



NAGPUR,
MAY 31, 2026

LATE CITY
16+4 PAGES
₹6.00

The Sunday EXPRESS



EYE THE BOY WHO COULD BE KING

At 15, cricketer Vaibhav Sooryavanshi's game has a fearful symmetry that has cricket's greats applauding the 'new six machine'

BOOKS

Ruskin Bond on turning 92, his new book and why he can't stop writing



DAILY FROM : AHMEDABAD, CHANDIGARH, DELHI, JAIPUR, KOLKATA, LUCKNOW, MUMBAI, NAGPUR, PATNA, PUNE, VADODARA

NATIONAL EGG CO-OPERATION COUNCIL (Non-Govt. Public Charitable Trust)	Vencobb Vencobb No. 7 Tattol Chicken
Ex Farm Broiler Chicken Rate	₹ 108 per kg
Retail Sale Rate LIVE	₹ 136 per kg
Dressed (with skin) Rate	₹ 168 per kg
Retail Sale Rate for Eggs	₹ 80 per 12eggs
Given in the interest of consumers *Conditions Apply	

Happening today

● **GUJARAT TITANS** will face defending champions RCB in the IPL final. The Titans entered the final after defeating Rajasthan Royals by seven wickets in the Qualifier 2.

● **LT GEN N S Raja Subramani** (ret'd) will take charge as the country's next CDS after General Anil Chauhan superannuated. Gen Chauhan took charge as the CDS in September 2022.

TRACK THESE AND MORE ON WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

INSIDE PAGE 6

HAMIRPUR BRIDGE DEATHS: FIR LODGED AGAINST FIRM AND OWNER

In multi-state op, police say Pak-backed terror group busted, 8 held

Planned attacks on key installations in Delhi, Mumbai, Punjab: Delhi Police

Pragynesh
New Delhi May 30

THE DELHI Police said Saturday it had uncovered a Pakistan ISI-underworld terror module and arrested eight persons, including a Nepali national, who were allegedly planning attacks on vital installations, security establishments and police personnel in Delhi, Mumbai, Chandigarh and cities in Punjab.

Police officers said the arrests of the eight, some linked to fugitive underworld gangster



The accused being brought to Patiala House Court. ANI

Dawood Ibrahim, were made in a coordinated multi-state operation, uncovering a conspiracy allegedly orchestrated by

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Pakistan's Shahzad Bhatti, his network show up on terror radar

Mohamed Thaver & Zeeshan Shaikh
Mumbai, May 30

FOR YEARS, Shahzad Bhatti cultivated an image as a social media personality, businessman and self-styled defender of religion. Through videos posted online under the '333' banner, the Pakistani national

built a following by commenting on religious controversies, influencer feuds and India-Pakistan relations.

Today, Bhatti, said to be around 45 years old, finds himself at the centre of multiple investigations by Indian security agencies which believe he is a key player in a growing

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Meenakshi Goyat, an Asian Championship silver medalist. But Vinesh, the mother of a 10-month-old son, said she was not as heartbroken as she was at the Paris Olympics after failing to make the weight cut by 100 grams ahead of the final and missing out on a medal.

"This loss does not hurt. I am proud of being able to take care of my son, keep him healthy and return to the mat to fight. I hope that I am an inspiration to women," she said.

She remained defiant even in defeat in the 53kg semifinals, walking in the direction of WFI

Ritika Chopra

New Delhi, Mumbai, May 30

DEEP INSIDE the National Testing Agency's paper-setting operation is a highly secured premises in New Delhi that was not supposed to be breached. It's effectively sealed off from the outside: no phones, no laptops, no devices, no internet, air-gapped computers, logs tracking every document, mandatory shredding of all notes. It was designed, after the NEET leak of 2024, to be the last word in securing the medical entrance test.

The people at the centre of the NEET-UG 2026 leak investigation were trusted insiders embedded in the most protected phase of the examination process. And at least one of those arrested had worked on last year's NEET paper, too.

That the leak happened despite this has rattled the Government.

The CBI has arrested 13 people so far, including paper translators, subject experts and intermediaries accused of circulating sections of the question paper before the May 3 exam, taken by over 20 lakh students. Interviews with over a dozen officials, NTA insiders and experts associated with NEET-UG 2024, 2025 and 2026 by *The Indian Express* reveal there's a broad internal consensus on an institutional failure that created conditions for the leak.

Two things, they believe, went wrong.

One, the security framework built after the 2024 controversy, known internally as "confidential operations" or

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

Another NTA exam mess: Tech glitches disrupt CUET, retest for over 3,700

Sophiya Mathew
New Delhi, May 30

A TECHNICAL glitch hit the Saturday morning shift of the CUET-UG 2026, the national-level examination for admission to undergraduate programmes in participating universities, leading to confusion and panic among candidates at the affected centres.

The National Testing Agency (NTA) later announced a one-time re-test for 3,765 candidates who had completed their biometric registration but had left the examination centres before the test could resume.



Outside a CUET-UG exam centre in New Delhi, Saturday.

The NTA said about 95 per cent of candidates were able to complete the examination

once the issue was resolved and the test resumed.

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



Women cadets after the Passing Out Parade of the landmark 150th course of the NDA at in Pune Saturday. PAVAN KHENGRE, MORE ON PAGE 4

Armed forces preparing well for Operation Sindoor 2.0 if it takes place: Army Chief

Sushant Kulkarni

Pune, May 30

CHIEF OF Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi said on Saturday that all three services are preparing well for Operation Sindoor 2.0 if it takes place. He also said that within the next two to three years, the process of theatreisation can be seen happening on ground.

General Dwivedi, who reviewed the Passing Out Parade (POP) of the landmark 150th



Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi during a media interaction in Pune on Saturday.

PAVAN KHENGRE

course of the National Defence Academy (NDA), also said that Operation Sindoor has set a benchmark on how India responds to provocation and urged the passing out NDA cadets to uphold that standard. As the Reviewing Officer of the parade Gen Dwivedi inspected the cadets lined up for their final parade.

He addressed the passing-out cadets and ceremonially pinned medals on those who earned medals.

Answering a question about Operation Sindoor during media interaction on the sidelines of the parade, the Army Chief said, "As far as Operation Sindoor is concerned, firstly, it is still continuing. There is temporary cessation of hostilities. All the three services including the Indian Army are preparing well for Operation Sindoor 2.0 if it takes place. Presently we are looking at enhancing synergy within the three services.

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

PETE HEGSETH IN SINGAPORE

'No China hegemony, India critical anchor, helps maintain balance of power'



US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth at Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore, Saturday. AP

Flags Javelin co-production with India, urges Asian allies to up defence spend

Amrita Nayak Dutta
New Delhi, May 30



IN AN expansive articulation of American strategic intent in the Indo-Pacific, US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth Saturday described India as a "critical anchor" to "hold the line" in South Asia and that a "powerful" India, acting in its own self-interest, "advances our shared goal of maintaining a balance of power across the region."

Speaking at the Shangri La Dialogue in Singapore Saturday, he framed the balance of power in Asia as one "in which no state, including China, can impose its hegemony and hold the security or prosperity of our nation and our allies in question."

At the same time, though, he struck a softer note on Beijing saying Washington was not seeking confrontation despite concerns over China's military build-up. And that under US President Donald Trump, US-China relations were "better than they've been in years."

Hegseth noted India's

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

POLITICS

INDIA SIGNS DEAL WITH VIETNAM FOR BRAHMOS MISSILES

PAGE 8

E. EXPLAINED

The balancing act

Hegseth framing of India as an Indian Ocean anchor and defence co-production partner may be a bid to reassure Delhi that its engagement with Beijing does not come at India's expense. At the same time, he flagged a Pacific dominated by any hegemon (read China) would "undermine the equilibrium we all seek to preserve."

PUNE HOOCH DEATHS

Methanol traced to Rex International in Bhiwandi; 22 officials suspended

Chandan Haygunde & Sushant Kulkarni
Pune, May 30

FOLLOWING THE hooch deaths in Pune, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), seized over 5,000 kg Methanol from the premises of Rex International Company in Bhiwandi in Thane district, on Saturday.

As per an FDA press release, the spurious liquor that caused multiple deaths in Pune district, contained Methanol pro-

duced from Rex International.

Meanwhile, as many as nine police personnel from Pune city and Pimpri Chinchwad police, along with 13 state excise department officials in Pune, were suspended from service, for allegedly failing in their duties to control the illicit liquor trade.

At least 11 persons from Phugewadi-Dapodi areas of Pimpri-Chinchwad and four from Hadapsar area in Pune

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

● BATTLING OPPONENTS AND A HOSTILE WFI, LOSES IN THE SEMIS OF ASIAD TRIALS

Comeback ends in heartbreak, Vinesh steels resolve: 'I will be back, Olympics my target'

Nihal Koshie
New Delhi, May 30

"THE SYSTEM is against me today, it will be against me tomorrow, but if I continue to believe in myself, I can overcome the system. The Los Angeles Olympics (2028) remains my target."

This was wrestler Vinesh Phogat, moments after she was knocked out of the Asian Games trials in New Delhi, on Saturday, having fought against the odds to be allowed to participate in the first place.

She lost 4-6 in the semifinals to up-and-coming wrestler

PAGE1 anchor



Vinesh Phogat was knocked out of the Asian Games trials in New Delhi, Saturday. GAJENDRA YADAV

president Sanjay Singh and pointing towards the mat in a gesture that appeared to send a message to opponents who left no stone unturned to stop her comeback. "I will be back," she said. The legal battle to secure participation in the Asiad trials after the WFI deemed her ineligible, coupled with court hearings following her accusations of sexual harassment against the federation's former president Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, had taken a mental toll.

"My first fight was against sexual harassment; this was about overcoming mental harassment," Vinesh said. On the mat, she was technically sound against opponents

much younger than her, but the challenge was not to tire.

"If the WFI had allowed me to participate in the Open National Ranking Tournament (in Gonda), I would have been better prepared," Vinesh said, while giving credit to all her opponents for the fight they put up.

But after three hard-fought bouts at the high-intensity trials at the K D Jadhav Indoor Stadium, the 31-year-old's dream of representing India at this year's Asiad in September-October came to an end.

During her bouts, seated a few metres away from the mat were WFI officials who moved the Supreme Court to challenge

a High Court order that allowed her to participate in the trials.

Vinesh's camp had a run-in when some of her supporters celebrated in front of WFI officials after a challenge went in her favour during the quarter-finals against Under-23 World Championships medallist Nishu. Vinesh prevailed 7-6 in that close bout.

Every time she was on the brink, a determined Vinesh found a way to come back, smartly using even the time referees took to review a challenge on video replay to catch her breath. In all three bouts, she was given a warning for being passive, but didn't back down

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

HOOCH TRAGEDY

Blurred vision, failed kidneys: All patients had similar symptoms

Doctors said that some of the patients died just a few hours after being admitted.

Manoj More
Pune, May 30

OF THE five persons who consumed toxic liquor and are undergoing treatment at PCMC-run YCM hospital in Pimpri, three have been put on dialysis after their kidneys failed to function.

The three are among the nine persons who were brought to YCM hospital in last two-three days from Phugewadi-Dapodi areas of Pimpri-Chinchwad.

All of them had consumed toxic liquor mixed with methanol which they bought from illicit liquor dens operating brazenly in their area.

Among the deceased are two brothers, Vijay and Raju Rathod. Their families said they were habitual drinkers and had consumed the toxic liquor a day before.

"Of the nine who were brought to YCMH, six have died. Three were put on dialysis after their kidneys failed to function. When a person consumes a toxic substance, his liver first gets affected and then his vital organs. Kidneys which filters blood gets badly affected and there is also the possibility of their function dropping drastically," said Dr Rajendra Wable, Dean of YCM hospital and Medical College.

Dr Wable reiterated that the liquor that was consumed by these individuals must have been placed with the methanol. "It appears that the liquor



(Clockwise from above) Among the deceased are two brothers, Vijay and Raju Rathod; Sachin Netke (34) was brought dead at YCM hospital at 9.50 am.

was poisoning with toxic materials like methanol. We have sent the viscera of the deceased for chemical analysis," he said.

Almost all of them who were brought to YCM hospital suffered from blurring of vision, breathlessness, vomiting, drowsiness, chest pain, nausea, abdominal pain. The medical report of the hospital said they all indulged in "binge alcohol consumption."

Dr Wable said methonal is mixed with ethanol in hospitals and used as anti-septic. "When it is ingested, it is toxic to the body," he said. Police investigation revealed that the alleged kingpin Yogesh Vhan-kade had brought methanol from Mumbai and had mixed it with liquor to increase the quantity so that it could be supplied to in Hadapsar, Dapodi, Phugewadi and Chatuhsshrungi areas where the illicit liquor dens operate.

Doctors said the patients were severely affected by the poisonous liquor, that some of them died just a few hours after being admitted.



The moment they were brought in, all of them had to be admitted to the intensive care units of the hospitals.

For instance, Akbar Pathan (48) was admitted to the intensive care unit of YCM hospital at 6.45 am on May 28, he died at 12.10 pm.

Anand Nikalje (70) who was admitted in the hospital ICU at 4.45 pm, died at 7.45 pm on May 28 itself.

Anand Desai (53), who was admitted in the hospital ICU at 11.20 am, on May 28 died at 4.05 pm.

Akshay Avsarmal (28) who was admitted in hospital ICU 1 at 10:20 pm on May 29 was declared dead at 6.45 am.

Rajesh Rajput (53) was brought dead at YCM hospital on May 28 at 2.48 pm.

Sachin Netke (34) was also brought dead at YCM hospital at 9.50 am.

His family members said he slept early and had woken up all sweating at midnight. "He slept again and did not get up in the morning. He was motionless after which we took him to the hospital," his family told *The Indian Express*.

‘Home Department run by a Pandu Havaladar’: Congress targets CM

Express News Service
Pune, May 30

Youth Congress workers stage protest outside excise office

Pune: In the wake of the tragic deaths caused by spurious liquor in Pune, the Maharashtra Pradesh Youth Congress staged a strong protest Saturday day outside the Pune District State Excise Department office. Youth Congress workers also attempted to enter the Excise Department office. However, in order to maintain law and order, the police intervened and prevented them from entering the premises. This led to a brief period of tension. Nevertheless, Pune Police managed the situation effectively and ensured that law and order was maintained. The police facilitated a meeting between a Youth Congress delegation and Pune District State Excise Superintendent Atul Kanade. The delegation sought action against the illegal liquor trade.

came too late. He further alleged that the Chief Minister had effectively altered the police force's motto of "Sadrak-shanaya Khananigrahanaya" (to protect the good and punish the wicked). Responding to the incident, the chief minister vowed that the government would crack down on those responsible.

For decades, Begum Barve has fascinated scholars, now a young artiste tries to revive it

Dipanita Nath
Pune, May 30

IT IS considered one of the most unusual and complex works in Marathi theatre. Scholars have made Begum Barve the subject of PhD research, and books have been published on the play. It is also one of the reasons Pune-based Satish Alekar, who is a recipient of the Padma Shri and the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award for theatre (Marathi playwriting), is counted among India's foremost playwrights.

Yet it has never been commercially successful. "When Begum Barve was first staged in 1979, it didn't receive a good response. We had about 20-25 shows. But it was never popular," said Alekar about the play.

Actor Gaurav Kanekar, who has appeared in Sony Marathi's Bheti Lagi Jeva, Zee Yuva's Aamhi Doghi and Star Pravah's Sahakutumb Sahapariwar, first encountered Begum Barve as a final-year student at Lalit Kala Kendra Gurukul, the Centre for Performing Arts at Savitribai Phule Pune University, a department that Alekar was once a part of.

As he fell under the spell of the abstract tragicomedy, Kanekar decided to present the play during the final year of his postgraduate studies. His hour-long student production, in which he staged only Act I of the play, has paved the way for a revival of Begum Barve, giving theatre-goers in the city a chance to watch the classic. The play will be staged at Bharat Natya Mandir on June 6. The play revolves around four male characters. Barve was once a famous female impersonator in the era of sangeet natak. Now, he makes a living by selling incense sticks. Sham-rao is a tonga driver who once owned a mare named Begum. Having lost strength in his legs,



A scene from Begum Barve. It was staged for the first time in 1979.

he now limps through life, dependent on Barve. The duo live in the darkness beneath a staircase in a chawl.

Nearby live the other two protagonists, Jawadekar and Bawadekar, clerks in a government office. Jawadekar harbours feelings for a colleague, while Bawadekar is attracted to the Collector's daughter. Neither, however, possesses the courage to transform these private fantasies into reality.

One night, Jawadekar and Bawadekar see Barve in his female guise and become entranced. As they willingly enter

an illusory world of fantasy and hallucination, the atmosphere grows tense, claustrophobic and fraught.

"It took me more than a month to decode the scenes. Decoding the characters was another challenge. People laugh at the comic situations in the play, but the lasting impact of the writing is that it provokes thought," says Kanekar.

He has attempted to bring alive the confluence of fantasy, desire, sexuality, and the lingering contrast between art and mediocrity that permeates through the play.

Lt Col Brahmankar's APEX CAREERS

Want to join NDA?

- **NDA Regular (4 month) Batch** commenced
- **SSB Interview Batches** on regular basis
- **Xi+Xii+NDA (2 yrs)** for students who have appeared/passed std. X

NOTE

For Xi+Xii+NDA (2 year batch)

1. Scholarships for meritorious students
2. First 25 admissions to get special concession in fees

Mahatma Phule Museum Campus, Ghole Road, Shivajinagar, Pune-4
Tel. : 9850880058, 9028221458. website: www.apexcareers.org

‘Bomb’ note found on IndiGo flight turns out to be a hoax

Express News Service
Pune, May 30

IN YET ANOTHER incident of its kind, a paper note written "bomb" was found in the washroom of a Pune-Guwahati Indigo flight, forcing the police and security personnel to swing into action at the Pune International Airport on Friday morning. However, the message later turned out to be a hoax as no bomb was discovered during security checks. The flight got delayed by a couple of hours, police said.

Following the incident, the Vimantal police station registered a First Information Report (FIR) against an unidentified person for allegedly spreading a bomb hoax.

"Someone seems to have played a mischief. An offence has been registered against unidentified accused. This is the third such incident reported in the last few months. A probe is on," said senior inspector Govind Jadhav of Vimantal police station.

According to the police, the paper chit was found in the washroom of the Indigo flight around 6.45 am on Friday during a routine check, and the personnel of the airlinewere alerted immediately.

Subsequently, the police and airport security staffers checked the flight thoroughly, but nothing suspicious was found.

In a similar incident on March 29, a handwritten word "bomb" was discovered on an interior wall of an IndiGo aircraft from Pune to Amritsar around 5 am. The discovery triggered swift action from security agencies, airport officials, and ground staff, who initiated standard emergency protocols without delay.

All passengers were de-boarded, and the aircraft was thoroughly checked, but nothing suspicious was found. The flight was delayed by about eight hours. An FIR was lodged at the Vimantal police station under sections 125, 351 (4), 353 (1), 353 (2) of the Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita (BNS).

The flight got delayed by a couple of hours, police said.

Summer party celebrates global unity at college

Express News Service
Pune, May 30

WELLINGTON COLLEGE International Pune recently hosted its inaugural Summer Unity Party, a vibrant celebration of diversity, inclusivity, and global mindedness.

Organised collaboratively by the school and its parent association, Friends of Wellington (FoW), the event brought together pupils, parents, and staff for an afternoon that reflected the character of the community.

Indian Institute of Information Technology, Design and Manufacturing, Kancheepuram
(An Institute of National Importance established by Govt. of India)
Melakottaiyur, Off Vandalur - Kelambakkam Road, Chennai - 600 127, Tamil Nadu, India

Advt. No. IIITDMK/Admn/C/01-2026
IIITDM Kancheepuram, located at Chennai (25km from airport) invites applications for the following contractual post:

1. Senior Training and Placement Officer - 1 post

Eligible candidates may apply as per the details given in the advertisement. For details, please refer our website www.iiitdm.ac.in.

The last date for submitting online application is 24 June 2026. Registrar

वैकुंठ मेहता राष्ट्रीय सहकारी प्रबंध संस्थान, पुणे- 411 007
Vaikunth Mehta National Institute of Cooperative Management
A National Institute of National Council for Cooperative Training
Ministry of Cooperation, Government of India (Email : cme@vamnicom.gov.in)

Admission open for Four Years Full Time Residential Bachelor of Business Administration– Cooperative Banking and Finance (BBA- CBF) & Agri Business (BBA-AB)
(Approved by AICTE, New Delhi & Affiliated to "Tribhuvan" Sahkari University (TSU), A National University and an Institute of Eminence established under Act of Parliament in 2025)
VAMNICOM invites online application for Admission to the BBA- CBF & BBA -AB (Batch 2026-30) with a valid test score of CUET 2026, UGAT 2026, IPMAT2026 & JIPMAT 2026 with application fee of Rs. 200/- on or before 30/06/2026. For details about the admission criteria and programme structure you may please visit: www.vamnicom.gov.in.

DIRECTOR

ADMISSIONS OPEN FOR BATCH 10
1 YEAR THAT CHANGES EVERYTHING.
From Political Spectator to Architect of Indian Democracy.
Stop observing Indian democracy from the sidelines. Step in to learn statecraft and strategy. Earn your place at the table.
1 Year Residential Programme
WHAT YOU WILL LEARN ?

- ✓ Real-world understanding of politics & governance
- ✓ Training in campaign strategy & public leadership
- ✓ Direct exposure to leaders, policymakers & experts
- ✓ A platform to build your political and public career

WHO SHOULD APPLY

- Aspiring political leaders
- Students & young professionals
- Social & policy enthusiasts
- Anyone serious about public life & leadership

Batch 10 Starts AUGUST 2026

Contact Us
+91 89286 50979 www.iiid.org.in

संकल्पना: ना. नितीन गडकरी

नागपुर के खेल प्रेमी और खिलाड़ीयों के लिए...
खासदार क्रीडा महोत्सव
Nation's First Grass-Root Level Multi Sport Event
(SEASON - 8)
31 मई - 7 जून

उद्घाटन समारोह
--:उद्घाटक:--
मा. श्री. सुनिल शेटी
प्रसिद्ध अभिनेता

रविवार, 31 मई 2026
सुबह 6.00 बजे
स्थल: यशवंत स्टेडियम धंतोली, नागपुर

8 दिवस

18 खेलांचा महासंगम

57 लाखों बक्षिते

23,800+ खेळाडू

खासदार क्रीडा स्पर्धाओं के नाम तथा स्थल

Basketball	31 May to 6 June	Basketball Ground Shivaji Nagar	Kho-Kho	3 to 6 June	Mahila Mahavidyalaya Nandanvan
Yogasan	1 to 2 June	Suresh Bhat Sabhagruh Reshimbagh	Athletics	3 to 6 June	University Ground Ravi Nagar
Badminton	1 to 6 June	Subhedar Hall Ravi Nagar	Volleyball	3 to 6 June	Raghuji Nagar volleyball Ground
Kabaddi	2 to 6 June	Chitanvis Park Mahal	Carrom	3 to 6 June	Taluka Krida Sankul Ahuja Nagar North Nagpur
Table Tennis	2 to 4 June	Ganeshpeth Ramjeevan Choudhary Hall	Handball	4 to 6 June	DSO Ground Mankapur
Wrestling	3 rd June	Bhawani Mata Mandir, Pardi	Chess	4 to 6 June	Metro Hall, Airport Station, Wardha Road
Bench Press Power Lifting	3 to 4 June	Hindu Mulinchi Shala, Mahal	Softball	4 to 6 June	DNC, Congress Nagar
Gymnastics	3 to 4 June	Sport Complex Koradi	Swimming	5 to 6 June	NIT Swimming Pool Ambazari
Skating	6 Jun	Ganesh Nagar, Skating Ring			

संयोजक: श्री संदीप जोशी

सहसंयोजक : सर्वश्री डॉ विष्णुश आंबुलकर, डॉ संभाजी भोसले, डॉ विवेक अवसरे, डॉ पद्माकर चारमोडे, अशफाक शेख, सीए आशीश मुकीम, नागेश सहारे, सचिन देशमुख, नवनीत तुली, सतीश वडे, लक्ष्मीकांत किरपाने, प्रकाश चांद्रायण, अमित संपत, विशाल लोखंडे, सचिन माथने, संदेश खरे, डॉ सौरभ मोहोड, धनंजय उपासनी, सुनील मानेकर

आयोजक : खासदार क्रीडा महोत्सव समिती, नागपूर

प्रायोजक

NEU

CIAN
Agro Industries & Infrastructure Ltd.

AMRUTDHARA
(Good for Health)

CENTRE POINT NAGPUR

GLOBAL SQUARE
INDIA'S FIRST 100% REAL ESTATE & COMM. MARKET

HOTEL ASHOK

NAGPUR



The march past during the Passing Out Parade (POP); (right) Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi was the Reviewing Officer for the POP at the Khetarpal Parade Ground in Khadakwasla on Saturday. PAVAN KHENGRE

WITH FLYING COLOURS

The training of the landmark 150th course of NDA culminated with the Passing Out Parade held at the iconic Khetarpal Parade Ground of the academy. A total of 353 cadets marched shoulder to shoulder crossing the Antim Pag

MEET THE MEDALLISTS

One cracked entrance in fifth attempt, another strived to be a 'good senior'

Sushant Kulkarni
Pune, May 30

A CADET who cracked the National Defence Academy (NDA) entrance in his fifth attempt and another who always strived to be the 'good senior' to his juniors, were among the medal winners in overall order of merit from the historic 150th course which passed out on Saturday.

All the three toppers who have background military schools are set to join the Army. The training of the 150th course of NDA culminated on Saturday with the Passing Out Parade (POP) held at the iconic Khetarpal Parade Ground of the academy. In a display of precision and discipline, the cadets marched past the Quarterdeck flag mast with a background score of the emotional and nostalgic Scottish tune of Auld Lang Syne. Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi, himself an alumnus of the 65th course from the 'Charlie Squadron', was the Reviewing Officer for the POP.

The parade was conducted by NDA Adjutant Lt Col Avinash Pandey astride the horse Reliant Robin. This was Reliant Robin's 11th passing out parade. The parade for which the cadets wearing the white summer uniform was commanded by Academy Cadet Captain (ACC) Mayank Choudhary of Lima Squadron. The parade line-up included a total of 1250 cadets of which 353 were from the passing



(From left) Academy Cadet Adjutant Peeyush Rautela, Battalion Cadet Captain Rohit Kajla and Battalion Cadet Captain Sahil Sharma. PAVAN KHENGRE

out course.

A total of 353 cadets, including 18 female cadets and 24 cadets from 12 friendly foreign countries marched shoulder to shoulder crossing the Antim Pag – the symbolic last step at the NDA. The Army Chief presented the President's Gold, Silver and Bronze Medal to the first, second and third in the overall order of merit, respectively.

President's Bronze Medal winner Battalion Cadet Captain (BCC) Sahil Sharma, who hails from Jammu, said his journey to the National Defence Academy was shaped by perseverance, family support and the inspiration he drew from his father, an

ex-serviceman. "My father's service in the Army inspired me to pursue a career in the armed forces. When I told him about my dream, he got me admitted to Rashtriya Military School Chail," Sharma said. Sharma added that success did not come easily. "I cleared the NDA entrance examination on my fifth attempt. Through the four unsuccessful attempts, what kept me going was the unwavering support of my family and the encouragement of my mentors from school."

Reflecting on his time at the academy, Sharma said, "The three years at the NDA have been the most challenging, de-

manding, rewarding and enriching years of my life. Looking back, I can only say that times like these and people like them will never come back. Every teacher, instructor, officer, staff member and senior contributed, directly or indirectly, to my success." Sharma is now set to join the Indian Military Academy.

Winner of the President's silver medal was Academy Cadet Adjutant Peeyush Rautela, who secured first position in the Science stream in academics. Rautela credits his success to the training he received at Sainik School Ghorahal before joining the NDA and

the support from the seniors and faculty at the NDA.

President's Gold Medal winner Battalion Cadet Captain (BCC) Rohit Kajla, who hails from Jhajjar in Haryana and studied at Rashtriya Military School Bangalore, said his school years prepared him well for life in the armed forces but the NDA shaped him into a leader. "My school gave me a strong grounding in military discipline and bearing, so the environment at the NDA was not entirely new to me. Even then, the academy presented its own set of challenges. With the guidance of seniors and instructors, I was able to overcome them, and in the process, I was transformed physically, mentally and emotionally. The NDA taught me how to manage multiple responsibilities and perform under pressure," he said.

Talking about his leadership journey, Kajla said, "As I moved forward, I learnt that before becoming a successful senior, I will have to become a good senior to my juniors. And that is what I strived for. As Battalion Cadet Captain, I was responsible for leading 504 cadets and making a meaningful connection with each one of them. That experience made me not only a better leader, but also a better person." Kajla said his father, an Army veteran, has been his greatest inspiration throughout his journey.

CELEBRATION TIME



Cadets celebrate after the Passing Out Parade. PAVAN KHENGRE



Supreme Court panel member inspects Pune river stretches amid environmental concerns

Dipanita Nath
Pune, May 30

ANJAN KUMAR Mohanty, a member of the Central Empowered Committee (CEC), which was constituted by the Supreme Court to monitor the implementation of its orders and place cases of non-compliance before it, visited the Ram-Mula confluence, Balewadi, Dada Ghat and Sangvi river stretches on Saturday.

The visit follows representations made by Pune residents regarding their ecological concerns over riverfront development works along the Mula River. The CEC's mandate covers issues such as encroachment removal, implementation of working plans, compensatory afforestation, plantations and other conservation-related matters. Forest department officials, representatives of the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC), Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation (PCMC) and members of Pune River Revival (PRR), a citizens' organisation that works for the rights of rivers and the protection of natural

ecosystems, were present during the visit.

"Citizens and environmental groups highlighted concerns regarding the loss of riparian forests, disturbance to wetlands and springs, disruption of faunal corridors, debris dumping, and proposed tree felling in ecologically sensitive riverbank areas. They have been trying for many months to get these ecologically sensitive zones identified as deemed forests," said a PRR spokesperson. Mohanty examined the river stretches, interacted with officials and citizens, and sought details on riparian vegetation, biodiversity and ecological conditions.

"We informed him that more than 450 species have been documented within an approximately 800-metre stretch of the river corridor, with records uploaded to the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF)," the spokesperson said.

At a subsequent meeting held at Van Bhavan in Pune, Shailaja Deshpande of Jeevitnadi, an organisation working to maintain the health of the city's rivers, highlighted several eco-

logically sensitive hotspots along the river stretches.

