Family dispute ends...

Gupta's family indicated that the couple had a history of minor disputes and had sought amicable resolutions. They also alleged prior threats from one of the wife's brothers. Authorities are investigating the sequence of events that led to the violence, including witness testimonies and available surveillance footage. The incident has resulted in the loss of the children's father and underscores the tragic escalation of domestic disagreements into fatal violence. An ongoing investigation is in progress.

53% of bills passed in same session since 2024: PRS data

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Data compiled from sessions between 2024 and 2026 across both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha show that of the 64 bills introduced since this Lok Sabha was constituted, 34 or 53 per cent, were passed by both Houses in the session in which they were introduced.

According to an analysis of PRS' PRS Legislative Research data, the corresponding proportion was 33 per cent during the 16th Lok Sabha, when 63 of the 189 bills introduced were passed in the session of their introduction. It nearly doubled to about 62 per cent during the 17th Lok

Sabha, when 117 of the 190 bills introduced were passed in the same session, an analysis of PRS data shows.

The 18th Lok Sabha, however, began slowly on this count, according to records maintained by PRS, an independent, not-for-profit group that researches and tracks the functioning of Parliament and state legislatures. In the Budget Session of 2026, five of the 10 bills introduced completed passage through both Houses in the same session.

The trend was most pronounced in the Monsoon Session, which ended on August 13. Eleven of the 12 bills introduced were passed before the session ended.

The only one that remained pending was the Indian Statistical Institute Bill, 2026.

The Government's original legislative agenda had listed five new bills for introduction and passage and two pending bills for consideration and passage. But six of the 11 bills eventually passed by Parliament had not been listed for introduction in the original agenda.

Neither of the two pending bills listed on the Government's agenda for consideration and passage - the Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan (VBSA) Bill, 2025, and the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment (FCRA) Bill, 2026 - was passed.

The parliamentary com-



mittee examining the VBSA Bill has not yet presented its report, while the FCRA Amendment Bill was referred to a Joint Committee of the Parliament amid Opposition demands for its withdrawal.

stakeholders, a concern that the time spent discussing several Bills during the Monsoon Session attests.

As many as nine bills were cleared without any MP, other than the minister piloting them, speaking, according to PRS. Seven of the 11 Bills were passed in five minutes or less.

None of the 11 bills introduced in the Budget Session of 2024 was passed by both Houses during that session. The four bills introduced in the following Winter Session also remained pending at the end of the session.

The only bill to complete passage through Parliament in Winter Session 2024 was the Bharatiya Vayuyan

Vidheyak, 2024, which had been introduced in the previous Budget Session.

The pattern changed in 2025.

Of the five bills introduced in the Budget Session of 2025, three were passed during the same session. In the Monsoon Session of 2025, eight of the 13 bills introduced were passed within the session. The other five were referred to parliamentary committees.

The proportion rose further in the Winter Session of 2025, when seven of the nine bills introduced were passed during the session, while the remaining two were referred to committees.

This year's Monsoon

Session, held from July 20 to August 13, had 19 sittings. Lok Sabha functioned for only 15 per cent of its scheduled time, while Rajya Sabha worked for 33 per cent, amid repeated disruptions over the NEET-UG paper leak, police action against protesting students at Jantar Mantar and the alleged theft of donations from the Ram temple in Ayodhya.

Question Hour functioned for just one per cent of its scheduled time in Lok Sabha and 12 per cent in Rajya Sabha. In Lok Sabha, Question Hour was held for only nine minutes during the entire session, with two of the 380 listed questions answered orally, according to PRS.

J&K power tariff hiked by 6.8%; Opposition corners Omar Govt

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Jammu

Within hours of the Joint Electricity Regulatory Commission (JERC) for Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh approving an average 6.83 per cent hike in electricity tariffs for the Union Territory of J&K for FY 2026-27 (effective from September 1, 2026), Opposition parties issued a sharp reminder to Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, accusing him of failing to deliver on his party's election promise of 200 units of free electricity for consumers.

National Conference Member of Parliament Aga Syed Ruhullah was among those who questioned the Omar-led Government over the party's failure to implement its electoral promise of 200 units of free electricity.

Leaders belonging to the Bharatiya Janata Party, Peoples Democratic Party, Peoples Conference, and Apni Party also cornered the Government over delivering a high-voltage shock at this juncture.

Speaking to reporters,



Ruhullah said the National Conference had promised 200 units of free power during the elections, but it had not fulfilled the commitment even after two years. Instead of giving 200 units for free, nearly seven per cent is being increased," Ruhullah said.

Leader of Opposition in the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly Sunil Sharma said the NC had come to power with a clear promise of providing 200 units of free electricity to every household, but nearly two years after the 2024 Assembly elec-

tions, the commitment remained unfulfilled.

Instead, he said, consumers were now being burdened with higher electricity bills. This is not relief; it is a betrayal of the trust placed in the Government," Sharma said.

People's Conference leader Sajad Lone, in a post on X, said, People in Jammu and Kashmir will now have to pay more from their pockets for electricity. The regulator has approved a 6.83 per cent hike in power tariff and says it has avoided a tariff shock. It is definitely a shock for

those who were promised 200 units free in 2024 by the ruling party.

People's Democratic Party (PDP) leader Waheed Ur Rehman Para also criticised the decision.

In a post on X, Para said the tariff increase had come at a time when unemployment and inflation were putting pressure on households. He said ordinary families were already struggling with rising living costs and questioned the decision to increase electricity tariffs.

Para also referred to the ruling party's pre-election promises of 200 units of free electricity, free gas and free ration for the people.

"From free tariff promises of relief to higher bills, what happened to the promise?" Para asked in his post, while tagging Chief Minister Omar Abdullah's official X account.

Jammu and Kashmir Apni Party President Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari said only an insensitive Government can think of putting an additional burden on people by increasing power tariffs.

NIA raids 10 J&K locations in terror conspiracy investigation

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Jammu

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Saturday conducted searches at 10 locations across Srinagar, Kupwara, Anantnag, Pulwama and Budgam in connection with the investigation of a cross-border terror conspiracy involving Pak-based handlers and a network of local Over Ground Workers (OGWs) allegedly providing logistical and other forms of support to infiltrated terrorists.

According to official sources, the searches were aimed at securing further documentary, digital and material evidence relating to the conspiracy and at ascertaining the roles of persons allegedly associated with the local support network.

The case, arising out of FIR No. 0024/2026 of Police Station Zakoora, Srinagar, was subsequently re-registered by NIA as RC-02/2026/NIA/JMU under Section 23 of the UA (P) Act, 1967, Sections 7 and 25 of



the Arms Act, 1959, and Section 4 of the Explosive Substances Act, 1908. The case was initiated following the arrest of an OGW allegedly associated with the proscribed terrorist organisation Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) during the late-night hours of March 31, 2026 at a naka point, from whose possession a hand grenade and live ammunition were recovered.

During the investigation, Pakistani terrorists allegedly connected with the conspiracy were arrested, and the identities and alleged roles of members of the local support network were also ascertained.

The investigation conducted so far has indicated alleged linkages between

Pak-based handlers and local associates, who were allegedly being used for communication, logistical arrangements, movement and concealment of terrorists, provision of shelter, reconnaissance and other forms of facilitation.

The ongoing NIA investigation is also examining the financial trail, communication channels, movement of the accused, and the source of arms and explosives, with a view to establishing the complete network and the extent of its activities.

The searches conducted today form part of the continuing investigation into the larger conspiracy and the alleged facilitation mechanism supporting cross-border terrorism. Further evidence relevant to the investigation has been secured and is being examined and corroborated with other material collected in the case.

Official sources said NIA is continuing its investigation to identify all persons involved and ascertain their respective roles in the conspiracy.

Assam cab operators lift Meghalaya blockade

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Guwahati

Assam cab operators on Saturday suspended their blockade against Meghalaya-registered vehicles following assurances on safety after a ministerial-level meeting between the two States.

The decision was announced after a meeting between Assam Border Protection Minister Atul Bora and Meghalaya Deputy CM S Dhar, who had been entrusted by their respective Governments to resolve the crisis.

The crisis was triggered by attacks on Assam-registered vehicles during a students' rally in Shillong on August 19.

"We have decided to suspend the blockade for the time being," a cab operator said at the blockade site at Jorabat, after a meeting with Bora.

The Meghalaya Government has formed a Special Investigation Team to enquire into the violence of August 19. We will wait for its findings, he added.

BCI chairperson rejects Sadasiva Reddy's allegations

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Bar Council of India (BCI) Chairperson Manan Kumar Mishra on Saturday rejected allegations levelled against him by senior advocate and the bar body's co-chairman, YR Sadasiva Reddy, saying the charges have "no value" among lawyers and asserting that he is a man of "honesty and integrity".

In a letter dated August 22, Reddy called upon Mishra to resign within 15 days and sought a special meeting of the BCI, along with an independent audit of its accounts and the BCI Trust PEARL-First. The letter mentioned Reddy's designation as the bar body's co-chairman.

Reddy alleged that the statutory body has drifted away from the standards expected of it under Mishra's leadership.

In an interview, Mishra, however claimed that Reddy is no longer a member of the BCI as he did not contest the last bar council polls in his home State, Karnataka.

He said Reddy was a BCI member for eight years but did not raise such complaints during that time.

"Lawyers know me and know that I am an honest man. Manan Mishra is a man of honesty and integrity. YR Sadasiva Reddy was a member here. As of today, he is no longer a member of the state bar council. He did not have the courage to contest the state bar council election," Mishra said while responding to Reddy's allegations.

"If he had any such complaint, he should have raised it then. For the eight years that he was a member of the Bar Council of India, he did not raise his voice," he added.

In his letter, Reddy also crit-



BCI Chairperson Manan Kumar Mishra

icised Mishra over the BCI's now-withdrawn directive threatening to withhold the enrolment of the 2026 graduating batch of NALSAR University of Law students over a campaign concerning Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant.

Mishra, however, said he has the backing of the country's legal fraternity.

"As long as I have the support of the legal fraternity and the country's 2.5 million (25 lakh) lawyers, people like Sadasiva Reddy will come and go and continue making such statements on social media," he said.

Mishra was to address a press conference on Saturday afternoon over the allegations levelled against him by

Reddy. The press conference will now be held on Monday.

The demand for Mishra's resignation gained momentum following the now-withdrawn BCI order directing that the enrolment of the NALSAR University of Law's 2026 graduating batch as advocates be kept on hold.

The order was issued after some students objected to the CJI attending the university's convocation as the chief guest, but was withdrawn within hours following widespread backlash.

The controversy continued to fuel calls for Mishra's resignation, with Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) spokesperson Saurav Das publicly saying that "moral responsibility" required the BCI chairman to step down. Earlier, the CJP had also backed a protest call by the All India Young Advocates Association seeking Mishra's resignation.

Yes Bank loan row: EOW adds forgery charges against Valia

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Mumbai

The Mumbai Police Economic Offences Wing (EOW) has intensified its probe against businessman and Suraksha Asset Reconstruction Company (ARC) director Sudhir Valia in the Yes Bank-Sapphire Land Development case, informing a Mumbai court that Sections 420, 467 and 471 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) have been added against Valia and other accused.

The development was disclosed in a communication dated August 20, 2026, submitted before the 47th Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate at Esplanade Court, Mumbai.

The EOW said documents and other material received



from the Enforcement Directorate (ED) during its investigation had been examined and that, based on its findings, the additional IPC sections were incorporated into the FIR.

The original case was registered at Worli Police Station following a complaint by Lakhminder Dayal Singh, a suspended director of Sapphire Land Development Pvt Ltd, an HDIL-linked company. The FIR names former Yes Bank co-founder and CEO Rana Kapoor, Valia and other

bank officials over alleged irregularities in the assignment of a ₹150-crore Yes Bank loan and the subsequent transfer and sale of mortgaged assets.

According to the complaint, Sapphire Land Development obtained the ₹150-crore facility from Yes Bank's Nehru Centre branch in Worli in 2016 for a Virar real estate project. Properties and development rights offered as security were allegedly worth nearly ₹1,000 crore. The complaint alleges that despite a 36-month repayment period, recovery rights were transferred to Suraksha ARC within about 10 months, without proper NPA classification or an independent valuation of the underlying securities.

AYUSH should become part of lifestyle before illness: Minister

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Union Minister of State for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying SP Singh Baghel on Saturday called for integrating AYUSH systems into everyday life as a preventive healthcare measure, rather than relying on them only after illness occurs.

Addressing the second day of the 9th International Health and Wellness Expo (IHWE) 2026 at Bharat Mandapam, Baghel stressed greater coordination among modern medicine, Ayurveda, homeopathy and naturopathy to achieve a healthier India. "Where treatment ends, Ayurveda begins," he said, urging people to adopt AYUSH as part of a healthy lifestyle.

Baghel also expressed concern over rising screen time and late-night mobile phone use among young



Union minister SP Singh Baghel

people, saying excessive digital exposure was disrupting sleep cycles. He urged youth to exercise self-discipline and warned that unchecked screen time could create serious health challenges.

Highlighting India's traditional knowledge, Baghel said several ancient concepts once dismissed were now subjects of scientific research.

The minister also visited exhibition stalls and interacted with exhibitors. Technical sessions of the 18th Aarogya Sangoshthi subsequently focused on emerging cancer treatments, pain management, rehabilitation and multidisciplinary healthcare approaches. Doctors, policymakers and industry representatives participated in the discussions.

BJP plans 1-month campaign for PM's 25-year milestone

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The BJP on Saturday said that it will launch a month-long Seva Sankalp Abhiyan across the country from September 17 to mark the completion of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 25 years in public life as the head of the Government and his contributions.

During the nationwide campaign, the BJP will reach out to every section of society, including youth, women and farmers, through various programmes, party national general secretary Vinod Tawde said.

Every year, the BJP observes a fortnight-long Seva Pakhwada across the country to mark Prime Minister Narendra Modi's birthday on September 17. "Modi's personality is such that he is dedicated to service at every moment," Tawde said.

"As Modi is going to com-



plete 25 years (as the head of the Government) on October 17 this year, since he first took oath as chief minister of Gujarat on October 7, 2001, we decided to launch a nationwide month-long campaign, Seva Sankalp Abhiyan, keeping the significance of this 25-year milestone in mind," he told reporters at the party headquarters.

This month-long campaign will feature various activities centred around the "spirit of service that is so integral to

Modi's personality," the senior BJP leader added.

Tawde said that during the month-long Seva Sankalp campaign, the party workers will reach out to 14 lakh Anganwadi workers across the country to honour them for their contributions, organising Anganwadi Saman and Matru Samman programmes.

Other events to be organised during the campaign would include Seva Mein Mera Yogdaan and Rashtriya Innovation Challenge, espe-

cially for youth, he said.

"Under the Seva Setu Abhiyan, we are going to appeal to people, especially youth, to engage in social service activities and make reels for others to get inspiration to do such work," Tawde said.

He mentioned that they can make reels while undertaking social service activities, like cleanliness drives, tree plantation, connecting tuberculosis patients with the Government scheme that seeks to eradicate the disease.

Asked where such people will post their reels, the BJP leader said, "We will create a platform for that."

Tawde said that under the 15-day-long Seva Setu Abhiyan, the BJP workers will organise camps across all blocks to help enrol people in various Government welfare schemes, including Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi.

"Those who have been left out from availing the

benefit of the Government schemes, like the Ayushman Bharat scheme, for some or other reason, will be helped. They can come with papers and get enrolled," he added.

Tawde said a National Innovation Challenge will also be rolled out for youth across the country to promote innovation.

For successful implementation of the month-long campaign, the BJP organised a national-level workshop for party office bearers at party headquarters on Saturday, he said.

Similar workshops will be organised for party workers and office bearers across all states till August 31 so that they are ready for the roll-out of the month-long campaign from September 17, the BJP leader added.

Asked if there is any programme for Gen Z outreach during the BJP's month-long campaign, Tawde said, "We are connecting everybody under the Seva Sankalp Abhiyan."

States Focus



HISTORIC RULERS SHOULD BE VIEWED BEYOND CREED: KOVIND

Former President Ram Nath Kovind on Saturday paid floral tributes to ancient emperor Perumbidugu Mutharaiyar II and said historic rulers should be viewed beyond caste, creed and religion.

Also known as Suvaran Maran, Mutharaiyar II was an eighth-century monarch of the Mutharaiyar lineage who ruled parts of the Kaveri delta region, with strongholds around Tiruchirappalli, Thanjavur and Pudukkottai.

He was a powerful feudatory ally of Pallava king Nandivarman II and is regarded as a cultural icon by the Mutharaiyar community, which has a significant presence across central Tamil Nadu and the delta districts.

Speaking to reporters after performing a puja, Kovind said he felt privileged and honoured to pay respects to the monarch who had ruled the region centuries ago. "Every emperor is above community, caste, creed and religion. No one should associate any king with any religion, caste, community, region or language," Kovind said, underscoring the unifying legacy of historic leaders. (PTI)



RESERVATION CANNOT BE REMOVED: RAMDAS ATHAWALE

Union Minister Ramdas Athawale on Saturday said reservation is a "constitutional right" and described demands for its abolition as "unconstitutional".

Addressing a press conference here, the Union Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment said some people demanded an end to reservation, while others launched social media campaigns advocating its abolition. "Some people agitating at Jantar Mantar demanded the abolition of reservation, while others ran social media campaigns suggesting the same. However, reservation cannot be removed because it is our constitutional right," he said. (PTI)

Meghalaya Govt forms SIT to probe Shillong violence, identify culprits

TONY DAS
■ Guwahati/Shillong

The Meghalaya Government on Saturday said a Special Investigation Team (SIT) has been constituted to probe, identify and prosecute those involved in the August 19 violence, in which 16 people were injured, two vehicles were set ablaze and around 31 vehicles were damaged, officials said. This was informed during a high-level meeting between Assam and Meghalaya officials in Guwahati on Saturday. Rapid Action Force (RAF) of CRPF is deployed in tensed areas to maintain law and order, said Police.

Meghalaya Government also said five masked men involved in the violence and random attacks on Assam-registered tourist vehicles have so far been identified.

Police had registered 15 FIRs in connection with the violence and arrested three senior leaders of the Khasi Students' Union (KSU)—president Raymond Kharjana, vice-president Pynkmenlang Sanmiet and general secretary Reuben Najiar.

The three leaders were



CRPF and RAF teams conducted a flag march in Shillong city on Saturday PTI

arrested on the night of August 19 following the KSU's black-flag motorcycle rally, during which incidents of stone-pelting, assaults, vandalism and arson were reported at different locations in Shillong. They were subsequently sent to judicial custody.

The Government said the SIT would identify other persons involved in the violence, particularly those responsible for attacks on Assam-registered vehicles, and ensure their prosecution in accordance with law.

Several private vehicles were attacked during the KSU-sponsored rally seeking the state Government's attention on various issues, which include the cancellation of

the public hearing of Shree Cement Ltd in remote Daistong village in East Jaintia Hills district.

More than 3,770 Assam-registered vehicles have already been safely escorted out of Meghalaya into Assam, officials said.

The violence has triggered tensions between the two neighbouring states, with traffic movement between Assam and Meghalaya disrupted following protests and blockades at Jorabat.

The high-level meeting in Guwahati was held to discuss the prevailing situation and measures to restore normal movement and strengthen coordination between the two States.

Meanwhile, traffic movement to Meghalaya from Assam remained disrupted for the third day on Saturday as taxi drivers of Guwahati blocked multiple entry points to the hill State, protesting alleged attacks on Assam residents during a recent students' rally in Shillong.

An inter-state ministerial-level meeting is scheduled to be held at Guwahati during the day to find a solution to the impasse, with vehicles from Assam also being restricted from entering Meghalaya.

The Assam State Drivers' Union, among the cab-operators' and drivers' bodies leading the agitation, said it has extended its blockade of Meghalaya-bound traffic to the entry points of Rani, Boko, Hahim and Lampi Road.

The move comes after the Meghalaya Government issued an advisory for travellers to use these alternative routes.

The cab operators had already been blockading traffic at Jorabat and Khanapara areas, which serve as the main entry points to Meghalaya to reach its Capital, Shillong.

Bombay HC orders NTA to clear NEET candidate's result



PRAMOD KUMAR SINGH
■ New Delhi/Nagpur

The Nagpur bench of the Bombay High Court has told the National Testing Agency (NTA) to release the NEET-UG result for Atharva Donadkar, a student from Chandrapur. The court made this decision after the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) confirmed it found no evidence of wrongdoing by the student during its investigation into the NEET paper leak.

Atharva Donadkar took the NEET-UG exam on May 3, 2026. When a paper leak led to a re-test, he appeared for the exam again on June 21. After the CBI raided his home on May 15 as part of its investigation, his results were withheld. Investigators took study materials and a question paper with a different roll number during the raid.

After this, the NTA sent Donadkar a show-cause notice on July 15. He replied on July 17, saying the seized items were mock practice papers from his coaching institute and not linked to the leaked exam papers. Despite his explanation, the NTA continued to withhold his results, preventing him from joining Maharashtra's first centralised medical admission round.

Worried about losing an academic year, Donadkar went to the Bombay High Court for help. Justices Anil Kilor and Rajnish Vyas heard the case. After learning that the investigation found no link between Donadkar and the exam leak, the judges told the NTA to release his

results right away. This decision brings relief to a student who took both the original exam and the re-test. With medical counselling deadlines approaching, the court's order now allows Donadkar to proceed with the admission process.

The broader investigation into the NEET-UG 2026 exam leak is still ongoing. The CBI has filed a chargesheet against 13 people, including three subject experts connected to the NTA. The agency says it is looking into a group accused of sharing Physics, Chemistry, and Biology questions before the exam. As the inquiry continues, some students, named only as witnesses or found during searches, have asked the courts to release their results once they are cleared. The Donadkar case shows how big investigations can affect students who are not involved.