"If these areas do not have a strategy for conservation and protection, more than 22,150 trees will be impacted. These are not just trees but ecosystems surrounded by lianas, shrubs, herbs, grasslands, wetlands and springs. The existing canopy contains extremely rich riparian species across various locations along the 44-km river stretch within Pune city, and these need to be protected for the city's resilience. We hope that the CEC will take due cognisance of this and help create a balance between infrastructure development and ecologically sensitive areas," Deshpande told *The Sunday Express*.

Ajay Phatak, trustee of Ecological Society, who was also present at the meeting, said there is a need for criteria to identify riparian forests or buffer zones so that they can be declared deemed forests.

"We have submitted a draft document to that effect to Mohanty for his review and further discussion," he said.

Doctor whose memory lives on in Ghole Road

Vaishnavi Gujar
Pune, May 30

THOUSANDS CROSS Ghole Road in Pune every day. Students rush towards Fergusson College, buses move through traffic, and office-goers pass without a second glance or thought to the history associated with the address. The road quietly carries the memory of a man who was far ahead of his time: Dr Vishram Ramji Ghole.

Vishram Ghole was a surgeon in the British Army, a reformer, and a close associate of social activist Jyotirao Phule.

"Dr Ghole was involved in the movement for women's emancipation and the upliftment of the lower castes, especially those who were called Shudras and Atishudras," said Shraddha Kumbhojkar, a professor of History at Savitribai Phule Pune University.

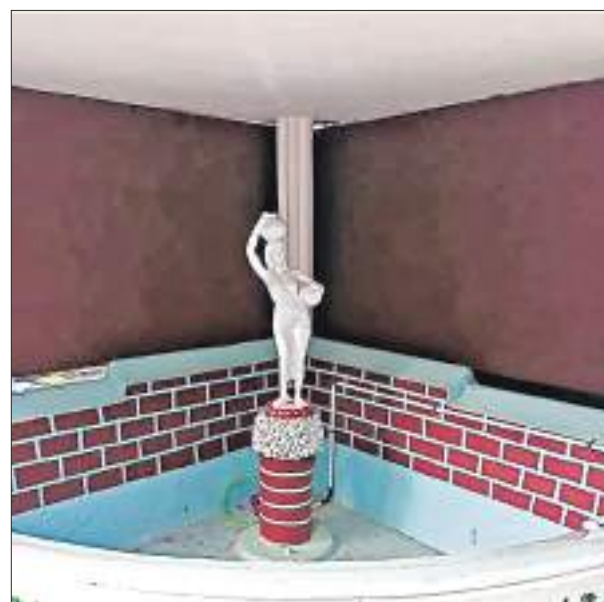
A Report of the Third Year of the Satyashodhak Samaj—a social reform society founded by Jyotirao Phule—mentions that Dr Ghole served as the organisation's president and worked extensively for the



Kashibai fountain was built by Dr Vishram Ramji Ghole to pay tribute to his daughter who was poisoned.

education of marginalised sections of society.

At a time when girls' education faced severe opposition, Dr Ghole insisted on educating his two daughters. Since schools for girls were limited, he sent them to the school run by Jyotirao Phule and his wife Savitribai despite social resistance. His daughter Kashibai, affectionately called 'Bahuli' (doll), would walk daily from



their home near the present-day Faraskhana Police Chowki to attend school. Kashibai, who was born in 1869, died in 1877 under tragic circumstances. "That little girl had stopped somewhere on the road for water, and people poisoned her," said Kumbhojkar.

Despite the devastating loss, Dr Ghole refused to withdraw from the cause of women's education. "He did not stop there. He also sent his other daughter, Gangubai, to

school," said Kumbhojkar. Gangubai later became highly educated. After marriage, she became known as Gangubai Khedkar and travelled to the US, where she delivered lectures on Indian culture.

To ensure that no child would have to ask strangers for water on the way to school, Dr Ghole built a public water fountain known as Bahulicha Houd. At the site, he also installed a statue of a small curly-haired girl in memory of his

daughter Kashibai. The fountain has since been moved from its original location close to the Ghole family home and is now kept in a corner of the premises of the Faraskhana Police Chowki in Shaniwar Peth.

Apart from his work in education and social reform, Ghole also addressed issues of farmer distress, especially during the period following the 1875 Deccan Riots, a localised peasant uprising in the Poona and Ahmednagar districts of the Bombay Presidency directed against exploitative moneylenders. At a major convention of Deccan farmers held at the Chaturshrungi grounds, he spoke about modern agricultural practices and methods that could reduce the hardships faced by farmers.

"He explained how better farming could be done using different methods so that farmers would not have to face distress," Kumbhojkar said.

Today, the road, which stretches from Bal Gandharva Rangmandir towards Fergusson College, stands as a memorial to the legacy of a man who dedicated his life to education, social reform, women's emancipation, and the welfare of ordinary people.





Devbhoomi
Uttarakhand
VIKAS BHI, VIRASAT BHI

Divine and Majestic

Chardham
Yatra

A WARM WELCOME
TO ALL DEVOTEES

SPIRITUAL AND NATURAL ATTRACTIONS NEAR THE CHAR DHAM ROUTE

- 1 Near Yamunotri

Janki Chatti & Hanuman Chatti, Kharsali Village, Saptarishi Kund, Lakhmandal, Kedarkantha Trek, Rana Chatti.
- 2 Near Kedarnath

Bhairavnath Temple, Vasuki Tal, Gaurikund, Triyuginarayan Temple, Chopta - Tungnath - Chandra Shila, Deoria Tal.
- 3 Near Gangotri

Gaumukh Trek, Bhojbasa & Tapovan, Surya Kund & Gauri Kund, Harsil Valley, Mukhimath (Mukhba), Dayara Bugyal Trek, Gartang Gali, Kashi Vishwanath Temple (Uttarkashi), Nachiketa Tal & Dodital.
- 4 Near Badrinath

Mana Village, Vyas Gufa & Ganesh Gufa, Bhimsila, Auli, Valley of Flowers, Vasudhara Falls, Charanpaduka, Tapt Kund & Narad Kund, Jyotirmath (Joshimath), Satopanth Lake, Pandukeshwar, Adibadri Temple, Hemkund Sahib.



“The Honourable Prime Minister has termed the third decade of the 21st century as the ‘Decade of Uttarakhand.’ In line with the Prime Minister’s vision, we are working with an ‘unwavering commitment’ (Vikalp Rahit Sankalp) to make the state an ideal state in every field.”

Pushkar Singh Dhami, Chief Minister, Uttarakhand

Important Information

- Mandatory Registration:** Registration is compulsory before commencing the Yatra.
- Verify Contact Details:** Please ensure you enter the correct mobile number during registration.
- Be Prepared for Weather:** Carry adequate woolen clothes, an umbrella, and a raincoat.
- Accurate Health Data:** Provide precise health information during the registration process.
- Senior Citizen Advisory:** Senior citizens are advised to undergo a medical check-up before starting the journey.
- Medication:** If you are on prescribed medication, carry a sufficient stock of your medicines.
- Acclimatisation:** Take frequent breaks at various transit points along the route to acclimatize to the high-altitude climate.
- Health First:** If you feel unwell, please do not proceed with the journey.
- Beware of Scams:** Avoid unauthorised individuals claiming to facilitate ‘Darshan’ at the shrines.
- Keep Tracks Clean:** Cooperate with us in keeping the pilgrimage routes clean; do not litter.
- Safe Driving:** Maintain controlled vehicle speed and park only in designated parking areas.
- No Plastic:** Strictly avoid the use of single-use plastic.

Modes of Registration

Visit the website or scan the QR Code:
registrationandtouristcare.uk.gov.in

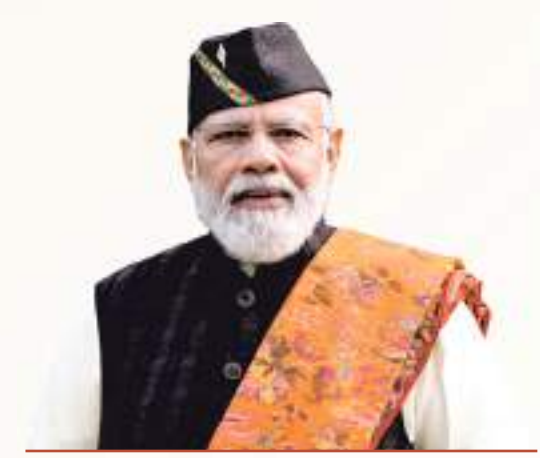
Download the App
touristcareuttarakhand

Google Play App Store

FOR ANY ASSISTANCE,
PLEASE CONTACT OUR 24X7
TOLL FREE NUMBER:
0135-3520100

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT
PHONE:
0135-2552627
0135-2559898
E-MAIL:
touristcare.uttarakhand@gmail.com

#ExploreUttarakhand
QR Code



My dear Countrymen,

The sacred Chardham Yatra has commenced in the holy land of Devbhoomi Uttarakhand. This divine pilgrimage to the four shrines, including the darshan of Baba Kedar, is a magnificent celebration of India's eternal (Sanatan) cultural consciousness. Jagadguru Adi Shankaracharya gave a new direction to Indian culture through his pilgrimages to Badrinath and Kedarnath. Similarly, Jagadguru Ramanujacharya and Jagadguru Madhvacharya also visited Badrinath to enrich their spiritual philosophies.

Even today, these four shrines nestled in the lap of the Himalayas remain divine centers of our eternal faith and belief. Every year, people belonging to diverse languages, traditions, and cultures come here, further strengthening the spirit of 'Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat'. This year's Yatra is an extension of that very tradition.

Our scriptures state:
**अग्निष्टोमादिभिर्नृजैरिष्टा विपुलदक्षिणैः।
न तत्फलमवाप्नोति तीर्थार्थिभिर्मनेन यत्॥**

Meaning: The immense merit (Punya) earned through grand Yagyas (sacrificial rituals) and charity is profound. However, the merit obtained through a pilgrimage (Tirtha Yatra) is even greater than that gained through those rituals.

In the resolve for a 'Viksit Bharat' (Developed India), the role of a 'Viksit Uttarakhand' is extremely vital. A few years ago, at the gateway of Baba Kedar, I had said that this decade would be the 'Decade of Uttarakhand.' Today, the progress of Uttarakhand is turning that belief into reality. Uttarakhand is setting new benchmarks in all three sectors: tourism, spirituality, and economic growth.

The great ritual of development (Vikas ka Mahayagya) that has been underway in Uttarakhand for the past few years has made the Chardham Yatra more accessible, safer, and divine than ever before. This is providing great convenience to the visiting devotees, saints, and tourists. In all these efforts, every care is being taken to preserve the natural beauty of Uttarakhand.

I would also urge every guest visiting Uttarakhand to truly enjoy this new experience. During your journey, I encourage all travellers to observe a "Digital Fast" and strive to live within the natural beauty of Uttarakhand. This will provide you with a unique sense of satisfaction.

Historically, we have always traveled from our homes to Devbhoomi for the Chardham Yatra with a specific resolve. In this spirit, I wish to urge you to take Five Resolves (Panch Sankalp):

First Resolve – Cleanliness is Paramount: Maintain cleanliness within and around the shrines. Contribute your part to keeping the rivers clean. Take a pledge for a journey free of single-use plastic and uphold the dignity of this sacred land.

Second Resolve – Sensitivity towards Nature and Environment: Be sensitive toward this divine Himalayan land. While maintaining the balance of nature, contribute to environmental conservation through initiatives like 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' (A Tree in Mother's Name).

Third Resolve – Emphasis on Service, Cooperation, and Unity: Since ancient times, our pilgrimages have been a medium for universal service and social harmony. Even today, people serve pilgrims with this same spirit. I urge every pilgrim visiting the Chardham to perform at least one act of service every day of their journey. Help your fellow travellers and connect with people coming from different parts of the country. By participating in their traditions, strengthen the spirit of 'Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat' through this pilgrimage.

Fourth Resolve – Promoting 'Vocal for Local': From the time you leave your home until you return, ensure that you spend at least five percent of your total travel budget on purchasing local products. Even if a local item is not immediately needed in this season, try to buy it for future use.

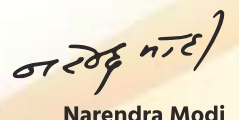
Fifth Resolve – Adherence to Discipline, Safety, and Decorum: Follow the rules of the journey and traffic instructions. As a responsible and alert citizen, make this pilgrimage safe and accessible. Let us ensure that our journey does not cause any inconvenience to the people involved in the organisation and management of this Yatra.

In recent years, a large number of creators and influencers have started visiting the Chardham. I urge all of you to make an effort to share the local stories of Uttarakhand and its small, unique traditions with the masses.

May the blessings of Baba Kedar and all the four shrines infuse your life with new energy, new inspiration, and new resolutions. This is my wish for you.

My heartiest best wishes to all of you for a successful, safe, divine, and soulful journey.

Yours


Narendra Modi



Panch Kedar

1. Kedarnath
2. Tungnath
3. Rudranath
4. Madhmaheshwar
5. Kalpeswar

Panch Prayag

1. Devprayag
2. Rudraprayag
3. Karnprayag
4. Nandprayag
5. Vishnuprayag

Panch Badri

1. Vishal Badri
2. Yogdarshan Badri
3. Bhavya Badri
4. Vradha Badri
5. Aadi Badri

Use only the official portal
for Helicopter Bookings
To Avoid any Fraud
www.heliyatra.irctc.co.in



During the Chardham Yatra, you can also visit and experience the divine Panch Kedar, Panch Prayag and Panch Badri. In the Panch Badri, Lord Vishnu is worshipped in various unique forms

'Adopt mandatory family planning to bring population under control': BJP Bengal chief to CM

Ravik Bhattacharya
Kolkata, May 30

STATING THAT it was imperative to control population growth of West Bengal, state BJP president Samik Bhattacharya on Saturday asked Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari to adopt effective policies, including mandatory family planning.

Sharing the stage with the chief minister during the launch of the HPV vaccine drive in Kolkata, Bhattacharya said family planning was crucial.

During his speech, Samik Bhattacharya said, "The issue of the growing population in West Bengal needs to be considered with utmost importance. In the interest of building a healthy, orderly society, it is imperative to increase awareness about family planning and adopt effective policies."

"In a healthy society, whether family planning can be made mandatory or making it a flagship programme of the government, and through vigorous awareness campaign, population growth can be controlled," Bhattacharya, a Rajya Sabha member, said.

"We have to see whether we can ease the pressure on land (from the rising population). We have to see whether, through birth control, we can do all-around development for women. We can bring in education and socio-economic development of women. The chief minister will take a decision on this," he added.

Praising the chief minister for having "touched the emotions of the people", Bhattacharya said, "Certain exemplary decisions have been taken by the new government. The state government welfare schemes have been aligned with the Central schemes. I would request the chief minister to shoulder the responsibility of population control (in West Bengal)."

Bhattacharya's statement comes amid the Centre forming a five-member High-Level Committee on Demographic Change to investigate "artificial" and "unnatural" population change across the country.

Abhishek gets CID summons, attacked by mob hours later

Tanusree Bose
Kolkata, May 30

TRINAMOOL CONGRESS (TMC) MP and national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee was heckled and eggs tossed at him Saturday evening while visiting Sonarpur to meet the family of a party worker who was allegedly a victim of post-poll violence. The incident marked Banerjee's first public appearance since the TMC's defeat in the recent West Bengal Assembly elections.

Banerjee allegedly came under attack while on his way to meet the family of Sanju Karmakar, a TMC worker who was murdered allegedly during post-poll violence. As he entered Sonarpur on a motorcycle, protesters allegedly attempted to assault him. Witnesses claimed that he was heckled, his shirt was tugged, and objects, including



TMC MP Abhishek Banerjee after the attack in Sonarpur, South 24 Parganas, Saturday. EXPRESS

bricks, shoes and eggs, were hurled at him.

The motorcycle on which Banerjee was travelling was also allegedly pushed to the ground amid the chaos. Protesters were heard chanting "Chor, chor (thief)" slogans against the Diamond Harbour MP.

Banerjee's security personnel were seen attempting to shield him from the crowd. Wearing a cricket helmet for protection, the TMC leader continued moving forward despite the protests. Eggs were also thrown at him, and several but-

tons on his shirt were torn off.

"This is BJP-sponsored. Look at the situation. We have come to meet victims of post-poll violence, but the police are nowhere to be seen despite repeated requests," he said later.

"I will move both the High Court and the Supreme Court regarding this incident. In the last 15 years, such a thing has never happened. I do not expect security from this government. Overnight, bulldozers are deployed, but I do not expect protection. I will stand by this family," he said.

Meanwhile, several women protesters gathered outside the house, carrying brooms and raising slogans against Banerjee. Some questioned the TMC leadership's role during the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital rape-murder case. "They protected the culprits. Where were they when the entire country stood in solidarity with the RG Kar victim?" one of them said.

After the incident, Banerjee was taken to a private hospital.

Former chief minister and TMC chairperson Mamata Banerjee, along with other family members, also headed there. Within an hour, Banerjee was seen leaving the hospital in a wheelchair, accompanied by the former CM. The TMC condemned the incident through a social media post, which Mamata shared, adding: "Rulers became killers – shame on you, BJP."

The attack was condemned by Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, who said, "By orchestrating a murderous attack on Shri Abhishek Banerjee ji, a key leader of the Trinamool Congress in Bengal, the anarchic BJP government in Bengal has proven that the BJP is capable of nothing but hate-filled, negative, violent politics."

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said, "Strongly condemn the shocking attack on MP Shri Abhishek Banerjee in Sonarpur, as he went to meet the families affected by post-poll vi-

olence in the state. The deliberate lack of adequate police protection for a prominent Opposition leader speaks volumes about the BJP's politics of vendetta and persecution."

BJP state president and MP Shamik Bhattacharya condemned the incident while denying any role of his party. "Why the police were not present, as alleged by him, I do not know," he said.

Meanwhile, a four-member team from the CID went to Banerjee's Harish Mukherjee Road residence, only to be informed that the Diamond Harbour MP was not there. Afterwards, he said, "I reside in my Kalighat Road house. If they (the CID) want to give notice, they will have to come here." CID officials who returned to the Kalighat Road house were told that the MP was busy and would not be able to meet them right away, prompting them to wait for a few hours. The reason for the summons is as yet unclear.

Monsoon at Kerala's doorstep but likely to miss June 1 onset

Express News Service
Bengaluru, May 30

THE SOUTHWEST monsoon is most likely to miss its date with Kerala on June 1 this year.

The normal monsoon onset date over Kerala, which marks the commencement of the season over the country, is June 1 with a likely deviation of 7 days. The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) said Saturday the conditions were favourable for further advance of southwest monsoon over to southern peninsular India, including Kerala and Tamil Nadu in the coming week.

The Met office said, "The monsoon advance was likely into some more parts of southwest and southeast Arabian Sea, Lakshadweep islands, some parts of Kerala and Tamil Nadu, some more parts of southwest, west-central, east-central and northeast Bay of Bengal and remaining parts of

southeast Bay of Bengal during the next 4 to 5 days."

In 2023, the monsoon onset over Kerala was realised on June 8, whereas it had an early onset both in 2024 (May 30) and 2025 (May 24), as per the IMD data.

On Saturday, the monsoon progressed further into some more parts of southwest and southeast Arabian Sea, Lakshadweep islands, Comorin area, southwest, southeast, west-central and east-central Bay of Bengal, and some parts of northeast Bay of Bengal.

This year, the all-India rainfall during the southwest monsoon is forecast to be below-normal and quantitatively remain 90 per cent of the Long Period Average of 870mm (1971-2020).

The monsoon onset over the Andaman Sea and neighbouring areas was realised on May 16 this year, which was nearly a week ahead of normal.

Over 400 alleged Bangladeshi migrants detained in holding centres across Bengal

Atri Mitra
& Ravik Bhattacharya
Kolkata, May 30

IN THE first seven days after opening holding centres across the state, the West Bengal administration has so far apprehended around 400 alleged Bangladeshi citizens for deportation.

According to the state administration, the highest number of detentions are from the Basirhat police district, where 335 alleged undocumented immigrants have been detained. The detainees here have been kept in Tentulghati, Pathorshati, Charghat and Subhashnagar flood centres.

Apart from Basirhat, alleged Bangladeshi immigrants have also been detained in Malda, Murshidabad and South Dinajpur districts. It has also been learnt that the detainees are being kept in police districts such as Baruiipur, Barasat, Cooch Behar, Jangipur, Krishnanagar and Bongaon. The state admin-



A deportation centre set up in Murshidabad district, West Bengal. PTI

istration has further tightened security and surveillance at all the holding centres here. According to sources, the district administrations concerned have also been given special instructions to ensure that the detention and deportation process is completed swiftly and smoothly.

Sources said that the holding centres are being continuously monitored and additional police have been deployed to maintain

law and order there.

Meanwhile, four labourers from Kerala are among the Bangladeshi immigrants who came to the Hakimpur border outpost on May 26. They came here in a bid to return home, but were sent to a detention centre in North 24 Parganas district.

Speaking over the phone, Motleb Hossain, one of the four youths, said, "Our biometrics were done yesterday. They took

our fingerprints and other information. The BSF officials also interrogated us and took all details of how we entered India and where we worked and stayed. We told them everything."

Another youth, Fahim Malida said they were being provided with proper food at the centre. "But we want to return home. We have been told that soon we will be sent back to Bangladesh." The group had crossed into India about eight months ago with help of a tout.

"The tout who helped us cross took Rs 7,000 per head," said Malida. From there, they took a bus to Kerala where they worked as a mason on a daily wage of Rs 1,000. "The trouble started after polls. They (landlords) wanted Aadhar cards to allow us to stay. We didn't have that, so we decided to return. An Indian tout promised a safe return... Later, he brought us to checkpoint and suddenly left. We had given him Rs 10,000 per head," Malida added.

Hamirpur bridge collapse: FIR against contractor firm, owner and supervisor

Express News Service
Lucknow, May 30

A DAY after six labourers were killed in Uttar Pradesh's Hamirpur district when a concrete slab from an under-construction bridge over the Betwa river collapsed on them, police on Saturday registered an FIR against the private construction firm engaged in the project, its owner, and a supervisor.

The FIR has been filed against the Kanpur-based construction agency, M/S The Sheter, its owner Vijay Pratap Singh and supervisor Nitish Sachan, on a complaint filed by Dileep Kumar, deputy project manager of the UP State Bridge Corporation Limited which had contracted the project to the firm. Charges of causing death by negligence and acts endangering life or personal safety of others have been invoked against them.

The complainant alleged that on the intervening night of Thursday and Friday, a severe



Officials at the site of the bridge collapse, which left six labourers dead and three injured, in Hamirpur district, Uttar Pradesh. FILE

high-velocity windstorm, coupled with the contractor's negligence, led to the collapse and damage of a segmental span of the under-construction bridge. The six labourers sitting beneath the span were buried under the debris, he added.

Hamirpur Circle Officer Rajesh Kamal said no arrests have been made so far in the case and further action will be taken based on the evidence gathered during the investigation.

The 800-metre-long bridge

has been under construction since 2024 and is being built to connect Mora Kandaur and Kandaur villages in Kurara block of the district.

Following the incident, the State Bridge Corporation suspended assistant engineer Gajendra Chaudhary while a departmental inquiry was initiated against Dileep Kumar, the deputy project manager.

The department has set up a three-member committee to probe the exact cause of collapse.

{ FROM PAGE 1 }

How NEET 2026 breached safeguards put after 2024 leak

CONOPs, was not consistently enforced in 2026. And the person who had built and overseen that framework was gone at the wrong moment, leaving a leadership vacuum in the system during the most sensitive phase of exam preparation.

"We are missing the larger issue," said one official, who did not wish to be identified. "If the confidential operations protocols were functioning the way they were supposed to, it would have been extremely difficult for anybody to access, retain and circulate complete sections of the paper."

The Education Ministry and the NTA did not respond to emails seeking comment.

Two leaks, two different failures

To understand what may have gone wrong in 2026, it helps to first understand how this controversy differs from 2024.

The NEET-UG 2024 scandal stemmed from vulnerabilities that emerged after the paper had left the NTA system: during printing, transportation, bank storage and movement to examination centres. The leak that year occurred in Jharkhand. Those gaps were substantially plugged ahead of NEET-UG 2025 through a series of stringent protocols — the CONOPs at the heart of these — introduced on the recommendations of a high-level committee headed by former ISRO chief K Radhakrishnan, constituted in the wake of the 2024 controversy. Four members of this very committee were tasked with overseeing the implementation of CONOPs for 2025.

CONOPs have two distinct phases. The first covers paper-setting, which happens months in advance, between December and February. The second covers paper transportation, closer to the exam, in April.

In 2024, it was the second phase that was compromised. In 2026, officials now believe it was the first — the phase that was supposed to be the most tightly sealed of all.

THE CHAIN A NEET PAPER TRAVELS, WHERE IT CAN BREAK

1 Paper-setting (Dec-Feb):

Chief paper setters, subject experts draft questions in special CONOPs room.

2 Translation (Jan-Feb):

The English master paper is translated into 12 regional languages by translators required to work inside the CONOPs room under the same strict protocols. **This is where the 2026 breach is believed to have occurred.**

3 Finalisation & encryption:

Master paper & translations are locked, encrypted and stored within NTA system before being



sent for printing.

4 Printing:

Question papers are printed at designated, security-cleared facilities.

5 Packaging & dispatch:

Papers sealed in tamper-evident packaging, taken to designated strong rooms at exam cities.

Inside the CONOPs room

The protocols introduced after 2024 effectively transformed the paper-setting ecosystem into a sealed operation almost identical to the highly restricted systems used by the IITs for the JEE Advanced examination.

The CONOPs room itself, where papers were set with the help of subject experts and chief paper setters, was designed to be entirely self-contained. Books, storage facilities, a refrigerator, microwave and pantry were all provided inside, so that paper setters, translators, vetters and domain experts had no reason to step out. A vestibule at the entrance was where team members were required to leave all personal belongings — phones, laptops, iPads, pen drives. No electronic devices were permitted past that point. There was no internet access.

Only authorised CONOPs team members could enter. All translation work was to be conducted on air-gapped computers, physically disconnected from the internet and external networks, with file access logs tracking every time a document was opened. No material was to be left on tables at the end of the day. Rough sheets and working notes were shredded daily.

Each evening, the room was locked and sealed by the chief paper setter or chief vetter, who

alone retained the key. Team members were also barred from participating in any external activities while paper-setting operations were underway.

"No phones, laptops, pen drives or external devices were supposed to enter the confidential operations room," said a person familiar with the 2025 protocols. "Even movement and access inside the system was meant to be tightly controlled."

It was inside this system, or at least one nominally bound by its rules, that the translators now accused of the leak were working. NEET-UG is conducted in 13 languages, which means the English paper must be translated into regional languages before the exam. That translation work, considered as sensitive as paper-setting itself, was required to happen inside the CONOPs room under the same strict protocols.

All three individuals arrested as translators were involved in translating the paper into Marathi. Retired Chemistry teacher PV Kulkarni, allegedly associated with the Marathi translation process, is accused of leaking the Chemistry section. Pune-based teacher Manisha Havaladar allegedly leaked the Physics section, while Manisha Mandhare is suspected of leaking Botany and Zoology questions, according to the investigators. Notably, Kulkarni was also involved in translating the

Chemistry section for the 2025 exam, the very exam the CONOPs were designed to protect.

"The entire logic of CONOPs during the paper-setting and translation phases is that no individual should be able to freely access, retain or move complete sections of the paper outside the system," said an official associated with the examination process. "If investigators are now alleging that happened with individuals linked to different sections of the paper, then naturally questions arise about whether the safeguards developed and implemented in 2025 were enforced with the same rigour in 2026."

A system without a steady hand

The protocols, officials insist, did not fail on their own. Some attribute it to a change in guard with gaps in transition.

After the 2024 controversy, the government removed NTA chief Subodh Kumar Singh and gave additional charge to PS Kharola, then serving as Chairman and Managing Director of the India Trade Promotion Organisation. Kharola oversaw the design and implementation of the entire CONOPs framework for 2025. But his extended tenure at the NTA expired on October 19, 2025 — just as the paper-setting cycle for NEET-UG 2026 would have been getting underway.

Between October and January, a period considered crucial for paper-setting preparation, NTA's additional charge was handled by Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti chairperson Rajesh Lakhani — who was simultaneously serving in his primary role elsewhere. A permanent head, Abhishek Singh, was appointed only a month before the May 3 exam.

The result was a leadership vacuum at the most sensitive moment. The protocols that Kharola had built and personally championed had no consistent owner as they were being applied for the first time without him.

"The CONOPs of 2025 did not smoothly translate into 2026. That is the core of the problem," said one official. "These protocols are not self-executing. They require institutional ownership, consistent enforcement and leadership that understands what is at stake."

Kharola and Lakhani did not respond to requests for a comment.

The irony of May 3

On May 3, the Education Ministry issued a press release highlighting the elaborate monitoring systems in place for NEET-UG 2026. Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan visited the NTA headquarters to supervise preparations, while ministry officials monitored examination centres round the clock for 48 hours from a control room at Ambedkar Bhawan.

Within days, however, NTA received information suggesting a possible leak in Chemistry. It began with an email. On May 7, a tip-off arrived without any attachment, just an allegation that Chemistry questions had been leaked before the exam. The agency tracked down the whistleblower the following day and obtained a PDF of a guess paper circulating online. The Chemistry questions matched.

On May 9, the highest levels of government were informed of the suspected leak, around the same time preparations

were underway for the swearing-in of West Bengal's new chief minister. NTA and the Education Ministry were told to first confirm the suspicion, and if verified, cancel the exam.

Over May 9 and 10, Sikar police in Rajasthan, where the whistleblower was based, verified whether the guess paper PDF had been circulated before the examination. On May 11, they confirmed it had — establishing that the leak had occurred before May 3. NTA formally wrote to the ministry. The ministry formally approached the CBI. On May 12, the government announced the exam had been scrapped and the investigation handed over to the CBI.

Officials defended the decision, saying allowing the result to stand despite evidence of a leak would have strengthened what one officer called the "paper leak economy." "Yes, something wrong happened. But there was a view that if the examination was allowed to continue, the message would go out that there are no real consequences for the exam mafia," said a senior official. "If someone has spent lakhs procuring a question paper, then the system must ensure there are consequences for that too."

What Comes Next

CONOPs are back in focus ahead of the NEET-UG re-test scheduled for June 21. A fresh batch of subject experts has been brought in to set the paper, though officials declined to detail the specific measures being taken.

On May 27, a meeting was held with former ISRO chief K Radhakrishnan, whose committee's recommendations had originally shaped the 2025 CONOPs framework.

That addresses the first leg of the process, paper-setting. For the second leg, discussions are underway on whether assistance from the defence forces should be sought to strengthen the secure transportation and storage of question papers after printing.

Chaos after tech glitch hits CUET-UG exam: Re-test for 3,765

A total of 73,106 candidates were present at their allotted examination centers, and their biometric registration was completed. Out of these, 69,341 candidates (almost 95%) completed their examination at their respective centers, said the NTA.

It said the Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), involved in conducting the test, reported a technical glitch, prompting NTA to initially revise the afternoon session timing and allow full compensatory time. It asked the technical service provider to conduct a root-cause analysis and submit its report immediately.

"We understand that 3,765 candidates who were present and had completed biometric registration chose to leave before the exam could restart. For these candidates, NTA will hold a re-scheduled examination as a one-time measure," the testing agency said in a post on X. Details of the fresh examination, it said, would be announced separately.

Earlier in the day, the NTA had announced that candidates affected by the disruption would be given another opportunity to appear for the examination.

The afternoon session was also pushed back by an hour. According to the revised timing, reporting and entry for the afternoon session began from 2.30 pm, while the examination began at 4 pm instead of 3 pm.

The NTA said candidates in the morning session were being given the full duration of the paper. The agency also said it "sincerely regrets the inconvenience caused to students and parents".

Meanwhile, TCS CEO and MD K Krithivasan said a brief technical issue caused a delay of around two hours in the morning shift of the CUET-UG examination. "The issue was promptly identified and resolved by our technical teams and the examination has since

resumed without any impact to the sanctity of the exam," he said. Krithivasan said teams were actively monitoring all systems and would ensure seamless conduct of computer-based tests.

At some centers, candidates said there was confusion on the ground before the revised arrangement was communicated.

At Adarsh Pariksha Kendra in Noida Sector 64, some candidates said they were asked to leave the facility around 11 am after waiting for several hours. They said entry had begun around 7 am, but the examination could not begin because of server-related issues and technical errors.

A CUET candidate from Delhi, whose examination centre was in Noida, said candidates had come from several places, including Delhi, Haryana and Jaipur to take the examination.

"We were allowed entry from 7 am and kept waiting. There were server-related issues and technical errors. The invigilators told us they were unable to download the question papers. Later, we were told that further communication would be initiated by the NTA," the candidate said, adding that many candidates had left the examination centre after being told to leave the premises.

The disruption caused inconvenience to candidates and parents, particularly those who had travelled from other states to the designated examination centres. A woman, whose daughter appeared for the exam at the Ion Digital Centre in Sector 62, Noida, said students were made to wait for nearly two-and-a-half hours amid uncertainty over whether the examination would be conducted. "Initially, they were informed that the exam had been cancelled. Despite this, they were not allowed to leave and told to remain seated inside the classrooms," she said.



MARATHA QUOTA DEMAND

Jarange-Patil begins fast; CM: govt positive about demands

Manoj More
Pune, May 30

AFTER MINISTERS of the ruling Mahayuti failed to persuade Manoj Jarange-Patil to withdraw his proposed agitation, the Maratha quota activist began his hunger strike on Saturday in the scorching summer heat. Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, meanwhile, said his government was "positive" about the demands made by the Maratha community.

On Friday, a delegation which comprised ministers Radhakrishna Vikhe Patil and Prasad Lad met Jarange-Patil and urged him not to proceed with the fast, stating that all his demands had been taken up. The ministers spent nearly two hours trying to convince the activist.

However, Jarange-Patil remained firm and began his fast on Saturday morning on his farmland. Several villagers from Antarwali-Sarathi and other nearby areas also joined the protest.



Lying on a cot under the sun, Jarange-Patil observes a fast. EXPRESS

Lying on a cot under the blazing sun, Jarange-Patil wore a traditional pheta (headgear) as he observed the fast.

During the meeting, Vikhe Patil and Lad submitted a government draft addressing the activist's demands.

“Talk and find a solution through dialogue. Do not attack.”

MANOJ JARANGE-PATIL
MARATHA QUOTA ACTIVIST

“After the lathi charge at Antarwali-Sarathi, we saw our mothers and sisters lying in pools of blood. Do not think of doing that again. Do not resort to police lathi charges. It will be difficult for you in the state,” said Jarange-Patil, referring to the September 1, 2023 incident in which police lathi-charged protesters demanding Maratha reservation in a Jalna village. The incident had also prompted him to launch his first hunger strike in protest.

Reiterating his decision to continue the fast, Jarange-Patil said, “Talk and find a solution through dialogue. Do not attack; the Maratha community is peaceful.”

Regarding Jarange-Patil's

“The govt does not make communities fight against each other.”

DEVENDRA FADNAVIS
MAHARASHTRA CHIEF MINISTER

demand for information on 5.8 million Kunbi records, the government draft stated that the records are available on all district websites.

Citizens can access them online, while physical copies will be provided if required.

On the issue of issuing Kunbi caste certificates to Marathas in the Marathwada region based on the Hyderabad Gazette, the draft stated that the Divisional Commissioner of Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar has prepared a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP).

Home visits and special camps will be conducted over the next three months, and action will be taken against negligent officers.

It further stated that helplines would be set up at district collectors' offices within eight days to assist applicants in searching records and applying for certificates.

Jarange-Patil had also demanded the immediate issuance of caste validity certificates. The administration replied that the Divisional Commissioner would review the progress of this work every 15 days.

Regarding the implementation of the Sataru Gazette, which contains the names of families classified under the Kunbi category, the state government claims that further action would be taken only after seeking the opinion of the Advocate General.

The activist has also demanded a separate ministry for the Maratha community.

In response, officials said steps would be taken within a month to establish a "Maratha Reservation Cell".

They also noted that financial assistance had already

been provided to 275 of the 306 affected families of those who died during the quota agitation, while the remaining 31 families would receive aid within 15 days.

Jarange-Patil had also sought a review of the functioning of village-level committees. The government stated that tehsildars would review the work of village committees, constituted on September 2, 2025, every 15 days.

It was further announced that the Justice Shinde Committee, a Maharashtra-appointed panel tasked with establishing the methodology for issuing Kunbi caste certificates to eligible members of the Maratha community, would be granted a one-year extension.

Reacting to Jarange-Patil's remarks, Chief Minister Fadnavis said said his government works positively and "does not make communities fight against each other." "The government makes decisions in the interest of the community. It operates within the

bounds of the Constitution and court directives. We are not taking away the reservation of one community to give it to another. The OBC community should not fear; no injustice will be done to them," he said.

In February 2024, the Maharashtra Legislature unanimously passed a Bill granting 10 per cent reservation to the Maratha community in education and government jobs under a separate category. However, Jarange-Patil has remained firm in his demand that Marathas be included under the Other Backward Classes (OBC) quota.

In September 2025, Jarange-Patil went on a five-day hunger strike in Mumbai, where thousands of Marathas gathered in support.

Following a series of meetings Jarange-Patil ended that fast after a Government Resolution (GR) was issued implementing the Hyderabad Gazette to extend Kunbi status to the Marathas in the Marathwada region.

NCP(SP) leader's nephew Prajakt Tanpure joins BJP

Vallabh Ozarkar
Mumbai, May 30

IN A setback to the Sharad Pawar-led NCP (SP), former minister Prajakt Tanpure, the nephew of senior NCP (SP) leader Jayant Patil, joined the BJP with his supporters at the BJP headquarters in Mumbai, in the presence of state BJP chief Ravindra Chavan, on Sunday.

Party sources indicated he is likely to be fielded for the upcoming Legislative Council elections from the Ahmednagar Local Authorities' constituency. "The decision has been made in light of the current issues in my constituency. I also need to think about my supporters and their future. I fought for the party, but I also need to get support. If I join the ruling alliance, development work in the constituency will take place," he said, speaking to reporters in Mumbai earlier.

The move is being seen as politically significant given Tanpure's family ties with Jayant Patil, one of the most influential leaders in the NCP (SP). It comes amid efforts by the ruling Mahayuti to expand its footprint in Opposition strongholds.

A former minister in the Maha Vikas Aghadi government, Tanpure represented the Rahuri Assembly constituency and remains an influential leader in Ahmednagar district through cooperative institutions and local political networks.

His expected entry into the BJP is likely to strengthen the party's position in parts of north Maharashtra while dealing a blow to the NCP (SP)'s district-level organisation. Speculation over Tanpure's future had intensified in recent months after he maintained contact with senior BJP leaders, including Revenue Minister Radhakrishna Vikhe Patil. The buzz grew when he stayed away from actively positioning himself for the Rahuri Assembly bypoll.

BJP sources said Tanpure's induction is part of a broader strategy to bring influential local leaders into the party ahead of local body elections. For the NCP (SP), however, the departure of a leader closely linked to Jayant Patil would be viewed as a symbolic and organisational loss at a time when the party is trying to consolidate its cadre after a series of defections.

With nominations for the June 18 Legislative Council elections closing on June 1, all eyes will now be on whether the BJP formally announces Tanpure as its candidate from Ahmednagar, a move that would immediately elevate his role within the ruling alliance.

The move comes amid Mahayuti's efforts to expand its footprint in strongholds of the opposition

DIRECTORATE OF MINES & GEOLOGY
STEEL AND MINES DEPARTMENT,
GOVT. OF ODISHA, BHUBANESWAR
Heads of Department Building, Unit-V, Pin-751001
Tel No.: 0674-2391537, Fax No.: 0674-2391684
Email ID: directormines1@orissaminerals.gov.in

corrigendum

In reference to the "Notice Inviting Tender" advertisement published in *The Indian Express* on 29th May '2026. Kindly read Rs. 2,00,000 for Price of Tender Document for Behera Banjipali Limestone Block mentioned in Sr. No-8 instead of Rs. 5,00,000

PUNE METROPOLITAN REGION DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY, Pune
E-Tender Notice No.06 for FY 2026-27
PMRDA invites proposals through e-tendering for Appointment of Consultant for Comprehensive Traffic Engineering, Analysis, Survey, Detailed Design and Detailed Project Report preparation, Bid Document preparation and Bid process management, Construction supervision for improvement and construction of Road Junctions within PMRDA limits
The Tender document for this work can be downloaded from the website: www.mahatenders.gov.in from 1st June, 2026 at 11.00 Hrs. onwards. Last date for submission of the proposal is 16th June, 2026 upto 11.00 Hrs. The changes if any can be available on www.mahatenders.gov.in. This Tender Notice can also be seen on PMRDA website.
Sd/- Executive Engineer Engineering Division 1 Pune Metropolitan Region Development Authority, Pune
outword-EG/AK/ पाखवाकर/
११-२०२५/११९/साख-१
Date - २५/०५/२०२६

Ujjivan Small Finance Bank
Registered Office: Grape Garden, No.27, 3rd 'A' Cross, 18th Main, 6th Block, Koramangala, Bengaluru-560095, Karnataka.
Regional Office: 7th Floor, Almonite IT Park, Sr.No. 8, Kharadi-Mundhwa Bypass, Village Kharadi, Pune 411014.
PUBLIC NOTICE
GOLD AUCTION CUM BID INVITATION NOTICE
The below mentioned borrowers ("RAMKUMAR RAKESH SHAHU") have failed to repay the loan and redeemed the pledged gold ornaments within the stipulated time in spite of several reminders
: The Gold Ornaments pledged by the below listed Borrowers will be sold in Public auction at our Branch premises (Kesar Villa Satnami Precint Layout, Near Ambedkar Square, Central Avenue Road, Nagpur Nagpur Maharashtra 440008) on **08/07/2026** @ 10:00AM -3:30PM onwards. The Bank reserves the right to accept or reject any bid without assigning any reason whatsoever. Please note if the auction does not get completed on the same day, the same will follow the subsequent days on the same terms and conditions. If the customer is deceased, all the conditions pertaining to auction will be applicable to nominee/legal heir. The Borrower are hereby notified to pay the up date interest and ancillary expenses before the date of auction, failing which the pledged gold ornaments will be sold and balance dues if any will be recovered with interest and cost.

Sl. No.	Name of the Borrower	Name of the branch of the Bank	Description of the Gold Ornaments Pledged	Approximate Gross weight (in gms.)	Approximate Value (INR)
1	Ramkumar Rakesh Shahu	4496-C A ROAD	Ear rings	7.87	102594

Interested parties may visit the above-mentioned Branch address of the Bank with their PAN Card along with a recent passport size photograph, valid photo identity proof and address proof, on the auction date as per time indicated above.
For further details and terms and conditions of sale, the intending bidders is requested to visit our Bank website <https://www.ujjivansfb.in/e-auctions> and may also contact our Branch at Ujjivan Small Finance Bank Ltd., Kesar Villa Satnami Precint Layout, Near Ambedkar Square, Central Avenue Road, Nagpur Nagpur Maharashtra 440008, Sachin Ashoksing Rathod- 7030077888.

Terms and Conditions of Auction Sale:-

- The intending bidders should submit their bids/quotation in the prescribed form in closed cover along with his/her ID proof, address proof. Bids/ quotation not in the prescribed format will not be accepted. The bids/ quotation along with ID proof & address poof shall be submitted at **Ujjivan Small Finance Bank Ltd., C A ROAD branch, Kesar Villa Satnami Precint Layout, Near Ambedkar Square, Central Avenue Road, Nagpur Nagpur Maharashtra 440008** latest by **08/07/2026** at 10:00AM -3:30PM. Bank has every right to reject or accept the quotation.
- The sealed bids /quotation will be opened by the official who presides over the Auction Sale process, in the presence of the available bidders, at 10:00AM - 3:30PM on **08/07/2026**.
- After opening the bids, the intending bidders may be given opportunity, at the discretion of the official who presides over the Auction Sale process, to have intense bidding amongst themselves to enhance the offer price. The incremental amount will be decided by the official who presides over the Auction Sale process, and his/her decision shall be final.
- The participating bidder who bids for the highest amount will be declared as successful bidder by the official who presides over the Auction Sale process.
- The successful bidder shall deposit complete Sale Price (viz., the price at which he/she bids the gold ornament) within 3 (Three) working days of completion of the auction sale, , in Cash (up to permissible limit) or by Demand Draft. In case of default by the successful bidder in depositing the amount of Sale Price in the above manner, the aggregate of amounts deposited by him/her till then shall be forfeited without any notice and the gold ornaments shall be put for re-auction or sale in any other mode as deemed fit by the Bank. In such case the successful bidder shall forfeit all claims in regard to the gold ornaments or to any part of the sum for which it may be sold subsequently.
- The successful bidder shall have to get released immediately after payment of complete Sale Price from the Bank the gold ornaments which are bid by him/her, at his/her costs and responsibility. He/she shall also bear the applicable statutory dues/taxes/charges that is required to be paid in order to get the gold ornaments. The successful bidder shall have to execute requisite acknowledgement letter in favour of the Bank.
- The official who presides over the Auction Sale process has absolute right to accept or reject any or all of the tender/bid/offer and/or adjourn/postpone/cancel the Auction Sale without assigning any reason, and also to modify any or all terms and conditions of the sale without prior notice.
- The sale is subject to confirmation by the Bank.
- The gold ornaments are put for sale on "AS IS WHERE IS CONDITION" and "WHATEVER THERE IS BASIS".

For further details the intending bidders may contact **Ujjivan Small Finance Bank Ltd., C A ROAD branch, Kesar Villa Satnami Precint Layout, Near Ambedkar Square, Central Avenue Road, Nagpur Nagpur Maharashtra 440008** with **Sachin Ashoksing Rathod- 7030077888**

Place: Nagpur
Date : 31.05.2026
Sd/- Authorized Officer, Ujjivan Small Finance Bank

INDUSIND BANK LIMITED
Registered Office : 2401, Gen. Thimmayya Road (Cantonment), Pune -411 001.
Consumer Finance Division : New No. 34, G.M. Chetty Road, T. Nagar, Chennai - 600 017
State Address: Indusind Bank, Multi Planet Building, Second Floor, 71/1C Shankar Sheth Road, Opposite Kumar Pacific Mall, Pune - 411042
PUBLICATION OF DEMAND NOTICE
Notice issued under Section 13(2) of The Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002
A notice is hereby given that the following **Borrowers/ Guarantors** have defaulted in the repayment of the below mentioned credit facilities obtained by them from the bank and said facilities have been classified as Non- performing assets by the Bank. Whereas the notices issued to them under section 13(2) of SARFAESI act, 2002 through Registered Post on their last known address were returned un-served and as such they are hereby informed by way of public notice about the same. The steps are being taken for substituted service of the notice. The above **borrowers, Co-borrowers and or/their guarantor** (wherever applicable) are advised to make the payments of outstanding within the 60 days from the date of publication of this notice failing which further steps will be taken as per the provision of Securitisation and reconstruction of financial assets and enforcement of security interest act 2002. The borrower's attention is invited to the provisions of sub section (13) of sec.13 of the act, that the borrowers are not entitled to transfer the secured assets by way of Sale, Lease or otherwise without the prior written consent of the Bank.

Sl No.	Loan A/c Number, Loan Amount, Name of the Borrower / Co borrower / Guarantor / Date of Demand Notice / Amount Out standing	Description of Property
1.	Loan Agreement Number:NEC05362M Loan Amount: Rs.26.45,000/- Date of Demand Notice: 29/12/2025 Amount Outstanding: Rs.26.91,457.40/- as on 28/12/2025 with further interest thereon Borrower: 1. Mr. Lakkan Ishwar Kurli, S/o. Ishwar, Plot No E/47 Near Israli Hardware Yashodhara Chowk, Pawan Nagar Uppalwadi, Nagpur, Maharashtra- 440026. Mobile: 8087790720 Also at: Plot No 781, Thakarkargam Railway Gate Thakkargram, Panchpowl, Nagpur, Maharashtra -440017, Mobile: 8087790720 Also at: Western Portion of Tenament No1/13, KH No.49850 H No.756/72, Sheet No.324/22, CS No.1963 Ward No.55 Mouza Hansapuri, 104 Tsishs Scheme Mhada Pachpaoli, Nagpur, Pincode-440002 Co-Borrower(s): Mrs. Roshni Lakkan Kuril, W/o. Lakkan Ishwar Kuril, Plot No E/47, Near Israli Hardware, Yashodhara Chowk, Pawan Nagar Uppalwadi, - 440026, Mobile: 9766760720 Also at: Plot No E/47 Near Israli Hardware, Yashodhara Chowk, Pawan Nagar Uppalwadi, Nagpur, Maharashtra- 440026 Mobile: 8087790720	SCHEDULE OF PROPERTY: All that Pieces and Parcel of the MHADA land bearing Western Portion of Tenement No. 1/13, in 104 T.S.S.I.H.S Tenement Scheme, admeasuring about 36.93 Sq.Mtrs. (i.e. 397.51) out of total land admeasuring 101.72 Sq.Mtrs. being a portion of the entire land bearing Kharsa No. 49 & 50, of Mouza Hansapuri, City Survey No. 1963, Sheet No. 324/22, Corporation House No. 756/72, Ward No. 55 within the Limits of Nagpur Municipal Corporation, Nagpur and Nagpur Improvement Trust, Nagpur, in Tahsil and District Nagpur: the said plot is bounded as under:- East: Remaining Portion of land belongs to Sheikh Rafique Suleman Sheikh, West: Tenement No. 2/13, North: Remaining Portion of land belongs to Jamila Bee Sheikh Gaffar, South: Open Land thereafter Road.
2.	Loan Agreement Number:NNN05304M Loan Amount: Rs.29.50,000/- Date of Demand Notice: 01/12/2025 Amount Outstanding: Rs.29.43,146.74/- as on 28/11/2025 with further interest thereon Borrower: Mr. S I S Irfansubhan, S/o Sheikh Subhan, 1128/1038 Shesh Nagar, Opp Vivekanand School, Hasanbagh Hanuman Nagar, Nagpur - 440009 Also At: Plot No. 21, Corporation House No.2680A/21/A, Mouza Dighori, Kh.no.7/6, Sheet No.59, Ct.no.54, Nagpur -440009 Co-Borrower(s): Mrs. Nikhat Tanweer Irfan, W/o S I S Irfansubhan, 1128/1038, Shesh Nagar, Opp Vivekanand School, Hasanbagh Hanuman Nagar, Nagpur-440006	Schedule Of Property: All that part and parcel of bearing of Plot No.21 admeasuring 1200 Sq.ft (111.48 Sq.M) on the land bearing Kharsa No.7/6 situated at by Aradhana Co-operative Housing Society Ltd, Nagpur bearing Mouza-Dighori, P.H.No.34 A, Ward No.21, Mouza No.193, Sheet No.59, City Survey No.54, House No.2680A/21/A Tal Dist Nagpur, North: Road, South: Plot No.20, East: Plot No.22, West: Road

Date: 31-05-2026
Place: Maharashtra
Sd/-Authorized Officer, For Indusind Bank limited

CENTRAL RAILWAY SOLAPUR DIVISION
ELECTRICAL (TRD) WORK
The Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer (TRD), Central Railway, Solapur, for and on behalf of the President of India invites online e-tenders on Railways e-procurement website www.irops.gov.in from reputed, experience & licensed Electrical contractors for the following works.
Tender No. SUR/TD/T/2026/15
Name of Work: - Electrical TRD portion of work in connection with Provision of additional loop lines at Boribial. **Estimated cost:** ₹2,44,42,461.70, **Bid Security:-** ₹4,88,900/-, **Completion Period:-** 12 months, **Validity of offer:-** 60 Days, **Date & time of tender closing on website:-** 29/06/2026 at 15.00 hours.
25 Sr. DEE (TRD)/Solapur
Travel safely, Avoid footboard travelling



BENGALURU NORTH CITY CORPORATION
Office of the Executive Engineer, Byatarayanapura Division, Zone-I No. 2152/20, Defence Colony, 9th Main, D Block, Sahakarnagara, BNCC Office, Bangalore-560092.
No: BNCC-21/EE/BTP/KPPP/PR/03/2026-27 Date: 30.05.2026
SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION TWO COVER TENDER
(Through GOK KPP Portal <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in> only)
Tenders on item rate basis are invited by the undersigned for the works mentioned below from the registered contractors of Bengaluru North City Corporation, or equivalent registration with CPWD/ KPWD/ Railways/ MES or any State Government Organizations.

Sl. No.	Name of the Work
1.	Annual Maintenance of SWD in Byatarayanapura Division for the year 2026-27/Call-2. Approximate value of work : Rs.175.00 Lakhs. EMD : Rs.2,62,500.00 Category : Others

Calendar of Events : (1) Pre-Bid Meeting will be held on **06.06.2026 at 15:00 Hrs** noon in the office of the Executive Engineer Byatarayanapura Division, No. 2152/20, Defence colony, BWSSB Tank Road, Sahakarnagara office, Bangalore-560092 (2) Last Date for uploading the Filled proposals is on **10.06.2026 up to 16:00 hours.** (3) Date of Opening of Technical Bid is **11.06.2026 after 16:00 hours.** (4) Date of Opening of Financial Bid after Approval of Technical BID.
Sd/- Executive Engineer, BNCC

बैंक ऑफ महाराष्ट्र Bank of Maharashtra
बँका महाराष्ट्र
एक पब्लिक लिमिटेड बँक
ग्राम कार्यालय : सोमेश्वर, 1501, शिवराजपुरा, पुणे - 411005.
R.O. : Lohamangali, 1501, Shivrajpur, Pune-411005.
अंचल कार्यालय अमरावती
दूरसंचार भवन, बीएसएनएल ऑफिस, श्याम चौक , अमरावती
Zonal office - Amravati
टेलीफोन/TELE : 0721-2671452, 2678206, 2565588
ई-मेल/e-mail – legal_ama@bankofmaharashtra.bank.in

POSSESSION NOTICE (Rule -8(1) For Immovable Property)
WHEREAS, the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of Bank of Maharashtra under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement Security Interest Act 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a Demand Notice dated mentioned on below column calling upon the Borrowers to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being and interest thereon and other charges within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The notice was sent by Regd post AD/Speed Post. The borrower and guarantor having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken **Symbolic Possession** of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13 (4) of the said SARFAESI Act read with rule 8 of the said rules
The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the Bank of Maharashtra for an amount and interest thereon.
The borrower's attention is invited to the provisions of Sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets

Sr. No.	Name of Borrowers /Guarantors And Branch	The details of the properties mortgaged to the Bank and taken possession by the Bank are as follows	Outstanding Amount	Demand Date
1.	Branch : Loni Takali Branch 1) Mr. Anup Vilasrao Fartode (Borrower) Address: AT DHANGARKHED, Po Hiwara Bk . Tq. Karanja Lad Dist Washim Pin 444105 2) Mr. Gajanan Rambhauji Jaware (Guarantor) Address - Behind Post Office, Rukmini Nagar, Amravati- 3) Mr. Roshan Vilasrao Fartode (Guarantor) Address - AT DHANGARKHED, Po Hiwara Bk .Tq. Karanja Lad Dist Washim 444105	1) Hypothecation of plant and machinery. 2) Hypothecation of stock. 3) Collateral Security of- 1) All those piece and parcel of Land situate being and lying at village wadura Tq. Nandgaon Khandeshwar Dist Amravati Admeasuring 0.40 hector and 1.64 hector (Total Admeasuring 2.04 hector) along with shed constructed thereupon in Gat No 87/2 . Owned by – Mr. Anup Vilasrao Fartode Bounded As- North- Field of Vilasrao Fartode, East- Field of Rahemat Khan Haudar Khan, West- Field of Gajanan Jichkar, South- Field of Sitaramji Kaje	Rs. 33,92,604.00 /- (Rs. Thirty Three Lakh Ninety Two Thousand Six Hundred Four only)plus interest @ 12.15 % thereon with monthly rests w. e. f. 13/03/2026 apart from penal interest, cost and expenses	12/03/2026 Date of Possession 25/05/2026
2.	Branch : Jawahar Rd Branch 1) M/s Sundarmoti Trading Company Prop: Mr. Kishor Motilaji Gangan. Plot No. 2, Kharbade Layout, Amravati Road, Chandur Railway, Dist-Amravati, 444904. Guarantor/s: 2) Mr. Ghanshyam Motilaji Gangan Plot No. 2, Kharbade Layout, Amravati Road, Chandur Railway, Dist-Amravati, 444904	1) Hypothecation of stock- 2) All those piece and parcel of Residential Plot No. 2, area admeasuring 262.30 Sq. Mtr. Situated at S No. 14, Kharabe Layout, Chandur Railway, Dist Amravati owned by Mr. Kishor Motilaji Gangani. Boundaries: East: Others Layout of Mr. Banait, West: Layout Road North: Res. Mr. Kharbade on Plot No 01, South: Property of same owner on plot No 03 3) All those piece and parcel of Residential Plot No. 3, area admeasuring 274.50 Sq. Mtr. Situated at S No. 14, Kharabe Layout, Chandur Railway, Dist Amravati owned by Mr. Kishor Motilaji Gangani. Boundaries: East: Others Layout of Mr. Banait, West: Layout Road, North: Res. Property of same owner on plot No 02, South: Open plot No 04	Rs. 4,13,17,068.00 /- (Rupees Four Crore Thirteen Lakh Seventeen Thousand Sixty Eight only) plus interest @ 8.65 % with monthly rests w. e. f. 12.03.2026 apart from penal interest, cost and expenses	11/03/2026 Date of Possession 27/05/2026
3.	Branch : Jawahar Rd Branch 1) Mr. Kishor Dhalumalji Chhablani. Address - 2nd Lane, Krishna Nagar, Rampuri Camp, Amravati. 2) Mr. Rajesh Dhalumalji Chhablani. Address- 2nd Lane, Krishna Nagar, Rampuri Camp, Amravati. Guarantor: 3) Mrs. Ritu Kishor Chhablani Address - 2nd Lane, Krishna Nagar, Rampuri Camp, Amravati.	Equitable Mortgage of All those piece and parcel of Flat No. 201, Second Floor, Block No. C-2, Ram-Laxman Residency, Building Name "Yashasvi", Nazul Plot No. 6, Nazul Sheet No. 50, Mouje- Tarkheda, Pragane- Badnera Tq. Dist – Amravati, 444604. Total Admeasuring area 1050 sq.ft. Bounded as- East- Flat no. 206, West- Flat no. 201 (Block C/1), North-Passage, South– Road CERSAID- 200007656563 Owned by- Mr. Kishor Dhalumalji Chhablani & Mr. Rajesh Dhalumalji Chhablani	Rs. 7,04,677.00 (Rupees Seven Lakhs Four Thousand Six Hundred Seventy Seven only) plus interest thereon @ 10.15 % with monthly rests w. e. f. 07.03.2026 apart from penal interest, cost and expenses	06/03/2026 Date of Possession 25/05/2026

Date: 31/05/2026, Place: Amravati
For Bank of Maharashtra, Chief Manager & Authorized Officer.

MORE THAN HALF MEMBERS IN OUTGOING SIDDARAMAIAH MINISTRY MAY BE DROPPED

Stage set for Shivakumar swearing-in as CM on June 3; rejigs on the cards

Akram M
Bengaluru, May 30

AS EXPECTED, the Karnataka Congress Legislature Party (CLP) on Saturday unanimously elected D K Shivakumar as its leader, paving the way for the Deputy Chief Minister to be elevated to the Chief Minister's position.

The CLP's move came two days after CM Siddaramaiah stepped down from his post following the Congress high command's directive. Veteran party leader Siddaramaiah, who has already become the longest-serving CM of Karnataka, resigned as part of a power-sharing agreement between him and Shivakumar in May 2023, when the party stormed to power by clinching the Karnataka Assembly polls.

The 64-year-old Volkaliga leader, Shivakumar has also been the state Congress president for several years.

Addressing media persons following the CLP meeting, All India Congress Committee (AICC) general secretary (organisation) KC Venugopal, accompanied by AICC general secretary in charge of Karnataka Randeep Surjewala, said that the CLP had "unanimously authorised Congress high command to propose a leader for CLP. The Congress high com-



Karnataka's outgoing CM Siddaramaiah with his successor D K Shivakumar and AICC general secretary (organisation) K C Venugopal at Vidhana Soudha in Bengaluru on Saturday.

mand suggested the name of D K Shivakumar as the leader of the CLP."

Siddaramaiah proposed the name of Shivakumar, which was seconded by G Parameshwara, Venugopal said, adding that the new CM will take oath along with a new set of Cabinet ministers. "Everybody thought that this transition would cause trouble for the Congress party. Everybody anticipated that a big shake is going to happen in Congress," he said, adding that the transition happened "smoothly" as the "Congress is like a family".

"Under the guidance of AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge and (Congress leader) Sonia Gandhi, smooth transition of power has happened in Karnataka. Therefore, now onwards, under the leadership of Shivakumar and support of Siddaramaiah, Congress is going to return to power in 2028," Venugopal said.