Even if no charges are filed, holding back results can hurt a person's career. The High Court's decision shows that suspicion alone is not enough to keep taking action if there is no evidence against someone. The NTA must release Donadkar's score so he can join the current counselling process.

Student groups and education experts have called the ruling a fair balance between maintaining exam integrity and protecting the rights of students not accused of wrongdoing. More updates on the main CBI investigation are expected soon.

Goa declares cancer a notifiable disease

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Panaji

Goa has declared cancer a notifiable disease across the state, making it mandatory for healthcare providers or laboratories to report it to Government authorities when they diagnose it, officials said on Saturday. The notification, issued by the State Public Health Department on August 20, will pave the way for systematic surveillance of cancer cases and data-driven planning of prevention, screening and treatment programmes, they said.

Welcoming the decision, National Organisation for Tobacco Eradication (India) president Dr Shekhar Sarkar called the move a "landmark



Representative image

ISTOCK

and much-needed public health decision" that could strengthen cancer control in the State.

Under the notification, cancer cases are required to be reported preferably within seven days and, in any event, not later than one month

from the date of diagnosis.

The reporting requirement covers Government and private hospitals, medical colleges, nursing homes, clinics, oncology and day-care centres, pathology and diagnostic laboratories, hospices, palliative care institu-

tions, and health and cancer screening programmes.

The Non-Communicable Disease Cell of the Directorate of Health Services (DHS) has been designated as the nodal authority for the surveillance programme. The DHS has also been tasked with establishing or designating a State Cancer Registry or State Cancer Surveillance System for compilation, validation, analysis and monitoring of notified cases.

Sarkar said a robust cancer surveillance mechanism would help the state understand the incidence and distribution of different cancers, identify populations that may be particularly affected and assess gaps in screening, diagnosis and treatment.

India needs to become laboratory of world, not just pharmacy: Anupriya Patel

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Ahmedabad

Union Minister Anupriya Patel on Saturday said India must evolve from being the "pharmacy of the world" to the "laboratory of the world" by leveraging artificial intelligence to discover drugs.

Addressing Healthcare Summit 2026 at the Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad, Patel noted that AI can serve as a force multiplier to overcome regional disparities and bridge the shortage of medical specialists.

The country is not going to be satisfied with the label of just being the pharmacy of the world; it now has the ambition of becoming the



laboratory of the world, which is why AI was necessary, the Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare said.

"We don't want the Indian pharmaceutical industry to keep on manufacturing medicines that have been discov-

ered elsewhere. It's been a long time. We've been hailed as the pharmacy of the world. We provide generic medicines and vaccines to countries around the world. We are fulfilling WHO's requirements, and India's capabilities are being applauded.

But now we need to move beyond that," she said.

Patel noted that there are many challenges in building a healthy India and achieving the goal of becoming a developed country by 2047, considering the population, diversity and geographical complexities.

Given India's vast and genetically diverse population, a treatment that may work well for one patient may not work as well for another, she said, adding that a 'one-size-fits-all approach' is not possible.

AI is required to provide "personalised" treatment to every single patient, and can be a 'force multiplier' in addressing many challenges, the Union minister said.

"So many areas in our country are still inaccessible. There are variations in access to healthcare because a lot of places are unreachable due to geographical complexities," she said.

Patel further pointed out that despite establishing new medical colleges and increasing PG (postgraduate) and UG (undergraduate) seats, there was a shortage of specialists and advanced diagnostic facilities, and a dual burden of communicable and non-communicable diseases.

"In the face of these multiple challenges, AI can be a force multiplier. It has the potential to help overcome these barriers and bring us closer to achieving health equity," she said.



GP Singh, IPS, DG CRPF, reviewed the Valediction Parade of the 77th RR Batch of the IPS officers at the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Police Academy, Hyderabad on Friday PIONEER PHOTO

Nagaland Student Federation slams NHIDCL over substandard road projects

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Kohima

Expressing severe concern over the poor quality of workmanship, prolonged delays, and gross negligence in the execution of highway infrastructure projects, the Naga Students' Federation (NSF) has lashed out at the National Highways & Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL) and demanded immediate blacklisting of defaulting contractors.

In a press statement issued from its headquarters, the NSF highlighted the deplorable condition of the upgraded 4-lane Dimapur-Kohima Road, pointing out that despite receiving a Completion Certificate in 2023, the stretch continues to suffer from collapsing side walls, inadequate drainage systems, missing slope protection measures, and an absence of timely repairs.

The student body noted that although the project falls under a five-year Defect Liability Period (DLP), NHIDCL has failed to execute mandatory maintenance. The federation also raised alarms over structural compromises on several bridges along the Dimapur-Kohima stretch, where four-lane bridge standards were allegedly disregarded.

"Public resources cannot continue to be squandered on projects that fail to meet even the most basic standards of safety, durability, and engineering integrity," stated NSF President Mteisuding and General



Secretary Kenilo Kent in the joint release. The NSF further noted that similar grievances regarding compromised construction quality have emerged from several other projects, including the Kohima Bypass Road, Kohima-Mao Road Upgradation, Akash Bridge-Jessami Road (NH-202), and the Peren-Dimapur Section (NH-129A).

Arunachal achieves 100% home electrification: CM

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Itanagar

Arunachal Pradesh has achieved 100 per cent home electrification and tap water provision, Chief Minister Pema Khandu said on Saturday and asserted that his Government aims to ensure that the benefits of schemes reach every household.

In a post on X, he said that by 2016, around 1.48 lakh homes in Arunachal Pradesh had electricity, accounting for only 49 per cent of the households in the State.

"Ten years later, the picture has completely changed. Today, 3.02 lakh homes have electricity. That is 100 per cent home electrification."

The chief minister said the expansion of drinking water coverage had been even more remarkable.

"In 2016, only 22,796 homes had functional tap connections. That is only 9.9 per cent. In 2026, this figure has reached 2,28,566 homes. That is 100 per cent coverage and 903 per cent exponential growth," Khandu added.



Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu

Death toll rises to 9 in Gujarat spurious liquor tragedy

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Bhavnagar

The death toll from the consumption of spurious liquor in Gujarat's Bhavnagar district rose to nine on Saturday after one more victim succumbed during treatment, while three others remain in critical condition, district officials said.

One of the victims, Hardik Kilji, died on the intervening night of Friday and Saturday, and out of 17 patients who are still undergoing treatment at the civil hospital and six other private facilities in the city, three remain in a critical condition, the district administration stated in an update.

As many as 17 patients, who consumed the liquor containing methanol, a highly toxic substance, have been discharged, while 18 others have sought medical consultation, it said.

Police have arrested 13 of the 21 accused named in the FIR registered at Vartej police



station in connection with the hooch tragedy.

Gujarat is a 'dry' state where the manufacture, sale and consumption of alcohol is banned.

According to police, the victims consumed spurious liquor packed in bottles bearing the name of a popular Indian-made foreign liquor brand.

The accused persons have been booked under charges, including culpable homicide not amounting to murder, adulteration and poisoning under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and Prohibition Act.

A local court on Thursday remanded them in police custody for 10 days.

The probe has been handed over to the State Monitoring Cell (SMC), a special Gujarat police unit that tracks state-wide illicit liquor and gambling operations.

The illicit hooch was allegedly prepared at the house of one Gautam Solanki, a resident of Vartej, with the help of Raees, who was detained from Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh.

The toxic liquor was packed and sealed in bottles carrying the label of an IMFL brand and supplied to bootleggers for distribution.

The matter came to light after three friends consumed the liquor at Vartej on the night of August 16, but all took ill, and one of them died.

The examination of the blood sample of the first victim, Upendrasinh Gohil, showed the presence of methanol.



From market access to market success: India-UK CETA and Kerala's new opportunities



DR M SARNGADHARAN

The global economy has been undergoing a profound transformation. Rapid technological changes, expansion of the digital economy, reorganisation of the global supply chains, climate concerns, geopolitical tensions and post-pandemic restructuring of the economic relations have essentially altered the nature of international trade.

Trade agreements, therefore, are no longer concerned merely with reducing customs duties. In the emerging global economic order, competitiveness is increasingly determined by quality, technology, innovation, digital capability, intellectual property, regulatory compliance, environmental standards and the capacity to participate adequately in the global value chains. Production may take place across several countries, with research, com-

ponent manufacturing, final assembly, marketing and distribution all located in different parts of the world. The challenge for nations is consequently not only to produce goods at competitive prices, but also to secure a meaningful position in these global production and supply networks.

It is against this background that the India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) should be viewed. Signed on 24 July 2025 and brought into force on 15 July 2026, the agreement represents a significant milestone in the economic relationship between India and the United Kingdom. It is more than a conventional Free Trade Agreement. It provides a broader framework for cooperation in trade in goods and services, customs and trade facilitation, professional mobility, standards and regulatory matters, digital trade and sustainable economic development.

One of the most important features of the agreement is the substantial expansion of market access. From its entry into force, 99 per cent of Indian goods entering the UK are eligible for duty-free access, while tariffs on a large share of UK exports to India are



reduced or eliminated according to agreed schedules. The agreement also offers significant opportunities in services, including IT and IT-enabled services, business and professional services, education and healthcare. Arrangements concerning the temporary movement of professionals and the avoidance of double social-security contributions further strengthen the prospects for skilled Indian workers and service providers.

For Kerala, these developments could open an important new chapter. The state possesses considerable strengths in natural

resources, human capital, social development, knowledge-based services and export-oriented industries. The UK's large, high-income consumer market and its growing demand for quality, healthy, sustainable and value-added products create opportunities for several sectors in Kerala.

Marine products, spices, tea, coffee, rubber, coir, handloom and processed foods could gain from improved access to the UK market. Kerala's real opportunity, however, lies not in exporting raw materials alone but in moving steadily towards high-value, branded and knowledge-intensive

products. Branded spice mixes, essential oils, spice extracts, organic foods, nutraceuticals and ready-to-eat products, for example, can generate greater value, income and employment than the export of unprocessed commodities.

The same applies to Kerala's coconut, jackfruit, banana and tapioca-based products, which can respond to growing demand for healthy and convenient food. Ayurveda and wellness services offer another major opportunity. Kerala can further strengthen its international position through high-quality Ayurvedic products, herbal cosmetics, wellness centres and health tourism.

The agreement could also support Kerala's growing knowledge economy. IT parks and technology institutions can expand collaboration in artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, fintech, health-tech, cloud computing and digital transformation. Universities and research institutions can build partnerships with UK counterparts through joint research, student and faculty exchanges, innovation programmes and technology collaboration. The healthcare sector,

too, offers potential in telemedicine, medical tourism, nursing, healthcare education and health technology.

An especially significant development in this context is the commencement of gateway EXIM operations at Vizhinjam International Seaport. With customs clearance enabling the port to handle export and import cargo, Vizhinjam is moving beyond its original role as a transshipment hub. This can substantially improve Kerala's integration with international shipping networks and create new possibilities for logistics, warehousing, processing and port-led industrial development.

This development gives practical meaning to the larger objective of the India-UK CETA. A trade agreement can provide Market Access, but efficient ports, reliable logistics, modern cold chains and efficient customs procedures are necessary to convert that access into Market Success.

Kerala must therefore pursue a focused strategy: strengthen export infrastructure; promote value addition and branding; support MSMEs with finance, certification and digital marketing;

develop relevant skills; connect start-ups with global markets; position GI products as premium international brands; and establish stronger research and innovation partnerships with the UK.

A dedicated Kerala-UK Trade Facilitation Cell could help exporters understand CETA provisions, rules of origin, market opportunities, quality standards and regulatory requirements. This is particularly important because preferential market access alone does not exempt exporters from the UK's food-safety, biosecurity and technical requirements.

The central challenge for Kerala is clear: it must move from raw materials to value-added products, from isolated exports to global value chains, and from market access to market success. If the opportunities created by the India-UK CETA are effectively combined with innovation, quality, skilled human resources, and the emerging logistics advantages of Vizhinjam, Kerala can strengthen its position as an important participant in the evolving global economy.

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India must become an AI creator, not just a user: Delhi CM



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Vellore

India must transform itself from a consumer of artificial intelligence into a creator of AI technologies, Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said on Saturday. Gupta was speaking as the chief guest at the 41st convocation of VIT University, Vellore, presided over by VIT Chancellor G Viswanathan. She conferred degree certificates on graduating students during the ceremony. Addressing the gathering, Gupta said many pressing problems faced by society could be addressed when Governments and graduates work together. Citing Delhi's experience, she said the city had found solutions to challenges including pollution, traffic congestion and waste management by partnering with IIT institutions.

She urged graduating students to take up similar responsibilities after entering the workforce and contribute to solving problems in their cities while driving innovation for the country.

"Don't just be users of artificial intelligence — build India's own AI," she said, pointing to the substantial investments being made by the Union Government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi through the India AI Mission. The initiative spans areas including semiconductors, computing infrastructure, defence, space, drones, robotics and biotechnology.

Gupta said India's goal should be to move beyond consuming AI technology and instead produce it, describing this as one of the greatest contributions graduates could make to their states and the nation.

She also spoke about

resilience, advising students not to fear failure or allow it to cause stress. Instead, she encouraged them to identify the causes of failure, understand them and work through them with determination rather than walking away from challenges.

Hard work, she said, remains the most important path to success. While a nation's products and assets contribute to its growth, she said its most valuable resource is its intellectual capital, represented by its graduates.

Gupta said India's development goals should be guided by the vision of "Make in India", "Invest in India", "Design in India" and "Brand in India". While the world has recognised the talent of Indian engineers, she said it must now also witness the strength of Indian technology.

Viswanathan calls for greater access to higher education

In his address, VIT Chancellor G Viswanathan said India's Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher education stands at around 30 per cent, while the Union Government's new education policy aims to raise it to 50 per cent.

India, he said, must compete with other Asian countries on this front, citing enrolment ratios of 90 per cent in South Korea, 60 per cent in Japan, over 60 per cent in China, 40 per

cent in Malaysia and 45 per cent in Thailand.

Viswanathan said India has around 1,400 universities, 54,000 colleges and 16,000 standalone educational institutions, with about 4.5 crore students currently pursuing higher education. Ensuring access to higher education for students from poor and middle-class backgrounds, he said, is a shared responsibility of the state and central Governments.

Highlighting the imbalance between engineering and medical education, Viswanathan said India has more than 50 lakh engineering seats but remains far behind in medical education. About 22 lakh students appear for the NEET examination every year, he said, competing for only around 1.3 lakh medical seats nationwide. Only around 2,000 to 3,000 seats remain vacant after allotment, he added.

As a result, nearly one lakh Indian students go abroad every year to study medicine. These include around 23,000 students in China, 18,000 in Russia, 15,000 in the Philippines, 10,000 each in Kyrgyzstan and France, 9,000 in Bangladesh, 7,500 in Georgia, 5,000 each in Italy and Poland, and 3,000 each in Iran and Nepal.

Citing World Health Organization guidelines recommending one doctor for

every 1,000 people, Viswanathan said southern states, including Tamil Nadu, meet the standard, while states such as Bihar and Uttar Pradesh face shortages, with ratios of one doctor for every 2,000 to 2,300 people.

He said India needs greater investment in medical education. The country has 840 medical colleges offering a combined 1.3 lakh seats, with individual colleges typically admitting only 100 to 150 students a year, compared with up to 400 in Britain and 800 to 1,200 in China.

Raising the intake to 1,000 students per institution, he suggested, could help India reach eight lakh medical seats, provided adequate faculty and infrastructure are created.

Appeal over vacant vice-chancellor posts

Viswanathan also pointed to continuing differences between governors and state Governments over the appointment of vice-chancellors. He said 17 universities in Tamil Nadu and more than 13 in Kerala currently have vacant vice-chancellor posts. He appealed to newly appointed Union Education Minister Pralhad Joshi to coordinate between governors and state Governments so that the education sector and the interests of students are not affected.

IRCON appoints Suman Bala as Independent Director

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

IRCON International Limited has appointed Smt Suman Bala as an Independent (Part-Time Non-Official) Director on its Board with effect from August 17, 2026.

Her appointment is for three years or until further orders, whichever is earlier, pursuant to an order issued by the Ministry of Railways on August 13, 2026.

Suman Bala, 50, is a com-



merce graduate from the University of Delhi and has previously served as Mayor of the Municipal Corporation of Faridabad.

She has experience in

urban governance, public administration, institutional management, stakeholder engagement and public-service delivery.

IRCON has confirmed that she is not related to any existing director of the company and has not been debarred from holding a directorship by SEBI or any other authority.

IRCON International is a Navratna public-sector infrastructure company under the Ministry of Railways.



Former Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan released 'The Bharat Model: Navigating 21st Century' in New Delhi, authored by Srikrishna Patra, a student from the University of Delhi. The book offers a youth-led vision for India's journey towards fulfilling the aim of Viksit Bharat. The launch saw an engaging interaction between Pradhan and young intellectuals, who discussed the book's themes and the role of youth in nation-building. PIONEER PHOTO

GDA clears major infrastructure, housing projects for Ghaziabad

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Ghaziabad



Four-lane elevated corridor from Ghantaghar to Bhatia Mor

One of the key proposals approved was the construction of an approximately two-kilometre-long, four-lane elevated road/GT Road transport corridor on GT Road. The elevated corridor will start in front of the Ghantaghar Ramliha Maidan, pass through Chaudhary Mor and extend up to the Aadhaar Seva Kendra at Bhatia Mor.

The project is expected to reduce traffic pressure in one of the busiest parts of the city by providing smoother and uninterrupted traffic movement. It could also help reduce travel time, congestion, fuel consumption and pollution. The Board approved, in principle, a proposal to raise loans to make 50 per cent of the project cost bankable under the Urban Challenge Fund.

Provisions have also been proposed for IIT Roorkee to

undertake design, construction and testing-related activities, along with an independent Third-Party Quality Control Agency. The project is proposed to be executed in EPC mode.

Hindon embankment to protect Haranandi Puram, stadium and Aero City

The Board unanimously approved construction of an embankment along the right bank of the Hindon River to protect the Haranandi Puram Residential Scheme, the proposed International Cricket Stadium and the Aero City area from flooding.

The embankment is expected to act as a protective shield for the major future urban development zone, reducing the risks of flooding and waterlogging and helping create a safer and sustainable infrastructure base for Haranandi Puram, the proposed cricket stadium and Aero City.

SIA-India, NESAC to host Northeast India Space Workshop 2026 in Guwahati

TONY DAS ■ Guwahati

The Space Industry Association of India (SIA-India), in partnership with the North Eastern Space Applications Centre (NESAC), will convene the Northeast India Space Workshop 2026 on August 26-27 at FREMAA, Assam Water Centre, Guwahati.

More than 200 stakeholders from Government, defence, space, telecommunications, industry, startups, investment, academia and international organisations are expected to participate in the workshop.

Being held under the theme "Leveraging Space Technology: Regional Transformation to Global Reach," the workshop will examine whether Northeast India can move beyond being a user of space technology to becoming a developer, testbed, commercial market and gateway for space-enabled solutions to Southeast Asia and the Global South.

Held in the context of National Space Day, the workshop builds on the significance of Chandrayaan-3's historic soft landing on the Moon on August 23, 2023. The initiative seeks to

connect that national milestone with the next phase of India's space journey by expanding participation in, benefits from and contributions to the country's growing space economy.

The workshop marks SIA-India's first major regional initiative outside New Delhi.

India's space sector moves towards commercialisation

India's space sector is increasingly moving towards commercial execution. Indian SpaceTech startups have raised approximately US\$871 million across 241 funding rounds involving 285 companies since 2021, compared with US\$43 million across 12 rounds in 2021.

In 2026 alone, startups have attracted approximately US\$113 million in equity funding. IN-SPACE had issued 105 authorisations to private entities by July 2026, while India has entered a new phase of private orbital launch capability with the successful Vikram-I mission.

SIA-India believes the Northeast can play an important role in this next phase.

The region's eight states account for 7.97 per cent of India's geographical area and share 5,484 km of inter-



national borders with five countries. Its strategic location, challenging terrain and high disaster exposure create demand for satellite communications, Earth observation, synthetic aperture radar (SAR), geospatial intelligence and space-enabled resilience.

These technologies have potential applications across connectivity, disaster response, agriculture, infrastructure, natural-resource management and border awareness.

Existing institutional foundation

The Northeast also has an established institutional foundation in space applications. NESAC has undertaken projects covering agriculture, disaster management, natural resources, infrastructure and communica-

tions, with Government reporting nearly 130 space-application projects across the region.

The North Eastern Spatial Data Repository (NeSDR) provides a regional geospatial foundation covering land, water, infrastructure, terrain and disaster-related information.

The next opportunity, according to SIA-India, is to connect these existing capabilities with private enterprise, investment, technology development and customers.

Subba Rao Pavuluri, President, SIA-India, said the Northeast's strategic location, unique operating environment and proximity to Southeast Asia give it an opportunity to build capabilities with relevance beyond the region.

Lab-grown diamonds get a New Delhi address as trend goes mainstream

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Lab-grown diamonds are increasingly moving from the margins to the mainstream of India's jewellery market. Industry estimates put the country's lab-grown diamond jewellery segment at roughly \$450 million this year, with projections of it nearly quadrupling over the next decade on the back of falling prices, wider IGI-certification standards, and a younger buyer base drawn to the category's affordability and sustainability credentials.

India's lab-grown diamond exports have also overtaken natural diamond exports by volume for the first time, industry data shows, underlining how quickly the shift is unfolding.