Both Venugopal and Surjewala were sent by the AICC leadership as its observers for the CLP meeting following which Shivakumar led a party delegation, comprising Siddaramaiah and several Congress

legislators, to meet Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot at the Lok Bhavan to stake claim to form his government. The Governor invited Shivakumar to take oath as the CM on June 3 along with the new ministers of his cabinet.

According to sources, the June 3 date was decided by Shivakumar following consultations with his astrologers. Earlier in the day, he also visited the Kadasiddeshwara Mutt of which he is a devotee.

Ahead of the swearing-in ceremony, there are speculations that up to four Deputy CMs may be appointed in the new Shivakumar ministry.

However, the Congress leadership has yet to take a call on the issue. Shivakumar is also learnt to have opposed the appointment of the Deputy CMs in his ministry.

Congress sources told The Indian Express that more than half the ministers in the outgoing Siddaramaiah Cabinet may be dropped to make way for new faces. The party is said to be focusing on younger legislators to fill the Cabinet berths.

Sources said that senior legislator K J George, who was energy minister in the Siddaramaiah government is "not keen" to be part of the Shivakumar Cabinet. He is likely to be elected to the Rajya Sabha in

the upcoming elections.

Other Congress MLAs such as G Parameshwara, H K Patil, Krishna Byre Gowda and Priyank Kharge are set to be part of the Shivakumar Cabinet, said sources. The new faces to be inducted into the Cabinet could include NA Haaris, Mahantesh Kaujalgi, Srinivas Mane and Roopakala Shashidhar, among others.

Shivakumar is expected to meet Mallikarjun Kharge and Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi in Delhi over the next couple of days to finalise his Cabinet. While a third of the ministerial berths are likely to go to Siddaramaiah's loyalists, another third would be bagged by the supporters of Shivakumar, with the high command picking faces for the remaining posts, sources said.

Shivakumar's elevation as the CM has also cleared the decks for appointment of a new Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) president in the coming days. Senior party leader Satish Jarkiholi, a tribal heavyweight considered a front-runner for the KPCC president's post, is also learnt to have sought a ministerial berth. There are also talks that Parameshwara may return as the KPCC chief for a second party stint.

Champagne parties to Interpol notice: Rise and fall of a Dehradun power couple

Aiswarya Raj
Dehradun, May 30

IT WAS at a glitzy evening event in February 2015 where businessman Deepak Mittal made his mark on Dehradun's high society. Around 1,200 guests, including senior officials, attended the party in the city to launch what Mittal promised would be an elite and exclusive club – the Canyons Club, with membership by invitation only and costing Rs 75 lakh.

Members would need to have at least done their graduation, while gazetted government officers, defence personnel and practising doctors would get a discount.

At the end of the party, which featured a performance by a Bollywood singer, the guests were sent home with gift bags carrying bottles of premium champagne. Around the same time, Mittal, then the managing director of Pushpanjali Realms and Infratech, also launched plans for luxurious flats tucked away in the foothills of the Himalayas. The launches and parties firmly established 48-year-old Mittal and his wife, Rakhi, also 48, as prominent members of Dehradun's elite. The inauguration of the club was scheduled for February 2018, the same year flats of the flagship housing society, Orchid Park, launched by Mittal, were to be handed over for occupation. Soon afterwards, around 90 new buyers approached the firm to book a flat in Orchid Park – a 339-unit, eight-tower project – which was to come up on Dehradun's Sahastadhara Road. The cost ranged from Rs 46 lakh for a 1BHK to Rs 1.1 crore for a three-bedroom apartment.

The dream flats, however, were never completed. In 2020, facing allegations of money laundering, Mittal left the country with his wife – she was



The MD of Pushpanjali Realms and Infratech, Deepak Mittal and his wife Rakhi Mittal.



arrested by the Dubai police last month – and their two adult children. When he left, the unfinished Orchid Park project was already two years past its completion date. Another of his real estate projects in Dehradun, Eminent Heights, was also facing allegations that flats were sold to multiple people at the same time.

The Canyons Club project was never officially inaugurated either.

Vivek Kumar, Additional SP of the Special Task Force, said, "We are coordinating with the central agencies in extradition proceedings."

To establish credibility, Mittal had named several co-directors for the club, including prominent advocates, a senior staff member of an elite boarding school, entrepreneurs, and senior IPS officer Amit Sinha. Sinha, now a Special Principal Secretary in the Uttarakhand government, said he had joined as the club's director to promote sports in the region.

"I was not aware of Deepak's background. There were four of us, like-minded people, who wanted to get squash and tennis courts in the area for practice. When I saw that the club was not getting inaugurated and there was an unaccounted delay, I stepped down in 2019," he told The Indian Express.

Before the allegations gained steam and the Mittals fled the country, the couple was hobnob-

bing with film directors, bureaucrats and other prominent citizens. They had multiple projects in the city. Apart from helming Pushpanjali Realms and Infratech and serving as a director at Canyons Club, Mittal also headed Rasayana Infra Design and QK Hotels and Restaurants. Rakhi was a director at Rasayana and QK Hotels. The Mittals also own the Kanatal Resorts in Dehradun.

Now, he is untraceable, while his wife was arrested in April by the Dubai police for alleged financial irregularities while she was in the UAE.

Police said that Mittal swindled the buyers of more than Rs 45 crore they had put into the projects, and that he si-phoned off part of it for personal and other uses, leading to delays in the completion of the projects. Currently, of the nine FIRs registered against him, chargesheets have been filed in four, a probe is underway in four, and a final report has been submitted in one. An application has also been filed at the National Company Law Tribunal to initiate the corporate insolvency resolution process. While two of the proposed eight towers in Orchid Park were about 70% completed, three of the four towers in Eminent Heights were completed by the time FIRs were registered.

A reward of Rs 50,000 each has been declared for information leading to the couple's arrest, and an Interpol Red Corner Notice has been issued. Steps are being taken to seek Rakhi's extradition from the UAE, a police statement said. According to the police statement, the couple acquired citizenship of the Republic of Vanuatu through its Citizenship by Investment programme, which allows individuals to obtain an additional citizenship or passport by making economic contributions.

Defence Secy: Signed deal with Vietnam for BrahMos

Amrita Nayak Dutta
New Delhi, May 30

IN THE first official confirmation of India selling the BrahMos missiles to Vietnam, Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh said Saturday that a deal has been signed with

the southeast Asian nation for the supply of the missiles, adding that a similar deal with Indonesia is in "final stages".

Singh, who is in Singapore to attend the Shangri-La Dialogue, made the comments in response to a question regarding the potential buyers of the

missile system.

"My understanding is that with both Indonesia and with Vietnam, the deal is in the final stages... In fact, for Vietnam, I understand that it has already been signed, probably not publicly announced, but it's already been signed," he said.

Signing a contract worth nearly 375 million dollars, The Philippines had become the first foreign buyer of the BrahMos missile system from India in 2022. In March, Indonesia had also said that it had entered into an agreement with India to procure the BrahMos

missile system.

The details of the deals with Indonesia and Vietnam are yet to be made public.

Singh said countries generally sell sophisticated weapon systems and platforms to nations they regard as friendly partners.



पंजाब नैशनल बैंक
punjab national bank

SAMD, CIRCLE OFFICE NAGPUR, KINGSWAY, NAGPUR 440010
Tel : 0712-2534323, eMail Id: conagpursamd@pnb.co.in

Sale Notice For Sale of Immovable Properties

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the constructive/physical/ symbolic possession of which has been taken by the Authorized Officer of the Bank/ Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" on the date as mentioned in the table herein below, for recovery of its dues due to the Bank/ Secured Creditor from the respective borrower (s) and guarantor (s). The reserve price and the earnest money deposit will be as mentioned in the table below against the respective properties.

SCHEDULE OF THE SECURED ASSETS					
Date of E-Auction: 16.06.2026 (Last date of deposit of EMD: 15.06.2026)					
Sr No.	Name of the branch; Name of the account; Name & addresses of the borrower/Guarantors account	Description of Immovable Properties/securities mortgaged/Owner's name (Mortgagors of properties)	(a) Date of demand Notice u/s 13 (2) of SARFAESI Act 2002 (b) O/S amount as on date of 13 (2) notice (c) Possession date u/s 13 (4) of SARFAESI Act 2002 (d) Nature of possession symbolic/physical/ constructive	(a) Reserve Price (b) EMD (c) Bid Increase Amt.	Date/Time of E-Auction
1.	Chandrapur Nagpur Rd Sh. Bharat Bhagwan Bhatkar & Smt Jaya Bhatkar	All that piece and parcel of Flat No F-6 Second Floor Vandana Apartment Built up area 58.915 Sq Mtr constructed on Plot No 35&36, out of land of survey No 172/1, 172/3 & 31/5 with undivided to the extent of 50.625 Sq mtrs in the land of Mouza Ballarpur Near Gurunanak public School, Bamni kothari State highway Mouja Ballarpur Dist Chandrapur in the name of Shri Bharat Bhagwan Bhatkar & Smt Jaya Bhatkar. Bounded as - East: 9 Mtrs Road, West- 6Mtrs road & Flat No F7 & F8, North- 6Mtrs road, South- Layout Plot No 37 & 38	(a) 12/08/2020 (b) Rs.14,35,327.00 as on 30/06/2020 + intt & other charges w.e.f. 01/01/2020 (c) 09/03/2022 (d) SYMBOLIC	(a) Rs. 21,01,000.00/- (b) Rs. 2,10,100/- (c) Rs. 10,000/-	Date: 16.06.2026 Time: 11:00 am to 4:00 pm
2.	MIDC, Nagpur Shri. Jagan Supchand Gadge (Borrower), Smt Shushila Jagan Gadge (Guarantor)	The Undivided 0.00944% Share and Interest in all that piece and parcel of Plot No 54, admeasuring about 2.40 Acres/Hectors, togetherwith Residential Apartment No 04, Wing II, Block -B, comprising of total 556.72 sq ft i.e 51.74 sq mtrs, Super Built up and 449.71 sq ft i.e 41.78 sq mtrs Built up on the Ground floor of the building named and styled as "RAI TOWN" in KH No 158, Bhumapan No 112/4, Mouza Digdoh, Mouza No 169, P H No 6, Ward No 1, Gram Panchayat House No 1211/1408(New No. 1408/BB/W2/04) with in the limits of Tah Hingda Dist Nagpur in the name of Shri Jagan S Gadge.Boundaries of Plot- East- Plots of Smrutti Co-op Hsg Soc Ltd, West- Open Land, North- Plots of Smrutti Co-op Hsg Soc Ltd, South- Plots of Smrutti Co-op Hsg Soc Ltd.	(a) 30/01/2025 (b)Rs. 6,41,462.40 as on 20.01.2025 + further inttt & other charges (c) 21/04/2025 (d) SYMBOLIC	(a) Rs.15,00,000.00/- (b) Rs.1,50,000.00/- (c) Rs. 10,000/-	Date: 16.06.2026 Time: 11:00 am to 4:00 pm
3.	Borgaon (Dist Amrawati) Shri Dhiraj Sureshrao Bobade (Borrower & Mortgagor)	All that Piece and Parcel of land and building bearing Residential House on Plot No 30 admeasuring 1550.00 sq ft, Mouza Parsodi, Survey No 76/1, in the layout of Yashodadevi Nagar, Tah Dhamangaon Railway District Amravati, in the name of Shri Dhiraj Sureshrao Bobade. Boundaries- East-Plot No 38, West- Road, North-Plot No 29, South- Plot No 21.	(a) 31/01/2025 (b) Rs. 6,80,447.22 as on 28.01.2025 + inttt & other charges. (c) 18/06/2025 (d) SYMBOLIC	(a) Rs. 20,79,000.00/- (b) Rs. 2,07,900.00/- (c) Rs. 10,000/-	Date: 16.06.2026 Time: 11:00 am to 4:00 pm
4.	Kamia Nehru, Nagpur Sh. Shekharshing Subhashsingh Pawar (Borrower / Mortgagor) Smt. Darshana Shekharsingh Pawar (Co-Borrower / Mortgagor)	All that piece & parcel of land & building i.e. Residential House bearing Plot No 37, containing by admeasurement 136.00 Sq Mtrs (1464 Sq Ft) being a portion of entire land bearing Gat No 253/38 of Mouza Parsodi in Tehsil & Dist Bhandara. Bounded as - East: 9 Mtrs wide road, West: Plot No 34, North: Plot No 38, South: Plot No 36. Owner- Sh. Shekharsingh Pawar & Smt. Darshana Pawar	(a) 09/12/2024 (b) Rs.16,40,584.25 as on 30/11/2024 + inttt & other charges w.e.f. 01/12/2024 (c) 10/03/2025 (d) SYMBOLIC	(a) Rs. 23,19,000.00/- (b) Rs.2,31,900.00/- (c) Rs. 10,000/-	Date: 16.06.2026 Time: 11:00 am to 4:00 pm
5.	Achalpur, Amravati M/s Kale Ash Bricks Industries (Borrower) Shri. Santul Ganesh kale (Proprietor) Mrs. Kalpana Uttamarao Ghom (Guarantor & Mortgagor) Mr. Uttam Vinayk Rao Ghom (Guarantor) Mr. Ganesh Bhaiya Kale (Guarantor)	All that piece and parcel of Property i.e land & Standing Structure of Residential House No. 943, on Nazul Sheet No. 3, Plot No. 212, Measuring 203.10 Sq. Mtr, (2185.35 Sq.ft) "A" Tenure, situated at Mouza- Kandali, Tq- Achalpur, Dist. Amravati in the Name of Mrs. Kalpana Uttamarao Ghom. Bounded as Under: East- House of Mr. Ramdas V Rawarkar, West- Govt. Road, North- House of Mr. Vasantrao Ganorkar, South- Open Plot of Mr. Ashok Mehare.	(a) 17/01/2024 (b) Rs.39,83,255.30 as on 31/12/2023 + inttt & Other Charges W.e.f. 01/01/2024 (c) 02/05/2024 (d) SYMBOLIC	(a) Rs. 11,91,000.00/- (b) Rs.1,19,100/- (c) Rs. 10,000/-	Date: 16.06.2026 Time: 11:00 am to 4:00 pm
6.	Branch: Lakadganj, Nagpur Shri. Sebastian S/o Milon Muthahil Thampy (Borrower/Mortgagor) Address: Flat No. 301, Vaishali Apartment, Plot No. 98, Jai Durga Layout, Godhani Road, Zingabai Takli, Nagpur- 440030	The undivided 16.66% share and interest in all that piece and parcel of land bearing Plot No. 98 out of the layout of Jai Durga Co-operative Housing Society, Nagpur, Containing by admeasurement 3032.76 Sq.Ft (281.75 Sq. Mtr) being a portion of entire land bearing Kh No. 30/1 and 30/2 of Mouza Zingabai Takli, PH No. 11, bearing Corporation House No. 525/98, city survey No. 36, Sheet No. 33, together with the entire R.C.C superstructure comprising Apartment No. 301, covering a super built-up area of 83.61 Sq. Mtrs, along with Garden/Terrace area of 66.42 Sq. mtr on the Third Floor of a Building constructed thereon and known and Styled as "Vaishali Apartments" situated at Zingabai Takli, Nagpur, within the limits of the Nagpur Municipal Corporation ward No. 61, Tahsil & Dist. Nagpur. Bounded as Under: East: Plot No. 74, West: 7.50 Mtrs wide Road, North: Kh. No. 28, South: Plot No. 97. Owner: Smt. Elamma W/o M. M. Thampy	A) 06.07.2024 (b) Rs. 15,74,579.24 + further interest & Other Charges w.e.f. 01.07.2024 (c) 30.09.2024 (d) SYMBOLIC	(a) Rs. 26,00,000/- (b) Rs. 2,60,000/- (c) Rs. 10,000/-	Date: 16.06.2026 Time: 11:00 am to 4:00 pm

Details of the encumbrances known to the secured creditors – Not known

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF E-AUCTION SALE

The sale shall be subject to the Terms & Conditions prescribed in the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002 and to the following further conditions.

- The auction sale will be "online through e-auction" portal <https://baancknet.com/>
- The intending Bidders/ Purchasers are requested to register on portal (<https://baancknet.com/>) using their mobile number and email-id. Further, they are requested to upload requisite KYC documents. Once the KYC documents are verified by e-auction service provider (may take 2 working days), the intending Bidders/ Purchasers has to transfer the EMD amount using online mode in his Global EMD Wallet by 15.06.2026 before the e-Auction Date and time in the portal. The registration, verification of KYC documents and transfer of EMD in wallet must be completed well in advance, before auction.
- Platform (<https://baancknet.com/>) for e-Auction will be provided by e-Auction service provider M/S PSB Alliance having its Registered office at 4th Floor, Metro House, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Dhoobi Talao, Near New Marine Lines, Mumbai 400020 [Support Number: 8291220220]. The intending Bidders/ Purchasers are required to participate in the e-Auction process at e-Auction Service Provider's website <https://baancknet.com/> This Service Provider will also provide online demonstration/ training on e-Auction on the portal.
- For details General Terms and Conditions of Sale is available / published in the following websites/ webpage portal.
- (a) <https://baancknet.com/>, (b) www.pnbindia.in
- The intending participants of e-auction may download free of cost, copies of the Sale Notice, Terms & Conditions of e-auction, Help Manual on operational part of e-Auction related to this e-Auction portal (<https://baancknet.com/>).
- The Authorized Officer reserves the right to accept any or reject all bids, if not found acceptable or to postpone/cancel/adjourn/discontinue or vary the terms of the auction at any time without assigning any reason whatsoever and his decision in this regard shall be final.
- The properties are being sold on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS" and "AS IS WHAT IS BASIS" and "WHATEVER THERE IS BASIS".
- Further any statutory dues of Central Govt/ State Govt/ Any other statutory body shall be paid by the Purchaser of IP. Bank will Not bear any types of dues Past/Present/Future.

STATUTORY SALE NOTICE UNDER RULE 8(6) OF THE SARFAESI ACT, 2002

Date: 31.05.2026, Place: Nagpur

Sd/- Authorized Officer Punjab National Bank Secured Creditor



WEST CENTRAL RAILWAY

Corrigendum to tender e-notice no. DYCE-C-HQ-02, Dated: 21.05.2026

This is with reference to the Inviting Tender (NIT) No. DYCE-C-HQ-02, Dated: 21.05.2026, published in newspapers for the work "Tender for Conducting final Location Survey (FLS) including preparation of DPR, Geotechnical investigation, Signalling work, electrical works and operating /Traffic work for construction of Electrified New line/ Doubling /third line/4th line. Fly over work/Bypass line etc." Due to an inadvertent typographical error in the newspaper publication, an incorrect date was printed. All prospective bidders are hereby requested to note the following correction and read the date as specified below:-

Description of Event : Bid Submission Last Date 30.06.2026, Date printed in Newspaper (Incorrect) : Incorrect Printed Date 21.05.2026, Corrected Date to be Read as (Correct) : Corrected Date: 30.06.2026 All other terms, conditions, and details of the original tender document available on the ireps.gov.in portal remain completely unchanged. Bids must be submitted in accordance with this corrected schedule.

Sd./-
Dy. Chief Engineer (Construction) HQ, West Central Railway, Jabalpur

सख भारत अभियान
एक कदम स्वच्छता की ओर

REGIONAL OFFICE NAGPUR

Regional Office Nagpur- 1st Floor, Chandak Bhavan North Ambazari Road, Shankar nagar Square, Nagpur-440010 Email: recoveryrnp@canarabank.com

REGIONAL OFFICE NAGPUR

The under mentioned persons are hereby informed that they have failed to pay off the liability in the loan accounts. Notices sent to them by Registered post have been returned undelivered, to the Bank. They are therefore requested to pay off the liability and other charges and redeem the pledged securities on or before 08.06.2026 (date) failing which the said securities will be sold by the Bank in e-auction at the cost of the borrower through e-auction website of www.gerpegov.com/canarabank on 09.06.2026 at 12.00 to 3.00 PM or any other convenient date thereafter without further notice, at the absolute discretion of the Bank.

Sr. No.	BRANCH NAME	Name & Address of Borrower	Loan Account number	Particulars	Gross Weight (in Grams)
1.	Kamptee [6319]	PRAKASH PANNALAL TIWARI	180191718202	GOLD ORNAMENT	5.10
2.	Kamptee [6319]	PRAKASH PANNALAL TIWARI	180158323051	GOLD ORNAMENT	40.60

Note: Amount Outstanding should include all liabilities of the party under Gold Loans as well as any other loan / credit facility.

Place: Nagpur, Date: 30.05.2026

Authorized Officer, Canara Bank



Classifieds

MATRIMONIAL

BRIDE WANTED

BRAHMIN

SM 4 for Punjabi Sr . Brahmin Sr. Software Engineer Veg B.Tech boy 28/5'-8" working in MNC at Gurgaon . Whatsapp -9041639834

0050290466-1

SMALL ADVT. BIG RESPONSE -Contact-

0712-2236897
0712-2236873

"IMPORTANT"

While care is taken prior to acceptance of advertising copy, it is not possible to verify its contents. The Indian Express (P) Limited cannot be held responsible for such contents, nor for any loss or damage incurred as a result of transactions with companies, associations or individuals advertising in its newspapers or Publications. We therefore recommend that readers make necessary inquiries before sending any monies or entering into any agreements with advertisers or otherwise acting on an advertisement in any manner whatsoever.

REGIONAL OFFICE NAGPUR

Regional Office Nagpur- 1st Floor, Chandak Bhavan North Ambazari Road, Shankar nagar Square, Nagpur-440010 Email: recoveryrnp@canarabank.com

REGIONAL OFFICE NAGPUR

The under mentioned persons are hereby informed that they have failed to pay off the liability in the loan accounts. Notices sent to them by Registered post have been returned undelivered, to the Bank. They are therefore requested to pay off the liability and other charges and redeem the pledged securities on or before 08.06.2026 (date) failing which the said securities will be sold by the Bank in e-auction at the cost of the borrower through e-auction website of www.gerpegov.com/canarabank on 09.06.2026 at 12.00 to 3.00 PM or any other convenient date thereafter without further notice, at the absolute discretion of the Bank.

Sr. No.	BRANCH NAME	Name & Address of Borrower	Loan Account number	Particulars	Gross Weight (in Grams)
1.	Kamptee [6319]	PRAKASH PANNALAL TIWARI	180191718202	GOLD ORNAMENT	5.10
2.	Kamptee [6319]	PRAKASH PANNALAL TIWARI	180158323051	GOLD ORNAMENT	40.60

Note: Amount Outstanding should include all liabilities of the party under Gold Loans as well as any other loan / credit facility.

Place: Nagpur, Date: 30.05.2026

Authorized Officer, Canara Bank



Bank of India

Zonal Office : Nagpur Zone, 4th Floor, Bank of India Building, S.V. Patel Marg, Kingsway, Nagpur. | Ph : 0712-2557596, 2561173

POSSESSION NOTICE (For immovable property)

Whereas the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of Bank of India, under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest, Act 2002 (Act No 54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 3 of the security interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice on the dates mentioned against each account as stated herein after calling upon Borrower and Guarantor to repay the amount within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The Borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers, Guarantor and the public in general that the undersigned has taken **Symbolic possession** of the Properties described herein below in exercise of power conferred on him under section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the security interest enforcement rules 2002 on the date mentioned below. The Guarantors & Borrowers in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the below mentioned properties and any dealing with the properties will be subject to the charge of Bank of India, for the amounts (and interest) due thereon. The borrower's/guarantor's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Name of the Borrower/ Branch	Amount Outstanding	Date of Demand Notice	Description of the Immovable Property
SIRONCHA BRANCH Mr. RAJLINGU MALLAYYA DONGRE	Rs 1,01,543.07 plus Uncharged interest plus other Charges thereon.	13.02.2026 Symbolic Possession Date 30.05.2026	All the piece of Land with Residential Building, situated at City Survey No. 342/50, Plot No 29, Area 170.00 Sq Meters, Mouza Sironcha, Tehsil Sironcha, District Gadchiroli. The Said Property is bounded by: East: Open Land, West: Plot No. 30, North: Road, South Plot No. 28

Date: 30.05.2026
Place: Sironcha

Sd/- Authorised Officer, Bank of India





Indian Bank
ALLAHABAD

ZONAL OFFICE NAGPUR
PALM ROAD NEAR RBI, CIVIL LINES NAGPUR-440001
E-Mail zonagpur@indianbank.co.in | Phone-0712-2521113

APPENDIX IV [Rule 8(1)] POSSESSION NOTICE

Whereas, The undersigned being the authorised officer of the Indian Bank under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (SARFAESI) and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with rule 8 and 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice dated mentioned on below column calling upon the borrower to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being and interest thereon at contractual rate plus costs, charges and expenses till date of payment within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Sub-Section 13(4) of the said Act read with rule 8 and 9 of the Security Interest Enforcement Rules, 2002.

The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the Indian Bank for an amount and interest thereon.

Name of Borrower's / Guarantors & Mortgagors / Branch Name	Description of the Immovable Properties	Date of Demand Notice	Demand Notice Amount 0/s. (Rs.)	Date of Possession
1. Mr. Ayaz Ahmad Shaikh (Borrower/Mortgager) 2. Mrs.Sahbnam Naj Ayaz Ahmad Sheikh (Co-Borrower) 3. Mr. Javed Akhtar Shaikh (Guarantor) BRANCH - DESHPANDE LAYOUT NAGPUR (Previously Wardhaman Nagar Branch)	All that piece and parcel of Plot No. 366, admeasuring 78.96 sq. mt. (850 sq ft.) (Northern South Part) in Central Avenue Scheme Section 3 Basti Precinct Nagpur, City Survey no. 294, Sheet No. 307/213, Mauja Nagpur, Ward No. 23, Garoba Maidan, Babulban within the limits of NIT & NMC Nagpur. The same is bounded as under: -On East: Plot No. 367, On West: Plot No. 365, On North: Plot No. 305, On South: Road.	23/03/2026	Rs. 19,86,298/- (Rupees Nineteen Lakh Eighty-Six Thousand Two Hundred and Ninety-Eight Only) plus expenses cost & future interest from 05.01.2026	27/05/2026

Date: 27/05/2026
Place : Nagpur

AUTHORISED OFFICER
INDIAN BANK



MAHARASHTRA ELECTRICITY REGULATORY COMMISSION
Centre No.1, 13th Floor, World Trade Centre, Cuffe Parade, Colaba, Mumbai-400 005 • Tel. 022-69876666
E-mail: mercindia@merc.gov.in • Website: www.merc.gov.in

Advertisement No. 28/2026

REQUIRES
CHAIRPERSON, CGRF AND INDEPENDENT MEMBER, CGRF

The Maharashtra Electricity Regulatory Commission (MERC) invites applications with full details for Chairperson and Independent Member, of the Consumer Grievance Redressal Forum at various location / Circles in Maharashtra for a minimum period of **three (3) years on contract basis of total 45 Posts (Chairperson - 35 posts and Independent Member - 10 Posts)**. The eligibility criteria and for other terms of references please visit MERC website www.merc.gov.in

Applications should reach either by post or by courier to the Secretary, MERC, World Trade Centre, Centre No.1, 13th Floor, Cuffe Parade, Mumbai - 400 005 on or before **22nd June 2026 by 05.00 pm** in the prescribed format which is uploaded on the MERC website.

Date: 31/05/2026
Place: Mumbai

Sd/-
(Dr. Prafulla Varhade)
Secretary, MERC



GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS CIRCLE : SUNDARGARH
AT/PO-SANKARA, SUNDARGARH-770020, E-mail address-serv_sundargarh@yahoo.com

No. Tender Online -RWCCSNG- 09 of 2026-27, Letter No 3071
Dtd:25/05/2026

e-Procurement NOTICE

1. Type of the Work: : Roads (MMSY)
2. Class of Contractor: : As specified in the column-6 of the Annexure
3. Time of Completion: : As specified in the column-5 of the Annexure
4. Detail Projects: : As per Annexure attached
5. Estimated Cost : : As specified in the column-4 of the Annexure
6. Other details: :

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender on-line for bidding		Last Date & Time of Seaking Tender Clarification	Date & Time of opening of tender	
		From	To		Technical Bid	Financial Bid
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Sundargarh	RWCCSNG-09 of 2026-27	03.06.2026 11:00 AM	23.06.2026 5:00 PM	22.06.2026 5:00 PM	24.06.2026 11:00 AM	Will be intimated separately

Further details can be seen from the website www.tendersodisha.gov.in

OIPR- 25001/25133/1/26-27/0011

Sd/-
Chief Construction Engineer,
Rural Works Circle, Sundargarh

SALUTE THE SOLDIER



LT COL RANJIT SINGH PAWAR, SM
(13 FEB 1978 – 31 MAY 2016)

IC-59142P Lt Col Ranjit Singh Pawar, Sena Medal (Posthumous) displayed exceptional courage, outstanding leadership and unwavering devotion to duty while leading firefighting operations at CAD Pulgaon in May 2016. Leading from the front under extremely hazardous conditions, he ensured effective containment measures and motivated his men with remarkable composure and determination despite grave danger. The officer displayed exemplary bravery, exceptional courage and leadership of the highest order spearheading the critical operations of preventing the further spread of fire which otherwise could have led to unimaginable loss of life & property, making the supreme sacrifice in the line of duty. For his gallant act and selfless devotion to duty, he was awarded the "Sena Medal" (Gallantry) posthumously. Lt Col Ranjit Singh Pawar will always be remembered with pride and deep respect by all ranks of the Army Ordnance Corps for his supreme sacrifice and extraordinary act of bravery.

Director General of Ordnance Service & Colonel Commandant and all ranks of the Army Ordnance Corps



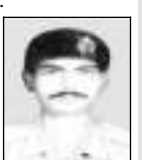
MAJ KRISHNAN MANOJ KUMAR, SM
(19 AUG 1974 - 31 MAY 2016)

IC-64501F Maj Krishnan Manoj Kumar, Sena Medal (Posthumous) was posted as Fire Master and Installation Security Officer at Central Ammunition Depot (CAD). On the fateful day, the officer led from the front, displaying exceptional courage, composure and determination while motivating his men in the face of grave danger. He led the critical firefighting operations to contain and prevent the further spread of fire, thereby averting a potentially catastrophic loss of life and property. His swift decision-making, resolute leadership, and effective execution of containment measures ensured successful management of the crisis under highly challenging circumstances. In the true traditions of the Indian Army, Maj Krishnan Manoj Kumar displayed exemplary bravery, courage and leadership of highest order and made the supreme sacrifice and was awarded "Sena Medal" (Gallantry). Maj Krishnan Manoj Kumar will always be remembered with pride and deep respect by all ranks of the Army Ordnance Corps for his supreme sacrifice and extraordinary act of bravery.

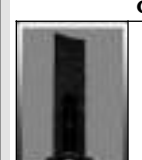
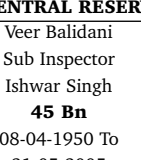
Director General of Ordnance Service & Colonel Commandant and all ranks of the Army Ordnance Corps

BORDER SECURITY FORCE

Director General and all Ranks of Border Security Force remember its gallant Jawans on their Balidan Diwas.

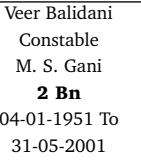
 LANCE NAIK PURAN SINGH 17 BN BSF 28.05.1956 – 31.05.1989	 CONSTABLE LAL SINGH 60 BN BSF 02.02.1980 – 31.05.2002	 CONSTABLE/ TRADESMAN SUNNY AVTAR 43 BN BSF 05.10.1975 – 31.05.2004	 CT BIDYUT KUMAR DAS 123 BN BSF 16.08.1965 – 31.05.2001
--	---	--	---

CENTRAL RESERVE POLICE FORCE

 Veer Balidani Sub Inspector Ishwar Singh 45 Bn 08-04-1950 To 31-05-2005	 Veer Balidani Constable Nitin Musale 45 Bn 01-06-1982 To 31-05-2005
---	---

DG and all Ranks of CRPF pay solemn tribute to Sub Inspector Ishwar Singh and Constable Nitin Musale of 45 Bn, who made the supreme sacrifice while bravely combating Maoists during a cordon and search operation in village Belahi, district West Champaran, Bihar on 31 May 2005. CRPF salutes the bravehearts and pledges never to let their sacrifice go in vain.

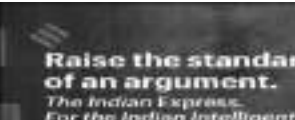
 Veer Balidani Constable Ramphal 38 Bn 02-11-1954 To 31-05-1984	DG and all Ranks of CRPF pay solemn tribute to Constable Ramphal of 38 Battalion, who made the supreme sacrifice while managing a violent mob in West Bengal on 31 May 1984. CRPF salutes the braveheart and pledges never to let his sacrifice go in vain.
--	---

 Veer Balidani Constable M. S. Gani 2 Bn 04-01-1951 To 31-05-2001	 Veer Balidani Constable V. K. Reddy 90 Bn 10-07-1977 To 31-05-2001
--	--

DG and all Ranks of CRPF pay solemn tribute to Constable M. S. Gani and Constable V. K. Reddy of 2 Bn, who made the supreme sacrifice while bravely combating insurgents during an attack on their CRPF in South Tripura on 31 May 2001. CRPF salutes the bravehearts and pledges never to let their sacrifice go in vain.

 Veer Balidani Lance Naik Roshan Lal 9 Bn 26-08-1926 To 31-05-1963	 Veer Balidani Constable Tara Singh 9 Bn 05-08-1942 To 31-05-1963	 Veer Balidani Constable Shri Krishna 9 Bn 10-05-1942 To 31-05-1963	 Veer Balidani Constable Baldev Raj 9 Bn 15-04-1943 To 31-05-1963
---	--	--	--

DG and all Ranks of CRPF pay solemn tribute to eight bravehearts of 9 Bn, who made the supreme sacrifice in a fierce encounter with hostile underground elements in the Tajo/Heta area of Chiyang, Arunachal Pradesh on 31 May 1963. CRPF salutes the bravehearts and pledges never to let their sacrifice go in vain.



Raise the standard of an argument.
The Indian Express.
For the Indian Intelligent.



The Indian EXPRESS
The Indian Express



Karnataka Bank Ltd.
Head Office, Mangaluru-575 002

Your Family Bank Across India.
CIN : L85110KA1924PLC001128

ARM Branch : 2nd Floor, The Metropolitan, 'E' Block, Plot No.C-26 & C-27, Bandra Kurla Complex, Bandra (East), Mumbai - 400051

Landline : 022-26572816 / 26572804
E-mail : mumbaiarm@ktk.bank.in, Website : www.karnatakabank.bank.in

SALE NOTICE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES ON 17.06.2026

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Property/ies under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) and 9(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged to the Secured Creditor, the possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer (details of possession is mentioned below), will be sold on “As is where is”, “As is what is”, and “Whatever there is” basis on **17.06.2026** at the below mentioned timings for recovery of dues with further interest and cost thereon due to the Karnataka Bank Ltd. **The details are as under:** Reserve Price and Earnest Money Deposits details are as under and the Earnest Money Deposit shall be deposited on or before **16.06.2026 at 4.00 pm** through online payment to the Account (details of which are mentioned below).

Sl No.	Branch Name	Name & Address of the Borrowers / Guarantors	Balance O/S in Rs.	Description of the Property/ies	Reserve Price (Rs.)	Date & Time of Auction	Details for Remitting EMD Account No. / IFSC Code
					Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) Rs.	Incremental Value of the Bid	
1	Nagpur Wardhaman Nagar Branch	1) Mrs. Pravina Harish Paturkar W/o. Mr. Harish Paturkar; 2) Mr. Hemant Harish Paturkar S/o. Mr. Harish Paturkar, Both are addressed at: Plot No.113A, Uday Nagar Road, Behind Navin School, Ayodhya Nagar, Nagpur – 440024; Both are also addressed at: Flat No.401, 4th Floor, “Yogiraj”, Plot No.335, Sakardara Street, I.A.I.B. Scheme of NIT, New Subhedar Layout, Nagpur.	Rs.38,45,524.63 (Rupees Thirty Eight Lakhs Forty Five Thousand Five Hundred Twenty Four and Paise Sixty Three Only) under TL A/c No.6907001600002401 along with future interest from 28.04.2026, plus costs due to the Karnataka Bank Ltd. Nagpur Wardhaman Nagar Branch	All that part and parcel of Residential Flat No.401, on 4th Floor, admeasuring 43.4493 sq.mtrs. (carpet area) & 65.1714 sq.mtrs. (built-up area) along with other amenities attached and rights in the common area in the building known as “Yogiraj”, along with 6.6006% undivided share & interest in Leasehold Land bearing Plot No.335 situated at Sakardara Street, IAI B Scheme, New Subhedar Layout, Nagpur, belonging to Mrs. Pravina Harish Paturkar and Mr. Hemant Harish Paturkar. Boundaries of Property: East by: Side Margin; West by: Side Margin; North by: Front Margin; South by: Flat No.402.	Rs.42,72,000/- (Rupees Forty Two Lakhs Seventy Two Thousand Only) Rs.4,27,200/- (Rupees Four Lakhs Twenty Seven Thousand Two Hundred Only)	17.06.2026 from 01.15 PM to 01.30 PM Rs. 10,000/-	RTGS account Number: 6903500200004101, Account Name: Karnataka Bank Ltd, Nagpur Wardhaman Nagar Branch, IFSC Code - KARB0000690
Possession Date / Type of Possession: Symbolic Possession Taken on 03.01.2025							

(The borrower's/mortgagor's attention is invited to the provisions of Sub-section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to redeem the secured asset).

For detailed terms and conditions of sale, please refer to link in **Karnataka Bank's Website** i.e. <https://karnatakabank.bank.in> under the head "Auction Notices" / "Mega Auction Notices".

The E-auction will be conducted through portal <https://auctionbazaar.com> on **17.06.2026** at the above mentioned timings with unlimited extension of 05 minutes. The intending bidder is required to register their name at <https://auctionbazaar.com> and get the user-id and password free of cost and get training i.e. online training on e-auction (tentatively on **16.06.2026**) from **M/s Arca Emart Pvt. Ltd., 6-3-1090/1/1, II Floor, Part 2B, Uma Hyderabad House, Rajbhavan Road, Somajiguda, Hyderabad 500082, Contact No.: 8370966996 (Shiva) / 7207941010 (Satish / Nilesh), E-mail: ktkb@auctionbazaar.com / contact@auctionbazaar.com / support@auctionbazaar.com**

Place: Mumbai
Date: 31-05-2026

Sd/- Chief Manager & Authorised Officer,
Karnataka Bank Ltd.



Karnataka Food & Civil Supplies Corporation Ltd.
(Government of Karnataka Undertaking)
No.16/I, MILLERS TANK BED AREA, BANGALORE-560 052
Ph: 080-2226 0932/2209 6555/2209 6512
E-mail: admknkfscs123@yahoo.com, mdkfscs@yahoo.com

No.KFCSO/ADMN/I.F.K.A./94/2026-27
Date: 30.05.2026

e-Tender Notice

The Karnataka Food and Civil Supplies Corporation Limited has published a tender for “Appointment of Third Party Assaying Agency to carry out Sampling, Testing and Quality Certification of Toordhal, Refined Sunflower Oil, Iodized Salt and Sugar to be Distributed under Public Distribution Scheme to the Beneficiaries through INDIRA Food Kit.” under Tender Number: **KFCSCL/2026-27/SE0171**. The RFP and other information can be obtained from <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in> e-procurement portal.

Sd/-
General Manager

IN THE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL AT C.G.O. COMPLEX, BLOCK B, 2nd FLOOR, SEMINARY HILLS, NAGPUR.

O.A. No. 503/2018
CANARA BANK -V/S- SHRI ASHOK S/O SHRI PRAKASH GAUD
F.F. 22/06/2026

TO,
Defendants

D-1) Shri Ashok S/o Shriprakash Gaud, Proprietor of M/s A. G. Engineering Industries, R/o Plot No 59, Shri Gajanan Prerna Nagar, Near Aakar Nagar, Nagpur

SUMMONS/PAPER PUBLICATION

1. WHEREAS the above named applicant / appellant has filed the above referred application / appeal in this Tribunal.

2. WHEREAS the service of Summons / Notice could not be effected in the ordinary manner and whereas the application for substituted service has been allowed by this Tribunal.

3. You are directed to appear before this Tribunal in person or through an Advocate and file Written Statement / Reply Say on **22/06/2026 at 10.30 am** and show cause as to why reliefs prayed for should not be granted.

4. Take notice that in case of default, the Application / Appeal shall be heard and decided in your absence.

Given under my hand and the seal of the Tribunal on this 13th day of May 2026, at Nagpur.

REGISTRAR
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL, NAGPUR

O.W.No. DRT/ 379/2026
Dt. 26/05/2026

FORM NO
[See Regulation 33(2)]
By Regd. A/D, Dasti failing which by Publication.

OFFICE OF THE RECOVERY OFFICER-I
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL NAGPUR
B' Block, 2nd Floor, CGO Complex, Seminary Hills, Nagpur- 440006

NOTICE FOR SETTLING A SALE PROCLAMATION UNDER RULE 53 OF THE SECOND SCHEDULE TO THE INCOME TAX ACT, 1961 READ WITH THE RECOVERY OF DEBTS & BANKRUPTCY ACT, 1993.

RC/206/2019
BANK OF BARODA
PRATAP NAGAR BRANCH, NAGPUR
VERSUS
M/S REETH AGENCIES & OTHERS

To, (C01) M/s Reeth Agencies (A Proprietorship Concern)
Shri Harshwardhan S/o. Sudarshan Verma
20, Padole Layout, Above Vijaya Bank Ring Road, Trimurti Nagar, Nagpur-440022.

(C02) Shri Harshwardhan S/o Sudarshan Verma (Proprietor-M/S. Reeth Agencies)
Plot No.22, Saraswari Layout, Dindayal Nagar, Nr. Ajjajioba Park, Nagpur-440022

(C03) Shri Suryaprakash S/o Shambhunath Pande
Plot No.7, Pension Nagar, Anant Nagar, SBI Colony, Nagpur-440013.

Whereas you were ordered by the Hon'ble Presiding Officer of DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL NAGPUR who had issued the Recovery Certificate dated 11/02/2019 in OA/95/2016 to pay to the Applicant Bank(s)/Financial Institution(s), Bank Of Baroda, the sum of **Rs.27,70,953/- (Rupees Twenty Seven Lakhs Seventy Thousands Nine Hundred Fifty Three Only)** along with pendente lite and future interest Simple (Yearly) @ 9% p.a. w.e.f. 08/02/2016 till full realization and costs of **Rs. 42,650/- (Rupees Forty Two Thousands Six Hundred Fifty Only)**, and whereas the said amount has not been paid, the undersigned has ordered the sale of undermentioned Immoveable properties which are Attached as per Order of Attachment dt. 06.04.2026.

2. You are hereby informed that the 09/07/2026 at 10.30 A.M. has been fixed for drawing up the proclamation of sale and settling the terms thereof. You are requested to bring to the notice of the undersigned any encumbrances, charges, claims or liabilities attached to the said properties or any portion thereof.

Specification of properties

1) "All that piece and parcel of agricultural land bearing Survey No.11/1; admeasuring 1.76 Hectares (about 43472 Acres); Land Revenue Rs.520; Occupancy Class-I; Patwari Halka No.79; situated at Mouza-Asola: Taluka-Hingna; District-Nagpur, along with entire structures, Well, all kinds of trees, shrubs, Plants, Crops, yield, passage rights, Right of pathways and all other easementary rights, water courses, and all other rights appurtenant and belonging therein, and which said land is bounded as under East-S.No.10, West-S.No.12, North-S.No.52, South-Nallah and S.No.10.

2) All that piece and parcel of agricultural land bearing Survey No.11/2; admeasuring 1.75 Hectares (about 43225 Acres); Land Revenue Rs.530; Occupancy Class-I; Patwari Halka No.79; situated at Mouza-Asola: Taluka-Hingna; District-Nagpur, along with entire structures, Well, all kinds of trees, shrubs, Plants, Crops, yield, passage rights, Right of pathways and all other easementary rights, water courses, and all other rights appurtenant and belonging therein, and which said land is bounded as under East-S.No.10, West-S.No.12, North-S.No.11/1, South-Nallah.

Given under my hand and seal of the Tribunal on this date : 20/05/2026.

Sd./-
(Shrihari Shashikant Pargaonkar)
Recovery Officer-I
Debts Recovery Tribunal Nagpur.



MAHINDRA RURAL HOUSING FINANCE LTD.
Corporate Office:- Agastya Corporate Park, Piramal, Amiti Building, Unit No. 203, 2nd Floor, B Wing, Sunder Bung, Kuria West, Mumbai Maharashtra 400 070 India. CIN – U65922MH2007PLC169791 Regional Office:- At Mahindra Rural Housing Finance Ltd Patil Complex, Ganeshpeth, Near main bus stand Nagpur – 440018

PUBLIC NOTICE FOR AUCTION - CUM - SALE NOTICE

In exercise of powers conferred under section 13 (4) of Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (herein after referred to as "SARFAESI Act") and Rule 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 (Hereinafter Referred to as "Rules") for the purpose of recovering the secured debts, the authorized officer of the secured creditor M/s Mahindra Rural Housing Finance Ltd. (hereinafter referred to as "MRHL") has decided to sell the secured asset (immovable property), the possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of the Secured Creditor under S. 13 (4) of SARFAESI Act, described herein below on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS" and "AS IS WHAT IT IS BASIS" and the public and all concerned including the concerned borrowers/mortgagors, their representatives, as the case may be are hereby informed that the secured asset listed below will be sold by Auction through the for which the particulars are furnished hereunder-

Name Of Borrowers/Co-Borrowers/Guarantors/Mortgagors	Date & Amount Of 13(2) Demand Notice	Description Of Property	Reserve Price/ EMD/ Bid Increase Amount	Property Inspection Date & Time	Contact Person
Fin- 1491519 & 1720788 - MR NAGENDRA GOMARAO ATHANKAR,VIMLESH NAGENDRA ATHANKAR BOTH R/O- FALT NO 101 KALYANI VATIKA APPARTMENT BABULKHEDA PARVATI NAGAR OPPOSITE IIVAN SCHOOL NAGPUR PIN CODE - 440027- AGREEMENT NO - XSEMNAG01122281. & AGREEMENT NO -XNHLSAQ000001720788.	12/09/2024 Rs. 1502097.93 & Rs. 1542967.18 Possession Date 05/01/2026	ALL That part and Parcel of the property- West part of Plot No 42, Mouja Babulkheda, PH No. 39, Bandobast No. 278, Circle No. 2, Sheet No. 41, CTS No. 5730, Kh.No. 54/1, NMC House No. 1410, Ward No. 8, Parvati Nagar, Nagpur-440027, FOUR BOUDRIES -East- remaingn portion of Plot no 42, West- 20.ft.Road ,North- 20 ft.Road ,South -Plot no -43	Reserve Price Rs. 35,68,000/- EMD Rs. 356800/- BIA Rs. 20,000/-	01 July 2026 Between 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM Date & Time Of Auction & Time 02-July-2026 time at 10:00 AM to 04.00 PM	Ms.Sonali Telang Mob- 9637405736
Fin- 1633715 & -1622295 - SHYAM PRAKASH TEVRE,SHRUTIKA DIGAMBER GAURKAR, R/O - SHRI RAMA VISHNU WARD NEAR VISHAL KIRANA SHAHALANGADI ROAD, HINGHAGAT DIST -WARDHA 442301 (XNHLSAQ00001959940) & (XSEMWRD01189669)\	06-02-2025 Rs. 568104.69 & Rs. 1426194.78 Possession Date 27-02-2026	ALL That piece and parcel of the land with construction thereon,H.N 163,BLOCK NO 14, Mauza Hinghanghat, mauza no 188 PH- NO.06, Sheet no 14 & 15 city, survey No 1816/9A, Tah-Hinganghat Dist- Wardha total Plot - area 59.80 Sq.Ft and Build up area 100.13 Sq.Ft - four boundries East- House of shri.Gajanan Devtade,West-House of shri Manoharlal Gupta, South- Common Road, North- Vacant Plot	Reserve Price Rs. 1907000/- EMD Rs. 190700/- BIA Rs. 20,000/-	04 July 2026 Between 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM Date & Time Of Auction & Time 06 July, 2026 time at 10:00 AM to 04.00 PM	Ms.Sonali Telang Mob- 9637405736

Sr. No.	Location	Branch Address
1.	Nagpur	At Mahindra Rural Housing Finance Ltd Patil Complex, Ganeshpeth, Near main bus stand Nagpur – 440018

1.Last date of submission of sealed offers as well as online in the prescribed tender forms along with EMD is **01-07-2026 & 04-07-2026 Time till 4.30 PM** at the branch office address mentioned herein above. Tenders that are not filled up properly or tenders received beyond last date will be considered as invalid tender and shall accordingly be rejected. No interest shall be paid on the EMD. 2.The detail terms and conditions of the auction sale are incorporated in the prescribed tender form. Tender forms are available on www.mahindrarohomefinance.com well as above branch office. 3. All the intending bidders are required to register their name in the Web Portal mentioned above in free of cost of their own to submit their bid as per the prescribed format along with EMD by way of Demand Draft in favour of 'Mahindra Rural Housing Finance Limited' and KYC in a sealed envelope at the branch office mentioned herein above as well as upload online to participate in the Auction on the date and time aforesaid. For any enquiry the prospective bidders may contact MRHL Authorised Officer on the above mentioned Branch Office Address & on the above mentioned Mob. No. 4. Further interest will be charged as applicable, as per the Loan Agreement on the amount outstanding in the notice and incidental expenses, costs, etc., is due and payable till its realization. 5. The notice is hereby given to the Borrower and Guarantor, to remain present personally at the time of sale and they can bring the intending buyers/purchasers for purchasing the immovable property as described herein above, as per the particulars of Terms and Conditions of Sale. 6. The Borrower(s)/Guarantor(s) are hereby given 30 DAYS SALE NOTICE UNDER SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES, 2002 to pay the sum mentioned as above before the date of Auction failing which the immovable property will be auctioned and balance, if any, will be recovered with interest and costs. If the Borrower pays the amount due to Mahindra Rural Housing Finance Ltd., in full before the date of sale, auction is liable to be stopped. 7. The immovable property will be sold to the highest tenderer. However, the undersigned reserves the absolute discretion to allow inter se bidding, if deemed necessary. 8. Company is not responsible for any liabilities upon the property which is not in the knowledge of the company. For further details, contact the Branch Manager, at the above mentioned Branch office address

Place: Nagpur, Date : 31/05/2026

Sd/- Authorised Officer, (Mahindra Rural Housing Finance Ltd.)



U. P. POWER CORPORATION LIMITED
Shakti Bhawan, 14-Ashok Marg, Lucknow
CIN: U32201UP1999SGC024928, website: www.uppcl.org

Extracts of Financial Results
for the quarter and year ended 31st March, 2026
(Regulation 52 (8), read with Regulation 52 (4), of the SEBI (LODR) Regulations, 2015)

S. No.	Particulars	Standalone		Year ended		Consolidated	
		31st Mar, 2026 Un-audited	31st Dec, 2025 Un-audited	31st Mar, 2025 Audited	31st Mar, 2026 Audited	31st Mar, 2026 Audited	31st Mar, 2025 Audited
1	Total Income from Operations	22,871.29	16,010.34	84,438.18	79,990.80	108,219.50	102,971.92
	Net Profit/(loss) for the period (before Tax, Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	(2,839.72)	429.41	(1,489.24)	(8,714.86)	(10,903.64)	(7,423.97)
	Net Profit/(loss) for the period before tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	(2,852.15)	429.41	(1,500.84)	(8,727.29)	(10,915.24)	(7,563.94)
	Net Profit/(loss) for the period after tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	(2,852.15)	429.41	(1,500.84)	(8,727.29)	(10,915.24)	(7,563.94)
5	Total comprehensive Income for the period (Comprising Profit/(Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax))	(2,846.63)	428.74	(1,502.38)	(8,723.79)	(10,917.93)	(7,456.14)
6	Paid up Equity Share capital (Face value of ₹1000/- per share)	157,334.80	153,628.90	146,238.51	157,334.80	146,238.51	146,238.51
7	Other Equity	(117,023.83)	(114,242.32)	(109,996.26)	(117,023.83)	(109,996.26)	(101,809.83)
8	Securities Premium Account	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
9	Net worth	37,160.93	35,565.40	34,052.17	37,160.93	34,052.17	30,234.48

Cockroaches of the world have united



ACROSS THE AISLE
BY P CHIDAMBARAM

COCKROACH IS not a *bad* word or an abuse. A search in Wikipedia will reveal that cockroaches have retained their basic body structure for roughly 200 million years — that is 199,700,000 years earlier than *Homo sapiens* first emerged in Africa about 300,000 years ago. Cockroaches have a prior claim over humans to the right to exist in this world.

Science Encyclopedia tells us that cockroaches do not bite or attack people, unlike people who attack cockroaches. Of course, cockroaches carry bacteria, transmit diseases and trigger allergies. Humans also carry bacteria, transmit diseases and trigger allergies (especially among members of rival groups). Some humans consider cockroaches as ‘creepy’, not unlike some humans who consider other humans as ‘creepy’.

Stirred and shaken

Some days ago, a high dignitary stirred the cockroaches from their slumber. Bless him, he clarified promptly that he was refer-

ring to fake lawyers with fake degrees roaming around the courts. Such fake lawyers deserve to be called bad names but, I submit respectfully, *not* a cockroach. Once stirred, the cockroaches remain stirred (like ‘once a mortgage, always a mortgage’). A few stirred cockroaches have founded a political party, started an X handle, created a website and opened an Instagram handle. By last count, the handle had over 22 million followers.

The stirred cockroaches retaliated. The consequence was the humans were *stirred* and *shaken*. I suspect the humans are shaking in their *Kolhapuri* chappals. If not, why would the highest executive authority of India with Armed Forces that have 1.45 million active personnel in uniform, 4,200 main battle tanks, 580 fighter aircraft, 270 naval vessels, 2 aircraft carriers and hundreds of nuclear weapons, and a Rs 2,86,588 crore bonanza from RBI in its kitty, fear a *mere* X handle opened by a 30-year-old Abhijeet Dipke who is the flag-bearer of the digital-only Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), and ask X to close the handle?

Mr Dipke is in a far away land pursuing a Masters degree in, *phew*, ‘public relations’ (not the dangerous AI) under the care of our frenemy, Mr Donald Trump. The website set out CJP’s goals: “we own the identity of the cockroach — if that is what it takes for young people to be heard.” With its tagline as ‘Voice of the lazy and unemployed’, the CJP claims to represent the people “the system forgot to count”. He wants the unemployed, lazy, chronically online and who can rant professionally to join his party. He is inspired by

Mobility is the life-spring of cockroaches. The high fuel prices limit the mobility of cockroaches. The price of petrol in Delhi is Rs 102.12 and the price of diesel is Rs 95.20



INSIDE TRACK | BY COOMI KAPOOR

RULERS RULE CLUB CLASS

The Capital’s drawing rooms are heatedly discussing the government’s eviction threat to the hallowed Delhi Gymkhana Club. Some members, who apprehend that they could be robbed of their lifelong watering hole, now trace the origins of the dispute to the arrogant and rigid attitude of the earlier managing committees to admitting the all-powerful members of the ruling political class. For instance, Natwar Singh as club president in the mid 1970s recommended that R K Dhawan, then Indira Gandhi’s personal assistant, jump the long membership waiting list, but was overruled. L K Advani was rather grudgingly admitted. And the managing committee quibbled about granting a five-year extension to former Haryana CM Bhupinder Hooda, an accomplished tennis player who has even played against Boris Becker. The club’s admission policy in its eminent person’s category is unabashedly transactional, limited to a person’s tenure in office! In contrast, the Delhi Golf Club liberally enrolled members recommended by the Urban Development Ministry, which periodically extends the lease terms for its 180 acres. Kamal Nath, who was minister in charge when the lease last came up for renewal, in fact, demanded unofficial, out-of-turn membership quota for his nominees for the next 20 years. During Modi’s regime, several of these memberships were cancelled and BJP nominees, including a former RSS pracharak, were enrolled in their place! Mumbai’s Western India Turf Club, the Willingdon Club and the Bombay Gymkhana have all opened their doors to officialdom, through a compromise of give and take.

REPORT CARD GLOOM

Prime Minister Modi’s mood and body language at the 4.5-hour-long Cabinet meeting at Seva Teerth this month was stern and somber, reflecting the gloomy economic outlook and looming global instability. It was not the ministers alone who were tense but also secretaries to the GoI, since the performance ratings of a dozen ministries was publicly appraised. Besides, ranking of ministries in terms of the top five and bottom five were announced for several criteria, including speed of clearance of files, redressal of public grievances and extent of execution of government policy. Many apprehend that the meeting was a prelude to a Cabinet reorganisation. The buzz is that the PM is waiting for the inauspicious month of *Purushottam Maas* (which extends from May 17 to June 15 in the Hindu calendar) to pass. But the delay has heightened public restiveness over issues, from examination fiascos and fuel shortages to a falling rupee and breakdown of essential services in cities in this summer’s record-breaking heat.

STATEWIDE ANXIETY

The party leadership is reportedly unhappy with some BJP CMs from heartland states. The blame, however, cannot be attributed to the CMs alone — they were catapulted to top positions without having the necessary political heft or administrative experience. The fact that a senior Cabinet minister has recently delegated some of his important duties to his minister of state has added grist to the rumour mill.

Yogi Adityanath, a seasoned CM who faces an election next year, is, however, almost certain to continue. Adityanath has successfully guarded his turf from outside interference. An example of his ability to neutralise attempts to rein him in is the posting in Lucknow in 2022 of a well-regarded IAS officer who previously worked in the Capital in many key positions, including the PMO for two decades. The surmise was that the bureaucrat, who sought voluntary retirement before entering politics and joining Yogi’s cabinet, would take over a prestigious portfolio, such as Home. But the CM assigned him instead to Energy and Urban Development. With the heat wave, power shortages have spiked with complaints even from BJP MLAs.

POLITICS THROUGH MATRIMONIAL ALLIANCE

Veteran Maharashtra politician and the man for all seasons, Sharad Pawar, recently surprised his INDIA allies by chiding Opposition leaders for criticising PM Modi’s frequent foreign trips. Pawar felt that whatever their political differences, these views should not be aired while Modi was out of the country as it detracted from the Prime Minister’s efforts to project India’s image abroad. Around the same time, weathercock pollster Prashant Kishor called on Pawar. Some spot a link between Pawar’s remarks defending Modi and the fact that earlier this year, his granddaughter Revati, daughter of NCP MP Supriya Sule, was engaged to Sarang Lakhani, son of businessman Arun Lakhani, Managing Director of the Vishvaraj Group, a company specialising in infrastructure and environmental solutions. The Nagpur-based businessman is close to the RSS and it is said that the BJP’s Nagpur politicians, Nitin Gadkari and Devendra Fadnavis, played a role as matchmakers.

A farewell night to remember at Delhi’s Gymkhana Club



HISTORY HEADLINE
BY VIVEK SHUKLA

IT WAS the evening of August 6, 1947. Though it was hot in Delhi, the air carried a certain chill. The mood was sombre, somewhat sedate.

At the beautiful Delhi Gymkhana Club, the green lawns and grand ballroom were softly lit. Women turned up in colourful sarees, officers in khaki uniforms. Brigadier Kodandera Madappa Cariappa (who later became India’s first Field Marshal) was the host that evening. But this was no ordinary party. Partition had been announced. The Army was also being divided. Cariappa had organised it as a farewell party for fellow officers of the British Indian Army who were now going to join the new Pakistan Army.

Cards by the “Officers of the Armed Forces of the Dominion of India” invited guests to the party to bid farewell to “Old Comrades Reception in Honour of the Officers of the Armed Forces of the Dominion of Pakistan”.

The book *Freedom at Midnight*, by Larry Collins and Dominique Lapiere, referred to this party as “the most emotional farewell”.

The club building, designed by Robert Tor Russell, was specially decorated that evening. Tents were put up on the lawns with tables full of whisky, gin, and Indian food. A band played in the ballroom. Officers hugged each other and recalled old memories.

Collins and Lapiere write about the conversations and the camaraderie at the party in great detail.

“Do you remember how we fought together on the Burma front in 1942?” a Muslim officer asked his Hindu friend.

“Yes, and that night when we faced the Japanese attack? You saved my life,” the other replied, with tears in his eyes.

The host of the evening, Brigadier Cariappa, was the first Indian commander of the Rajput Regiment. He was tall, had a strong face, but a soft heart. As the evening

Gandhi, Ambedkar and Nehru. CJP’s manifesto makes one laugh and think; the usual political party’s manifesto makes one sleep.

“It is the cause...”

I think CJP is counting on the widespread disappointment, distress and frustration among people, especially among the youth including young women. The causes are:

UNEMPLOYMENT: The unemployment rate is 5.2%; youth unemployment rate is 16-17%. The Work Force is 64.3 crore and the Labour Force Participation Rate is, at best, 60%. The remaining 40% or about 25 crore are, pardon me, cockroaches. If the CJP gets all the cockroach votes, it will form the government. (In the 2024 LS elections, BJP got 23.6 crore votes and the Congress 13.7 crore votes).