Reflecting this momentum, contemporary luxury label MINAKI opened its first standalone store in Connaught Place, New Delhi, on August 20, unveiling an IGI-certified lab-grown diamond collection of rings, earrings, bracelets and necklaces built around the idea of "the same love, with a new tradition."

FROM THE

WORLD

USA

Judge blocks visa suspension

The victim of a deadly sword attack at a school in central Sweden was a 17-year-old girl, police said on Saturday.

An 18-year-old man armed with a sword carried out the attack at the Brinell School in Fagersta, northwest of Stockholm, while classes were in session on Friday. One person was killed and three others were wounded, two of them severely.

Police said the suspect had been arrested and that the case was being investigated as murder and attempted murder. The police said they have no reason to believe there were more perpetrators. Vastmanland County, where the town is located, said that the two seriously injured boys were ages 12 and 17. A third person, also under 18, was slightly injured and has been discharged from a hospital, Swedish news agency TT reported. (AP)

NEPAL

Protests erupt after rape

The suspected rape and murder of a three-year-old girl in Nepal has triggered protests with locals obstructing the Birgunj-Pathlaiya road section of Simara for the fourth consecutive day on Saturday.

The girl, a resident of Bhaktinagar in Jeetpur sub-metropolitan city of Bara district of Madhesh province, was found dead near her house on August 18, three days after she went missing.

Locals staged a sit-in on the Birgunj-Pathlaiya section of Simara by installing a tent demanding justice for the girl, the police said. The police suspect that the girl was murdered after being raped.

A 16-year-old local youth, who had also been helping with the search for the missing girl, was arrested with the help of sniffer dogs deployed to search the area, Kathmandu Post newspaper reported. (PTI)

Iran claims victory; France, Saudi seek Hormuz bypass

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Dubai

Iran's president says the world has accepted that it's won the war with the United States, while France and Saudi Arabia are expected to discuss plans to bypass the Strait of Hormuz, which has been effectively closed since the US and Israel launched a war with Iran nearly six months ago.

Meanwhile remarks by the US Ambassador to Turkiye and special envoy for Syria appear to contradict official US position over the Golan Heights. Iranian state media reported that President Masoud Pezeshkian said the war with the US should end since the world has already accepted that Iran has won. Iran sees its control over the Strait and not giving into US demands as a win.

"The entire world approved our victory and the US is hated," he said according to IRNA news agency. Iran sees its control over the Strait and not giving into US demands as a win.

The remarks came as the Trump administration is touting a crushing financial campaign against Iran, promising an "economic D-Day" against the country.

President Donald Trump announced that the US would be imposing an "unprecedented" level of economic warfare and isolation on Iran, aiming to force its leadership to cave to demands to end its nuclear programme and fully reopen the crucial Strait of



The Israeli army demolishes buildings east of Deir al-Balah, central Gaza Strip on Saturday

Hormuz to oil and natural gas tankers.

In an interview, Tom Barrack said that Israel "still" occupies the territory in violation of UN resolutions.

In his comments made to Mario Nawfal, a Lebanese Australian entrepreneur, Barrack said that "in the Golan, with Syria, they (Israel) still occupy the Golan, against the UN resolutions."

Israel captured the Golan Heights from Syria in the 1967 war and annexed it in 1981. The UN considers the territory occupied Syrian land and the annexation null and void, with UN resolutions calling for Israel's withdrawal to the June 4, 1967, line.

In March 2019, Trump signed a proclamation recognising Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights, reversing decades of US policy. The move did not change the territory's status under international law or win broader international recognition.

Colombia became the second country to recognise Israeli sovereignty over the Golan this month, joining the United States.

Barrack's remarks sparked a backlash Saturday from

conservative activist and US presidential ally Laura Loomer, who posted on X that he "should resign for his lack of understanding of US foreign policy."

French President Emmanuel Macron and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman are expected to discuss the effects of the closure of the Strait of Hormuz and plans to develop routes around the waterway during the Saudi leader's two-day visit to Paris beginning Sunday, according to officials in the presidency who are not authorized to be publicly named.

Proposals under consideration include increasing trade through Omani ports outside the Persian Gulf, expanding or doubling pipelines in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere, and developing new rail links, the officials said.

France and Saudi Arabia have formed a joint task force on energy and logistics connections between the Middle East and Europe that is scheduled to meet at ministerial level on Monday.

The officials said the work was already well advanced and would focus on identifying the most strategic projects, securing financing and establishing roles for French companies.

The visit will be Mohammed bin Salman's first trip abroad since he travelled to Washington in November 2025, according to the officials. (AP)



Villagers participate in a tug-of-war as they celebrate the end of the agricultural cycle called Punuk along the Hapao River in Hungdian, Iugao province, Northern Philippines on Saturday

7 people die following head-on collision in northeast England

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ London

Seven people, including two police officers, died early Saturday in a head-on collision in the northeast of England following a pursuit.

Cleveland Police said a Volkswagen Passat carrying five members of the public was travelling the wrong way down the A66 highway near Middlesbrough and collided with a police vehicle on the same road going in the right direction.

The seven people were pronounced dead at the scene after the crash at 3:39



am. Police are still working to formally identify some of them. The families of those already identified have been informed and are being offered specialist support, police said.

Local lawmaker Anna Turley said Cleveland Police

are investigating the accident, alongside the Independent Office for Police Conduct.

"It is crucial that we respect that process and avoid speculation at this deeply painful time," she said. (AP)

Gorkha community in Israel holds candlelight prayer for murdered Indian national

HARINDER MISHRA ■ Tel Aviv

Members of the Gorkha community in Israel on Friday held a candlelight prayer in Tel Aviv for an Indian national who was killed in an attack allegedly by his employer's relative in Jerusalem last month, and called for justice for him and support for his family.

Rajiv Acharya, 40, who worked as a caregiver for an elderly couple in Jerusalem, was fatally attacked at their residence on July 23. He suffered multiple injuries after allegedly being attacked with a sharp object and later died from severe blood loss.

Israeli prosecutors have filed an indictment against 31-year-old Avior Zaken, who was identified as the grandson of the elderly couple



for whom Acharya worked.

Zaken is currently in custody and faces a charge of premeditated murder. However, the motive for the killing is not clear yet.

"The Embassy will continue to closely monitor the case and remain in contact with the concerned authorities," the Indian Embassy said in a post on X on August 19.

On Friday, Gorkha community members assembled under the banner of "Gorkha Voice for Justice" at Levinsky Park in Tel Aviv for the peaceful prayer meeting. They lit candles and observed a moment of silence in Acharya's memory.

Acharya belonged to the Gorkha community and was from West Bengal. There are about 3,000 people from the Gorkha commu-

nity working in Israel, a community member said.

Sara Peri, who works with a caregiver agency and supports caregivers in Israel, joined the gathering in seeking justice for Acharya.

"We know how to be together. You were with us, with Israel, during the war. You didn't leave to be safe in your country. You stayed here with old people," Peri told the gathering.

"But at this time we need to support you the same way you supported us and to show our concern to the community. It's about demanding justice for Rajiv, who left his family to work here," Peri added.

People in the gathering said they were seeking justice for Acharya lawfully and peacefully, and wanted his family to receive

justice and support. "We will continue to stand united, peacefully and respectfully, in support of Rajiv Acharya's family and justice," a community member said.

Acharya's death has raised concerns over the safety of foreign caregivers in Israel, particularly those who live and work inside private residences, according to a submission made by community representatives to the authorities.

The community's appeal said such arrangements can leave workers particularly vulnerable if they face threats, violence or other unsafe circumstances.

It called on Israeli authorities to strengthen preventive measures and create accessible channels through which foreign workers can report threats, abuse or violence without fear. (PTI)

Youths and students biggest bridge between India and the world, says envoy to Singapore

GURDIP SINGH ■ Singapore

Indian envoy to Singapore Shilpak Ambule on Saturday called youths and students the "biggest bridge" between the country and the world at an event.

Speaking at 'The Straits Connect' conclave organised by the Indian Scholars' Association (ISA), Dr Ambule said the number of Indian students studying in Singapore universities and institutions has "increased in the last three to four years," underlining that some of the students have prospered as entrepreneurs in the city-state as well as elsewhere in the world.

"Youths and students, I think, they're the biggest bridge today between



Indian envoy to Singapore Shilpak Ambule

Indians in the world," he said.

"We are trying to see if we can get startups in different sectors in India to come to Singapore at one point," Ambule said, adding that a

major hackathon will be organised in November.

ISA president Rahul Singh said, "As an association whose alumni have roots in India and spent formative years in Singapore, we

believe we are uniquely positioned to deepen understanding, trust, and collaboration between the two nations across business, academia, culture, entrepreneurship, and public life."

In a first, two Indian-origin diplomats, British and Canadian High Commissioners in Singapore, Nik Mehta and Paul James Thoppil, along with Indian envoy Ambule, addressed the gathering and interacted with the ISA community.

Singapore's former Ambassador and diplomat Professor Kishore Mahbubani, who served as the United Nations Security Council President in 2001-2002, also attended the event. (PTI)

Suspect held after 2 injured in Canada gurdwara stabbing

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Toronto

Two men, including a priest, were injured after a 27-year-old man stabbed them with a screwdriver inside a gurdwara in Canada's Edmonton, with police investigating whether the attack was hate-motivated, authorities said.

The incident took place at Nanaksar Sikh Gurdwara in northeast Edmonton, police said, adding the suspect entered the gurdwara and attempted to access the prayer area before he was confronted by the staff.

The confrontation escalated and two men, aged 75 and 51, were stabbed, Edmonton Police Service (EPS) said in a statement on Friday.

Witnesses intervened and detained the suspect until police arrived and arrested him, it said.

The two injured men were taken to a hospital with non-life-threatening injuries, while the suspect was also injured and taken to the hospital, CBC News reported. Prime Minister Mark Carney condemned the attack



and expressed solidarity with the Sikh community.

"The attack at the Nanaksar Gurdwara in Edmonton this morning is appalling. My thoughts are with the two people who were injured and the wider community that is shaken by this terrible event," Carney said in a post on X. "No one should ever feel unsafe in their place of worship. I want to thank the Edmonton Police Service for their swift response," he said.

Alberta Premier Danielle Smith condemned Friday's act of violence against the Sikh community and called for

reforms to federal bail and parole laws, CBC News reported.

"Everyone deserves to feel safe in their communities and places of worship, and we will continue to defend that right," Smith said, adding that the attack underscored the need for the federal government to take bail and parole reform seriously.

Naheed Nenshi, leader of Alberta's official opposition, described the violence at the Edmonton temple as shocking and said crimes in places of worship were particularly disturbing and had left members of the community shaken, the report said.

Police said the suspect had been seen walking in traffic on Highway 15 shortly before the stabbing, Global News reported. The suspect, who was known to police, has an extensive history of violent attacks dating back to 2015, police said. He had been released from a federal prison in Alberta the day before the attack, and failed to report to his designated halfway house in Edmonton, officials said.

China deepening control over Tibet; advocacy group seek greater heft for Tibetan Govt-in-exile

SAGAR KULKARNI ■ Washington

China is tightening its political grip over Tibet while sidelining Tibetans from key decision-making positions, a new report by a US-based advocacy group has said, as it called for greater international support for the Tibetan government-in-exile based in India.

The Washington-based International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) on Tuesday asked the US Congress to reinstate full funding for humanitarian assistance and other support to Tibetan communities in India and Nepal as well as for capacity-building efforts within the Central Tibetan

Administration (CTA). The CTA is Tibet's government-in-exile based in India's Dharamshala.

It represents the Tibetan diaspora globally and administers community services like education, healthcare, and cultural preservation.

While the 14th Dalai Lama remains the spiritual leader of Tibet, the Sikyong (President) is the political head of the CTA.

"India provides the Tibetans with the foundation to do whatever they want. That's why we have been able to build this foundation there and utilise that here," Bhuchung Tsering, Head of Research and Monitoring at the International Campaign

for Tibet said.

Tsering said the Tibetan cause has received bipartisan support in the US, and the Assuring the Future of Tibet Act has been introduced in the US Congress and is awaiting approval. "The US Congress should pass the bipartisan 'Assuring the Future of Tibet Act (AFTA)', which provides greater legitimacy to the CTA by recognising the institution as the democratically elected representative of the Tibetan people", Tsering said.

The AFTA is a bipartisan US legislation introduced in mid-2026 to firmly solidify America's long-term relationship with the Central Tibetan Administration. The primary



goal of the bill is to guarantee that the US government maintains direct, senior-level engagement with Tibet's democratically elected exile leadership.

Tsering also wanted the

European Union to appoint a Special Representative for Tibet to improve coordination and coherence in EU policy on Tibet, including regular consultations with the CTA. The annual ICT Tibetan

Leadership Report, unveiled in Washington on Tuesday, said that through leadership appointments, new legislation, and Party directives, China is deepening political control over Tibet.

The report said China was accelerating its policies of forced assimilation of Tibetans, amid a continued lack of any meaningful Tibetan representation in senior leadership positions.

China administers Tibet through a centralised dual-party-state structure where the top Chinese Communist Party official holds ultimate authority over the local ethnic Tibetan governor. In 2026, Tibetans occupied only

62 of the 240 senior leadership positions (25.8 per cent) across all 10 party, government, security, and judicial institutions in Tibet at the provincial, prefectural, and county levels.

"By contrast, non-Tibetans hold the majority, 178 of the 240 positions (74.2 per cent)," Tsering said. The report said no Tibetan serves as party secretary in any of the five provincial-level administrations covering Tibetan areas.

Only four of 19 prefectural-level and county-level administrations have Tibetan party secretaries. No Tibetan holds a military commander or political commissar post, it said. "As China further margin-

alises Tibetan participation in decision-making inside Tibet, the international community should strengthen engagement with the CTA as a democratic partner and representative of the Tibetan people," Tsering said.

The report finds that the "Promoting Ethnic Unity and Progress Law" and "Xi Jinping Thought on Party Building" together form the legal and ideological foundations of a new governance model.

The model prioritises political loyalty, National security, and implementation of assimilation policies over meaningful Tibetan representation, the report said. (PTI)

US slaps 50% tariffs on Canadian products

PAUL WISEMAN/ROB GILLIES
■ Washington

The United States imposed 50 per cent tariffs on \$20 billion worth of Canadian products early on Saturday, and Canada said it would retaliate beginning September 8 after last-ditch negotiations failed to resolve the latest strain in relations between the historic allies.

President Donald Trump's import taxes will hit about 5 per cent of what Canada ships to the United States every year, including products ranging from hockey sticks to tongue depressors.

Carney said that “in the



President Donald Trump arrives to speak at a campaign rally for Sen Darline Graham, R-SC at the Myrtle Beach Convention Centre

AP

CANADA WILL IMPOSE RETALIATORY TARIFFS ON US GOODS BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 8 AS TRADE TALKS COLLAPSE

coming days, we will release the details of these new tariff measures, which will come into force the Tuesday after Labor Day.” The dollar-for-dollar retaliation would target steel, dairy, appliances, agricultural equipment, pulp and paper and electronics, he said from Ottawa. He disclosed that Canada had

been willing to drop remaining retaliatory tariffs on steel, aluminum and autos if the United States substantially lowered its own, and to encourage provinces to restore US alcohol sales. But he said Washington's final demands went too far, saying, “They asked too much and offered too little,” Carney said.

Trump's top trade negotiator, Jamieson Greer, said the Republican administration was offering to cut tariffs on steel, autos and lumber, “things that are sensitive for them. And they've always had the best deal, and they still would have an even better deal, but they

didn't want that,” he told “Fox & Friends Weekend.

He added: “We're moving forward with measures that respond to Canadian retaliation.” Carney said the US added last-minute terms that would have reduced tariff relief for Canadian-made vehicles, restricted Canada's ability to strike trade deals with other countries and weakened protections for language, culture and sovereignty.

He said such demands were “unacceptable.” But Greer, the US trade representative, said that after a year of retaliation by its longtime ally, “We've said enough, and so we've taken countermeasures”.

Russian and Ukrainian attacks kill 10 after mall drone strike

VOLODYMYR YURCHUK ■ Kyiv

Russian drone and missile strikes killed at least seven people in Ukraine, officials said on Saturday, while a Ukrainian drone attack on Russia's Krasnodar region killed three people there.

The attacks came a day after a Russian strike on a Ukrainian shopping centre killed at least 16 people and wounded some 130.

Moscow's forces have recently intensified their ballistic missile attacks on Kyiv, exploiting Ukraine's chronic shortage of US-made Patriot air defence interceptors, the sole weapon in its arsenal able to shoot down the missiles.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that one person was killed and another wounded in the latest attacks when ballistic missiles hit railway infrastructure in the capital, Kyiv, overnight. Russia's



Defence Ministry said that its forces had hit a locomotive depot.

In a separate attack, local authorities said two people were killed Saturday afternoon in a Russian ballistic missile strike on the Kyiv region, which surrounds the capital.

Russian drone strikes also killed one person overnight in the Zaporizhzhia region, local officials

said Saturday, and a daytime attack killed three others and wounded 15. Zelenskyy said that three people were also wounded in an attack on a minibus in the regional capital, also called Zaporizhzhia.

In Russia's southern Krasnodar region, authorities said that three people, including two children, were killed and two adults were wounded in a Ukrainian drone strike. The latest attacks came a day after Russian drones struck a shopping centre in the city of Kryvyi Rih in central Ukraine.

Dnipropetrovsk regional head Oleksandr Hanzha said in the early hours of Saturday that the death toll had risen to 16. Later on Saturday, he said four people remain missing after the attack, which wounded a further 130.

Kryvyi Rih is the hometown of Zelenskyy, who described the attack as a double-tap strike, in which an

initial wave of drones hit the area followed by a second wave as rescue workers responded. The Ukrainian leader said the fire, which spread across 9,000 square metres (around 97,000 square feet), had been extinguished and rescue efforts were underway.

Kryvyi Rih has been hit multiple times during the 4½-year all-out war between Russia and Ukraine, with one of the deadliest occurring in April 2025, when 20 people were killed, including nine children.

Large-scale Russian strikes have become a regular occurrence this summer, with Friday's attacks landing just 24 hours after Russia pounded Kyiv with scores of missiles and drones in a nighttime assault that killed 16 people. The United Nations said last week that Kyiv was one of the hardest-hit cities in July, with at least 54 civilians killed and 202 wounded. (AP)

UN welcomes Sri Lanka's efforts to bring back refugees from India



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Colombo

The United Nations on Saturday welcomed Sri Lanka's decision to simplify immigration procedures to expedite the voluntary return of refugees from India who left the country without valid documents during its decades-long civil war.

The Sri Lankan Government earlier this month made special arrangements for the initiative aimed at streamlining the process to facilitate the return of refugees from India.

Sri Lankan refugees began arriving in Tamil Nadu in large numbers after ethnic violence in the island nation that started in 1983, and the subsequent escalation of the armed conflict between government forces and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), which went on for nearly three decades.

While around 18,000 of them returned home between 2002 and 2022, approximately 90,000 refugees continue to reside in the southern Indian State.

Many of those who remain have spent decades in India, with questions around livelihoods, documentation and long-term legal status forming part of the challenges surrounding their eventual return.

Resident Coordinator and representative of the UN Secretary-General in Sri Lanka, Marc-Andre Franche, said that through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the intergovernmental organisation will continue to facilitate the return and resettlement of these refugees.

“I welcome the Cabinet's decision on procedures for the voluntary return of Sri Lankan refugees — a key step towards a safe & dignified return after years of displacement,” he said in a post on X.

Vance endorses Ramaswamy for Ohio Governor

SAGAR KULKARNI
■ Washington

US Vice President JD Vance has extended his support to fellow Republican Vivek Ramaswamy in the Ohio gubernatorial election, asserting that the Indian American entrepreneur-turned-politician will “make a great Governor.”

Vance's support for 41-year-old Ramaswamy came weeks after the latter was booed and heckled off stage as his off-putting remarks infuriated what should have been a friendly crowd at the Young Americans for Liberty conference in Cincinnati.

“We've also got, I believe, a great gubernatorial can-



didate, but also a great next governor of Ohio, my friend Vivek Ramaswamy,” Vance said at a rally in Ohio.

A gubernatorial election is an election to choose a State governor.

“I don't think that anybody needed to encourage Vivek to go to the

polling location that day. When your name is on the ballot, nobody needs to make you go vote. But Vivek's going to make a great governor for the state of Ohio,” Vance said.

Backed by US President Donald Trump, Ramaswamy won the Republican primary in May

to become the party's candidate for the November election for the post of State Governor.

A former co-chair of Trump's Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), Ramaswamy had also launched the presidential campaign in 2024 but opted out and backed Trump. The son of immigrants from Kerala, Ramaswamy was born in Cincinnati, Ohio.

He studied at Harvard University and Yale Law School before entering the biotechnology and financial sectors. Ramaswamy is the founder of the biotech firm Roivant Sciences, and he served as its CEO from 2014 to 2021. (PTI)

Congo receives 16,000 doses of Ebola vaccine

ASSOCIATED PRESS
■ Bunia

Congo has received more than 16,000 doses of the Ervebo vaccine as the country grapples with the fastest Ebola outbreak in history, the country's health minister said.

The 16,250 doses arrived at the N'djili International Airport in the capital, Kinshasa, late Friday, as part of 70,000 doses expected from the World Health Organisation and partners that were announced on Thursday. More doses are expected early next week.

The current Ebola outbreak in Congo is caused by the rare Bundibugyo



virus, which currently has no approved treatment or vaccine. It can spread easily and go undetected because some of its symptoms are similar to other illnesses, such as malaria.

The Ervebo vaccine is licensed to treat Ebola and has been effective in

past outbreaks. The WHO said it may provide some protection against the Bundibugyo virus.