PETROL & DIESEL: Mobility is the life-spring of cockroaches. The high fuel prices limit the mobility of cockroaches. The price of petrol in Delhi is Rs 102.12 and the price of diesel is Rs 95.20. For voting for the BJP, residents of Kolkata have been rewarded with prices of Rs 113.51 and Rs 99.82, respectively. **JOBS IN FACTORIES:** Cockroaches are, by definition, lazy. Since they do not get up early every morning to attend the neighbourhood *shakha*, they will never be employed by the government. The next best is a factory job. According to MoSPI, there are 260,061 registered factories in India. The estimate of the number of jobs in factories is 1.95 crore. Many jobs will be redundant because of AI, and the 25 crore cockroaches will never get a factory job. Hence, the frustration.

FAMILY SUPPORT: Cockroaches are supported by families, especially mothers, in return for the 5 kg of free grain that they bring to the family every month. Since the household debt is 42% of GDP and household savings are only 5-6% of GDP, cockroaches receive little cash support from families, and are desperately cashless.

VIKSIT BHARAT BILLIONAIRE: Cockroaches hoped to become billionaires in *Viksit Bharat*. However, despite 12 years of BJP rule, the number of billionaires is rising at a painfully slow pace. The latest count is 205, and there are 25 crore cockroaches in the line waiting to become billionaires. They are also waiting for the Rs 15 lakh of *achhe din aayenge* promised in 2014.

C-EA dashes hopes

The cockroaches turned to the Cockroaches Economic Adviser. The C-EA’s advice was sombre: “The trade deficit will widen significantly in FY27, as will the current account deficit. Inflation risks are tilted to the upside. A below-normal monsoon adds an agricultural dimension to a complex supply shock. The task of attracting stable long-term capital — through credible tax policy, regulatory predictability, and reduced friction for investors — intensifies in these conditions” (*The Indian Express*, May 23, 2026).

Catastrophe is foretold. The cockroaches may decide that the only way to prevent the catastrophe is to seek a peaceful transfer of power, with the aid of CEC, from humans to cockroaches.



The Gymkhana Club, founded in 1913, now faces eviction. GAJENDRA YADAV

grew darker, he climbed onto the raised platform in the ballroom and asked everyone to be quiet.

All eyes turned to him. “My dear comrades,” he said in a deep voice, “we have shared a common destiny for so long that our story cannot be separated. We were brothers. We will always remain brothers. And we will never forget the great years we spent together.”

The hall fell completely silent. Then, the clapping started. Many officers had tears in their eyes. A Major who was going to Pakistan stepped forward and hugged Cariappa tightly. “Sir, this is very painful,” he said. Cariappa smiled and replied, “It is painful because our bond was deep. But even in this new beginning, we must keep this friendship alive.”

The party continued late into the night. Officers kept sharing old stories from the Second World War and their cantonment days. Women sat in a corner, talking. Some wondered what tomorrow would bring. The journey from Delhi to Lahore and Rawalpindi would now mean crossing the border of enmity.

A young Captain who was going to Pakistan told his Indian friend, “My belongings are still in Delhi. I thought I would come back and take them once things become normal.”

His friend patted his shoulder and said, “Yes, definitely come. We will wait for you.”

But history had something else in store. Just a few months later, war broke out in

Kashmir. The same officers who had left their belongings behind were now fighting on the enemy side.

The writers of *Freedom at Midnight* describe the atmosphere at the club that evening as one of “great sadness”. The Gymkhana Club, which was once only for the British elite, had become a witness to the emotions of Indian and Pakistani officers.

That evening, a Muslim officer going to Pakistan, Brigadier Aga Raza, was given a special gift by his junior officers. According to the book, “Raza plucked the protective cloth from the trophy and held it up to the crowd. Fashioned by a silversmith in old Delhi, it represented two sepoy, one Hindu, One Moslem, standing side by side, rifles at their shoulders trained upon some common foe.”

But it didn’t take long for that evening of friendship to turn into nights of hostility.

Cariappa went on to become the first Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army. But he remained a professional soldier all his life. He always spoke of friendship with Pakistan. Even when his own son was a prisoner of war in Pakistan, he put the nation first.

The memory of that evening lives on at the Gymkhana Club. The club faces new challenges today, but that farewell party of 1947 remains a proud part of its history.

The writer is Ex-Advisor (History), Indira Gandhi Centre for Arts and Culture

Parliament has become a private club



FIFTH COLUMN
BY TAVLEEN SINGH

WHAT INTRIGUED me about the government’s decision to sound the death knell of the Delhi Gymkhana Club was the timing. Why now?

Could it be to distract attention from the economic problems caused by the war on Iran? In these times of social media, it is stories that everyone has an opinion about that take precedence over grim news like the price of fuel rising and foreign investors fleeing our shores. Whatever the reason, I am delighted that the club was given marching orders.

Not because I think it is a good idea to demolish this charming relic of our colonial past but because the decision could start a movement to end the privileges of our politicians and high officials. It is a movement that is much needed. Among the heated debates that happened last week on television and social media the one thing everyone agreed on was that this private club was a symbol of the entitlement and privilege that makes the word ‘lootys’ an insult. Somehow nobody has noticed yet that the most entitled and privileged private club in Lutyens’ Delhi is not the Gymkhana but the Lok Sabha. Just over 30% of its members come from political families which means one in three of our elected representatives is a nepo baby. Nepotism is less evident in the Rajya Sabha but 20% of its members also come from political families.

So, if we object to people inheriting their membership at the Gymkhana Club, then we must first acknowledge that this is not half as disquieting as politicians inheriting parliamentary constituencies. A desire for public service is not something that comes down in the genes so every time some nepo baby inherits a constituency, it is denied to a person with a genuine desire for public service. Yet we never protest when our political parties hand out tickets at election time to candidates from political families. The sad truth is that other than the communists, all our opposition parties are today family businesses. Nepo babies can be spotted in the BJP as well, but the party itself has not yet become some political heirloom.

In the debates we heard last week about the cancellation of the lease of the Gymkhana Club’s 27 acres, those who said this was a good thing argued that public land needs to be better used. True. And this is why this columnist has argued for many years that it is time to throw politicians and bureaucrats out of their colonial bungalows in Lutyens Delhi. This is public land that can be much better used for creating affordable rental housing for the millions of people in Delhi who live in shamefully squalid shanties. An estimated 30-50 lakh Delhi citizens live in horrible conditions in shanty towns that sometimes exist on the edge of garbage dumps in which children compete with stray animals in their search for food. Is it acceptable that the men responsible for building low-cost housing themselves live like princes?

Most democratic countries do not ask taxpayers to pay for housing public servants. But since we have spoiled ours so badly for so many decades, I would like to offer a humble suggestion. Since ‘national security’ was given as a reason to get rid of the Gymkhana Club, would it not be a good idea to move the Prime Minister into a permanent residence like Teen Murti House? Or instead of wasting money on a new residence for the Prime Minister, why not move him into Hyderabad House or one of those other fine palaces that exist around India Gate?

Another question we need to start asking is why Rashtrapati Bhawan needs to sit in an estate that is slightly more than 300 acres? Surely a 20-acre garden would suffice for the President of India, and the rest of that public land could be used to house ministers and high officials? This would reduce what we spend on security, and we might save some money on their travel since they would then be close enough to their offices to walk. There are countries in the ‘viksit’ western world where prime ministers, presidents and princes all use public transport. Our politicians and officials believe that there is a constant threat to their lives so that cannot happen, but a healthy walk accompanied by two security men would do wonders for their health.

If the Gymkhana Club refuses to pay market rent, then it must go. But this should be the first step in a bigger readjustment of Lutyens Delhi. Or it will be clear that the real reason why this club has been targeted is because it is considered the last bastion of that ‘English-speaking ruling class’ that the new rulers of India so despise. At this point I must clarify that although I am a proud member of that old ruling class (AKA Khan Market gang), I am in fact not a member of the Gymkhana Club.

Like a lot of other people, I have been trying to change my dependent member card to a full membership for more than thirty years. I also need to clarify that in the past thirty years I have been to the Gymkhana Club no more than five or six times. Usually for someone else’s party or for someone’s wedding. It is here that the indigent ‘elite’ come because they cannot afford five-star hotels.

The End of Nine-to-Five



ON THE LOOSE
BY LEHER KALA

There’s the thought deeply rooted in history that a person who doesn’t work full time may be morally suspect. (An idle mind is the devil’s workshop.) Even the Bible warned, “He who does not work, neither shall he eat.” Throughout the ages but especially in the last hundred years, our self worth is inextricably tied up with productivity and success. The first question anyone asks at a party is, what do you do? The right answer raises one’s stature. But we’re entering an era of the very real possibility that people will wake up in the morning and have nowhere to go and nothing to do. Will how we view work change? Perhaps, at social gatherings, the initial question will be asking about peoples’ hobbies instead.

For too long, we have all fallen for the righteous view that one must have some kind of vocation to justify a right to existence. People who have enough don’t necessarily have to “earn a living”. They shouldn’t be sneered at for going back to learning or en-

gaging in community service. It should strike anyone as odd that volunteering in India is seen as a euphemism for being incapable of finding something real. Governments have their own sobering motivations to keep inventing employment schemes — like India’s MNREGA — a large population with too much free time poses a danger to the social order. The Pope is right when he says that people feel a need to contribute meaningfully to the world but it’s easy to forget that of the three billion working people on this planet, most wake up and head to unskilled, labour-intensive employment. They’re sanguine about the drudgery involved because they need the money. Work is rarely worship. For most, it’s a means of survival.

For the well qualified, if AI hogs all the boring job options humanity relies on for a paycheck, dare we hope that after the initial shake up, people will pivot back and pursue whatever genuinely brings them joy? It’s a widespread reality that most people hate

their jobs. Often, circumstances dictate careers and ambition requires making cold blooded choices. If there’s no security in anything, one is free to choose whatever one enjoys.

Work will, in fact, become a perpetual hustle. Till quite recently, people went about careers knowing it’s a slow and patient climb up a corporate ladder but there are regular increments and better designations along the way. It’s not that this kind of quiet toiling didn’t have its frustrations but there’s comfort in knowing that one could join an organisation and not worry about getting sacked. Sure, there’s freedom in carving out one’s own (tentative) path but it comes with a lot of stressful uncertainty. One must have some sympathy for the 20-somethings entering the workplace who have no idea how a new technological age will reshape their lives.

The writer is director, Hutkay Films



RECENT HIKE IN FUEL PRICES MAY ACTIVATE BOTH DIRECT AND INDIRECT TRANSMISSION CHANNELS

Must be vigilant on inflation, may face demand headwinds: Fin Min

The comments come days before the RBI's rate setting panel announces its interest rate decision on June 5

Siddharth Upasani
New Delhi, May 30

CONSUMPTION DEMAND in India may face headwinds in the coming months with economic conditions beginning to show the impact of the conflict in West Asia, the Ministry of Finance said on Saturday.

It cautioned that while the near-term outlook is one of "cautious resilience", policy will need to "remain agile across monetary, fiscal, and structural dimensions" to tackle the ongoing uncertainty and that inflation developments warrant "vigilance".

"For India, these external pressures are beginning to transmit, selectively but perceptibly, into domestic economic conditions," the finance ministry said in its Monthly Economic Review report for May, adding that the moderation in core sector growth and fuel consumption "signals that global headwinds are gradually finding their way into select segments of domestic activity."

"With forecasts pointing to a below-normal monsoon and a likely moderation in economic activity, overall consumption demand may face headwinds in the coming months," it further said.

It separately said a signifi-

cant rainfall deficit along with the current geopolitical conditions could translate into food inflation, weakening rural demand and aggregate growth.

According to data released on May 20, growth of India's eight core industries — namely coal, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, fertilisers, steel, cement, and electricity — fell to 1.2% in March and 1.7% in April.

Meanwhile, the India Meteorological Department on Friday cut its monsoon forecast to 90% of the Long Period Average from 92% projected in April. The latest forecast is the lowest by IMD in the last 20 years. The comments by the finance ministry that policy will need to be "agile" and the inflation outlook warrants vigilance come days before the Reserve Bank of India's Monetary Policy Committee announces its interest rate decision on June 5.

After having cut the policy repo rate by 125 basis points (bps) to 5.25% in 2025, the MPC has left it unchanged so far in 2026 amid sharply higher global energy prices due to the war in West Asia, which has led to foreign investors pulling money out from Indian financial markets to the tune of \$24.2 billion since the conflict began in late February.



The finance ministry released its Monthly Economic Review report for May on Saturday. REUTERS

This has exerted tremendous pressure on the Indian rupee's exchange rate, pushing it down to multiple all-time lows. Earlier this month, it nearly breached the 97-per-dollar mark, before it was propped up by sustained RBI intervention in the foreign exchange market.

On Friday, the rupee ended at 95. It has fallen 4.2% since the war started.

While the rupee has recovered some ground in recent days, economists warn that the MPC may have to increase interest rates as early as next week. According to Standard Chartered Bank economists, the RBI may raise the repo rate by 50 bps over its June and August meetings. And they see a risk of additional 25-50 bps of hikes in 2026-27 if inflation turns out to be higher than ex-

pected due to continued pressure from commodity prices and a weak rupee.

In its report on Saturday, the finance ministry took note of the divergence between India's retail and wholesale inflation in April — which stood at 3.48% and 8.3%, respectively.

"This wedge, it said, is a sign that upstream cost pressures are building and the pass-through to consumers may not be far behind. "The recent hike in petrol and diesel prices may activate both direct and indirect transmission channels, and any further escalation in energy prices could narrow the existing cushion more quickly than anticipated. A deficient monsoon could add food price pressures on top of energy-driven ones. However, second-round effects and their persistence must be evident in the

• CHALLENGES AHEAD

THE FINANCE ministry took note of the divergence between India's retail and wholesale inflation in April — which stood at 3.48% and 8.3%, respectively

THIS WEDGE, it said, is a sign that upstream cost pressures are building and the pass-through to consumers may not be far behind

IT SEPARATELY said a significant rainfall deficit along with the current geopolitical conditions could translate into food inflation, weakening rural demand and aggregate growth

data for policy responses to be triggered," the finance ministry said. After holding retail fuel prices at for over two-and-a-half months amid the surge in global rates due to the West Asia crisis, public sector oil marketing companies have raised pump prices of petrol and diesel by over Rs 7 per litre in less than two weeks.

The RBI, in early April, forecast that headline retail inflation as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) may average 4.6% in 2026-27, up from less than 2% in 2025-26. However, economists from outside the central bank see CPI inflation averaging more than 5%. Central banks in Asia have already begun raising interest rates, including Indonesia by 50 bps and Sri Lanka by 100 bps — both in one go — in the last 10 days.

Govt waives import duty on cotton till October 30

Ravi Dutta Mishra
New Delhi, May 30

THE GOVERNMENT on Saturday announced removal of the 11% duty on cotton starting June 1 till October 30 to boost cotton availability for India's textile industry amid the on-going West Asia crisis.

This is the second time in the last 12 months that the duty has been removed.

A similar relief measure was extended to the industry last year after the US imposed steep tariffs on Indian exports.

The Ministry of Textiles said that the temporary duty exemption is expected to reduce input costs across the textile and apparel sector, thereby providing a targeted relief to manufacturers and consumers, while also keeping the interests of domestic farmers in mind.

"Overall, the measure is anticipated to have a positive impact on the performance of the domestic textile industry, especially the small and medium enterprises, ensuring better availability of cotton in the market," the ministry said.

The government move comes after industry executives highlighted that the price of cotton has surged nearly 10-15% during the last month alone due to hoarding, as cotton demand picked up in line with other input materials, particularly polyester.

Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEP) Chairman A Sakthivel had earlier this

month asked the government to eliminate the duty due to high cotton prices and rising input costs.

In a presentation made to the Finance, Commerce and Industry and Textile Ministry, AEP said that India has recently entered into several Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), but competing countries have lower input costs.

Mithileshwar Thakur, Secretary General AEP said, "The temporary exemption of Customs duty and Agriculture Infrastructure and Development Cess on Cotton imports from June 1, 2026 to October 30, 2026 will lead to reduction of input costs across the textile and apparel sector besides improving the availability of cotton, thereby providing much-needed relief to the downstream industry, which have been facing challenges due to the sharp increase in cotton and yarn prices."

Confederation of Indian Textile Industry (CITI) said import duty was resulting in costs going up across the value chain and having a detrimental impact on scaling India's textile and apparel exports. India's textile exports are dominated by cotton. India is the second-largest cotton producer after China, but relies on imports for about 15% of its raw cotton and about 20% of its yarn to meet demand.

India's cotton production has been declining, with experts blaming it on a range of

policy failures. They said that cotton production has stagnated for years largely due to a lack of new seeds, modern irrigation facilities, and frequent pest attacks and diseases.

Unlike several other competitors, such as Bangladesh and Vietnam, India is one of the largest producers of cotton and farmers' interests weigh on the duty-related decision.

Apparel manufacturers have said that some investments that had begun going out of the country due to tariffs have started to come back.

An industry executive, who did not wish to be named, said the sector is also seeing European investments coming into India as they are trying to diversify away from Bangladesh.

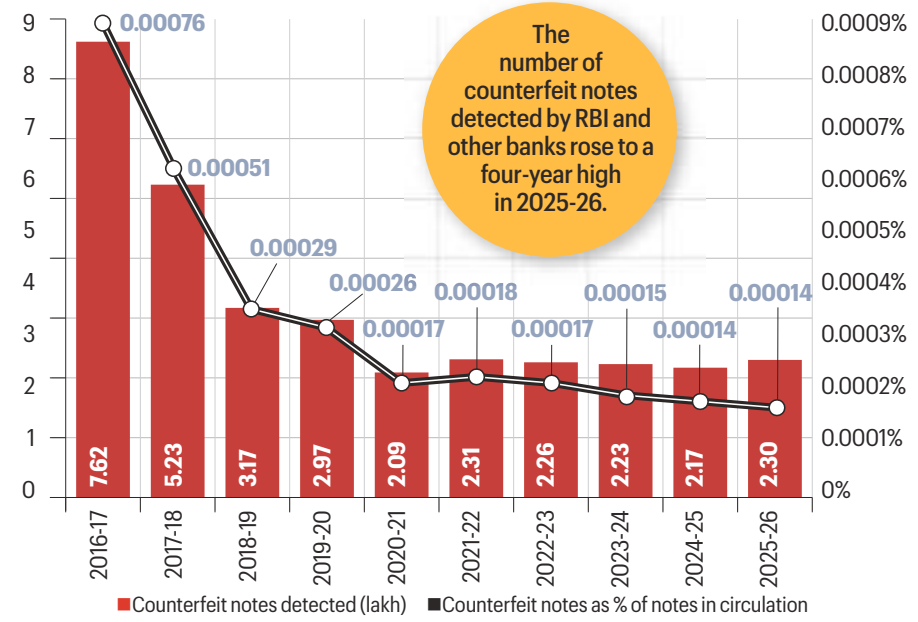
"Bangladesh has signed an FTA with the US and is also seeking a deal with the EU, as India's duty disadvantage will be eliminated soon when the deal comes into effect," the executive said.

AEP said that the textile industry's cotton requirement for the current year is projected at around 337 lakh bales, while cotton arrivals for the 2025-26 season are estimated at only 292.15 lakh bales, resulting in a supply-demand gap of nearly 45 lakh bales.

The shortfall is expected to increase pressure on spinning mills and downstream textile industries due to rising input costs and limited availability of quality raw material, the Export Promotion Council said.

• RBI, banks detected 2.3 lakh counterfeit notes in FY26

According to the Reserve Bank of India's annual report, published on Friday, the number of fake notes in the last financial year rose to 2.30 lakh from 2.17 lakh in 2024-25. However, as a percentage of all banknotes in circulation, the number of fake notes detected remains minuscule: 0.00013%. In fact, this percentage figure has now fallen for four years in a row, having stood more than five times higher at 0.00076% in 2016-17.



SOURCE: RBI

'Carbon rules, sustainability norms make ESG a compliance priority for industry'

New Delhi: Frameworks such as the EU's carbon tax and the proposed Carbon Credit Trading Scheme by India are rapidly transforming environmental, social and governance (ESG) practices from a voluntary disclosure exercise into a key business and compliance priority for industries, say experts.

Without credible carbon data systems and traceable reporting mechanisms, companies could face increasing compliance risks and competitive disadvantages in global markets, they said.

"The next phase of ESG will be driven by implementation readiness and data credibility," World of Circular Economy (WOCE) Founder and Director Anup Garg said.

He added that frameworks such as the European Union's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), India's Business Responsibility and Sustainability Reporting (BRSR) norms and the evolving Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS)

in global markets, they said.

"The next phase of ESG will be driven by implementation readiness and data credibility," World of Circular Economy (WOCE) Founder and Director Anup Garg said.

He added that frameworks such as the European Union's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), India's Business Responsibility and Sustainability Reporting (BRSR) norms and the evolving Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS)

are rapidly shifting ESG from a voluntary disclosure exercise to a business and compliance priority. While sustainability intent is clearly rising, execution remains uneven, many organisations continue to struggle with structured emissions tracking, especially across supply chains and vendor ecosystems, he added.

Citing an analysis, he said that 72% of Indian companies remain at an early stage of carbon readiness despite increasing climate regulations. PTI

Govt withdraws draft Sugarcane (Control) Order amid opposition

New Delhi: The Centre has withdrawn the draft Sugarcane (Control) Order, 2026, saying it needs to be revisited in the light of objections received from state governments and other stakeholders.

The Food Ministry had circulated the draft for public comments, with a May 20 deadline. "Based on the suggestions/comments received from state governments and other stakeholders, it is considered necessary to revisit the draft Sugarcane (Control) Order, 2026," the ministry said in an office memorandum.

The draft sought to replace the 60-year-old Sugarcane (Control) Order, 1966, with a new regulatory framework that proposed, among other things, bringing the ethanol and khandasari sectors under government regulation.

The move drew opposition from khandasari units and farmers. The draft had proposed redefining a khandasari unit as one with more than 10 workers and a crushing capacity of over 500 tonnes per day.

Currently a khandasari unit is defined as one with 20 or more workers, with no capacity limit. Sources said the proposed definition would have brought a large number of small-scale, labour-intensive units under the regulatory ambit. PTI

India's MSCI weight declines as investors chase the AI boom in Taiwan & Korea

Akash Mandal
Mumbai, May 30

MSCI'S QUARTERLY rebalancing of its global benchmark indices has long attracted the interest of global investors, triggering inflows and outflows across markets. For example, its latest rejig — which came into effect on Friday — triggered a sharp sell-off in the Indian stock markets late in the session, with benchmark indices ending 1.5% down from Thursday.

"Indian Equity Market has witnessed massive activity from the FPIs on the day of MSCI rebalancing," Nilesh Shah, Managing Director at Kotak Mahindra Asset Management Co, posted on X on Friday, adding that Foreign Portfolio Investors accounted for around 69% of the total turnover of Rs 2.87 lakh crore on National Stock Exchange.

The indices provided by New York-based MSCI are keenly eyed by investors across the world because they dictate the flow of capital, especially passive funds that closely track the weights assigned to regions, countries, and companies. Friday's rebalancing saw India's weight in the Global Standard index edge down to 12.3% from 12.4%. Announced earlier in the month on May 13, while the rebalancing saw the number of Indian companies in the index remain unchanged at 165, four

• THE AIR RUSH

INDIA'S WEIGHT in the Emerging Markets index has been on a downward trend since peaking around 21% in September 2024

IT NOW stands at 11.94%, behind the likes of Taiwan (24.84%), China (23.05%), and South Korea (18.69%)

THESE RANKINGS do a good job of telling the entire India story: it has no AI play, while its Asian rivals are leading the world on the

were removed (Hyundai Motor India, Jubilant Foodworks, Kalyan Jewellers, and Rail Vikas Nigam) and four others were added in their place: Federal Bank, Multi Commodity Exchange of India, National Aluminium, and Indian Bank.

Meanwhile, India's weight in the Emerging Markets (EM) index has been on a downward trend since peaking around 21% in September 2024 and now stands at 11.94%, behind the likes of Taiwan (24.84%), China (23.05%), and South Korea (18.69%). And these rankings do a good job of telling the entire India story: it has no AI play, while its Asian rivals are leading the world on the back of eye-popping increases in key company's share prices. In fact, only



back of eye-popping increases in key company's share prices.

a few days ago, Taiwan overtook India and became the fifth most valuable stock market in the world in terms of market capitalisation. "The catalyst? AI. Specifically, the scale of AI-driven demand for semiconductors," MSCI noted on Wednesday. "Taiwan's semiconductor industry accounts for 16.2% of the index on its own, contributing to IT's surge to nearly 37% of EM, up from 31.8% just one month earlier. For

investors, broad EM exposure today is structurally different than a year ago, with more technology, more semiconductors and a more direct stake in the global AI build-out," it added.

Leading the charge for Taiwan has been Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co, the

world's largest chipmaker, whose share price has more than doubled in the last year. Just how dominant is TSMC? One of only two non-US entities in the world's top-10 most valuable companies — the other being Saudi Aramco — TSMC makes up more than 40% of Taiwan's benchmark Taiaex index.

At 14.21%, TSMC on its own has a greater weight in MSCI's EM index than India.

It's not just Taiwan that has benefitted from the AI boom. A day after Taiwan overtook India in the world's largest stock markets, South Korean semiconductor manufacturer SK Hynix saw its market capitalisation top \$1 trillion. This was just a few days after fellow Korean firm Samsung also crossed the \$1 trillion mark. Together, the market cap of Samsung and SK Hynix is almost half of the Kospi index. These two companies are also the second and third biggest constituents of the MSCI EM index, accounting for 10.08% of it. The Indian companies with the highest weight are HDFC Bank and Reliance Industries, both at 0.79%.

The absence of an AI play in India was earlier viewed as a contrarian strategy. Now, it's a glaring weakness. And, in conjunction with the rupee's fall, it's showing up in how FPIs are behaving.

FULL REPORT ON
WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

• THERE IS A SHARP MISMATCH BETWEEN THE COUNTRY'S RELATIVELY LIMITED DOMESTIC CELL MANUFACTURING CAPACITY AND ITS MUCH LARGER SOLAR MODULE MANUFACTURING BASE

Domestic solar cell mandate: How new rules may squeeze smaller manufacturers

Pratyush Deep
New Delhi, May 30

A NEW domestic sourcing requirement for solar cells, set to come into force from June 1, is likely to disproportionately impact smaller solar module manufacturers compared to larger companies with integrated cell and module manufacturing facilities.

While the move is expected to help reduce India's dependence on imports and strengthen the domestic solar manufacturing ecosystem, industry insiders have raised concerns over potential market consolidation risks in this sector. The apprehension stems from the sharp mismatch between the country's relatively limited do-

mestic cell manufacturing capacity and its much larger solar module manufacturing base, a gap that could tighten supplies and favour vertically integrated players.

While the country's solar module manufacturing capacity has surged to nearly 200 gigawatts (GW) per annum, domestic solar cell manufacturing remains far lower at around 30 GW, creating a significant gap.

Under the new mandate, all 'net-metering' and 'Open Access' solar projects commissioned after June 1 will have to use domestically manufactured solar cells. Net-metering projects largely include rooftop solar installations — such as those under the PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana — where consumers



India's solar module manufacturing capacity has surged to nearly 200GW per annum, but domestic solar cell manufacturing remains far lower at around 30 GW. REUTERS

can offset electricity bills by supplying surplus power back to the grid, while Open Access projects mainly cater to commercial and industrial consumers pro-

curing renewable energy directly from developers.

The new mandate has sparked concerns among module manufacturers, particularly

non-integrated players — those without internal cell manufacturing facilities. Industry executives cautioned such companies could face significant supply risks, as they would now be forced to procure domestically manufactured cells from larger competitors that also operate in the module market, potentially creating an uneven playing field.

According to industry insiders, the timing of the transition has added to the stress. India's solar module manufacturers are currently grappling with overcapacity and weakening export opportunities amid steep US tariff barriers. Against solar capacity installations of around 45 GW in 2025–

26, India's annual solar module production is estimated at nearly 60-65 GW, highlighting the growing oversupply concerns in the sector.

Industry sources said capacity utilisation levels at several module assembly plants are currently hovering around 30-40%.

"The prices of domestically manufactured cells are expected to rise after the mandate comes into force. As a result, companies with integrated manufacturing facilities may prioritise cell production, given the stronger margins and assured demand," an industry insider said, adding that some degree of market consolidation now appears inevitable during the transition

phase. Alpesh Dave, vice president at Surat-based Goldi Solar, told *The Indian Express* that while standalone module manufacturers are facing significant pressure on revenues, companies with integrated cell and module manufacturing facilities are in a much stronger position.

"Cell manufacturers in India are currently commanding very high margins because of the limited domestic supply and lack of sufficient competition. They are charging margins of at least 20-30%," Dave said.

Nitin Aggarwal, CEO of Rajasthan Solar Association which represents solar equipment manufacturers from the state, said that barring a handful of large integrated players, the new mandate could pose a serious

survival challenge for a significant section of the industry.

However, a divergent view is also emerging within the industry, with several manufacturers viewing the new mandate as a relief of sorts and offering a strong policy push for the investments being made in India's domestic solar manufacturing ecosystem. They maintain that concerns over limited domestic cell manufacturing capacity are overstated, especially because large utility-scale solar projects bid out before August 31, 2025 have been exempted from the domestic sourcing requirement for solar cells. According to them, this significantly reduces immediate pressure on domestic cell supplies.

FULL REPORT ON
WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

PENTAGON CHIEF SAYS TRUMP IS ‘PATIENT’ AND WANTS DEAL WHICH ENSURES IRAN DOES NOT GET NUCLEAR WEAPONS

US ready to resume strikes on Iran if no deal: Hegseth

Trump to make decision on extending truce

Reuters
Singapore, May 30

THE US is ready to restart attacks on Iran if a deal cannot be reached, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said on Saturday, as negotiators from Washington and Tehran worked to bridge major differences blocking an agreement. “Our ability to recommence if necessary...we are more than capable,” Hegseth said in Singapore.

“Our stockpiles are more than suited for that, both there and around the globe, so we’re in a very good place,” he added.

Hegseth, speaking at the Shangri-La Dialogue, Asia’s premier forum for defence leaders, militaries and diplomats, said the US has not turned its back on the Asia-Pacific region despite being engaged in conflict with Iran.

“We can do two things at one time. We’re super-charging our defence industrial base so that we’re building 2X, 3X, 4X the munitions very soon to ensure that all of our (operations) plans are properly funded throughout the world,” he said.