The latest outbreak, which has recorded 2,516 deaths out of the 5,290 confirmed cases as at Friday, is spreading at an unprecedented rate and

is on track to surpass the deadliest outbreak on record, which killed over 11,000 people across West Africa between 2014 and 2016. Data from the Africa Centre for Disease Control shows that transmission has not yet peaked and could reach three times its known rate.

Efforts to contain the outbreak have been hampered by armed conflict between the Government and rebel groups, which control key cities in the hot spot; attacks on medical personnel and facilities; an itinerant labor population and people displaced by the armed conflict; and a lack of critical infrastructure. (AP)

Pak to deploy army in Rawalpindi for sensitive security duties

SAJJAD HUSSAIN ■ Islamabad

Pakistan Government has approved the deployment of the army for six months in Rawalpindi at the request of Punjab's home department for “sensitive security duties”.

“The federal Government, exercising the powers conferred under Article 245 of the Constitution of Pakistan, is pleased to authorise the deployment of three companies of the Pakistan Army for sensitive security duties in Rawalpindi,” according to a notification issued by the Ministry of Interior and Narcotics Control. It said that the decision was taken “to avoid any undesirable situation as well as to respond effectively in any unforeseen situation as per the requirement of the district administration”.

Article 245 of the Constitution pertains to the deployment of armed forces in aid of civil power. The decision comes days after a man linked to former prime minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party (PTI) opened fire on securi-



ty forces and was shot dead in retaliatory firing. Citing security sources, State-run PTV News said the assailant was a resident of Khyber district and an “active PTI member”. A PTI flag, bullets and weapons were also recovered from him, it added. PTI distanced itself from the incident, saying it had nothing to do with terrorism and that efforts were being made to link the party to it. (PTI)

Nigeria orders investigation into second fake Govt agency



DYEPKAZAH SHIBAYAN
■ Abuja

Nigeria's President Bola Tinubu ordered an investigation into a man accused of creating and running a fake Government agency, the second such agency uncovered in the country in recent weeks.

Musa Adamu Aliyu, the head of the country's corruption watchdog, announced the investigation after briefing the president in the Capital, Abuja. The latest bogus agency, called the National Brands Development and Made in Nigeria Special Project Office, was operating illegally from a Government office and was headed by George Buchi Nwabueze, authorities said. The scandal is the latest involving an allegedly fake Government agency under Tinubu's

administration. Last month, authorities discovered that another purported agency, the Presidential Foreign Investment Promotion Council, had operated for years, with its director meeting Government officials and accessing public funds. The man accused of creating the first bogus agency was arrested by police. Aliyu said the investigation into the first agency led to the discovery of the second. Analysts believe the perpetrators are working with senior Government officials to use the agencies to siphon money from the national budget. Aliyu did not say whether the accused man had profited from the scheme before it was uncovered.

Three senior Government officials have been suspended, and authorities have issued an arrest warrant for Nwabueze. (AP)

Imran Khan's sister files plea over violation of SC order



SAJJAD HUSSAIN
■ Islamabad

The sister of jailed former Pakistan prime minister Imran Khan on Saturday filed a petition in the Supreme Court, accusing the Government and senior officials of violating the top court's order to shift him to a private hospital for medical examination and treatment.

Uzma Khan has sought contempt proceedings, alleging wilful violation of the Supreme Court's August 18 order. The Supreme Court had directed authorities to shift 73-year-old Khan from Adiala

Jail in Rawalpindi to Shifa International Hospital in Islamabad within two days and ordered that he remain there until the next hearing on September 16.

Instead, Khan was taken to the state-run Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences in Islamabad during the night of August 20-21 for medical examination and treatment before being returned to Adiala Jail. Khan's family and leaders of his political party, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, have termed the move a violation of the Supreme Court order and challenged the official action. (PTI)

Tesla recalls nearly 3M vehicles in China over door handle safety risks

CHAN HO-HIM/FU TING
■ Hong Kong

Tesla and other Chinese carmakers are making a major recall of more than 4 million vehicles over safety concerns mostly related to their door handles, according to Chinese authorities on Friday.

The US carmaker is recalling about 2.98 million China-made and imported EVs including Model 3, Model Y, Model X and Model S over door handle safety risks, according to China's State Administration for Market Regulation.

The recall, the largest this year according to Chinese media, comes a few months after Chinese authorities said in February that starting next year, it would be banning hidden car door handles



that are commonly seen on Tesla electric vehicles and many Chinese EV models.

China has stepped up scrutiny recently on hidden, or flush, car door handles following EV accidents in the country and elsewhere, in which cars' hidden electronic doors failed and trapped people inside.

In a notice on the Chinese regulator's website, it cited safety risk. In extreme situations, such as a severe collision that causes an electrical system failure, the car handles could hinder car users from quickly opening the doors to escape, or prevent rescuers outside the car from gaining access, the notice said. Some experts in the industry said the automakers should value safety over design.

Cui Dongshu, head of the China Passenger Car Association, called the recall “an inevitable step” in the development of the electric vehicle industry and said automakers were “being responsible” by moving toward a more reliable, “safety-first” approach.

“This represents, in part, the growing pains of the industry. At the same time, however, this move signifies a policy-driven safety upgrade,” said Cui.

Tesla will perform software updates on the vehicles to mitigate risks, the notice added. Tesla did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Friday.

Xiaomi, the Beijing-based Chinese technology giant, is recalling more than 390,000 vehicles. Hangzhou-based Leapmotor is recalling over 370,000 cars. Other

Chinese carmakers, including Geely and XPENG are also recalling some vehicles.

The reasons given in each case were similar, mostly relating to issues with their car door handles.

A report published by the People's Daily, the official newspaper of China's ruling Communist Party, said the large-scale recall “serves as a unified safety upgrade” for existing vehicle models ahead of the 2027 implementation of the ban on hidden car door handles.

“For the rapidly evolving NEV (new energy vehicle) industry, competition should be defined not only by the pace of technological innovation but also by the high standards set for safety,” the newspaper said. (AP)

BRIEFLY

Russell cruises to sprint race win at F1's Dutch Grand Prix



George Russell started the second half of the Formula 1 season in style as he eased to a sprint race victory on Saturday ahead of the Dutch Grand Prix.

Russell started from pole position, quickly built a gap to Lando Norris in second and didn't look back from there, taking his first win since the Austrian Grand Prix in June.

Charles Leclerc snatched second off Norris with a daring pass into the inside of the first corner with six laps to go.

Norris held off a late charge from Russell's Mercedes teammate Kimi Antonelli to stay third. Fourth-place Antonelli, starting fifth after car damage in qualifying, still managed to extend his standings lead because his closest challenger Lewis Hamilton could only manage seventh for Ferrari. Qualifying takes place later Saturday for Sunday's Dutch Grand Prix.

(AP)

Former world champion boxer Zolani Tete killed



Former world champion boxer Zolani Tete has been shot and killed at his home in South Africa, Government officials said Friday. Gayton McKenzie, South Africa's sports, arts and culture minister, said the 38-year-old Tete was killed in his car and that a 27-year-old woman who was in the vehicle with him was shot multiple times and is in hospital.

Tete held world title belts in the WBF flyweight category from 2007-2008 and the WBO bantamweight title in 2017 and 2019. Police said the shooting took place at Mdantsane, Eastern Cape and that Tete was arriving at his residence and waiting for the gate to open when he was ambushed by two armed suspects wearing balaclavas.

(AP)

Golf: Akshay Bhatia assured of Tour Championship



Akshay Bhatia remained best placed Indian in the BMW Championship, being five-under 135 and tied 16 halfway through in the competition here at the Bellerive Country Club. Bhatia, who opened with a 67, kept himself in a strong position to advance to next week's Tour Championship, for which only the top 30 will qualify. He had four birdies against two bogeys in his 2-under 68.

Indo-British Aaron Rai, the reigning PGA Champion, was tied 34th at one-under 139 after rounds of 68 and 71 and his overall FedEx standing is tied 40, while fellow Indian-origin player Sahith Theegala (71-72) was tied 48th at three-over 143. He is 49th in the FedEx standings.

The BMW Championship is particularly important because only the top 30 players in the FedExCup standings after this tournament qualify for the season-ending TOUR Championship at East Lake.

Rai and Theegala are virtually out of the race with their current positions putting them in danger of falling outside the qualifying positions. Bhatia, meanwhile, is sure for the Tour Championships as he is tied 16th in this event and 15th overall in standings. His 67-68 start has placed him five-under for the tournament and tied 16th, leaves him in contention for a high finish.

(PTI)

From shy girl to mentor, Savita Punia says hockey changed her life

MONA PARTHSARATHI

Amstelveen

There was a time when Savita Punia needed her mother to stand at the doorstep whenever she would step out of the house, too hesitant to speak to seniors in the Indian hockey team, and uncomfortable facing the camera. Today, the veteran goalkeeper travels across the world, speaks confidently and mentors the young women hockey players.

The 36-year-old Savita, who is the most experienced player in the FIH World Cup with 317 caps, is only four matches away from breaking the Indian record for playing most matches (320), currently held by the veteran goalkeeper



Vandana Katariya.

While looking back at her glorious career, Savita feels hockey has changed her as a person too.

"When I started playing, I couldn't talk to my seniors much beyond saying 'good

Indian men's hockey team lose to Netherlands

MONA PARTHSARATHI

Amstelveen (The Netherlands)

The Indian men's hockey team conceded two goals in the final quarter despite a flawless first half to lose 1-3 against reigning Olympic champions the Netherlands and crash out of the semifinal race of the ongoing FIH World Cup here on Saturday.

India needed to win this match at all costs to reach the last four stage, but despite a good start, the team committed mistakes in the final 10 minutes to get knocked out of podium contention. India will now plays an inconsequential final second-round match against Argentina on Monday. After that, the team will play the fifth-eighth place classification matches.

Captain Harmanpreet Singh scored the only goal for India in the 52nd minute from a penalty corner.

Duco Telgenkamp (41st),

Tjep Hoedemakers (51st), and Thijs van Dam (55th) scored three field goals for the Netherlands.

The Indian team, which lost to England in the first round, remained pointless in the second round. Even if they beat Argentina, India will only have three points, ending its hopes of reaching the semifinals.

In World Cup history, the Indian team has never defeated the Netherlands. In the 1973 World Cup final, the Dutch team defeated India in a penalty shootout.

The Indian team played a very composed game in the first half, keeping the Dutch team at bay. While the Indian backline made no mistakes, they also prevented the Dutch midfield from retaining possession for long periods.

In the third minute, India applied pressure and entered the circle from the right, but the Dutch defenders thwart-



ed their attempt.

In the eighth minute, Rajinder Singh took the ball inside the D after a pass from Hardik Singh, but once again India could not penetrate the Dutch defence.

Three minutes later, van Dam attempted a reverse hit from a pass from the left, but the ball hit the back of his stick. India was awarded a free hit, but lost control of the ball.

The Dutch team won the

first penalty corner of the match in the 13th minute, but Jip Janssen's drag-flick was effectively blocked by Manpreet's smart rushing.

The Indian defence dominated the match in the first 15 minutes. In the opening minute of the second quarter, the Netherlands won three consecutive penalty corners, none of which resulted in a goal. India had a chance to score in the 24th minute when

Neeraj finishes second, Pathirage wins title in Lausanne

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lausanne

Indian javelin ace Neeraj Chopra produced his best performance in more than a year but was pipped to the post by the rising Sri Lankan star Rumesh Pathirage for the top spot by a mere nine centimetres in the Lausanne Diamond League meet on Friday.

The 28-year-old Chopra's 88.05m throw in the second round, which fetched him the second spot in the nine-man star-studded field, was his best after the 88.16m he recorded while winning the Paris Diamond League in June 2025. It was also his season's best throw.

However, the 23-year-old Pathirage continued his juggernaut this season as he overtook Chopra with his third-round throw of 88.14m. Grenada's Anderson Peters was third with his sixth and final round effort of 86.69m.

Reigning world champion Keshorn Walcott of Trinidad and Tobago was fourth with



a best throw of 83.71m.

World Championships bronze winner Curtis Thompson of the USA was sixth with a below par 78.13m while Tokyo Olympics silver winner Jakub Vadlejch of Czech Republic took the seventh spot with 77.32m.

Chopra later said it was a close tussle between him and Pathirage for the top spot. "I didn't realise it was only nine centimetres, it was really close, but I'm happy with the 88-metre throw. To be honest, it didn't feel like it went 88m because I felt very relaxed. I tried really hard and later focused on my technique," he said. "With every compe-

tition, I feel that I'm coming back. The crowds in Lausanne and Zurich understand athletics and really support you, so it's always good to compete here."

With his second-place finish, Chopra also jumped to top-five in the season-ending Diamond League Finals standings from earlier seventh spot.

For jumps and throws, the top six in the standings will compete in the September 4-5 DL Finals in Brussels. One additional athlete per discipline may also compete via a national or global wildcard selection. Pathirage and Peters have already qualified for the DL Finals after accumu-

Habas seeks glory, history with East Bengal in Durand Cup final vs Mohun Bagan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata

Emotions will run high and history will be at stake when Antonio Lopez Habas seeks a record-equalling 17th Durand Cup title with East Bengal against arch-rivals Mohun Bagan Super Giant in the summit clash in Kolkata on Sunday.

For Habas, the final presents an opportunity to add another chapter to his remarkable Indian football story, but for East Bengal it is also a chance to end a 22-year wait for the prestigious trophy and draw level with their arch-rivals on 17 Durand Cup titles.

The Spaniard, who has previously guided both Mohun Bagan and the erstwhile ATK to multiple ISL triumphs, took charge of a new-look East Bengal side after the club's title-winning ISL campaign last season after the departure of coach Oscar Bruzon and the end of its association with sponsors Emami. But Habas in little time has already put

his stamp on the team with his compact display and midfield cohesion.

The new East Bengal outfit have shown a greater emphasis on defensive organisation, discipline and patience, while retaining enough attacking threat to hurt opponents when opportunities arrive.

Their resilience was at full display in the AFC Champions League Two preliminary round, when they came from a goal down to hammer Kuwait's Al Arabi 4-1 and secure a place in the group stage.

That comeback showed the character of a team that can stay in the game despite at odds and make the most of its chances at the right time. East Bengal have also been particularly difficult to break down in the Durand Cup. After conceding once in their opening group game against Mohun Bagan, they have kept four successive clean sheets, including their goalless semi-final against SC Delhi before prevailing 5-3 on



penalties. But the demanding schedule remains a concern. Sunday's final will be East Bengal's fifth match in 15 days, following games against South United FC, Al Arabi, Indian Army FT and SC Delhi across two competitions.

With their AFC Champions League Two campaign also set to begin next month, Habas has opted to give his players additional rest rather than hold a conventional training session on the eve of the final. The players are instead expected to undergo a tactical session at the team hotel before taking the field

at the Salt Lake Stadium.

The decision shows how Habas has to balance the players' need for rest with the need to prepare well, especially with the final coming after a busy run of matches. East Bengal will also have to assess the fitness of Spanish defender Nacho Monsalve, who has been nursing a knee problem and missed both the Al Arabi game and the semi-final against SC Delhi.

With a long season ahead, including the AFC Champions League Two group stage, it would be a risk if a player is not fully fit.

A French Revolution: Gicquel and Delrue step away from history



AMIT KUMAR DAS

New Delhi

When Thom Gicquel and Delphine Delrue started playing badminton, there was little indication that badminton as a sport could be pursued as a profession in France, let alone take them to a World Championships final. Nearly two decades later, the French mixed doubles pair are just one win away from becoming world champions.

"It was only passion at that moment. We didn't know that we can earn money actually, so it was just the fun, the love to compete," Gicquel recalled. But their journey to the summit is about more than one match or one medal. It mirrors the transformation of French badminton itself. A sort of a mini 'French Revolution'.

The world No. 5 pair reached their first World Championships final on Saturday by recovering from a game down to beat China's Jiang Zhen Bang and Wei Ya Xin 19-21 21-13 21-11. They will face world No. 1 Feng Yan Zhe and Huang Dong Ping in the final. For a country that had waited 16 years between its first and second World Championships medals, the presence of French players deep into the biggest events is becoming increasingly familiar. Gicquel and Delrue have been central to that change. They won bronze at last year's World Championships in Paris and this year, they have reached the All England final and the semifinals at the Indonesia and China Super 1000 tournaments. The defining word, Gicquel believes, is consistency. "We had a level quickly in our career, but the big deal for us was to be consistent during the year and we

deflected off Duco's stick and went in. Indian goalkeeper Mohit had no chance.

India earned a penalty corner on the counter, but Harmanpreet's drag-flick was saved by the goalkeeper. With the ball inside the circle, the Indian strikers attempted to rebound but were unsuccessful. In the 47th minute, Abhishek earned a penalty corner for India, but Harmanpreet was not on the field. Amit Rohidas's slap shot deflected wide. India took a review after the ball hit a defender's foot, and was awarded another penalty corner, but Sanjay's shot was blocked by the goalkeeper.

The Netherlands doubled their lead in the 51st minute when Hoedenmakers put the ball into the net. The following minute, Rajinder earned a penalty corner for India on a counter-attack, and Harmanpreet scored with a powerful drag-flick.

(PTI)

Casey Kaufhold set for APL debut

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hyderabad

Paris Olympic bronze medalist Casey Kaufhold of the USA will make her debut at Archery Premier League (APL) when the second season begins in Hyderabad on October 8 as 12 overseas star archers are set to compete in the event.

Casey, who won an Olympic medal at the age of 20 years, will join an elite roster that includes Olympic medalists Mete Gazoz of Turkey and Alejandra Valencia of Mexico, both of whom competed in the league's inaugural season.

"The 15-second shot clock will be a new challenge, but



I enjoy formats that demand focus, composure and trust in every shot. I am also excited to compete alongside some of the world's best archers, and connect with the passionate archery fans in India," said Casey.

World No. 2 and reigning World Games champions Mike Schloesser currently, and numero uno Andrea Becerra will also return after competing in the inaugural season. Season 1 standout and 2025 World Championship Silver medalist Mathias Fullerton will also return alongside Mexico's 22-year-old Matias Grande and Spain's Elia Canales for the 11-day tournament. "Bringing 12 leading international archers, including three Olympic medalists, to APL Season 2 reflects our ambition to make India an important destination on the global archery calendar," said Anil Kamineni, Director, APL.

2nd Test: Gill, Jaiswal eye big knock in India’s push for series win

G UNNIKRIISHNAN ■ Colombo

Substantial knocks from skipper Shubman Gill and opener Yashasvi Jaiswal will fill the remaining blank columns as India push for their first overseas Test series victory in three years during the second and final match against Sri Lanka, starting here on Sunday.

India's last Test rubber win abroad was against the West Indies in July 2023. Since then, India lost to Australia and shared the series with South Africa and England

away from home. In this interim, the defeats at home against New Zealand and South Africa also dimmed the halo around this Indian Test outfit.

But Gill's side regained some ground with a 165-run romp in the first Test at Galle, where Sri Lankan spinners often spun a web around visiting batters.

Despite the inexperience in the Sri Lankan ranks, the result might have come as a relief for the team and head coach Gautam Gambhir after two shattering home defeats

against New Zealand and South Africa. The Galle win has certainly released a pressure valve around the team.

If India happen to complete a 2-0 clean sweep, they will have a chance to go up to the fourth spot in the World Test Championship (WTC) rankings with 57.58 percentage points.

There is a high possibility that Bangladesh, who are currently fourth in WTC table with 66.67 percentage points post Darwin victory, will lose the second Test against Australia at McKay and drop



down to fifth spot with 55.56 percentage points.

Amidst the general elation, India will certainly welcome some runs from Gill and Jaiswal. On the periphery, Gill appears in solid touch, having scored two hundreds in his last six innings.

But scratch the cover, there is a tinge of weakness, a pattern-setting dismissals against spin, particularly the left-arm orthodox variation.

True to that failure, Gill fell twice to Prabath Jayasuriya at Galle, and he will certainly like to set that

unwanted record straight, a blemish on an otherwise impeccable run as team leader. As the skipper, Gill has managed to score 1100 runs in 10 Tests at an average of over 73, a remarkable leap from 1893 runs from 32 Tests at 35 before taking over the team's reins.

Then there is also this little matter of registering the first overseas Test series win under his watch, a matter of pride and yardstick of success for any captain.

If Gill can merge those two tasks, then India could be

hard to stop at the Sinhalese Sports Club.

Jaiswal offers a slightly deeper problem. After scoring a hundred against the West Indies at New Delhi last year, the opener has made just one fifty in his last eight innings.

Similar to Gill's failings against spinners, Jaiswal has developed a worrying habit of getting dismissed while playing cut or chip against pace bowlers.

After getting run out in the first innings at Galle, Jaiswal got out in that fashion in the second essay. (PTI)

Starc, Islam shine on 1st day of second Australia vs Bangladesh Test



ASSOCIATED PRESS
■ Mackay (Australia)

Mitchell Starc removed Bangladesh opener Shadman Islam with the first ball of the match and the veteran Australian fast bowler took six wickets in the first innings on a wild first day of the second cricket test Saturday.

Later, Shoriful Islam incredibly matched Starc's total with a six-wicket haul on a day which saw 18 wickets fall. After Australia won the toss and decided to bowl, with captain Pat Cummins suggesting "the wicket looks pretty good, but if there is any moisture in it, it might be this morning," Starc proved Cummins correct and Bangladesh was bowled out for 64 runs shortly after lunch.

The wicket, however, continued to be a challenge for batters well beyond the morning. In reply, Australia was 165-8 at stumps to lead by 101 runs despite Shoriful Islam's 6-35 total. Cameron Green was one of the not-out batsmen on 51 with Nathan Lyon on 10.