A drone view shows vessels anchored at the Strait of Hormuz, as seen from Musandam, Oman, on Saturday. REUTERS

The Pentagon chief said President Donald Trump was “patient” and wants to make a “great deal” that ensures Iran does not get a nuclear weapon.

Meanwhile on Saturday, the US military stopped another merchant vessel trying to break through the American blockade of Iranian ports, a US official with knowledge of the situation told *The Associated Press*.

The Gambia-flagged bulk carrier *Lian Star* ignored multiple warnings from US forces overnight as it tried to enter an Iranian port, the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss military operations, said.

The ship was disabled by US aircraft in the Gulf of Oman and remains adrift there, the official said, adding that US forces have not boarded it.

With the latest action, US military has stopped six ships trying to breach the blockade. One was allowed to proceed.

On Friday, Trump said he would meet in a secure White House room to make a “final determination” on a proposal to end the Iran war, which would extend an early-April truce for another 60 days, giving negotiators time to forge a permanent end to the conflict.

A White House official said the meeting in the Situation

Room lasted about two hours, but did not address whether Trump had made a decision.

“President Trump will only make a deal that is good for America and satisfies his red-lines. Iran can never possess a nuclear weapon,” the official said. A senior Iranian source told *Reuters* an agreement was close but had not yet been approved.

However, Trump also said Iran would have to end its chokehold on the Strait of Hormuz and dismantle its capacity to make a nuclear weapon - two conditions that Tehran has not agreed to. “Iran must agree that they will never have a Nuclear Weapon or Bomb. The Hormuz Strait must be immediately open, no tolls, for unrestricted shipping traffic, in both directions,” Trump said, adding that nuclear material would be “unearthed” by the US.

Iran’s semi-official *Fars* news agency, citing sources, said Trump’s comments were an “attempt to portray a fabricated victory.” The senior Iranian source, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the potential deal does not include any nuclear-related issues, while Iran’s Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei said on state TV that the management of the strait must be decided by Iran and Oman.

Hardliners in Tehran try to derail potential deal with Washington

Farnaz Fassihi
May 29

AS IRAN and the United States appeared to be nearing an agreement to end hostilities this week, not everyone in Iran was on board.

The hard-line faction, a fringe but loud group with members in Parliament and a seat on the Supreme National Security Council, has openly opposed any concessions to Washington, using rallies, state media and private and public statements as tools to try to derail a deal.

It remains unclear when an actual agreement will be announced, if at all. President Trump met for two hours with cabinet members in the Situation Room at the White House on Friday, but he put off making a final decision, according to a senior administration official.

Iran’s lead negotiator, Gen. Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, said in a social media post earlier in the day that Tehran did not trust Washington and that no step would “be taken before the other side acts first.”

But in Iran the political fight continues. State television, which is controlled by a hard-line director, has amplified the divisions in the country and portrayed negotiations as a fail-

ure. On Monday, President Masoud Pezeshkian scolded state television in a meeting with its senior leaders, calling on them to avoid sowing discord.

Pezeshkian said even Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the former supreme leader killed on the first day of the war, “agreed that we must go to the negotiation table.” “But now,” he continued, “we are advertising that we should not negotiate.”

At a packed rally of hard-line supporters in Tehran on Friday, large crowds waved flags and chanted for defiance. A state television reporter asked some attendees if Iran should retreat or continue fighting the United States and Israel.

“We want them to punish them good,” one woman attendee said. “Stand firm, we are with you until our last drop of blood,” said one man.

“Trump must know that Iran, as the victor and conqueror of the field, sets the terms,” said Ebrahim Azizi, a conservative lawmaker and the head of Parliament’s national security and foreign policy committees, in a social media post on Friday. Analysts close to the government in Iran say that the hard-line faction represents a minority view, both in the general public and among officials. NYT

• BRIEFLY



Rescuers after they safely evacuated the villagers, who had been trapped in a cave in Xaisomboun province, Laos, on Saturday. AP

LAOS

Rescuers pull four from flooded cave in Laos, two still missing

RESCUERS PULLED four people from a flooded cave in Laos on Saturday, Thai volunteer rescuers said, hours after another man was brought out late on Friday. The five are among seven Lao nationals who had entered the cave in Xaisomboun province to prospect for gold, but were trapped for more than a week when rising water blocked their exit. Two others remain missing, Kengkard Bongkawong, a Thai cave diver involved in the mission, said in a Facebook post on Saturday that all four of the trapped people had emerged from the cave. REUTERS

GERMANY

Drone sighting disrupts flights at Munich airport

FLIGHTS WERE halted for about an hour at Munich Airport in Germany on Saturday morning after two pilots reported seeing a drone, airport authorities and police said, confirming initial reports by German media. During the shutdown more than 20 flights that had been due to land at Munich were diverted to other airports, an airport spokesperson said. REUTERS

GHANA

Bill criminalizing LGBT promotion gets House nod

GHANA’S PARLIAMENT on Friday approved a new bill that criminalizes the so-called promotion of LGBTQ activity, part of a broader crackdown on sexual minorities in West Africa. The Human Sexual Rights and Family Values Bill, passed by a voice vote after Constitutional and Legal Affairs Committee recommended adoption, said deputy speaker Bernard Ahiafor. REUTERS

• NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

SRI LANKA

Buddhist monk suspended over abuse charges

THE POWERFUL Buddhist clergy in Sri Lanka on Saturday stripped a senior monk facing charges of child abuse after weeks of relentless pressure. Pallegama Hemarathana was on May 14 ordered to be remanded after being arrested on May 9 following a probe into a case of child sexual abuse. PTI

PAKISTAN

Security forces kill 5 terrorists in KPK province

PAKISTANI SECURITY forces have killed five terrorists during an operation in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, police said on Saturday. The operation was conducted in Darra Adam Khel town of Kohat district, some 30 km southwest of Peshawar on Friday. Two soldiers also died in a fierce exchange of fire. PTI

Inside Ebola epicentre, the virus rages with little to stop it

Declan Walsh
Mongbwalu, May 30

IN THE cramped, dilapidated Ebola ward, a 5-year-old boy languished on a bare mattress, a tissue stuffed into his nose to stanch the incessant bleeding. His father stood over him, eyes clouded with worry.

A few beds away lay the body of Christiane Bahati, 21, who had died seven hours earlier but had not yet been taken away. Her shoes were still tucked under the bed, her wailing relatives gathered outside the ward doors.

The body, covered by a thin sheet, was highly contagious. Yet hardly anyone in the ward was protected. Relatives came and went, carrying food and

water to ailing patients because the hospital had none to give them. A few wore rubber gloves or pulled a scarf across their mouths. Most had nothing at all.

In the next ward lay the hospital’s laboratory technician, also sick. Seven other hospital workers had already died from suspected Ebola.

Few of the staff members had ever been trained to fight the disease, and the most rudimentary equipment was in dangerously short supply: tests, protective suits, goggles, masks, even drinking water.

Outside, the sound of hammering broke the hushed silence. Aid workers from Doctors Without Borders were racing to erect isolation tents and disinfection stations.



Dr Alex Bogole, a Congolese doctor in the hospital’s intensive care ward, was furious. The virus had been spread-

ing for months, virtually unimpeded, “and this is the best we can do?” he said, the frustration pouring through his protective

gear. This is the epicenter of the Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the front line is completely overwhelmed.

The Congolese Health Ministry declared the outbreak on May 15, and it has already ballooned into the third largest on record. Two weeks later, the international response is being outpaced by the virus, and there is almost nothing to slow it down. Aid groups warn that without urgent intervention, this could be the world’s deadliest Ebola outbreak ever.

Dr Bogole was never trained for this and was angry at everyone — at the Congolese government for failing to detect the outbreak until perhaps six weeks after it began, and at the

world, which has barely mobilized help here in Mongbwalu, a remote gold mining town of about 150,000 where the outbreak is believed to have started.

“They hold meetings and meetings,” he said, struggling to contain his disdain. “What is the purpose of these meetings? People are dying, people are getting infected, people are in danger. It’s very slow.”

Giant trucks, curling through lush hills, leave blinding clouds of dust. Edgy-looking Congolese soldiers guard checkpoints that are often little more than string.

Gold miners and people fleeing rebel conflict stream in and out of Mongbwalu, providing an excellent vector for the spread of the virus. NYT

Ukraine keeps up strikes on Russian oil sites as Kyiv expects more attacks

Associated Press
Moscow, May 30

UKRAINIAN DRONE strikes caused fires at more Russian oil facilities overnight into Saturday, Russian officials said, in what appeared to be latest attack on Moscow’s vital oil industry.

Authorities in Russia’s Rostov region said falling drone debris sparked a fire that damaged an oil depot and tanker in the port of Taganrog, while officials in the neighbouring Krasnodar region reported a fire breaking out at an oil depot in Armavir.

“Another facility of Russia’s oil industry has been reached - Armavir,” Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy wrote on X, referring to the Krasnodar attack, and noting that Armavir is



Smoke rises after a Ukrainian drone attack on an oil refinery and terminal in Tuapse region of Russia on Saturday. AP

“500 kilometers from our state border.” “We are rightfully bringing the war back to where it came from,” he wrote.

Kyiv is bracing for further heavy bombardments after what the Russian Foreign Ministry said earlier this week would

be upcoming “systemic strikes” on Ukraine. The attacks on Russian oil infrastructure came a day after a Russian drone that was part of an attack on Ukraine struck an apartment building in eastern Romania, injuring two in the NATO member country.

Top US commander meets Cuban military officials amid Trump pressure

Associated Press
Havana, May 30

THE TOP US commander in Latin America met with Cuban military leaders on Friday in a “brief exchange on operational security matters” near the US Navy base in Guantanamo Bay, the latest official to visit the island nation as President Donald Trump ramps up pressure on its leaders.

Trump has warned that Cuba “is next” after US military forces captured Venezuela’s autocratic leader, Nicolas Maduro, in a January raid.

In the months since, the Trump administration has im-

posed an oil blockade on Cuba, maintained warships in the Caribbean Sea and indicted former Cuban President Raul Castro on federal charges.

General Francis Donovan, head of US Southern Command, met with Lieutenant General Roberto Legra Sotolongo and other Cuban military officials.

Cuba’s Revolutionary Armed Forces said in a statement that both sides viewed “the meeting positively because it addressed security issues along the perimeter separating the military enclave, and they agreed to maintain communication between the two military commands”.

22 killed after truck carrying Afghan refugees overturns

Associated Press
Kabul, May 30

A TRUCK carrying Afghan refugees returning from neighboring Pakistan overturned on a highway in eastern Afghanistan on Saturday, killing at least 22 people and injuring about 36 others, most of them women and children, officials said.

The accident occurred in Laghman province on the main highway linking Kabul, the Afghan capital, with Nangarhar province, said Abdul Malik Nia-zai, the spokesperson for the provincial governor.

He said among the dead were 10 children and five women, and the injured were taken to hospitals in Nangarhar.



An man receives treatment at a hospital in Jalalabad after the accident in Laghman province on Saturday. AP

fell into a ditch after the driver fell asleep.

The passengers were among thousands of Afghans who recently returned from Pakistan, which launched a crackdown on migrants in 2023, and has since deported or pressured many to leave. Iran also intensified expulsions of Afghan migrants around the same time. Since then, millions of Afghans have returned home from the two countries, including many who were born in Pakistan and had spent decades working there.

In a separate accident in the eastern province of Nuristan, a car fell off the road into a river on Friday night, injuring the driver and leaving four passengers missing, governor’s office said.

• BELGIUM’S POTATO HARVEST SETS A RECORD, JUST AS TARIFFS HIT U.S. DEMAND FOR FROZEN FRIES AND AS COMPETITION FROM SUPPLIERS IN ASIA INTENSIFIES

The world capital of French fries has a problem: Too many potatoes and no buyers

Jenny Gross
Walhain (Belgium), May 30

A THOUSAND tons of potatoes were stacked 15 feet high in a warehouse on Kris D’haeyere’s farm for months. Even though he offered to sell them for just a couple of euros per ton, no one wanted to buy them.

So D’haeyere did the unthinkable: This month, he dumped the crop back into his fields in eastern Belgium, the cheapest way to dispose of enough potatoes to make 200 million French fries.

Other farmers are doing the same, as Europe faces a surplus of five million metric tons of the type of potato used for fries.

For months, the price of a metric ton of potatoes on the spot market in Belgium, the world’s biggest exporter of frozen fries, has languished at precisely zero. It was nearly 600 euros (\$690) three years ago.

The great potato glut of 2026 is the result of several factors, some meteorological and others geopolitical.

Good weather produced the biggest European potato harvest in eight years, just as farmers were struggling to sell their crops because the Trump administration’s tariffs hit their exports and new competitors from Asia took market share. More recently, the war in Iran has pushed up prices for energy

and fertilizer and made consumers cut back, shrinking profit margins that were already as thin as a shoestring fry.

“Of course it’s bad,” D’haeyere, 58, said, “but that’s life.” His unsold potatoes had started to sprout, making them impossible to offload. It hit him with a loss of €160,000 on soil, seedlings, fertilizer, labor and other costs and forced him to dip into his savings, he said.

D’haeyere planted 17 acres of potatoes for next season, a fraction of the 170 acres he usually plants on his 370-acre farm in Hermalle-sous-Huy, Belgium.

In Germany, another major potato producer, a farmer with 4,000 tons of unwanted pota-



Potatoes for sale at a market in Halle, Belgium. NYT

atoes arranged a series of giveaways in Berlin, which locals refer to as the “Kartoffel-Flut,” or potato flood.

But nowhere has a mismatch in potato supply and demand been more acutely felt than in Belgium, the world’s

biggest exporter of frozen fries. Frites are a national symbol, and friteries — what French-speaking Belgians call the stands that sell cardboard cones stuffed with fries — are ubiquitous in public squares across the country. Belgians smother their frites in a variety of elaborate sauces, including andalouse, a mayonnaise blend with tomato paste and bell peppers, and dallas, which has fried onion, tomato and herbs.

Belgium exported \$3.3 billion of cooked, frozen potatoes in 2025, nearly triple the amount a decade earlier, according to the EU’s statistics agency. The war in Iran is the latest source of strain on the supply

chain for frozen fries, said Christophe Vermeulen, the chief executive of Belgapom, Belgium’s potato processing association.

Higher energy costs make refrigeration and transport more expensive. Skyrocketing fertilizer costs also make farming more expensive, with ships carrying fertilizer ingredients unable to exit the Persian Gulf because of a blockade on the Strait of Hormuz.

The blockade has also made it harder to export fries to countries including Qatar, the UAE and Saudi Arabia, all major French fry consumers. Gulf countries are likely to need fewer fries anyway, with fewer tourists

staying at resorts and eating at restaurants, Vermeulen said.

Closer to home, rising inflation has forced many Europeans to think twice about going out to restaurants, where most fries are consumed, said Niels van der Boom, an analyst at DCA Market Intelligence, which specializes in commodity markets.

These challenges come as US tariffs on imports have made European fries more expensive in the United States, their second-largest market after Britain. Exports of frozen fries from the EU to the US were down 8 percent over the 12 months ending Feb. 28, according to World Potato Markets, a magazine. NYT

“
Mindset to win title, not defend 2025 IPL win, says Patidar



Rajat Patidar. PRAVEEN KHANNA

Express News Service
Ahmedabad, May 30

BEFORE ROYAL Challengers Bengaluru (RCB)'s IPL 2026 final against Gujarat Titans, Rajat Patidar was presented with a topic that has followed him through much of the season - a potential return to India's T20I setup.

Patidar, however, had little interest in discussing it. "I'm not looking forward to any selection regarding India. So, I'm not looking forward for it," the RCB captain said on the eve of the final.

It is easy to understand why his name has entered the selection debate. Patidar has scored 486 runs in 14 matches this season while simultaneously leading RCB into a second successive IPL final. His performances have come in a batting line-up built around clearly defined roles, with Patidar often providing the acceleration in the middle overs.

India captain?

That same outlook was evident when Patidar was asked whether he could envision himself one day leading India in T20 cricket. "I don't visualise to be the T20 captain of India. But at the same time, every captain wants to win the trophies. So last year we did it, but again it's a new season. You cannot keep talking about 2025, what we have done. You have to be more in the present and do whatever best you can do to win the title. What has changed from last year? To be honest, I don't think we have changed anything."

RCB enter the final carrying the confidence of a side that has established itself as one of the IPL's most consistent teams in recent seasons. While Patidar's individual contributions have been significant, he believes the franchise's evolution has been driven by a broader shift in mindset rather than the influence of a few star performers. "I think responsibility is the main word that every individual is thinking about."

He added: "So, responsibility and keenness to do for the team. And having the same mindset that we are not here to just play qualifiers and all. We are here to play the finals and win the finals. So I think this mindset has changed."

Responsibility is probably the key word. Every individual is keen to contribute and do something for the team. The other thing is the mindset. We're not here just to qualify for the playoffs. We're here to play finals and win finals. I think that mindset has changed.

RAJAT PATIDAR, ON WHAT'S CHANGED FOR ROYAL CHALLENGERS BENGALURU

INDIAN PREMIER LEAGUE FINAL

From chaos to clarity

For 18 years, RCB underachieved. Sunday's final against Gujarat will tell us if they have fixed it permanently

Shankar Narayan
Ahmedabad, May 30

As the sun set over the Narendra Modi Stadium on Saturday evening, Rajat Patidar and Devdutt Padikkal were still on the ground, working through their drills under Dinesh Karthik's eye. The intensity was evident. So was the composure. That combination - urgency without anxiety - has become the defining characteristic of this RCB side over two seasons.

They arrive at Sunday's final as defending champions. They also arrive at a venue that has already beaten them once this season - bowled out for 155 here in April, a total Gujarat chased with four wickets in hand. The final was originally scheduled at the Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru, RCB's home, before the BCCI moved it to Ahmedabad citing logistical requirements. So the defending champions will play for the title not on their own ground but on Gujarat's, on a pitch they know can undo them. Ahmedabad is hosting the IPL final for the fourth time in the last five seasons. RCB are the only side arriving without the comfort of familiarity.

It is the kind of detail that would have unsettled previous RCB sides. This one no longer looks like a team built on reputation. It has been built, deliberately, on something more durable.

The clearest illustration came last Tuesday in Dharamsala. Bhuvneshwar Kumar, 36 years old, with 26 wickets in 15 matches this season, bowling



The Narendra Modi Stadium will host the IPL final for the fourth time in the last five seasons. PRAVEEN KHANNA

the same seam-up action he has bowled for sixteen years. Patidar walking in at 97 for 3 and making 93 off 33 balls - the fastest innings of 90 or more in IPL history. Neither moment was accidental. Both were the product of a franchise that has stopped assembling famous names and started building defined roles.

Efficient XI

The thinking behind the squad reflects a clarity shaped by the Chinnaswamy - high-scoring, short boundaries, pace-friendly. Bhuvneshwar gives swing and powerplay wickets that hand RCB early control. Josh Hazlewood mixes his lengths intelligently to maintain pressure. Rasikh Salam Dar has quietly filled the third seamer slot in Yash Dayal's absence. In spin, Suyash Sharma and Krunal Pandya bring different tools toward the same principle: middle-over control and wickets in batting-friendly conditions. The batting reflects the same role precision. Virat Kohli stabil-

The defending champions will play for the title not on their own ground but on Gujarat's, on a pitch they know can undo them.

ises and anchors. Padikkal enforces at the top. Tim David accelerates late. Jitesh Sharma provides finishing depth. The intent is not to assemble the most famous XI but the most efficient one.

A win on Sunday would put Patidar alongside MS Dhoni and Rohit Sharma as captains to win consecutive IPL titles. He was asked about this at the pre-match press conference on Saturday. The answer was characteristic. "No, I've never thought about what another captain has done or whether I want to compete with someone. My journey has been a rollercoaster, but I've never focused on that. I focus on

what I can do best in the present. Right now, my focus is only on the final and giving my best tomorrow."

The broader legacy conversation is one the franchise is more willing to have than their captain. Teams that define eras are rarely built on single-season brilliance. They are built on stability across cycles. Three things stand out in this RCB group as the foundations of something longer. The first is Patidar's captaincy - not yet fully formed but already embedded in a clear system, built for continuity rather than personality. The second is the Indian core of Krunal, Padikkal, Jitesh and Patidar himself - the structural backbone that gives the side identity and allows overseas players to slot into defined roles. The third is the bridge that Kohli and Bhuvneshwar provide between the franchise's past and its evolving present. Between them they carry the identity and the experience. Neither is surplus. Both are essential.

Gujarat Titans are not straightforward opponents. Both sides arrive on Sunday chasing a second IPL title - GT won their first in 2022 under Hardik Pandya. They know this ground. They bat from the top with Gill and Sudharsan, bowl with Rabada and Siraj, and control the middle overs with Rashid Khan. They have lost to RCB twice this season but won Qualifier 2 to be here. Gill's reflection after the Qualifier 1 defeat was pointed: fielding let them down under pressure. They will have addressed that.

The pitch used for the final will be the same surface used for the 2023 ODI World Cup final. On that evidence alone, conditions will test both sides equally. What it will not test equally is temperament - and that, more than tactics, is what Sunday is really about.

RCB have climbed the mountain once. The question is whether they have built something strong enough to stay there.

Teams with similar batting philosophies, different depth

Lalith Kalidas
New Delhi, May 30

EVEN IN an IPL season defined by unprecedented scoring rates, stability remains a premium. Consistency that lasts two months can punch a ticket to the final. Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Gujarat Titans embody contrasting run-making philosophies, yet arrive at the same endpoint: clarity over chaos.

It is the relative calm within their batting units that has driven success, albeit through different personnel structures. While the defending champions utilise their entire top seven, Gujarat's batting is visibly pinned

on Shubman Gill, Sai Sudharsan and Jos Buttler. The efficiency of both units through the first two phases, with minimal drop-offs in intent, has allowed them to outpace the more explosive top orders of Rajasthan Royals, Sunrisers Hyderabad and Punjab Kings.

Interestingly, RCB are the only side among the top-five teams to increase their scoring rate as the innings progress. Their Powerplay strike rate of 9.75 runs per over (rpo) has transitioned smoothly into 9.9 rpo in the middle overs (7-16). While the average dips from 41 to 31, RCB absorb that cost thanks to their depth and finishing



Gujarat's batting is visibly pinned on Shubman Gill, Sai Sudharsan and Jos Buttler. CREIMAS

strength. In contrast, Gujarat continue to adopt a lower-risk approach, with scoring responsibility concentrated in the top

Number Plate

9.9

● RCB's SR in the powerplay is 9.75 runs per over and goes to 9.9 in the middle overs (7-16) — the only team in the Top 5 to have an ascending scoring rate.

three. Their middle-order average of 35.24 is the highest among Playoff teams. Though they start slower in the Powerplay at 9.08 rpo, GT maintain stability at 9.05 rpo through the middle overs. By comparison, the third-

placed Rajasthan Royals leaned heavily on the Vaibhav Sooryavanshi factor, with the Powerplay contributing over 36 per cent of their total runs — the highest among all teams. However, their 11.2 rpo in that phase drops to 9.19 in the middle overs, alongside a steep fall in average.

Avoiding such sharp fluctuations for 80 per cent of the innings has ensured that neither RCB nor GT is forced to reset at the death. Powered by Tim David (252 runs in overs 17-20), RCB surge at 11.19 rpo — the second-best in the league. Gujarat, lacking similar firepower, trail at 9.53 rpo in the final phase.

”
Titans' five-pronged bowling attack RCB's biggest test



Kagiso Rabada has 28 wickets in 18 matches this IPL. CREIMAS/BCCI

Shankar Narayan
Ahmedabad, May 30

KAGISO RABADA will run in from one end. Mohammed Siraj from the other. Between them, in the overs that follow, Jason Holder will step in. Then Rashid Khan. Then Prasidh Krishna. Royal Challengers Bengaluru's batting - Kohli's stability, Patidar's explosiveness, Tim David's finishing power - has found answers to most challenges this season. On Sunday, it must find answers for all five.

What makes Gujarat Titans' attack particularly dangerous is not merely the quality of individuals but the variety they bring. It is a unit rooted in traditional Test-match lengths, forcing batsmen to constantly rethink their approach across all twenty overs. There are no easy phases. There is no obvious gap. RCB's batting has been one of the defining stories of IPL 2026 - built around clearly defined roles, it has answered most challenges thrown its way. But this is arguably the most complete bowling attack in the league, and the most complete test it has faced.

Rediscovered form

Rabada has been the stand-out bowler of IPL 2026. After three consecutive difficult seasons - a combined 20 wickets in 21 matches - he has emerged as the bowling leader of this attack. Twenty-eight wickets in 16 matches at 9.43. Nineteen of those in the powerplay. His ability to hit the deck hard while maintaining high speeds makes him effective even on surfaces that offer little assistance. There's no relenting pace, the attacking mindset that refuses to retreat into containment - Rabada arrives at the final as the tournament's leading wicket-taker and as a bowler who has rediscovered something he had temporarily lost.

Siraj presents a different challenge from the other end. The 32-year-old relies on seam movement and swing, hunting wickets from the very first over rather than retreating into defensive lengths. Fourteen of his 18 wickets this season have come in the first six overs. His stock delivery appears to come in but shapes away - outside edges re-

main interested. Where Rabada hits hard and fast, Siraj probes and moves. Together they form the most dangerous new-ball pairing in the competition.

The surprise has been Holder. Gujarat had planned him before the auction even opened. "Even before the IPL auction last year, we had planned that Jason Holder would be our main pick," GT assistant coach Parthiv Patel said.

Faith in Holder

"We know that in the last 1.5 years, Holder has been in good form in T20 leagues across the world. If you have a player who can bowl in the powerplay as well as in the middle overs, and he can bat as well - after that decision, a lot of things changed for us." Seventeen wickets in 10 matches at an economy of 7.54. Thirteen of those in the middle overs, where his height extracts bounce from lengths that are otherwise comfortable to hit. The calculation was made fourteen months ago. It has paid off precisely as intended.

Prasidh Krishna's 16 wickets have come at a cost - 10.52 runs per over - but he remains a difficult bowler to line up. The lengths are awkward, the pace persistent, and he repeatedly hits the deck hard. Caught between driving and pulling, batsmen are forced into scoring options they would not normally consider. On a surface like Ahmedabad, where the bounce is true and the pace holds, those lengths become difficult.

Then Rashid Khan. By the time he arrives, RCB will have survived the pace quartet. It will not feel like relief. Seventeen of his 19 wickets have come in the middle overs, where he has broken partnerships and stalled scoring with a consistency that makes him the most reliable wicket-taker in the competition when games are in the balance. His pace through the air, his accuracy, his ability to create doubt where batsmen thought they had settled - each time a RCB batter thinks they have read the innings, Rashid will be waiting.

Batsmen win you games. Bowlers win you championships. Gujarat Titans have built their bowling attack around that conviction.

● SULTAN OF SWING

How Bhuvi hasn't allowed the young fearless batsman to run away with IPL

Sandeep Dwivedi
New Delhi, May 30

WHILE THE 15-year-old Vaibhav Suryavanshi's fearless hitting has made him this season's highest run-getter, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, at 36, has exploited that same trait in several new-age batsmen to emerge as one of the league's top wicket-takers. Though he hasn't yet got Suryavanshi's wicket, Bhuvneshwar's 26 scalps include the who's who of Gen Next daredevils—Priyansh Arya, Prabhsimran Singh, Sahil Parakh, Sameer Rizvi, Ayush Mhatre, and a few more.

The sly old fox has reminded the young turks that their standard-deliver, relentless attacking approach, though very popular with fans, isn't bulletproof. He isn't allowing the relentlessly attacking kids to run away with his sport. Not that he is getting any credit for keeping bowlers relevant in T20 cricket. But then, that has been Bhuvneshwar's story all along.

notched Sachin Tendulkar's first duck in domestic cricket. He had a dream ODI debut against Pakistan, running through their top order. He is on the Lord's honours board. He has two Purple Caps and two IPL titles.

Still, Bhuvi isn't even the most talked-about cricketer from his hometown Meerut. That honour goes to Praveen Kumar. In RCB, there are Virat Kohli and now Rajat Patidar, players with more star power than him. Not that he minds or works towards building an aura around him. A man of few words, he isn't just understated but does his best to underplay himself.

Strong work ethic

Once, an interviewer asked him the secret of his swing bowling and suggested a few options: Is it because of the several ball-manufacturing units in Meerut? Was it because Bittu, his childhood name, was passionate about kite flying, a daily activity that helped him develop dexterous wrists? As if to cut the con-



At 36, Bhuvneshwar Kumar (26 scalps and counting), continues to be a challenging prospect for batsmen to deal with in the IPL. CREIMAS

versation short or probably not keen to intellectualise his art, he agreed to both. If easy access to a gleaming red cherry and kite flying made one the Sultan of Swing, India would be brimming with bowlers of Bhuvneshwar's skill. Bhuvi, the Sultan of Swing, didn't mind the image of a kite-flying Bittu.

Though later in the chat, he did mention the hours he put in as a 10-year-old with a slight build to be a fast bowler. He didn't have any energy left to even eat food. His mother gave his elder sister the daily duty of feeding him as he sprawled on the bed, shut his eyes, and called it a day. He also had drools drip-

In the IPL too, when Bhuvneshwar gets one of the new stars, a Johnny-come-lately hard-hitter, his celebration doesn't have the angst of a veteran who grudges the success and riches of the newbies

ping from the corner of his mouth when he slept — a clear sign of a thoroughly exhausted person. These were nuggets mentioned in passing with no effort to exaggerate his ordeal from his early days. In his part of the world, the industrial town of Meerut, they call Bhuvneshwar a karmath cricketer—a player with a great work-ethic and firm believer of karma and not the hype-industry.

Bhuvneshwar comes across as a laid-back cricketer but that's misleading, like his bowling. Watch his eyes when he runs in to bowl — fully focused on the target, tiny balls of fire burn at the very center of his pupils when he towers over the stumps, arches his back, and unleashes the ball exactly where he wants. Every time he has the ball in his hand, he seems to be in a zone, his brain ticking constantly to spot a weakness in the batsman in front. His goal is to dismiss the batsman, nothing else. No ugly send-off or a sledge to vent out the anger or even an over-the-top celebration to tell the batsman that he was better on the day.

Thinking bowler

When he got Tendulkar, he hung his head, as if to offer an apology to Paaji. At Lord's, when he knocked back Ben Stokes's stump to take his fifth, all he could manage was a mild fist-pump. In the IPL, too, when he gets one of the new stars, a Johnny-come-lately hard-hitter, his celebration doesn't have the angst of a veteran who grudges the success and riches of the newbies. Once he has beaten

their defense, he is on his own, flying on the turf, celebrating his victory and not the batsman's defeat. His face betrays the satisfaction of a thinking bowler who has cracked the code to pin down the modern T20 smasher.