Shadman Islam was caught in the gully off a leading edge to give Starc his record fourth career wicket on the

first ball of a match. Starc removed Tanzid Hasan and had captain Najmul Hossain Shanto caught lbw in the third over to leave Bangladesh, which surprisingly won the first test of the two-test series, reeling.

Starc got his fourth wicket when Cameron Green made a grass-top catch to remove Mominul Haque for 9, the only Bangladesh batter to score a run among the first four batters Saturday. His fifth wicket came when he had Litton Das trapped lbw and his sixth after lunch.

Starc's figures were 6-12 in 10 overs and Cummins finished with three wickets. The Bangladesh total was the lowest while batting first in Australia since 1932 when South Africa was dismissed for 36. The highest Bangladesh score was by No. 11 batter Shoriful Islam with 14.

"Six (wickets) in the first session, can't beat that," Starc told his wife, television commentator and former Australia captain Alyssa Healy while walking off the field at lunch. "Obviously a little bit of anger." Australia announced a 13-man squad earlier this week, with only one change for the second test. (AP)

Ministry approves 492 athletes for Asian Games; athletics accounts for 73 names

POONAM MEHRA
■ New Delhi

The Sports Ministry on Saturday approved a 492-strong Indian contingent of athletes for the Asian Games beginning next month in Japan, with athletics forming the biggest chunk of 73 names in the list.

The contingent comprises 265 male and 227 female athletes.

The Ministry has, however, not yet issued the list of support staff that would accompany the contingent for the September 19 to October 4 mega-event in Aichi-Nagoya.

"The list of support staff would be out in another week or even earlier. It is being recalibrated to ensure that there is a balanced presence of sports science experts such as physios and medical staff for all participating teams," a well-placed



source told PTI.

"The athletes list is more or less what the IOA (Indian Olympic Association) recommended. A few names have been dropped because of doping violations as is already documented but a few more could be added for which we are awaiting clearance from the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA)," the

source added.

The athletics group features 35 men and 38 women and is headlined by two-time Olympic medal-winning javelin throw superstar Neeraj Chopra, long jumper Murali Sreeshankar, long distance runner Gulveer Singh, decathlete Tejaswin Shankar and 100m hurdler Jyothi Yarraji, among others.



The shooting squad is led by double Olympic-medallist pistol ace Manu Bhaker, and other in-form youngsters like Suruchi Singh (pistol), Elavenil Valarivan (rifle) and Esha Singh (pistol). It's a 30-strong side that has 15 men and as many women.

The redoubtable Mirabai Chanu (49kg) and Gyaneshwari Devi (53kg),

Manush survives scare in National Ranking TT Title

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Kanpur

Top-seeded Manush Shah of RBI survived a major scare in the men's singles Round of 64, while the women's singles draw saw a string of upsets as the UTT National Ranking Table Tennis Championships on Saturday.

Manush, one of the leading contenders for the title, was pushed to the limit by Tamil Nadu's MR Balamurugan before prevailing 11-3 11-3 11-3 11-7 11-8.

After racing through the opening two games, the top seed saw Balamurugan fight back strongly to level the contest, but Manush steadied himself in the decider to avoid what



would have been a major upset. The remaining 15 seeded players in the men's draw had comparatively little trouble advancing to the Round of 32, though a number of matches went the distance.

West Bengal's Oishik Ghosh survived a close encounter against RSPB's

Jayabrata Battacharjee, recovering from a 1-2 deficit to win 11-9 8-11 7-11 11-4 12-10. The deciding game went down to the wire before Ghosh held his nerve. Manipur's K Segal Singh also endured a gruelling battle, overcoming his opponent 14-12 11-5 5-11 6-11 11-8. Maharashtra's Raegan

Albuquerque secured another five-game win, defeating Karnataka's P Yeshwant 7-11 11-3 11-5 7-11 11-1. IA&AD's Abhimanyu Mitra was pushed hard by Haryana's Vatsal Duklan before winning 11-8 13-11 9-11 7-11 11-9. Haryana's Ankur Bhattacharjee secured another close win, edging out West Bengal's Arnab Chanda 4-11 11-6 10-12 11-7 11-9 after recovering from an early setback.

The women's competition, meanwhile, saw more upheaval, with eighth-seeded Sayali Wani of PSPB among the prominent casualties. Tamil Nadu's Kavyashree Baskar staged an impressive comeback from two games down to defeat Wani 9-11 8-11 11-7 11-6 11-7.

Ideally I want three-Test series as team loses 1st can comeback: Gambhir

G UNNIKRIISHNAN ■ Colombo

India head coach Gautam Gambhir on Saturday championed the cause of three-match Test series, stressing that two-match rubbers put undue pressure on the team that loses the first match.

India and Sri Lanka are currently engaged in a two-match series with the Shubman Gill-led side holding a 1-0 lead after its 165-run victory at Galle.

"Ideally, I would want a three Test match series. I've always believed that there should always be a possibility that a team that loses in the first Test should have the chance to come back," Gambhir said in the pre-match press conference.

"Sometimes what happens is, in a two-Test match series, if you lose the first Test match, there is no chance for the other team to come back and win the series. The maximum you can do is to try and draw the series," he added. "I still remember that series, between India and Australia (2001), where India was one down, and they still managed to come back, and win that series 2-1."

Often, the two Test series also offered minimum turnaround time, but Gambhir was fine with it. "Short turnaround...that's fine. Other teams are doing that as well. As a professional cricketer, we know how to manage our bodies. That's why there are days when we give players



optional practices.

"As we all know, in these conditions, the seniors may find it tough and so we try to manage it. As I said, ideally, I would want a three Test match series rather than a two Test match series," he said.

Left-arm spinner Manav Suthar and top-order batter

Devdutt Padikkal made an instant impression, and Gambhir was chuffed for them. "Extremely satisfying because you get those younger players coming in and delivering straight away. But again, there is still a lot of work to be done. You can't judge players by only one or two performances.

"We want to see that they are not only well-qualified but involved as well (with the team). One of them coming in and delivering in most of the Test matches. But again, as I said, judging players by only one or two matches is not going to be fair."

Padikkal made a match-defining 167 in the first Test, while Suthar, who was playing only his second Test, grabbed a 10-wicket match haul at Galle. "We want to see them along the road and at the same time, we keep having this faith because there will be ups and downs. We know how tough Test cricket is and how hard it is."

The arrival of these young names, Gambhir, has added to the depth of the squad.

"I think, someone getting an opportunity, and making the most of it, is a good thing. We keep talking about the depth and the more depth we have, the more competitive it is. It's not a bad thing, because, when you have competition, you want people to keep getting better, as well."

"And prime example is, Dev, he got an opportunity, he made most of it and that's what we expect players to do. Manav, when he got opportunity, when he made his debut against Afghanistan, it was big series for him, but he put his hands up. There are other talented guys playing as well like Sai, who's going to be part of this group. So, which is again, good. The more depth, the better," he noted. (PTI)

Treesa-Gayatri pair loses semifinal, clinch maiden World Championships bronze

AMIT KUMAR DAS
■ New Delhi

Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand's extraordinary run ended with a fighting three-game loss to world Number 1 and defending champions Liu Sheng Shu and Tan Ning in the women's doubles semifinals at the World Championships here on Saturday as the Indian pair signed off with a maiden bronze medal.

The unseeded Indians produced a sensational start to pocket the opening game but could not sustain the pressure against the mighty Chinese pair, going down 21-18, 13-21, 8-21 in an hour and 11 minutes.

India last won a BWF World Championships medal in women's doubles in 2011,

when Jwala Gutta and Ashwini Ponnappa claimed bronze in London.

Reflecting on their match, Gayatri said they lacked patience and also didn't have the rhythm in the second game. "In the second set, they played very patiently and we couldn't match both. It happens. Treesa played really well from the back court. If I had supported a little more from the net, we could have pulled off the second set," she said. "Also in the third set, there were a few points which we could have converted, but the rhythm didn't come."

Ranked 39th in the world, the Indian pair had defeated three seeded pairs to reach the semifinals.

"After the second game,



India's Gayatri Gopichand Pullela, left, and Treesa Jolly celebrate a point during a women's doubles semifinal badminton match against China's Liu Sheng Shu and Tan Ning, unseen, at the BWF World Championships, at IGI Stadium, in New Delhi, on Saturday

PTI

second half, I feel like the few mistakes that made us a little bit kind of doubtful about the strokes, what we are playing.

Then we went for more defensive and we cannot play against them defensively," Treesa said.

The Indian pair didn't have a favourable head-to-head record against the Chinese, having lost six times with just one to show in seven meetings so far. A crowd of close to 8,000 had turned up to cheer the Indian pair as they raced to a 7-2 lead to put the Chinese pair under early pressure.

Liu and Tan, however, quickly fought their way back with six straight points to move ahead. The Chinese made effective use of angled returns, forcing the Indians into errors as they lead 11-7 at the interval. The rallies were generally short but the Indians began to regain their rhythm after the resumption. Treesa ended the Chinese run with a well-executed point. Another attack at the front court forced

the Chinese long, before a 31-shot rally brought the Indians level at 12-12. The two pairs fought tooth and nail as lead exchanged hands frequently.

Treesa produced a crouching defensive return during a flat exchange to level the scores at 18-18. Another superb rally ended with a scathing cross-court winner from Treesa as India moved to 19-18. The unseeded pair then earned two game points after Tan found the net. They converted on their first opportunity when the Chinese pair sent a shot long, sending the home crowd into raptures.

The ecstatic home crowd roared Treesa and Gayatri on.

After the change of ends, the Chinese opened up a 3-0 lead. A short serve gave India its first

point, while a lucky net cord made it 4-1 before Liu found the net. The Indians responded with a cross-court, cross-body combination and excellent follow-up play. An effective flick serve and counter-attack helped them close gap to 4-5.

Gayatri then went long to make it 6-4. The Indians tried to put pressure on the Chinese with pushes towards the backline, but a few errors crept in, with Treesa sending one long to make it 7-4. Gayatri's attacking shots from the back court began forcing the Chinese wide. Treesa's cross-court drop made it 6-8, before a Chinese smash into the net reduced the deficit further to 7-8. Treesa found the net, but followed it with another tricky cross-net shot to make it 9-10. India drew

level at 10-10 before taking the lead when the Chinese defence produced two errors.

However, Liu and Tan wrestled the lead back at 12-11.

A 49-shot rally followed, but Treesa eventually found the net. A tumble serve set up the next point for the Chinese, who opened a 14-12 lead. The Indians then sent another shot wide, followed by two net errors from Gayatri, allowing China to move to 17-12.

Another precise shot onto the backline made it 18-12, before Gayatri's long lift gave the Chinese a 19-12 advantage. Treesa then found the net as the Chinese earned eight game points. Liu and Tan converted their second opportunity to take the match into a decider. (PTI)



LPL good platform for young cricketers, presence of stars make it better: Vaas

G UNNIKRIISHNAN ■ Colombo

Former pacer Chaminda Vaas is delighted to see the growth of Lanka Premier League as a platform for young cricketers and hoped that the presence of prominent international stars will lift its profile in the coming years.

The LPL 2026 saw some high-profile names such as Vijay Shankar, Moeen Ali and Sikandar Raza taking part in it. "The league is getting better over the last six seasons, and all the prominent players have been coming from overseas, people like Moeen Ali, Vijay Shankar, he has a lot of experience playing in the IPL and then there are quite a few players from Afghanistan, Zimbabwe, even South Africa," Vaas told PTI.

However, the Lankan legend was equally happy to see the flow of young talents from the league to the higher levels. "It has been a feature of LPL - a lot of newcomers have come out, you know, Kamil Mishra, Sahan Arachchige, Trevor Matthews, Wanuja Sahan. There are quite a few youngsters, they have grabbed the opportunities and performed extremely well in LPL. It's a good platform for young players," he said. "It's good and I'm sure that from next year onwards it's going to be a lot of improvement and bring all the prominent players. And it's going to be an even more successful event next year I guess," he said. Vaas said he has been enjoying his coaching stint at various T20

leagues across the world, as it offers a chance to enhance his knowledge base. "I've been doing all the franchise leagues all over the world, like Abu Dhabi T10, LPL and quite a few in India as well. Recently I did Telangana T20, Hyderabad, Maharashtra Premier League and there are quite a few others as well.

"But it's good to work with different franchises and different players, get to know them and give my experience to them. And I'm really happy with the way I have come up." As someone with extensive playing and coaching experience, the 52-year-old urged the bowlers not to overcomplicate their craft.

"You need to keep it simple as a bowler and that's my thought as a coach and I tried to do that in my playing days as well. It's important because these days batsmen are trying to come after you every ball. So, your best bet is to keep a clear mind, and it helps you find consistency with your line and length. If you do that consistently then you will get your wickets," he added. (PTI)

Tied to the times

From Kalava to contemporary keepsakes:
How Rakhi threads changed with every generation

SAKSHI PRIYA

Before the era of glittering stones and customised trinkets crowded store shelves, a plain cotton string carried a heavy, lifelong promise. The festival of Raksha Bandhan originally centred entirely on the modest Kalava or Mauli. Spun from raw cotton, this red and yellow thread held prayers instead of price tags. Sisters tied these fragile strands to seal vows of protection rooted deeply in ancient epics and quiet rural folklore.

When the fun 1990s arrived that simple string suddenly turned into a burst of color. Local markets became messy fairs. Vendors tucked themselves behind heaps of marigolds, stringing up thick, squishy velvet circles. Suddenly, every rakhi had to have fake pearls, loud zari borders, and little gold-painted beads. Kids would drag their parents through the stalls for hours just to find the thickest sponge base. Having one felt like a prize. The bigger it was, the better- something soft enough to cover half your wrist and bright enough to make your friends notice it at school.

When the 2000s started, everything changed in a flash. Those soft, familiar velvet circles completely disappeared, swapped out for heavy metal designs packed with rows of fake diamonds. Shoppers started hunting for pieces mimicking intricate bracelets studded with elaborate stone motifs. Festive shopping shifted away from simple charm toward heavily marketed aesthetics, reflecting a rapidly changing society chasing affordable glamour.

Modern festive markets showcase a completely different sociological shift. The rakhi now functions as a highly specific fashion statement. Stalls are flooded with 'Nazarbattu' or evil eye designs, seamlessly fusing global bohemian jewellery trends with the traditional Indian practice of warding off bad luck.

At the very same time, a mindful approach to celebrations has carved out its own massive space. Eco-friendly versions embedded with tulsi, amaranth, or marigold seeds are actively reshaping the festival. After the celebrations end, these plantable threads go straight into the soil, eventually blooming into green shoots that act as living reminders of family

affection. On the complete opposite end of the market, pure silver and gold-plated rakhis are booming in popularity. Silversmiths design these precious metals as permanent jewellery meant for everyday wear rather than a single day's use.

A half-century of cultural shifts shows a simple tradition morphing from a fragile cotton string into a seeded plant or a precious silver ornament. Underneath all the changing trends and commercial pressure, the core tradition survives completely intact. The thread acts as a physical manifestation of an unbreakable bond, holding families together across the relentless march of time.



FROM SIMPLE COTTON THREADS TO SPARKLING SILVER, THE RAKHI HAS COMPLETELY CHANGED. YET, THROUGH ALL THESE YEARS, THIS TINY STRING STILL HOLDS OUR MOST BEAUTIFUL, UNBREAKABLE PROMISE OF LIFELONG LOVE



HOW THE RAKHI THALI GOT A MAKEOVER

Traditional Thali: Once just a simple brass plate holding plain kumkum, raw rice, and a little clay diya, it was all about pure, honest love.

Contemporary Thali: Today, these platters are gorgeous modern displays, packed with fresh flowers, sweet-smelling candles, and pretty glass bowls to make the day feel extra special.

- Why the Rakhi thali is changing**
- **Sustainable materials:** Lots of families are going for bamboo and jute and ceramic when it comes to decorating for festivals.
 - **Handmade details:** Local craft brings warmth and character.
 - **Personal touches:** Notes, names and ribbons make it feel special.
 - **Styled celebrations:** Flowers, candles and artisan bowls add festive charm.



ART CORNER

The art of belief

At Kalakaar Art Salon, twenty-two artists redefine sacred traditions, transforming memory and labor into a profound visual exploration of ritual, says SAKSHI PRIYA



Ritual lives far outside the confines of sacred shrines. It breathes through the quiet repetition of a brushstroke, the heavy weight of cultural memory, and the enduring labor of creation. At Kalakaar Art Salon, the group exhibition *Performing Belief*, curated by Rahul Kumar, captures this profound evolution. The showcase observes how identity and belonging shift across changing social landscapes, uniting twenty-two creators across distinct generations.

Carefully curated for this space, the artworks spark a compelling conversation between local histories and bold modernism. SH Raza's *Naga Bindu-98*, a commanding acrylic on canvas, anchors the room in tantric philosophy and geometric devotion. The raw energy of folk tradition surfaces in Jivya Soma Mashe's 2000 creation, rendered intimately with natural pigment on cloth. These historical touchstones seam-



PERFORMING BELIEF UNITES GENERATIONS OF ARTISTS, BLENDING RAZA'S MODERNISM WITH FOLK ROOTS, PROVING RITUAL SURVIVES THROUGH EVERYDAY CREATIVE REPETITION

lessly converse with contemporary visions. Madhvi Parekh's acrylic canvas, *The river in my village*, pulls childhood landscapes into vivid form, stretching the concept of ritual into the everyday human experience.

For younger contemporaries, the physical act of making turns into a rhythmic devotion. In *The Land of Lost Content*, Youshishir Maharjan meticulously weaves strips of reclaimed book pages, transforming the strict discipline of craft into a quiet archival gesture. Himmat Gyari's *Visarjan* captures the cyclical nature of cultural transformation through intricate watercolor and pencil work.

Through these intentional pairings, the salon creates an intimate space for observation. Ritual survives through continuous performance and renewal, holding the heavy threads of India's artistic past and its vibrant present in perfect tension.

Effortless festive chic

TEAM VIVA

Festive fashion has completely changed. Bright, overwhelming outfits have officially stepped aside for a much calmer, highly curated aesthetic. As Raksha Bandhan approaches, true elegance relies entirely on unexpected colour combinations. Picture a sweeping dusty rose skirt paired with a heavy moss green dupatta, finished beautifully with antique gold jewellery. Such styling effortlessly transcends the predictable sharara. Soft silver-grey worn with sage green provides a refreshing clarity for morning rituals, whilst combining peacock blue and emerald green introduces profound evening drama. To navigate this shift, our style desk has curated the ultimate colour palettes for that dreamy, Pinterest-board aesthetic you have always wanted.

SAGE & SILVER PEARLS

Swap the classic kurta for a sheer peplum jacket. Flowing sage green palazzos dripping in silver pearls offer an unexpected daytime glamour, perfect for festive brunches.



OLIVE GREEN AND PLUM

To give this earthy olive outfit a modern twist, simply drape the rich plum dupatta like a cape. Skip heavy gold and choose sleek silver instead. This fresh styling perfectly balances that striking contrast, keeping your festive look wonderfully traditional while adding a brilliantly updated, edgy vibe.



PERIWINKLE & SAGE GREEN

Blend sleek modern cuts with traditional floral embroidery. Pair flowing periwinkle trousers with an asymmetric sage green halter cape for sharp Indo-Western charm.



TEAL MIST & POMEGRANATE

Anchor bold pomegranate silk with sheer teal embroidery and heavy antique chokers for unforgettable contrast.



CHAMPAGNE GOLD

This rich glowing outfit looks absolutely stunning when paired with massive traditional gold earrings.



MASTERING THESE MUTED PALETTES IS ONLY HALF THE JOB. HOW YOU STYLE THEM MATTERS IMMENSELY. LAYERING SOFT FABRICS WITH BOLD ANTIQUE JEWELLERY AND SHARP FOOTWEAR COMPLETELY TRANSFORMS YOUR FESTIVE LOOK

ENTERTAINMENT



TEAM VIVA

Delhi's hip-hop scene took centre stage as MC Square and Paradox returned to the city for Hustle 5 -Apna Homeground, this time as Squad Bosses rather than contestants. The season is led by Badshah as Rap Supremo and EPR as OG Squad Boss, with MC Square, Paradox and Agsy joining the panel after making their own early mark on the show. The two rappers revisited the streets, food and musical influences that shaped their early years, while spending time with fans and emerging performers.

"Delhi NCR has always been a big part of my story," said MC Square, recalling the city as the place where he found "my inspiration, my sound and the people who believed in me." Meeting young artists, he added, brought back "that same hunger I had when I was starting."

Paradox called Delhi central to his identity: "A lot of who I am as an artist comes from Delhi-the people, the energy, the music and the experiences that shaped me."

'I See You' photo exhibition gets viewers' thumbs up



GYANESHWAR DAYAL

The Polish Institute in New Delhi and Anant Art present a compelling solo exhibition by acclaimed cinematographer Artur Zurawski, celebrating the often-invisible communities behind cinematic productions. Opening on August 21 and running through August 29 at Anant Art in Safdarjung Enclave, "I See You" showcases black-and-white photographs capturing directors, actors, crew members and collaborators from film sets across multiple countries. Zurawski, a Warsaw-based visual artist and graduate of Poland's renowned National Film School in Lodz, has forged a distinctive career spanning feature films, documentaries and international co-productions. His cinematography credits include notable Indian films such as *Mardaani* (2014), *Sultan* (2016) and *Bhoomi* (2017), alongside acclaimed works including *Idz pod prąd* (2024), which earned him the Golden Lion at the Polish Film Festival.

The exhibition offers a philosophical exploration of filmmaking's collaborative nature. Through carefully composed monochrome portraits, Zurawski captures moments of genuine human connection between individuals whose lives briefly intersect during production. Each photograph represents an act of recognition, acknowledging the presence and individuality of people whose contributions often remain invisible once filming concludes.

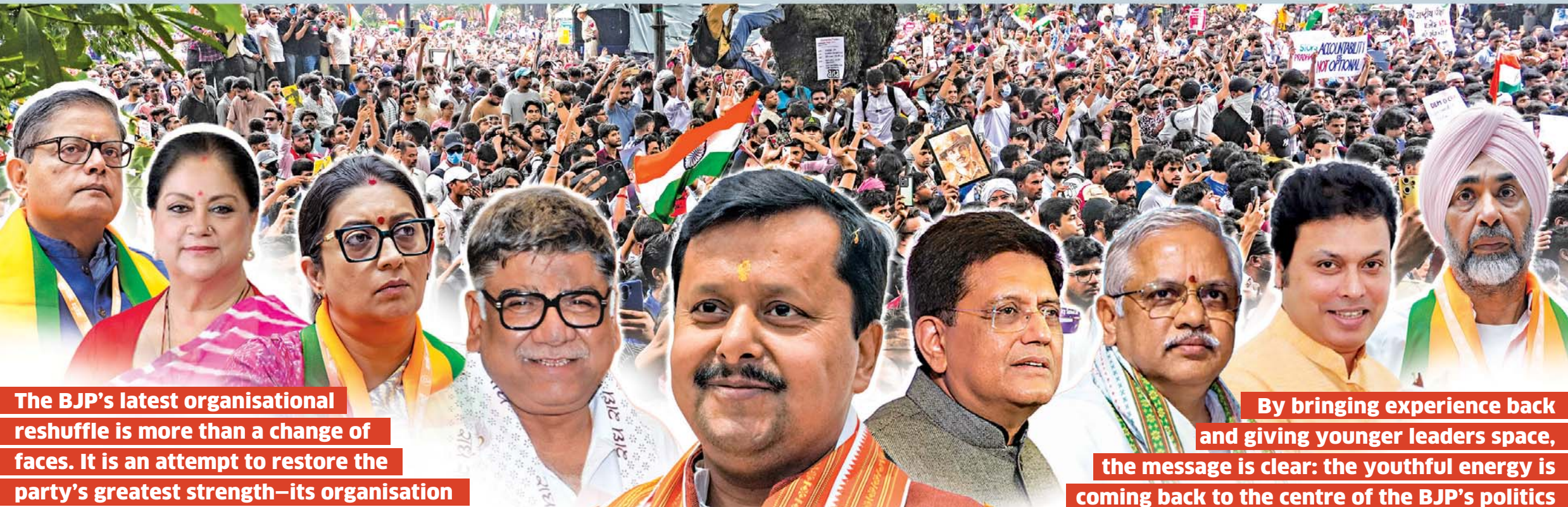
"The photographs remind us that cinema is not created by stars alone," explains Malgorzata Wejsis-Golebiak, Director of the Polish Institute, highlighting how the exhibition strengthens cultural dialogue between Poland and India through a universal artistic language.

A Polish cinematographer's striking photographs reveal the unseen faces behind filmmaking, celebrating collaboration, human connection and the people who make cinema possible

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The Pioneer AGENDA

I don't write off any political party. I believe in strengthening the BJP and winning elections and not depend on writing off parties.
— Amit Shah



Re-organisation of a party built on organisational strength



Re-organisation of the BJP central team has become a major topic of discussion nationally, and rightly so. No other political party has such a structured organisation where workers begin work from booth level to get a chance to move from local to national politics by sheer dint of their hard work on the field. Lately, there have been many horizontal entries because of the new corporate culture in Indian politics, so there are many newcomers who get a chance to enter at middle or even higher level, but most of them too have to prove their mettle and their malleability in the organizational ethos they have adopted, or they fall slowly by the sidelines.

Organisation is the major strength of BJP. It is the life breath of BJP that saw its rise from two MPs to being the most dominant force. Due to cycles of elections every few months, the urgency of coming to power in most states saw the much vaunted organisation to stay in the back stage and it seemed like being pre-dominantly run by ministers and powerful political leaders. The recent reshuffle is a long due process undertaken now. By all means, it is a major overhaul. Many established actors have gone backstage, replaced by new faces and erstwhile proven and time tested stars who seemed to have been on the way out.

Many analysts are stuck with average age of the new team. However, NDTV has put up some interesting graphics to show that while above 60 years leadership moved out, some experienced stars of 50-60 age group have come back, while the younger leaders have been given responsibilities. So, the average doesn't reflect the true nature of this change. The party starts with the advantage of the youngest party President ever in BJP history. The recalibration also shows that he has been given some freehand in putting his team together. He has not shied away from the fact that absence of experienced mature leaders saw the organisation become weak in some area where personalities had become power centres by themselves, and slowly losing connect with the field karyakartas. This is a positive development.

The reshuffle shows that BJP leadership keeps a keen tab on the performance of its karyakartas. No karyakarta is forgotten or discarded as many speculate when changes take place. Smriti Irani has, of course, proven to be queen of comebacks with sterling performance in West Bengal and her unique gift of communicating precisely in multiple languages. Communication has been one of the weak points in BJP for some years, with Modi ji and Amit Shah doing the heavy lifting.

Vinod Tawde, once pushed out of Maharashtra was brought to Delhi where he worked silently but solidly to

rise again in prominence as a very important organiser. Ram Madhav with his proven skills at negotiating with tough opposition, turning many foes into friends, his knowledge of foreign affairs has seen him back. Biplob Deb a rising star from north east, after some days on the bench, so to say, finds himself at the top.

Bringing in Piyush Goyal, a veteran and key minister in Modi cabinet back as treasurer shows the seriousness of the exercise. Not many have commented on BL Santhosh's continuation at the top of the organisational pyramid. He is the most experienced organiser in BJP now with minutest knowledge of the organisation and people in every corner of Bharat. He will be very important for Nitin Nabin to run the organisation smoothly.

Rajasthan is in serious trouble due to inexperience of the CM, while Vijayaraje Scindia sulked on the sidelines. She has been rehabilitated, strengthening Rajasthan at organisational level. If the CM were to seek her guidance, he can improve on his governance score card. An important feature of this re-organisation is space given to 'outsiders' meaning those who came to BJP from other political parties. Anil Antony stands out as a person who worked silently at the organisational level for some time before being brought into centre. I wish more of such articulate and good talents were accommodated too. Sandeep Pathak finds a place with his excellent achievements in fields outside politics. Bringing very late entrant Rohan Gupta is a surprise promotion, but BJP surely knows his importance.

Rising number of women is a great signal that BJP walks to talk. 33% is not just a political rhetoric but a commitment. That ratio is not yet 33% shows the difficulty in getting enough talent, yet, among women. A challenge well accepted. The social balancing of different communities has been well maintained, reiterating the talent and commitment of social engineering of BJP in every aspect of governance and organisation. Absence of organizational secretaries in many states, induction of outsiders in important positions shows the changing organizational priorities of BJP.

One area of concern could be lack of enough representation to the southern states. There is enough talent. BJP is serious about making strong headway into South, but it is not reflected in the composition of the team. Karnataka is the only strong state, the beach head of BJP in southern part of Bharat, but the

The new-look BJP

organisation there is nothing to write home about. Various fronts do have many faces from southern region, who will find it difficult to communicate with the strong northern party workers.

The biggest change that attracted lot of attention was removal of much loved and hated Amit Malviya from the critical post of IT Cell head. But I am sure he is not going anywhere far. His services will be used in strategic areas. He set up a formidable machinery in social media. However, over last few years, Congress seemed to have stolen a march over BJP in social media space. A political analyst S Nagarajan notes that there is a sense of digital fatigue and public friction has set in among netizens due to hyper-aggressive, polarizing online rhetoric. I think, IT Cell behaved in a flat footed manner during critical political challenges. Debacle of communication and anticipating the mood of youth during CJP protests was a signal that IT Cell had lost its mojo. Media cell too has seen serious changes. Despite a big panel of spokespersons, very few spokespersons get to appear on national media. Among the panelists there is preponderance of new comers from other parties. To me, the major failure of media and IT Cell was blocking of communication and feedback mechanism. Ministers can be excused for being very busy. But a department set up specifically for communicating with people cannot operate within closed networks. It is hoped that the new team will relearn the quality of BJP of keeping all channels open to again become the dominant force as it was from 2014 to 2019-20.

Nitin Nabin has shown that he can create a navin (new) organizational mood. One can say that he mishandled only the opening over (by-elections in his own stronghold), but he definitely recovered well and is battling with focus and patience for a long haul.

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The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) recently executed a significant organisational overhaul immediately following youth-led demonstrations at Jantar Mantar. The reshuffle raises a fundamental political question: Is this restructuring a proactive, natural evolution, or a defensive reaction to mounting public pressure? There are many questions are on surface which need to be explained. First, is it a new team which will drive the party or veterans sitting on the top continue to play shot? Second, how far BJP has travelled on the way as it had been sketched by the Congress earlier? The famous political scientist named it 'Congress System'. Third, has the gap occurred between RSS and BJP? Fourth, how will the Gen G react on the forthcoming elections? These are common political questions which need a better understanding.

First BJP is a party with difference. It is closely attached with its ideological foundation i.e. RSS. Other political parties in India either national or regional are imbedded within the family bond. Leadership cannot emerge beyond blood relations. Exceptions could be Communist Parties of India. At major turning points BJP has overhauled its structure and sent a strong message that decisions are always taken democratically. During Ram Rath Yatra, veteran leader of BJP Lal Krishna Advani created a new team in which the current prime minister was one of the pillars. The organisational overhaul following L.K. Advani's 1990 Ram Rath Yatra was a foundational turning point in the BJP's history. Parmod Mahajan



BJP's new team: A strategic pivot or forced defence?

emerged as the party's chief strategist, moderniser, and alliance architect. Inducted as a National General Secretary from the RSS, Govindacharya formulated the party's policy of "social engineering" (samajik samrasta) to expand the BJP's base beyond its traditional urban upper-caste core and counter the Mandal reservation politics of the era. Sushma Swaraj became the party's foremost orator and public face in parliament, while Arun Jaitley provided media coordination, legal strategy, and television debate representation.

The larger question is, has the Nitin Nabin, BJP President, the same aura as Advani enjoyed? It is too early to jump on the conclusion. Few changes are well understood. BJP earlier team failed to combat on social media during the protest. The most direct response to the Gen Z protests—which leveraged memes, satire, and viral campaigns that outpaced traditional political machinery. That led to replace long-time IT and social media head Amit Malviya with Deepak Mhaskey. Key figures like Smriti Irani (appointed General Secretary) and Ram Madhav (appointed Vice President) were brought back into active organizational roles to bolster political messaging, party discipline, and state-level coordination. There is no doubt who understands Indian politics that final shot will be played by top central leaders especially the Prime Minister and Home Minister. The consecutive winning streaks of BJP happened due the charismatic image of Modi. A new theory has been evolved in Indian polity that it is not MPs who elect PM it is other way round. MPs win their respective constituencies because of the image of PM Modi. That is why the top leader will take the penalty kick. That connects with centralising syndrome in BJP.

Third question comes to the surface is that as BJP adopted the Congress Spirit of centralising the party affairs? Many leaders from different parties are being coopted into BJP. The main entry point in BJP used to come through RSS orientations at different levels. That has been largely compromised. Decision-making, ticket distribution, and cabinet appointments have become heavily centralized around the national leadership in New Delhi, mirroring the Indira Gandhi era. State Chief Ministers are frequently appointed directly by central command rather than emerging through autonomous regional party factions. To secure legislative majorities and expand into non-traditional territories (such as the Northeast, Maharashtra, and South India), the party has inducted dozens of high-profile former Congress and opposition figures. Prominent leaders like Himanta Biswa Sarma, Jyotiraditya Scindia, Ashok Chavan, and Jitin Prasada were rapidly rewarded with chief ministerships, cabinet berths, and Rajya Sabha tickets, often causing friction with lifelong Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and BJP workers. While the national leadership frequently campaigns against dynastic politics (parivarwad), the party has accommodated numerous dynastic politicians and their offspring when inducting leaders from other parties or seeking regional electoral leverage.

Fourth, how G-Generation will react in the forthcoming elections? They are very

different. They cannot be fooled. Quite often they do not give much credit to caste and religion which are the most dominant factors in elections. They constitute 28 percent of demography. Most of them are first time voter. It will have tangible impacts. India has the largest Generation Z population in the world, estimated at ~375 to 405 million people (accounting for roughly 28% of the country's total population. India is home to roughly 20% of the world's entire Gen Z cohort. Raised on cheap 4G/5G mobile internet and smartphones, with over 93% smartphone penetration. Their primary sources of news, entertainment, and identity discovery are visual and algorithm-driven platforms (Instagram, YouTube, short video formats). With a significant portion of this demographic reaching voting age, their priorities—such as competitive exam integrity, employment generation, digital freedom, and climate concerns—have made them a crucial swing bloc. Gen-Z uprisings happened in many parts of the world. In some the countries political systems were changed, like Bangladesh, Nepal and Kenya. A few of them had to adjust with the demands of Gen G. Fifth, is this generation is manufactured and provoked by foreign media? The primary findings do not endorse this truth. It has emerged due perennial failures of governance at different levels. Yes, it could be true that foreign media magnify the internal issues against India. Major Western outlets frequently report on Indian protests through the broader lens of democratic backsliding, youth discontent, or global anti-incumbency.

Last, has the relations of BJP with RSS become problematic and conflicting? In fact, relationship between the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its ideological parent organisation, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), is historically defined by deep ideological alignment, shared leadership networks, and close cadre coordination. A notable public spark occurred during the 2024 national election campaign when BJP President J.P. Nadda stated in an interview that while the party initially relied heavily on the RSS, the BJP has grown into an autonomous, self-sufficient (sakhsham) political machine capable of running its own affairs. Once ex-Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee had made it clear that there are few points of disagreements with RSS but it is not so big to be talked about. It is family with big umbrella. Dissent and dialogues are part of democracy.

PM has congratulated the new team. PM Narendra Modi said in a post on X, "This newly appointed team brings together organisational experience, energy and grassroots connect." BJP new team will be tested in the upcoming assembly elections. The biggest challenge is to connect with G-Generation. The second most important truth is that RSS has been not merely parents of BJP but also cares and nurtures accordingly. RSS pracharaks know the nerve and accurately identify the reasons of discontent and advise BJP subsequently. Bringing people from other political parties in the driving seat will affect BJP. Therefore, a candid understanding with its parents would always be a boon for the BJP.

THE BHARTIYA JANATA PARTY GETS A MAKEOVER: THE KEY FACES

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) announced its new national leadership team under the newly appointed Party President Nitin Nabin. The major organisational reshuffle balances veteran leaders with fresh faces for upcoming political cycles.

TOP LEADERSHIP & TREASURERS

- National President: Nitin Nabin
- National Treasurer: Piyush Goyal (Union Minister)
- National Joint Treasurer: Rajesh Mangal

NATIONAL GENERAL SECRETARIES

- B. L. Santhosh (Organisational National General Secretary)
- Smriti Irani
- Biplob Kumar Deb
- Vinod Tawde
- Sunil Bansal

NATIONAL VICE PRESIDENTS

- Vasundhara Raje Scindia
- Ram Madhav
- Baijayant Jay Panda
- Tirath Singh Rawat
- Sardar Manpreet Singh Badal
- D. Purandeshwari

- Rekha Verma
- Bharti Pawar
- M. Nagaraja
- Lal Singh Arya
- Usha Ben Doshi

NATIONAL JOINT GENERAL SECRETARIES

- Shiv Prakash
- Saudan Singh

SECRETARIES & MORCHA PRESIDENTS

- Anil Antony (National Secretary)
- Rohan Gupta (National Secretary)
- Hemang Joshi (Yuva Morcha President)
- Roop Kumari Choudhary (Mahila Morcha President)

WEEKLY MOON SIGN FORECAST | 23 - 29 AUGUST

Wide Horizons, Steady Work
and a Clearer Outlook

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 Moons quiet message for the week ahead. A Full Moon and lunar eclipse arrive towards the close of the week, bringing some matters to a natural point of review. Notice what has been building quietly; not every strong feeling needs an immediate decision.

Weekly Overview

The week opens with the Moon in Sagittarius, encouraging broader thinking, learning and movement. Capricorn then brings attention to discipline, responsibilities and practical decisions. By Friday, Shravana Purnima and the lunar eclipse add a more reflective note as the Moon moves through Aquarius. The weekend favours perspective and calmer conversations.



Aries (Mesh): Travel, learning or future planning may open the week on an encouraging note. A conversation with someone experienced could help you see an old situation differently. Capricorn then turns attention towards career and responsibilities, where steady follow-up matters more than speed. By the weekend, friends and professional networks become useful again. Keep plans flexible; one new connection may lead somewhere worthwhile.



Taurus (Vrishabh): Shared finances, trust or an unresolved commitment may need careful handling during the opening days. Avoid making assumptions simply because a discussion feels uncomfortable. The middle of the week broadens perspective through learning, travel or useful advice. By Friday, professional matters become more visible. Stay composed if expectations rise; quiet preparation will carry more weight than trying to prove a point.



Gemini (Mithun): Relationships and one-to-one discussions take centre stage early in the week. Some differences can be settled if both sides are willing to listen rather than defend a position. Later, shared responsibilities or financial matters need practical attention. The closing phase opens a wider view and may revive interest in travel, learning or future plans. Give yourself time before turning an idea into a commitment.



Cancer (Karka): Work, health and routine responsibilities may keep the first part of the week fairly structured. Small corrections can make daily life easier without requiring a complete change. Relationships become more important as the week progresses, particularly where duties are shared. Fridays Full Moon phase may bring a financial or emotional matter into sharper focus. Handle it calmly and avoid making a final decision in the heat of the moment.



Leo (Simha): Creative interests, children or personal plans may bring lighter moments at the start of the week. Capricorn then asks for more discipline in work, health or unfinished responsibilities. Relationships move into stronger focus towards Friday, and someone close may have more to say than expected. Listen before reacting. The weekend can bring useful clarity once both sides have had enough space to speak honestly.



Virgo (Kanya): Home, family or personal arrangements may need attention early on, especially if something has been left half-finished. The middle of the week feels more expressive and may revive a creative interest or personal plan. By Friday, work routines and health priorities come back into focus. Keep things simple. A few practical improvements may do more for your peace of mind than another ambitious target.



Libra (Tula): Communication, paperwork or short journeys can make the opening days busy, but useful information may emerge through ordinary conversations. Capricorn later shifts attention towards home and family, where practical arrangements need patience. The Full Moon phase brings creativity and personal emotions closer to the surface. Enjoy what feels good, but avoid reading too much into one moment or one persons reaction.



Scorpio (Vrishchik): Money, family responsibilities or personal values may need sensible handling as the week begins. Discussions become easier once you move away from fixed expectations. Midweek supports communication, meetings and short travel. By Friday, home or family matters may feel more emotionally charged than usual. Give people some room. What appears urgent in the moment may look quite different after the atmosphere settles.



Sagittarius (Dhanu): With the Moon beginning the week in Sagittarius, confidence and personal momentum improve naturally. This is a useful time to reconnect with plans that had lost direction. Capricorn then brings finances and practical priorities into focus, asking for a more measured approach. Towards the weekend, communication becomes active again. Speak clearly, but avoid promising more than your time or energy can realistically support.



Capricorn (Makar): The opening days may feel quieter, giving you useful space to think before stepping forward. Once the Moon moves into Capricorn, priorities become clearer and practical decisions feel easier to make. Use this phase to organise rather than overextend yourself. By Friday, finances and personal security need a balanced look.



Aquarius (Kumbh): Friends, professional networks or longer-term plans may remain active early in the week, though you need not respond to every suggestion immediately. Capricorn then encourages a quieter phase of preparation and rest. As the Moon enters Aquarius around the Full Moon and eclipse, personal feelings may become stronger or clearer. Observe first.



Pisces (Meen): Career matters or public responsibilities may demand attention at the beginning of the week. Useful support can come through colleagues or wider networks as the week develops. The closing phase becomes more inward-looking, particularly around the Full Moon and eclipse.

“IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, IN FOREIGN POLICY, A GREAT DEAL HAS TO DO WITH HISTORICAL CIRCUMSTANCES, A GREAT DEAL HAS TO DO WITH THE SENSE AND PERCEPTION OF PEOPLE.”
— SALMAN KHURSHID

The future of Islamic NATO



SURJIT SINGH FLORA

A defence treaty agreed in Mecca on August 7 binds Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Pakistan to a single mutual-defence promise: an armed attack on one nation will be viewed as an attack on all three.

The agreement is already being called "Islamic NATO," although that isnt its official name. The comparison rests on its central pledge, which resembles NATOs Article 5. Yet the pacts real importance will depend less on its language than on whether the three governments build the structures needed to act together in a crisis. Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif signed the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement in Mecca. Its stated goals include deterrence, military cooperation, regional peace, security, and stability.

The three countries have different strengths. Pakistan has a nuclear arsenal, a large army and combat experience. Türkiye has the second largest military in NATO, a booming defence industry, armed drones, missiles and naval forces. Saudi Arabia has substantial financial resources, energy leverage and a pivotal position in the Arab and Muslim worlds.

That combination explains the NATO comparison. However, there is no public evidence that the agreement creates an automatic troop deployment rule, a standing joint force, or a unified command. Mutual-defence language carries political weight, but it doesnt create an integrated military by itself.

The timing reflects rising security fears in the Gulf. Missile attacks, threats to energy facilities, and dangers to shipping near the Red Sea and the Strait of Hormuz have pushed regional defense planning higher on the political agenda.

The pact builds on the Saudi-Pakistan Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement signed in September 2025. Holding the ceremony in Mecca gave the agreement additional religious and political significance. It didnt, however, create military obligations beyond the terms of the document.

Saudi and Turkish officials have described the pact as defensive rather than an anti-Iran alliance or a sectarian bloc. Iranian lawmaker Ebrahim Rezaei called it a "paper



agreement," though that was his personal comment and not a formal response from Tehran.

Pakistans hand is clear. Its military has trained and fought alongside Saudi forces for decades, and its nuclear arsenal provides an additional layer of deterrence. Türkiye has traditional military strength, defence technology and a growing domestic arms industry with increasing export potential. Saudi Arabia can finance weapons, infrastructure and joint programs. It can use its geographic location and diplomatic clout.

Those resources could support a durable partnership. They dont answer the hardest questions about collective defense. If one member is attacked, who responds first? What assistance is required? Who commands the operation? Would the response involve intelligence and weapons, air defense, logistics, troops, or direct combat?

A shared threat can bring governments together quickly. It cant produce a common war plan overnight.

Pakistans Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said on August 9 that the agreement is open to countries willing to accept its principles. He also said it doesnt replace existing bilateral or multilateral security arrangements.

That language leaves room for expansion. Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, and Jordan could all see value in closer military cooperation, particularly in missile defense, maritime security, and intelligence sharing. None, however, has been confirmed as an applicant. No official list of potential members exists, and no accession process has been announced.

Further members could improve practical cooperation. Exchanges of intelligence could improve warnings about missiles, drones, militant networks and cross-border attacks. Smaller militaries could obtain Pakistani and Turkish training thru joint

exercises. Ports, energy facilities and shipping lanes could be protected by coordinated air-defence and maritime patrols. The richer Gulf countries could also help pay for equipment, maintenance and military infrastructure. A broader grouping would carry diplomatic value as well. Muslim-majority states could gain a stronger voice in regional security discussions that are often shaped by the United States, China, Russia, and other outside powers.

Membership would also bring risk. A country that joins a mutual-defence pact could be expected to support a crisis it didnt start and cant control. Each government would have to balance the new commitment against relationships with Washington, Beijing, Tehran, Israel, and neighboring states.

Their policies already differ on Syria, Yemen, Gaza, Iran, and relations with Western powers. Türkiyes membership in NATO adds another layer of complexity. Saudi Arabia maintains wide Gulf and international ties, while Pakistan faces domestic political pressure and depends on external economic support. Those constraints could limit each governments freedom of action when a real conflict begins.

The signing ceremony was the easiest part. The agreements credibility will depend on what follows. Reports indicate that the pact may establish a Saudi-based secretariat, regular meetings of foreign and defense ministers, and consultations among military chiefs. The published Arabic text also refers to cooperation in training, logistics, and intelligence sharing.

Important details remain unclear. Public reporting hasnt explained how the three countries would make decisions during a crisis, what forces each would provide, or how Pakistans nuclear status fits into the arrangement. The agreement also doesnt

define the military response that an attacked member could expect.

That ambiguity matters because "defense" can mean many things. It can involve diplomatic support, intelligence, weapons, logistics, air defense, or combat troops. Without agreed procedures, governments may interpret the same promise in very different ways.

The first signs of seriousness would be concrete. The three members would need a permanent council with authority during a crisis, secure intelligence systems, joint command arrangements, regular exercises, and agreed funding. They would also need published rules covering the type and speed of assistance available to an attacked member.

The earlier Saudi-Pakistani accord is a word to the wise. Subsequent regional attacks didnt lead to direct military intervention, despite strong mutual-defense language. War is expensive and political promises tend to get stretched to the limit.

Any decision to fight could complicate NATO duties and diplomatic ties for Turkey. Pakistan would have its own internal and external constraints. Saudi Arabia, meanwhile, would need to weigh the impact of military action on its economy, energy exports and relations with major powers.

The most likely near-term result is therefore less dramatic than the Islamic NATO label suggests. Training exchanges, intelligence cooperation, defense technology projects, border security, and coordinated diplomacy are more plausible than a fully integrated force modeled on NATO.

That result would still count. Improved intelligence, joint training and better air and maritime defences could increase the cost of attacking any member. It could also improve the readiness of three militaries that already have significant capabilities thru joint planning. Shared interests and a formal ceremony were not enough to create an enduring alliance. This would require trust, clear commitments, joint planning and rules that hold when governments change.

The Makkah agreement has the political weight and military capacity to attract new partners. But expansion is not guaranteed and more members would not automatically mean more security. The pact is now a three-country mutual-defence agreement with a lofty political message.

Its future will be measured through exercises, intelligence sharing, procurement, command arrangements, and crisis decisions. Calling the agreement an Islamic NATO is easy. Building the institutions that could make the name credible will take far longer.

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

What we inherit: A father, a book and the memory of Mathura

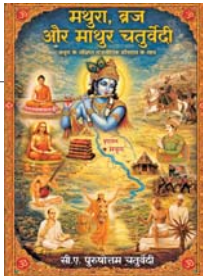
BY PRIYANKA CHATURVEDI

There are some books you read as a reader. And then there are books you hold as an inheritance. For me, Mathura, Braj aur Mathur Chaturvedi is the latter not just because it is the fruit of labour of my father, C. A. Purushottam Chaturvedi, who has spent much of his life besides being a Chartered Accountant, as an avid reader, chronicler, researcher collecting as well as documenting the history of the region. What began as a lifelong intellectual curiosity has now become a substantial volume bringing together history, religion, culture, genealogy, local traditions and the political history of Mathura.

Mathura has always occupied an important place in Indias imagination. It is one of Indias seven sacred cities. The town carries the memory of Krishnas birth, the history of the Shurasena kingdom, the traditions of Braj, and layers of Buddhist, Jain, Vaishnav, Shaiv and Shakta traditions. It is not just a geographical location, a historical city, a pilgrimage centre, Mathura is an amalgamation of all these lived and ideas. Despite its rich cultural and civilisational history there is one uncomfortable question that the book asks, why has Mathura not received the attention and development that it deserves?

Cities survive because ordinary people continue living in them. Traditions survive because families continue practising them. Memories survive because somebody tells the next generation what happened. This is why the book is an important contribution towards Indias civilisational ethos and the power of continuity as it brings the historical narrative through the people who lived these centuries of change - it is the communities of Mathura and, particularly, the Mathur Chaturvedis who continued to remain connected to the city and its religious traditions. The book documents the Mathur Chaturvedi community through its *gotras*, *pravars*, all, *kuldevis*, customs, social institutions, and geographical spread. These may sound like details of genealogy, but they are actually records of continuity.

The book describes how these identities became important not



Publisher: Mathura, Brij aur Mathur Chaturvedi
Author: C. A. Purushottam Chaturvedi

merely as markers of ancestry but as structures that helped preserve social and cultural memory. A community is not preserved merely because its members continue to carry the same surname. It survives because it carries forward a memory. It remembers where it came from, what traditions shaped it, who its teachers were, which institutions sustained it, and what it believes is worth passing on. There is also the story of the Chaturvedis beyond Mathura. Over different periods, Chaturvedi families came to be settled in areas beyond Mathura, including parts of the Bhadaur region and present-day Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. The book engages with the popular explanation that the communities dispersal was simply the result of people fleeing Mathura because of invasions and persecution. The Chaturvedi story, as presented in the book, is therefore not simply a story of migration. It is a story of how identity travels. What emerges is a simple but powerful idea: Education was one of the ways a small community like the Chaturvedis decided to empower themselves and break the poverty cycle - through intellect and knowledge. Perhaps that is one of the most valuable lessons my fathers generation can leave ours.

Another part of the book is its discussion of the traditional akhara and community institutions. The akhara was not merely a place for wrestling. It could become a space of social cohesion, where people with completely different political beliefs could nevertheless come together as members of the same community. The book gives the striking example of Congressmen,

Jana Sangh supporters, and communists sharing the same social space.

That feels remarkably relevant today.

We speak endlessly about polarisation and the loss of social cohesion. Perhaps we should also ask ourselves what happened to the institutions that once allowed people to disagree politically without ceasing to belong to the same social world.

The other lesson from the book is that the communities history through music. How music continues to build communities and keep it alive. Music became a vehicle for devotion and cultural expression in Mathura. The book records traditions of Ramlleela, Kansa Mela, Holi that continue even today. Most importantly the book eventually brings us back to something far more eternal.

Love. One of the reflections in the book beautifully connects Braj, Krishna, and the Bhagavata tradition through the idea of prem - the affection of Yashoda, the friendship of the cowherds, the devotion of the gopis, and Radhas mahabhava.

Personally for me & selfishly so, this book is an act of preservation. Every generation assumes the next one will remember. It doesnt unless someone makes the effort to write it down. In the foreword I wrote for the book, I described it as preserving the unbroken connection of the Chaturvedis with Krishna and his janmabhoomi. But perhaps I was also describing something much more personal; the connection between one generation and the next - that is of me with that of my parents and the one I take forward with my children. Finally, when I think about what a parent can best do for their children, it is not merely to leave an inheritance that is of monetary value - property, money, or possessions. But sometimes it is to leave behind something as invaluable as curiosity. Sometimes something as precious as a library. Sometimes something as beautiful as a story of our roots and where we belong. And then, sometimes it is a book that says: this mattered to me, and I wanted you to know why.

The reviewer is a former member of Rajya Sabha

Greek bards and Indian battles



BY ALOK PRIYADARSHI

Christopher Nolans "The Odyssey" has crossed \$1.3 billion worldwide and over 7200 crore in India, making it the biggest hit of Nolans career, ahead of even "The Dark Knight Rises." The real author of that success, though, is a poet who never saw a rupee of it: Homer, whose Iliad and Odyssey were composed nearly 2,700 years ago and still anchor the costliest film epics money can buy. The Iliad tells of the ten-year Trojan War sparked by Helens abduction; the Odyssey follows its heroes twenty-year, monster-strewn voyage home to reclaim his wife and throne from her suitors.

Whats eerie is how much of this weve heard before, in Sanskrit. Odysseus strings his old bow to prove his identity, as Rama strings Shivas bow to win Sita. Achilles, invincible but for his heel, dies to an arrow, exactly as Krishna does, shot in the foot by the hunter Jara. The wooden horse that breaches Troy has its twin in Yudhishtiras murmured lie about "Ashwatthama," the elephant, which breaks Dronas will to fight. Both wars ignite over a humiliated woman: Helens abduction, Draupadis disrobing.

Achilles and Karna are both invincible but for one weak spot, both reluctant warriors - one fighting to avenge a friends death, the other to repay a debt of loyalty rather than conviction. Patroclus and Abhimanyu both die young, entering battles meant for greater men in their absence. Even the dogs rhyme: Argos waits twenty years to die at Odysseuss returning feet; Yudhishtiras companion walks with him all the way to heavens gate.

No credible contact existed between Greece and India before Alexanders invasion of 326 BC, centuries after both epics took shape. So this is either coincidence, or evidence that every culture reaches for the same stories to make sense of duty, loyalty and grief. What survives intact in both is an unfashionable moral: glory isnt the point. Rama, the Pandavas and Odysseus all end their stories by turning away from the spoils of victory, choosing home over conquest. Thats the real inheritance: not the wars these epics describe so unforgettably, but the walking away from them.

The writer is Additional Commissioner of Police (Crime) Varanasi



“YOU ARE INVITED TO THE FESTIVAL OF
THIS WORLD AND YOUR LIFE IS BLESSED”
— RABINDRANATH TAGORE

Onam

When Kerala serves abundance on a banana leaf



ANIL
RAJPUT

Some festivals are remembered through a ritual, others through a procession, a prayer or a song. Onam is remembered through all of these, but perhaps nowhere is its meaning expressed more completely than on a banana leaf. A sadya does not celebrate abundance by piling luxury upon luxury. It brings together rice, vegetables, pulses, coconut, curd, spices, jaggery and plantain in a meal where every preparation has its place. Its deeper grammar is striking: prosperity without waste, diversity without disorder, and abundance made meaningful through sharing. In 2026, Thiruvonam, the principal day of Onam, falls on Wednesday, 26 August, when families across Kerala and Malayali communities around the world gather to welcome a festival that is at once mythic, agricultural, social and deeply culinary.

The best-known story of Onam centres on Mahabali, the generous asura king whose reign Kerala's cultural memory associates with prosperity, equality and the absence of want. According to the tradition, Vishnu appeared before him as Vamana and asked for three paces of land. When Vamana assumed a cosmic form, two steps encompassed the worlds, and Mahabali, unable to offer a third measure of land, offered his own head. His humility earned him the privilege of returning to visit his people once every year. Yet in Kerala's imagination, Onam is not merely the homecoming of a beloved king. It is also the symbolic return of an ethical idea. Mahabali is remembered not simply for power or splendour, but for the quality of the realm over which he presided, a society imagined as free from deprivation, discrimination and injustice, and governed with generosity and concern for its people.

The Mahabali story has travelled through different textual, theological and regional traditions, and its interpretation has never been entirely singular. Kerala's celebration, however, has come to place particular emphasis on Mahabali's generosity, the prosperity of his realm, his humility before Vamana and the affection that binds ruler and people. The enduring appeal of the legend therefore lies not only in nostalgia for a golden age, but in the moral questions it keeps alive: What makes prosperity meaningful? What does good governance owe to those it serves? What is abundance worth if it is not widely shared? Onam turns those questions into lived culture, and the sadya gives them perhaps their most tangible form.

That cultural meaning extends well beyond the dining leaf. The ten-day season begins with Atham, when pookkalam starts appearing at homes and gradually grow more elaborate as Thiruvonam approaches. Athachamayam at Thripunithura marks the opening of the festive season with a public procession of folk arts, music and pageantry, while boat races, Pulikali, dances, games, new clothes and family gatherings transform Onam from a household observance into a wider social celebration. Over time, it has also become a cultural season shared widely by Malayalis across religious and social communities. Homes, neighbourhoods and public spaces participate in different ways, but hospitality, reunion and collective celebration remain central to its emotional character.

Onam is equally shaped by Kerala's agricultural calendar. It arrives in Chingam after the intensity of the monsoon months, carrying associations of harvest, renewal and replenished fields. The traditional sadya reflects this ecology. Rice, gourds, tubers, plantains, pulses, coconut, curry leaves, chillies and seasonal vegetables connect the feast to paddy fields, homestead gardens and coconut groves. Long before words such as local, seasonal and sustainable became part of modern food-policy vocabulary, the traditional sadya embodied much of that logic. A banana leaf could serve as the plate and return naturally to the soil, while culinary abundance depended less on imported luxury than on the diversity of what the landscape could produce. The feast therefore celebrates not only plenty, but the intelligence of using many ingredients in distinct ways and wasting as little of their potential as possible.

The architecture of the sadya begins with that banana leaf. Traditionally laid with its tapering end towards the diner's left, it is not filled at random. Smaller accompaniments occupy customary positions before rice is served on the lower portion, creating deliberate contrasts in colour, texture, temperature and intensity. Crisp meets soft, dry meets creamy, sweet answers sour, and mild preparations sit beside pungent or fiery ones. This alternation allows the diner to move through the meal rather than experience every flavour at once. At communal sadyas, rows of guests are also served the same style of meal and hospitality. That should not be romanticised as proof that social differences disappear at the table, but the image of people eating together from the same kind of leaf has



acquired a powerful democratic symbolism within Onam's moral imagination.

The opening tastes are concentrated and lively. Upperi, thin slices of firm Nendran plantain fried until crisp, brings salt and crunch. Beside it may sit Sharkara Varatti, thicker plantain pieces coated in jaggery and seasoned with dry ginger and spices, turning the same fruit into something sweet and aromatic. PulI Inji, or inji curry, pushes the palate elsewhere, with fresh ginger cooked in tamarind and jaggery until hot, sour and sweet meet in the same spoonful. Mango or lime pickles add another acidic edge, while Pappadam supplies brittle texture and a savoury counterpoint. These are small servings, but they establish the principle that will govern everything that follows: contrast without confusion.

From these sharp openers, the meal moves into one of Kerala cuisine's great themes, the transformation of coconut. Avial combines raw plantain, yam, ash gourd, drumstick, beans and other vegetables in a thick mixture of coconut and green chilli, often sharpened with curd and finished with coconut oil and curry leaves. Olan does almost the opposite. Ash gourd is gently cooked with cowpeas in coconut milk to produce a pale, restrained preparation whose subtlety becomes important beside stronger curries. Thoran transforms coconut again, combining grated coconut with finely cut vegetables such as cabbage, beans or beetroot in a relatively dry preparation tempered with mustard seeds and curry leaves.

Erissery commonly brings pumpkin, yam or plantain together with pulses and coconut, sometimes finished with roasted coconut for greater depth, while Kootu Curry may combine black chickpeas, yam, plantain and coconut in a thicker preparation. Kaalan introduces curd,

coconut and raw plantain or elephant foot yam in a preparation that is tangier and more concentrated. Vellarikka Kichadi, usually made with cucumber, coconut and curd, offers a cooler counterpoint, while Pachadi can bring sweetness into the same family through pineapple, ripe mango or pumpkin. Together these dishes show that diversity in a sadya does not come from unrelated ingredients competing for attention. Many share the same pantry, yet technique gives each a distinct identity while allowing it to contribute to a harmonious whole.

Only after these accompaniments gather does rice establish the centre of the leaf. Kerala's parboiled red rice, often known as Matta rice, provides a firm foundation for successive gravies. Parippu, a mellow lentil preparation, is commonly eaten first with rice and ghee. Sambar follows in many traditions with lentils, vegetables, tamarind and spices. Pulissery, made with curd and coconut and sometimes fruit or vegetables, introduces a gently sour note, while Rasam is thinner, pepperier and more sharply aromatic. Serving practices vary by district and household, but the principle remains recognisable. Dense preparations give way to lighter ones, and the rice becomes the canvas through which the diner experiences changes in richness, sourness, heat and texture.

Then sweetness takes command, but even here Onam resists a single ending. Ada Pradhaman, one of the feast's great classics, simmers rice ada with jaggery and coconut milk until it develops a deep caramel richness. Palada Pradhaman uses the same rice ada but cooks it slowly with milk and sugar, creating a paler, creamier dessert. Parippu Pradhaman replaces rice ada with lentils cooked in jaggery and coconut milk, while Pazham Pradhaman draws sweetness from ripe Nendran banana. Pal Payasam turns rice, milk and sugar into a slow-cooked pudding, and Semiya Payasam uses vermicelli, milk, sugar and cardamom, often with cashews and raisins. In parts of southern Kerala, milk-based payasams may be eaten with Boli, a thin sweet flatbread filled with a smooth lentil and sugar mixture, while ripe Pazham may also be eaten with payasam. Dessert, like the rest of the sadya, is therefore an exploration of variation within a familiar set of ingredients.

Beverages remain less elaborate than the food, and that simplicity is part of the meal's character. Sambharam, or seasoned buttermilk,

may be flavoured with ginger, green chilli, curry leaves and salt, providing a refreshing conclusion after the many courses. Plain moru or buttermilk may also be served, while water remains the essential accompaniment throughout. Tea, coffee and juices may appear in contemporary family gatherings before or after the feast, but the traditional sadya does not depend on an extensive beverage ritual. Its sense of balance is achieved primarily through the foods themselves.

Nor should Onasadya be presented as one rigid menu repeated identically across Kerala. The conventional sadya is vegetarian, but preparations, sequences and the prominence of dishes such as erissery, kaalan, pulissery, kootu curry and particular payasams vary by region and household. Wider Onam food traditions can also differ among communities, and in parts of northern Kerala some celebratory meals may include meat or seafood outside the classic vegetarian sadya. These variations are not deviations from a single pure model. They are reminders that living food traditions survive precisely because communities preserve a shared structure while allowing local taste and memory to shape it.

The deeper significance of the sadya therefore lies not in the impressive number of dishes but in what the meal teaches about abundance. No single preparation has to dominate the leaf. Each retains its own identity, yet contributes to a larger harmony. The same is true of Onam's social imagination. Prosperity acquires meaning when it is shared, hospitality acquires meaning when it includes others, and plenty becomes culturally valuable when it strengthens rather than separates a community. The banana leaf makes that principle visible. It is filled generously, but with order, proportion and purpose.

That is why preserving Onam cuisine requires more than preserving recipes. Future generations must inherit the methods and feelings that surround them: how vegetables are cut for avial, how long kaalan is reduced, how coconut changes when grated, ground, pressed into milk or used as oil, how jaggery transforms rice ada into pradhaman, how the leaf is laid, how guests are served, and why families gather to cook together. They should also inherit the excitement of Thiruvonam morning, the making of pookkalam, the sounds of celebration, the fragrance of coconut oil and curry leaves, the anticipation of payasam and the feeling of coming home that Onam carries for so many Malayalis.

As families continue to cook together, communities continue to gather and culinary knowledge continues to pass from one generation to the next, Onam will remain more than a remembered festival. It will remain Kerala's living affirmation that abundance is not measured only by how much one possesses, but by how generously one shares it. To pass down the sadya is therefore to pass down more than food. It is to pass down agricultural memory, cooking skill, hospitality, cultural identity and an ethical imagination in which prosperity finds its fullest meaning when it is joined by justice, humility and generosity.

(The writer is Secretary, Cuisine India Society)

Festivities, served with
Ghewar

TEAM AGENDA

Raksha Bandhan always brings the very first spark of the Indian festive season. Right at the centre of these festivities is *Ghewar*. Legend traces this stunning dessert straight back to the grand royal kitchens of Rajasthan, and it remains a massive favourite because the textures are so brilliant. Watching *halwais* make it is wonderfully exciting. They pour a batter from a very high place right into hot desi ghee that is bubbling. This lets the batter spread out and turn into a golden honeycomb. When the crispy fried strands are covered in sugar syrup, they become soft and juicy to eat. The batter turns into a treat that is fun to eat. People love to eat the juicy desi ghee treats. It is the classic present families pass around to celebrate.

Today, this beloved treat is taking on a completely new life. The gifting brand Wishes by Om is using the traditional dessert as a blank canvas, introducing

a fresh flavour vocabulary to the festive table. Instead of just the usual toppings, they are pairing the crisp layers with Kesar Amras, Mango, and Rose Lychee. They have even crafted bold new variations like Paan Gul kand, Kunafa Mango, and a rich Malai Rabri Ghewar. “Om Sweets’ legacy began in the 1960s with founder Om Prakash Kathuria, built on trust and quality,” says Ankit Kathuria, who now leads Wishes by Om alongside Aishna Kathuria. This festive season, ghewar and classic mithai are being reimaged with artisanal craft and inventive flavours, turning nostalgic favourites into contemporary luxury, and festive gifting into a personal, elevated experience.

Let's be honest — the best part is letting that syrup cling to your fingers before you finally take the bite. Raksha

Bandhan has always been about spoiling siblings rotten, and if you're the one handing out those pretty mithai boxes, sneak yourself a generous piece before they're all gone.

DO YOU KNOW THE BELOVED
GHEWAR ORIGINALLY CAME
STRAIGHT FROM
RAJASTHAN'S ROYAL
KITCHENS? HALWAIS
CREATE ITS MAGICAL
GOLDEN LATTICE BY
DROPPING BATTER
FROM A THRILLING HEIGHT
INTO HOT GHEE

A carnival of flowers, feasts and fellowship

GYANESHWAR DAYAL

Onam, celebrated primarily in Kerala, stands as one of South India's most vibrant and joyous festivals, embodying centuries of cultural heritage and agricultural tradition. This ancient festival, observed during August-September, marks the homecoming of the legendary King Mahabali, a beloved mythological figure who ruled Kerala with fairness and prosperity.

● Historical Roots

Onam's origins trace back to pre-Christian Kerala, reflecting Dravidian culture and harvest celebrations. According to Hindu mythology, Lord Vishnu, in his Vamana avatar (dwarf incarnation), subdued the demon king Bali. However, pleased with Bali's devotion and righteous rule, Vishnu granted him an annual visit to his beloved subjects—a visit celebrated as Onam. This unique narrative, where a demon king is revered rather than vilified, demonstrates Kerala's inclusive cultural philosophy.

● Celebrations and Customs

The festival spans ten days, beginning with Atham (star day) and concluding with Thiruvonam (the main day). Homes transform into kaleidoscopes of color through Pookalam—elaborate flower arrangements made with marigolds, lotus, and other blossoms arranged in concentric circles. These floral designs welcome Mahabali's arrival.

Traditional boat races, particularly the famous Nehru Trophy boat race, showcase Kerala's maritime culture with intricately carved longboats and thunderous rhythmic paddling. Families engage in Kaikottikali



(group hand-clapping dance) and Thumbi Thullal (swinging on suspended vines), while men participate in Pulikali (tiger dance), parading through streets in colorful tiger costumes.

● Culinary Delights

Onam's food traditions are legendary. Sadhya—an elaborate vegetarian feast served on banana leaves—features rice accompanied by numerous curries, pickles, and side dishes. Appam (crepes), Puttu (cylindrical steamed cake), and Payasam (rice pudding dessert) are

● Spirit of Gaity

What distinguishes Onam is its inclusive, secular celebration uniting communities regardless of religion or caste. The festival epitomizes Kerala's syncretic ethos, where people from all backgrounds participate enthusiastically. Markets bustle with activity as families purchase new clothes and decorations; the air resonates with classical music and folk songs; and neighborhoods brim with infectious joy.

Onam ultimately represents more than harvest celebration—it symbolises equality, prosperity, and the timeless human desire for community connection and celebration.



The eternal standard of perfect governance

AMMA (SRI MATA AMRITANANDAMAYI DEVI)

Once during a court gathering under the reign of King Bhoja, a poet rose, beaming, and to the king's delight recited a verse praising him as the equal of Lord Rama and his kingdom the equal of Rama Rajya. As the ministers applauded, a crow flew in and let its droppings fall upon the poet's head. The poet was instantly crestfallen, and the king ordered the bird to be seized.

To everyone's wonder, the crow began to speak: "O King, I soiled this poet because he has told a lie. You are not the equal of Rama, and your kingdom is not the equal of Rama Rajya. Let me prove it to you. Follow me."

The king, his ministers and the poet followed the crow to the mouth of a cave, where it instructed them to dig away the earth. Beneath the soil lay thousands of gemstones.

The crow then began a story. In Sri Rama's kingdom, there was once a wealthy man who had no children. Praying to Rama, he promised that if a child were granted to him, he would offer the Lord a pot full of gems.

Soon after, a child was born, and he brought the gems to Rama as promised. But Rama would not take them and asked the wealthy man to share the gems among the poor. Yet in Rama Rajya, there were no poor to be found.

In response, Rama said the gems might be given to anyone who desired them. But during his rule, dharma was so strong in the people's hearts that they would not accept any wealth they had not earned by their own labour. And so the gems were left lying there, taken by no one.

"What you see before your eyes now are those very gems," said the crow. "O King, now bid your ministers and your poet to open their hands."

Reluctantly, each one obeyed, and in every palm gemstones were found. They had pocketed them while the story was being told. "Now do you see that your kingdom is not the equal of Rama



A TRUE RULER WILL ALWAYS PUT THE NEEDS OF THE PEOPLE ABOVE THE NEEDS OF HIS NEAR AND DEAR ONES. HIS SUBJECTS ARE ALSO HIS FAMILY

Rajya?" said the crow.

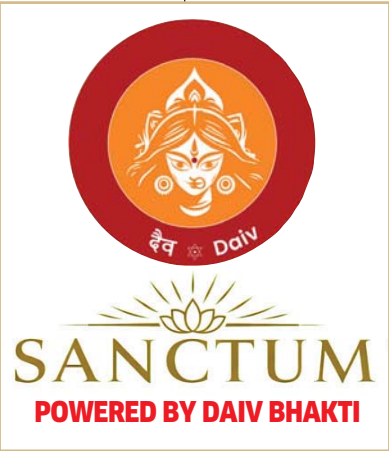
Today, the crow's question lingers. Rama Rajya was the model of perfect governance, and as the world faces grave challenges, many are praying for all of humanity to live in peace and plenty, guided by rulers who guard the people as parents guard their children.

With Rama as their king, the people were sincerely committed to moral values, content to leave wealth lying in the earth rather than take what they had

not earned. When a ruler is firmly rooted in dharma, those ideals flourish in the hearts of the people too.

A true ruler will always put the needs of the people above the needs of his near and dear ones. His subjects are also his family, and their welfare is his single aim. To him, governance is a penance, a worship of God, an offering of himself for the sake of the world. Because Rama ruled in just this way, Rama Rajya remains for all time the measure of perfect governance.

(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 the Mata Amritanandamayi Math, an NGO that reaches across more than 50 countries, working in the areas of healthcare, disaster relief, education, gender equality, and environmental restoration)



SADHGURU

If you look at it, on one level, kundalini is just another name for the Divine or that which is the source of your creation. Though you provided it the fuel from outside, all the growth that has happened to this body up to this day - from the day it was born and even before - has happened from inside. That energy which makes all this happen, you can call it God, Divine or whatever. In yoga, we gave it a specific name because we are not looking at it with faith, but as a science.

Today, science tells us that this body is the greatest piece of engineering on the planet. It really is a masterpiece. Something that is capable of creating this, you think this is all it could do? Suppose you saw one painting of an artist which was really incredible, you think that is all he can do? He could be doing so many other things. Similarly, you allowed this energy to create only this much. You have seen just one piece of creation; you have not seen the rest of it. The whole system of yoga is looking at how to allow this "inner engineer" or this "inner artist" find his full potential. The physical body is the most basic thing he is able to create. He is doing it for everybody. If he is able to produce billions of them, then he must be capable of many more things. We are seeing how to allow him the freedom to function at his full creativity.

The word "kundalini" generally refers to that dimension of energy, which is yet to realize its potential. There is a huge volume of energy within you which is yet to find its potential. It is just



there waiting, because what you call as a human being is still in the making. You are not yet a human being, you are a "human becoming." You are not an absolute entity of being human. There is constant scope to make yourself into a better human being. For this process to happen, the process of evolution allowed a huge volume of energy untapped, that if you become conscious, you could use this to make something fantastic out of it.

When you were an animal, you did not choose evolution. When you were a monkey, you did not desire to become a man. Nature just pushed you on. But once you become human, there is no more unconscious evolution. If you are unconscious, the same endless cycle of the same nonsense will go on and on. If you seek evolution consciously, it will come to you. Now if you become conscious, evolution or any change cannot happen without the necessary energy. So nature left a huge volume of untapped energy that you could use. It is a treasure on which you are sitting. If you are looking in the wrong direction, you will never know that there is a treasure.

It happened once. There was a beggar who lived in terrible poverty. He just sat under a tree and begged. People threw a few coins, and he just lived on. One day he died and his body was just lying there. No friends and relatives, nobody

wants to carry him somewhere and bury him. Nobody wants to carry his body far away, so they decided to just bury him right there under the tree. So people started digging, and then they hit upon a huge treasure. Just a few feet beneath him there had been a huge treasure, a huge pot full of gold and the fool was sitting right there all his life, begging. If only he had dug down, he would have been a very rich man. But he sat there all the time being a beggar.

This is the way of the kundalini. It is sitting right there. Everybody is sitting on a jackpot, but they are all looking in other directions. They are not looking where the treasure is. So they never realize something like this is there. Kundalini is that treasure within you which has been left unused, untapped. The kind of energy which can create something as fantastic as a human body, if a huge volume of it is untapped, can you imagine what you could create out of it? Anything, isn't it? You could make something fantastic out of it. You could use that energy to transform this into a completely different dimension altogether; a dimension that you cannot imagine.

(Sadhguru is a yogi, mystic and visionary, and a prominent spiritual leader. An author, poet, and internationally-renowned speaker, Sadhguru's wit and piercing logic provoke and widen our perception of life)

A hand that heals: Beyond self, beyond ego

A helping hand is more than a gesture; it is hope reaching another soul. It wipes unseen tears, restores fading courage, and reminds the broken that they are not alone

DR SWAMI GYANANANDDAS

Rashtrakavi Maithili Sharan Gupta aptly observes in his poem, "Life becomes miserable, when we live only for ourselves." Today, those words seem more relevant than ever. Constant self-thinking, excessive indulgence in social media, and digital distractions are quietly distancing people from one another. Connections are becoming superficial, and genuine human bonds are weakening. In such a situation, when difficulties arise, a troubling question emerges: whom does one turn to for help?

The answer is, charity begins at home. We are all human beings; we should take initiative. Specifically, in this modern age, the value of extending a helping hand becomes vital. Offering support is not merely a social formality; it reflects our deepest moral and spiritual identity. When one chooses to uplift another, one rises above narrow self-interest and steps into the realm of genuine human greatness.

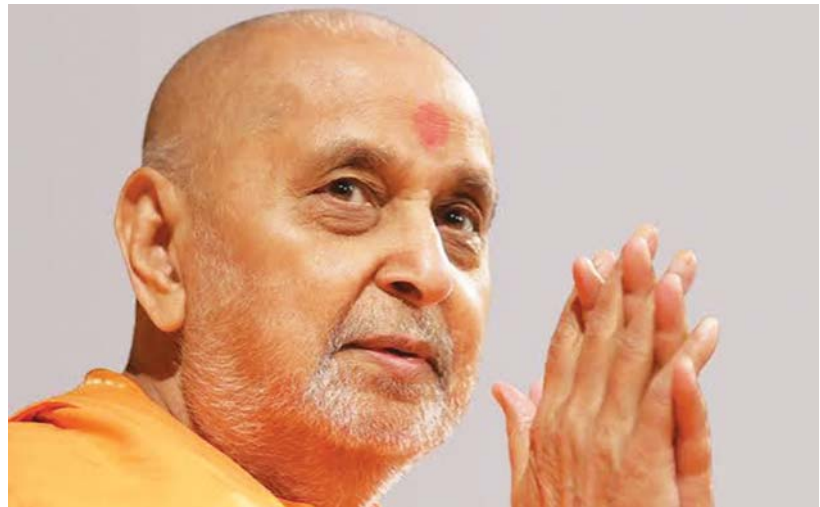
Helping others is, at its core, humanity in action. It is the silent acknowledgment that we are all interconnected, that the suffering of one diminishes the whole, and the upliftment of one strengthens society.

As Mahatma Gandhi said, "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others." When we extend support without expectation, we do not diminish ourselves; rather, we discover a deeper purpose and a more meaningful existence.

However, genuine service demands a shift in perspective, a readiness to notice the needs around us and respond with sincerity. Often, opportunities to assist are not dramatic or heroic; they are quiet and subtle. Offering food to someone hungry, listening patiently to a troubled mind, teaching a child who lacks access to education, or simply speaking words of encouragement to someone on the verge of giving up—these are all powerful expressions of care.

This spirit is not limited to assisting fellow human beings alone. It extends beyond, to birds seeking water in the scorching summer, to animals in distress, and to every form of life that shares this planet with us. Protecting injured creatures reflects a broader understanding of coexistence. Such sensitivity reflects not weakness, but an evolved consciousness. It nurtures empathy and reminds us that kindness should not be selective.

For many years, there was insuffi-



"IT IS GOD'S WORK. I DON'T BELIEVE THAT I AM DOING ANYTHING. IT IS ALL DUE TO THE GURU'S BLESSINGS AND GOD'S INSPIRATION. YOU ONLY FEEL THE BURDEN ON YOUR HEAD IF YOU TRY TO CARRY A POT OF WATER. IF YOU SWIM IN THE OCEAN, THOUSANDS OF GALLONS OF WATER ARE ABOVE YOUR HEAD, BUT YOU DON'T FEEL A THING."

cient rainfall, and ultimately, in 1987, the Saurashtra region of Gujarat was declared a famine-affected area. At a time when the land was parched, crops had failed, and both people and animals were struggling for survival, Pramukh Swami Maharaj did not remain a distant observer. Moved by deep compassion, he inspired and organized large-scale relief efforts.

Under his guidance, food and water were distributed to affected villages, ensuring that no one was left helpless. But his concern did not stop with human suffering. Special arrangements were made for cattle camps where thousands of animals were fed and cared for. Water facilities were created for birds, who silently endure the harshness of such calamities. His vision of service was inclusive; it embraced every living being.

What made this service truly remarkable was the spirit behind it. There was no trace of ego, no desire for recognition, and no sense of superiority. Every act was performed with genuine sympathy and love, as if serving God through all forms of life. He often emphasized that true service should be done humbly, without expecting anything in return.

This incident stands as a living example of what it means to offer a helping hand in the highest sense, not just responding to visible suffering, but doing so with a pure heart, free from pride, and filled with universal compassion. For him, service was not an obligation but a natural expression of devotion. Of course, true divinity emerges in the act of helping others when one forgets, "I am the one helping." The moment the ego of doership dissolves, service becomes sacred. When every act is offered to please God rather than to glorify oneself, compassion flows without expectation, recognition, or pride. Such selfless seva does more than ease another's suffering; it purifies the one who serves.

Deepak Jhaveri, a reporter for the India Post in the United States, once interviewed Pramukh Swami Maharaj. He asked, "Don't you ever tire from the constant travel and doing all this humanitarian work across the globe?"

Swamiji replied, "It is God's work. I don't believe that I am doing anything. It is all due to the Guru's blessings and God's inspiration. You only feel the burden on your head if you try to carry a pot of water. If you swim in the ocean, thousands of gallons of water are above your head, but you don't feel a thing."

Pramukh Swami Maharaj's life taught the world that compassion reaches its highest form when service is offered without the slightest trace of ego. Where the 'I' ends, true seva begins. Long after words are forgotten, this single act of kindness continues to echo in grateful hearts, inspiring humanity to care again.

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

The potential of kundalini

GURUDEV SRI SRI RAVI SHANKAR

Disagreement is a natural part of life. We have different experiences, different temperaments and different ways of seeing things. So it is not surprising that we do not always agree with one another. The question is not whether disagreements will arise, but whether we allow them to disturb our peace and turn into conflict. Sometimes people come to me with very good ideas. I may tell them, "Your idea is brilliant, but it may not be practical." Even when there is a genuine difference of opinion, it can be handled with some tact. The first step is to listen and, where possible, to agree. Once a person feels heard, they are more willing to listen to what you have to say. Then you can present your view with calmness and confidence.

When you recognise your own magnanimity and inner beauty, it becomes much easier to accommodate differences. But when you are constantly looking at another person's behaviour and thinking, "Why are they like this?", the mind becomes disturbed. And when you try to correct someone from a disturbed mind, very rarely does anything improve. People are not angry all the time. Even someone who is difficult at one moment may be pleasant at another. Why not choose the right moment to communicate? If someone is in a very bad mood, perhaps you can simply ask, "What can I do for you?" Or you can leave the place and come back later. There is no need to win every argument. With a little love and skilful communication, you can influence a person far more than by confrontation.

I remember a woman once who came to me deeply distressed. She told me that her mother-in-law was creating difficulties in her marriage. It was her second marriage, and she was frightened that it might meet the same fate as her first, which had also broken down because of conflict with her mother-in-law. I told her, "Sometimes, just agree. If she says black is white, you say, 'Yes, it is.' Why argue?" It may sound strange, but there are situations where arguing serves no purpose. You have to know when to insist and when to simply walk with someone for a while. Not every difference needs to be resolved. Sometimes you can accommodate another person without losing yourself recall another occasion when someone invited me to a conference with the intention of arguing with me publicly. He wanted to provoke me. He said that what I had written in a particular book was completely wrong. It was clear that he wanted an argument to escalate, perhaps even to create tension between communities. So I simply said, "Yes, you are absolutely right." There was nothing left to fight about. When you understand what another person is trying to do, you don't have to participate in it. Sometimes the most powerful response to provocation is refusing to be provoked.



People who irritate you can, in fact, bring out skills in you that you may not otherwise discover. When everyone around you is pleasant and accommodating, you don't need much skill to handle situations. It is when you meet someone unreasonable that your patience, communication, humour and wisdom are put to the test. So, if possible, take difficult people along as an exercise. It may not always be easy, but at least you save your mind.

Life is full of contrasts. Haven't you experienced people you considered good friends, whom you thought understood you well, misunderstanding you? People's understandings and misunderstandings are never permanent. Life is baffling. You often see people you have done so much for turn against you. Such circumstances become unbearable for you. This is because you expect everyone to behave as though they are enlightened, which isn't possible. You cannot expect everyone to be as accepting and accommodating as you are, or as your Guru is. They don't come from an unconditionally loving and giving space. It is impossible. Some time or other, you have to face unreasonable reactions from your near and dear ones. You should face it, and that's it. Have faith that bitterness will be transformed into love again when realisation dawns upon them. People don't even know what they want. So they behave in a certain way. They say things which they don't even mean. Why don't you give them a little space?

When someone reacts unreasonably, you don't have to take it as a final verdict on the relationship. Allow them to just be. They will grow; they will understand. With greater awareness, bitterness can transform into affection again.

And at all costs, save your mind. Don't keep going over the same questions—"What happened to this person? Why did they misunderstand me? How could they say this after everything I have done?"

The mind can spend hours conducting a postmortem of something that has already happened. But what does it achieve? If someone has misunderstood you, educate them and move on.

In contrast, people with whom you had a tiff in the past could support your views in the future! All kinds of possibilities may arise. So don't be bothered

about it. When you find somebody has misunderstood, educate them and move on. 'Educate' and 'move on'; these are the 3 words you must remember. Just ignoring them isn't good. It is arrogance. Have the attitude, 'I am just trying to educate them.' Don't invest too much time and effort to make them understand because then you stress yourself and ultimately get no positive outcome.

One of the biggest mistakes we make after a disagreement is refusing to move on. We explain, complain and revisit the same conversation until a small difference becomes a lasting conflict.

"Why did you say that?"
"That is not what I meant."
"But you understood me wrongly."
And so it goes on. This is a complete waste of time. Don't dwell in this emotional garbage. Let infinite enthusiasm replace explanations and complaints. If someone has lost their enthusiasm, help them find it again. Don't keep complaining about their lack of it.

This is particularly important in families. When there is a disagreement between people who have to live together, there is often a temptation to keep explaining and complaining until everyone is exhausted. Explain what is necessary, but don't make an event out of it. A relationship is much larger than one disagreement. At the same time, wisdom does not mean agreeing with everything. There are things we should be firm about. If a habit is harmful, if it prevents growth or damages one's well-being, then it may be necessary to say no and leave it behind. But if something is harmless and simply brings comfort to another person, why insist that everything must be done our way?

You cannot always live life entirely on your own terms. Sometimes you have to respect another person's wishes as well. Balance is essential. This is especially true in relationships. My advice to couples who disagree is, don't keep focusing on each other and on who is right or wrong. Focus on a common goal. Keep the differences aside and see what you can accomplish together.

There is another interesting aspect of the mind. When you agree with someone, you often forget the matter very quickly. But when you disagree, the mind keeps returning to it. You may remember the argument for days, sometimes even years. Have you noticed this? The disagreement somehow keeps you connected to the person. The mind holds on to what it resisted.

So let us reverse that tendency. Don't give a disagreement so much importance that it occupies your mind long after the conversation is over. Don't hold on to resentment. Don't keep replaying the incident. There will always be differences. There will always be people who misunderstand us and situations that don't go according to our expectations. But every disagreement does not have to become a conflict, and every conflict does not have to become a wound.