In an RCB video, when asked to compare Suryavanshi & Co. to past batsmen, he shares a secret that gives hope that all is not lost for the bowlers. "They (new-age T20 batsmen) are fearless. They don't think about what the conditions are and what the situation is. They take on the bowlers. That is also the reason batsmen of the past are more mature and read the situation and conditions better than these guys," he says.

While lesser bowlers get intimidated by the massive back lift and the bats moving like a golf swing, Bhuvneshwar sees an opening. A classical swing bowler, with immaculate control over the line and length, the ever-evolving bowler bowls lengths that force batsmen to move their feet—something today's T20

batsmen aren't used to.

By an indiscernible adjustment of the thumb on the ball, he has it on a string. He got Arya out with a ball pitched at a length that was beyond his reach; the extra bounce that he gets from bending the back at the last minute resulted in a mis-hit. Prabhsimran was foxed by a ball pitched on a Test match length, swung wide on the off-side and moved further away after pitching. By habit he swung and edged behind. Rizvi couldn't read the length and got bowled.

Bhuvi the conjurer has been playing the young batsmen this season. As he said, they weren't reading the conditions, situation, or the bowler who had Tendulkar for a duck and is a Lord's hero.

Here's a humble request to those punch-drunk on the success of this IPL's young six-hitting machine—spare a thought for an equally successful crafty old-timer. If your fingers are hurting from applauding Suryavanshi all season, deliver a slow-clap ovation to Bhuvneshwar.



Celebrate
the final
with a feast of
flavours from
Amul Ice Cream
and get
10% off*

Frostik Gold
70 mL / ₹45*

Chocolate
Browine
1 L / ₹230*

Pan Nawabi
1 L / ₹215*

Caramel Chocolate Gold
1 L / ₹260*

King Alphonso Gold
1 L / ₹260*

Rajbhog
1 L / ₹300*

Falooda
1 L / ₹300*

Indulge in the delicious range of Amul Ice Cream.

BIG HITS

FAN FAVOURITES



Tiramisu Gold
1 L / ₹350*



Tender coconut
1 L / ₹275*



Double Sundae
Choco Almond
'N' Kesar Badam
1 L / ₹230*



Butterscotch
Gold
1 L / ₹260*



Tutti Frutti
Gold
1 L / ₹260*



Choco Maltino
1 L / ₹300*



Fruit 'N' Nut
Fantasy
1 L / ₹230*



Cheese n Cherry
Sundae
1 L / ₹300*



Ice Malai
Mango
500 mL / ₹180*



Strawberry Magic
Sundae
1 L / ₹215*



Cookies N Cream
Gold
1 L / ₹260*



Choco Crackle
1 L / ₹250*



Roasted Almond
1 L / ₹300*



Berry Dazzle
1 L / ₹300*



Moroccan Dry Fruit
1 L / ₹300*



Shahi Kulfi
1 L / ₹300*

Amul
ICE CREAM

OFFICIAL ICE CREAM PARTNER



CODE MI10



CODE KKR10



CODE DC10

Enjoy the final with

10%
DISCOUNT*

on Amul Ice Cream.



CODE GT10



CODE RR10



CODE PK10



CODE LSG10

ORDER FROM OUR OFFICIAL Q-COMM PARTNERS



#Offer valid till 31st May 2026 (during match hours of the teams mentioned above). Conditions apply. Offer valid in select markets and on selected flavours.



*Creative Visualisation.

*MRP (Incl. of all taxes)



‘For me, the past is very vivid’

Ruskin Bond on turning 92, his new book and why he can’t stop writing

Shape of Momo’s
Tribeny Rai on the
politics of life



Cricketer Vaibhav Sooryavanshi at 15 has proved that it takes more than a village to raise a champion. With hand-eye balance and powerful bat-swing, his game has a fearful symmetry that has cricket’s greats applauding the ‘new six machine’

Sandip G

A CENTURY-OLD temple comes first, then the house, then the cricketing shrine. A sharp deviation past the signage that marks the entry into Tajpur block in Samastipur district, Bihar, breaks into a narrow rugged path, its tarred flesh receding at the edges, stops at the temple. During the annual festival, thousands flock to the Shiva temple inside the canopied plot. The house on the edge of the temple is modest and unfenced; the first floor gleams in bright pink, matching the shirt colour of the locality’s most famous resident, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, who is shattering records like breaking chalks in a classroom.

Hugging the house, separated by translucent metallic sheets, is a rectangular cage that resembles a freight container. It’s the cricketing shrine, where Vaibhav spent hours honing his strokes. A set of plastic stumps are intact. One end is a concrete surface, without a crack. The other end is turf, the black soil layer whipping up dust and debris when a breeze sweeps by. During the pandemic, his father Sanjeev and relatives laboured for nearly a month to set up the initial structure, so that his practice would not lag.

Even when Vaibhav is not around, his relatives and boys in the neighbourhood tend to the pitches, as though it is a holy spot. “It’s an emotional place for Vaibhav. Even after he has become a star, he practises here when he is around,” says uncle Pintu Singh. “With him, the atmosphere becomes vibrant. The chats, banter, the stories, they would go on,” he adds. The boys in the neighbourhood would pass by, hoping to catch a glimpse of him. Some of them have bowled to him, some idolise him. One of them, Munna, is a helper in a nearby photocopy shop. “I am 25, used to play club cricket and consider myself a decent off-spinner. I clearly remember getting him out bowled, because it was the only time I had bowled him!”

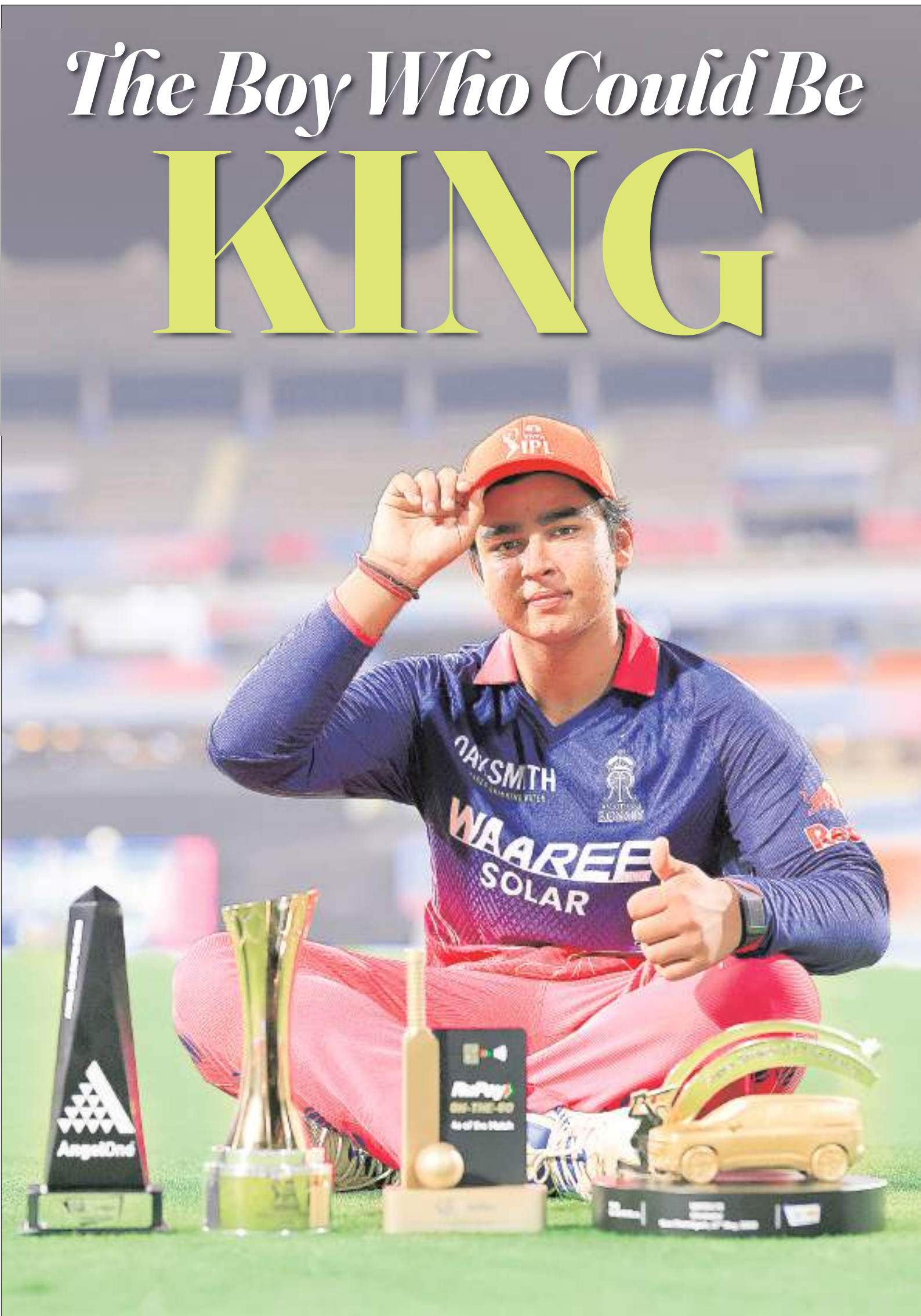
The sweet sound of leather on wood is the siren that blares the news of Vaibhav’s arrival. “Ours is a quiet village, so you hear every sound in the vicinity. Harvest time, it’s the sound of tractors. So when Vaibhav is around, you hear the sound of him hitting the ball,” says Shrikant Jha, a local resident and a freelance journalist. “At first, it seemed strange like someone pelting stones at your wall, because most of us have not even seen a real cricket ball in our life. Only on television,” he adds. “Even cable television, internet and mobile connectivity are recent arrivals. It’s only in the last 15-20 years that we started getting a stable electricity connection. We were not quite backward but were stuck in the past. Now, we have the future of cricket,” he says.

Now, between the temple and the cricketing shrine, the locals have a little deity. “Only that we watch him on TV than in real life,” says Shrikant.

THE BOSS Baby. Mr Universe. These are epithets bestowed upon Vaibhav Sooryavanshi after he broke the record six haul of Chris Gayle, the Universe Boss in the Indian Premier League (IPL). The Jamaican smacked 59 maximums in 2012; Vaibhav’s six-metre had nudged 65 (until the second qualifier). Gayle, his IPL days long gone, feted him: “What a phenomenal player Vaibhav is. Great entertainment young man! New Six machine,” Gayle wrote on X.

He hits like a machine, a programmable six-hitting machine rather. The frequency is bewildering. He has struck one every fourth ball; Gayle, the most voracious six-hitter of all time, swiped one every ninth ball. Vaibhav’s sixes come in all sorts, through drives, cuts, pulls, slogs, and ramps. He hasn’t spared the deadliest and the most decorated fast bowlers. This season, he has pillaged Jasprit Bumrah, Pat Cummins, Kagiso Rabada and Josh Hazlewood, the four great all-format bowlers of the era. His IPL career is just 33 games old but he has the highest strike in the world in the shortest format (221.6).

The greats of the game have not stopped



DEEPAK MALIK/CREIMAS FOR IPL

showering superlatives. Kevin Pietersen, who signed a jersey from him, raved on X: “Sooryavanshi is an absolute joke! My goodness.” He invited him to his show *Switch*, where the 15-year-old outlined his big dream: “I want to score a double hundred in T20s. If I bat all 20 overs, I can.” He uttered those words with a Buddha-like detachment. He has a poise that belies his age.

Sachin Tendulkar was quick to point out the finesse of his technique. “Vaibhav’s bat swing has been outstanding. What’s even more remarkable is how beautifully he clears his front foot to create room for balls aimed at his legs. This freedom allows him to play the way he does,” he posted on X after his 97 against Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH).

One of Vaibhav’s coaches who had worked with him at Royals, Zubin Bharucha, says that his hands and technique remind him of Brian Lara, the 15-year-old’s idol, and the head of Tendulkar. “The boy is very aware of his game. Such a sharp head,” Bharucha observes. He has the same relationship with time and space like most great batsmen; a kind of fly-vision, the ability to strip it all in slow motion. The fundamentals are strong to suggest that his bubble will not burst. Eyes, balance, hand, power, bat-swing, dreamy contact — his game has a fearful symmetry.

His batting is not yet a finished product — a frightening thought for the bowlers’ union. Imperfections would be ironed out, the repertoire enhanced. His Royals coach Kumar Sangakkara has just one piece of advice: “Just enjoy the game.” He certainly is,



PHOTOS: SANDIP G



THE ROYAL ABODE
(From top)
Vaibhav Sooryavanshi; his home in Samastipur, Bihar; his practising space adjoining the house

and he is making watching the game enjoyable too. But the world around him is careful to not overburden him with hype and attention. The dizzying success has those around him worried if the pressure and hype would crush him. His parents are prohibited from talking to the media during the IPL or any other tournament; the beeline of advertisers queuing up for him has been politely turned away. This is an age where most teenagers of his age would be busy preparing for board exams. Outside the arena, he is like a careworn teenager, polishing off ice creams, experimenting with different cuisines, bantering with his teammates and switching off from the sport.

Heavy is the head that wears the crown. But Vaibhav is willing to wear it. In the few interactions he had with the media, often during the post-match presentation ceremony, he has shown a level of maturity that some sportsmen take ages to develop. He is neither nervous nor over-excited with a microphone in hand. The words are firm and clear. His method, he said at the presentation ceremony, are uncomplicated. “I just think about who the bowlers are on the opposition team, how I can face them on this wicket, how big the boundaries are, just these kinds of things. I just try to stay positive with my intent. When I do that, the bowlers stay under pressure. So I try to continue that and dominate the game,” he said. The pre-game visualisation reminded South Africa great AB de Villiers of Matthew Hayden.

It’s untrue that he is too young to feel the pressure. It’s just that he is utterly fearless.

His teammate Dhruv Jurel threw light on his method. “The best thing about Vaibhav is that he doesn’t plan anything,” Jurel says. “Because he practises a lot and he always backs himself. That’s what he does every time he goes out and plays. He backs himself. He doesn’t even have a shadow of doubt that ‘I am not able to do it.’”

V AIBHAV’S EMERGENCE has to be viewed through the social and cultural milieu of his village and region. The Sooryavanshis are landed and have been running a fairly successful jewellery business, not extremely prosperous but enough to meet ends. The surroundings, though, were different. The town had just a cluster of basic shops, the *kirana* and *dawai* stalls. Mobile recharging and repairing shops have sprung up. “Most rely on agriculture but in the ’90s, we had extreme weather conditions and people started to migrate,” says Shrikant.

A sporting career was unimaginable in Samastipur before Vaibhav burst on the scene. “Cricket was no more than a distraction or a pastime, which the men from cities played,” says Shrikant. But in Mumbai, where Sanjeev landed with Bollywood dreams at the age of 19, the city’s devotion for the game left a lasting impression on him. He did odd jobs like working as a bouncer at a nightclub in Colaba, as a janitor in the city’s port. In spare time, he rushed to the Oval Maidan. “There, young kids playing cricket would be wearing pads and helmets. A few of them were so good that one could watch them for hours. I decided then that be it a son or a daughter, I will make my children cricketers,” Sanjeev had told *The Indian Express* in the past.

When Sanjeev ventured into realising his dreams, he stumbled onto practical difficulties. Samastipur, the district headquarters, had humble facilities. He took him to the most reputed coach in the town, Brajesh Jha, a former district and club cricketer, teaching kids informally. Brajesh was reluctant, because Vaibhav was barely eight and looked even younger. “But what I saw surprised me. Vaibhav had natural movements, was flexible even though he was chubby and learned everything fast,” the coach says. Like a blotting paper, he would stench.

The academy, in Patel Field near the Samastipur bus stand, was roughly 15 km away. Travel would consume anywhere from 30-90 minutes depending on weather and the state of the road. In monsoon, the drains overflowed; in peak hours, traffic jams were frequent; heavy showers would damage roads, months would pass before they were repaired. “Sometimes, we had to wait till the government changed,” says Ram Chaudhary, careening his rickety electric rickshaw past a pothole in the middle of the road. He rattles out a local proverb: “The roads look straight but the routes are crooked.” It fits snugly with Vaibhav’s narrative too.

Shortly, Sanjeev realised that his son should be raised in a more competitive environment, lest he be wasted in Tajpur’s obscurity. So every weekend, he took him to the GenNext Academy in Patna. The 90-km ride, often in ramshackle buses, changed his destiny. Patna was more competitive and aggressive; there was no consideration for his age and the infrastructure was better. His coach Manish Ojha, a former Ranji player, threw him to boys twice his age. He didn’t flinch. He noticed the same trait as Brajesh did. The ability to absorb details fast. “You just teach him something, and the next moment you see the change in his game. I don’t remember teaching him something more than once: he would pick it up and not only practise but perfect it in matches. He always had this ability to play according to the demands of the ball or the situation and come up with a perfect response,” says Manish.

With stunned eyes, Manish saw him blossom and shatter bowlers and records without fuss. “He is easily 3-4 years ahead of his age. Not just in his batting but also in his mind. He is disciplined, does not get carried away and works really hard in the nets,” says Manish. Brajesh remembers the difficulty in dragging him out of the nets. “We had just one pitch and he batted for hours. No one would get him out and the others wouldn’t get to bat,” he says.

In the Sooryavanshi household, the nights were short and the days long. “Whatever I am today, wherever I stand, it’s because of them. My mother would sleep at 11 at night and wake up at 2 in the morning so that she could cook for me. My father quit his job, woke up early in the morning. My elder brother took over my father’s responsibilities. It was tough at home but my father insisted, ‘You’ll make it,’” Vaibhav recalled in a podcast.

The word spread in Patna’s cricket circles about the boy who is humbling men twice his age. The turning point came when someone informed former Jharkhand cricketer and Rajasthan Royals’ scout Samar Qadri about him. He decided to have a look, watched him closely, bowled at him and, at the end of day, excitedly informed the team management about the boy who could be king. He was 13 when Royals snaffled him. He made his debut at 14 and at 15, the world is gazing at him with wonder.

Some make age look like just a number; some make it look like a wonder. Tajpur now has a holy trinity of temple, cricketing shrine and a deity.

This is the forgotten story of Kachaudi Gali, a century-old folk song, which documents the anguish of women during the migration in Purvanchal, when men from the region were shipped to present-day Myanmar under British rule

From Kachaudi Gali to Coke Studio

Suanshu Khurana

FOR THE better part of its existence, the catalogue of Coke Studio Bharat has remained closer to mainstream artists and indie music than to regional folk traditions. After struggling to find a firm footing with its previous editions, its latest release, titled *Kachaudi Gali*, is a marked shift in approach with a soundscape rooted in authentic folk. The show has brought a melody from the bylanes of Varanasi in the delicate cadence of Bhojpuri.

Sung by playback singer Rekha Bhardwaj and Utpal Udit, a folk singer from Bihar, and put together by music producer Nishant Nagar, with the distinct Purabiya lilt in tow, *Kachaudi Gali* has attempted to resurrect a time and story that once was and a song that has survived for over a century through oral legacy. It opens with the line *Sejia pelote kala naag, Kachaudi Gali sooni kaila balamu* (On the bed, a black serpent creeps slowly, Kachaudi Gali waits silent, missing your glow), which metaphorically speaks of a woman's desire for her beloved who's migrated to Mirzapur, a major industrial and trading hub back in the day, where many men from Purvanchal (eastern Uttar

Pradesh) went to work.

Varanasi's Kachaudi Gali, which still survives, is a narrow lane tucked away in an area called Lahore Tola near Kashi Vishwanath Temple. The street got its name from the famed kachaudis fried in large *kadhais* and was once a vibrant hub for freedom fighters, academics and artistes, who would gather to discuss politics and culture over chai. Also, unlike the usual innuendo-laden

A forgotten Bhojpuri folk ballad revives histories of love, migration and longing

Bhojpuri music, the song highlights the tender and eloquent idiom of Bhojpuri folk tradition.

Its authorship and popularity

Likely to have been written and composed in the 19th century, the *kajri* (a folk tradition sung in the monsoon) emerged from the ache of separation of a woman, possibly a courtesan from Banaras. The piece is also sometimes called *Kajri*

Gauhar Jaan. But it was not written or sung by the famous Gauhar Jaan of Calcutta, the first Indian musician to record her voice commercially on the gramophone. As legend goes, this is the story of another Gauhar Jaan who lived in Dalmandi in Banaras. "It is believed that she used to go out in her palanquin in Kachaudi Gali and would pass by a man named Aslam, a patriot, near the *chowk*. There was no conversation but she was enamoured by him and fell deeply in love. One day, he disappeared. On asking around, she was told he had gone to Mirzapur to work, hence its mention in the song. Much later, she came to know that the British had deported him to Rangoon," says Delhi-based Nirala Bidesia, an expert on Bhojpuri music and literature. He adds that the lines *Hathwa mein hoti jo hamare kartariya, baha dete gorvan ke khoon* (If a blade had rested within my hand/ I would have shed the blood of the White man), come from that sense of wanting to avenge the injustice of her beloved being taken away to Rangoon (present day Myanmar). "Folk is an oral legacy, new lines and contexts get added with time," says Bidesia.

Another story around the song is of it being a *Girmitiya geet* (a song about the migration of the indentured labourers trans-

LOVE INTERRUPTED
Rekha Bhardwaj; Utpal Udit and Nishant Nagar in *Kachaudi Gali*

ported overseas). Much of the migration was also to find some work for small wages. The song has been associated with this phase.

Shehnai stalwart Ustad Bismillah Khan used to play this *kajri* in his concerts and would often say that he had heard it since he was a child in Banaras. His adopted daughter, Soma Ghosh, would perform this with him in numerous concerts. Folk singer Malini Awasthi has also sung the *kajri* and has mentioned the Gauhar Jaan story in her memoir *Chandan Kiwad*, in which she has traced the stories behind the songs.

The Purvanchali migration

Folk music has remained one of the purest forms of storytelling, where melody, rhythm and lyrics are often used to document life. Using poetry and song as a narrative tool, the song moves further with the lines *Aehi Mirzapur se udal jahajiya, Sayiyaan chal gayin Rangoon ho...* (From Mirzapur, a plane took flight, My beloved has gone away to Rangoon).

This is a reference to the continuous migration of thousands of men from Purvanchal, stretching across eastern Uttar Pradesh and parts of Bihar, which began during the Anglo-Burmese War of the 19th

century. Ordinary citizens were forcefully sent by the Britishers to Rangoon or Burma as sepoy. From 1824 to 1937, Burma was under British rule. Even though the song uses the phrase '*udal jahajwa*', these men were often sent aboard crowded steamships that would depart from what was once Calcutta. "Earlier, it was *chhalal jahajwa*. With changing times, *chhalal* became *udal*," says Bidesia.

Of the 40,000 troops, 15,000 perished due to malaria, dysentery and fighting amid terrain thick with jungles. While the war ended in 1885, the migration continued through the early 1900s as a result of British colonial policies, which administered Burma as a province of India. The war brought with it massive economic instability and Burma offered prospects for employment in port cities. These men worked in docks, rice mills and as manual labourers. Burma was also a transit point for the British system for Kaala Paani, the exile and imprisonment of Indian prisoners in the Cellular Jail in the Andamans.

"Even today, many people who came back from Burma, use 'Burma' as their surname. This refreshed version of the song has brought age-old Bhojpuri folk and the historical context to the fore," says Bidesia.

'Politics is also in how you lead your life'

Director Tribeny Rai joins Zoya Akhtar, Reema Kagti and Payal Kapadia to talk about her debut feature *Shape of Momo*, indie filmmaking, theatrical culture, the need to nurture writers and politics in cinema

Alaka Sahani

AFTER TRAVELLING to several international festivals and winning accolades, Tribeny Rai's *Shape of Momo* released in theatres on May 29. The Nepali-language film, set in a Sikkim village, is distributed theatrically by Rana Daghubati's Spirit Media. It is supported by Zoya Akhtar, Reema Kagti and Payal Kapadia, who have come on board as executive producers.

The film follows the story of 32-year-old Bishnu (Gaumaya Gurung) who returns to her ancestral Himalayan village after quitting her city job, only to face multiple family pressures and rigid societal expectations. At home are her grandmother, who hopes her son will return from Dubai; her mother, eager to see Bishnu settled and married; and her pregnant sister Junu, who has come seeking refuge due to tensions at her in-laws' home. Even as Bishnu navigates expectations, she must choose to conform or forge her own path.

In a conversation about the film, Zoya, Reema, Tribeny and Payal, who joined via Zoom from France, talk about women's stories and creating room for independent voices. Excerpts:

What made Zoya, Reema and Payal join hands to support the release



like. It is engaging with all kinds of movies. I would like an audience which encourages both niche and tentpole movies.

Recently, a bunch of filmmakers has been throwing their weight behind independent movies such as *Stolen*, *Humans in the Loop* and *Sabar Bonida*?

Reema: We are all selfish and at the end of the day, we want to watch these movies on screen. That's why everyone steps up to make that happen. To have a thriving industry, we can't have just one kind of movie release. The Indian audience has an appetite for a lot more.

After the statements made at Berlinale that cinema should stay away from politics, the Cannes Film Festival has made its leaning toward politics evident while selecting its winners and making certain statements. What's your take?

Payal: Cinema can't be devoid of politics. You see that in *Shape of Momo*, which can be seen as supremely political. Politics is not always associated with parties. It's also about how you lead your life and the choices you make.

Zoya: You can take any film, including one that does not have anything overtly political, yet you will get a sense of their politics, their views of women or how they view class conflicts. You can understand a person's value system from their work.

Reema: No art can exist in a vacuum. It's all political. If you are consciously omitting any political commentary in your art or writing, that itself is a political choice.

Tribeny: In an initial interview, I had said that in this film, 'personal becomes political'. When you watch the film, you know my stand in life.

This enables many filmmakers of India, especially from my region (Northeast) to tell stories like this.

Your protagonist is a 32-year-old woman who does not make conventional choices.

Tribeny: I wanted this kind of representation on screen. While watching movies, I did not find a protagonist like her. Since society expects us to behave in a certain way, we don't cheer for a female protagonist unless she is righteous like a mother who feeds her son before eating herself. Social realities are quite different for women like us, who want to make their choices, I really wanted to project those experiences.

We have big-budget movies like *Dhurandhar* making waves while *Shape of Momo* is now in cinemas. Should the endeavour also be to draw the audience?

Reema: Between *Dhurandhar* and *Shape of Momo*, they cover the entire spectrum. To me, that's how a healthy industry looks



The daring of a moment's surrender

From sleeping through Carnatic vocal classes to redefining the indie Malayalam music scene, Aron Kollassani Selestin aka Aksomaniac on *Amsham* that ranked No 4 on Spotify's Viral 50 Global charts

Anusree KC

WHEN COVID hit in 2020, many Class XII students were navigating online learning. Some were sleeping through their classes, some were playing online games but Aron Kollassani Selestin (*pictured*) was on the piano. "I would prop my iPad on top of my piano, login for online classes with the video off while I played. I didn't care much about my academics at that time," he says with a laugh and not an ounce of regret. "Though eventually, I studied and got good marks," he adds.

Aron, better known by his stage name, Aksomaniac, is singer-songwriter and producer from Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, basking in the success of his viral track *Amsham* which released last month. The track was ranked No 4 on Spotify's Viral 50 Global charts earlier in May, with over 15 million streams on Spotify and more than 13 million views on YouTube.

The track, which has been viral on Instagram since then, seamlessly transitions across genres such as R&B and hip-hop. With verses in Malayalam and Tamil, the song also features indie artists M.H.R., Bhumi and Circle Tone. "With music, I have an incentive to understand my language better," he says.

Amsham was meant as a love song. "I started out as a track to tease my partner," he says. Aron had been thinking about the mythological figures of Manmadhan or Kamadevan — beings who awaken love in others but are denied it themselves. He says, "Manmadhan embodies a cruel paradox. I first encountered him in the 1991 Malayalam film, *Njan Gandharvan*." The movie gave him what he needed. *Amsham* thus became an attempt to ease into the idea of love and bonding. "You have to push the story forward in steps and make people more comfortable slowly," says the 22-year-old.

Aron was the reluctant school boy who had Carnatic vocal and tabla classes, which held no interest for the then seven-year-old. But the turning point came when his music teacher realised he had an instinct for music. She suggested that he learn the keyboard and piano. He was surprised when his family agreed to buy him a piano because it cost them a lot. They had to take a small loan for it. But that changed things for him. "A piano is a large instrument. You walk toward it, sit in front of it, and it's like a form of surrender when you practise. I started practising for nine hours every single day," he adds.

It was like music had become his life breath. "I was listening to three or four albums a day, like having three meals. I felt like I had missed out and was catching up on lost

time," says Aron, who by ninth grade had started writing poetry too. He did enrol for Computer Science in TKM College of Engineering, Thiruvananthapuram, but dropped out in the third year to pursue music. Last year, he moved to Mumbai.

Building *Amsham* with M.H.R or Mohammed Hussain Rahman (popular hip-hop and EDM producer from Malappuram, known for popular tracks such as *Malabari*

Banger and *Munthirichar*) was not always easy. "I didn't like the first drop he made, and he didn't like the drop I made," he says. So they sat together and listened to the song until something better came out. "I love that disagreement. I am someone who loves disagreement and the way it allows a person to grow." The name Aksomaniac comes from AKS, his initials, fused with his mother's name Soma in the middle, finished off with "maniac" that he already had on his Instagram handle. "There isn't an alignment between the music and the name," he admits, "But keeping it is a way of validating that child who was doing cover songs back then."

That child isn't far from the person on this call.

You have to push the story forward in steps, and make people more comfortable slowly
ARON KOLLASSANI SELESTIN



Heena Khandelwal

CHEF AT HOME

FOR MANY of us, one of the earliest experiences of immersive cooking was a gentleman at a roadside stall chopping vegetables at startlingspeed, throwing them into a large wok on high flame, adding boiled noodles and sauces — green, red, soy — in quick succession. Chef Ajay Chopra was among those wide-eyed witnesses — a young boy growing up in Alwar, Rajasthan, before his family moved to Sonipat, Haryana, when he was nine.

The noodles at the Chinese cart, across Alwar, Sonipat and, later, Delhi continued to be his soul food. And decades later, it still tickles something in him. So naturally, he said, “I am going to make you a Delhi-style desi chowmein.”

Now a household name, courtesy *MasterChef* and a YouTube channel with over a million followers, reaching here, however, wasn’t easy. He was studying PCMB (Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, Biology) in Class 12, when he was intrigued by a friend’s career choice of hotel management.

Realising the need for multiple income sources during Covid, Chopra launched his YouTube channel. Today, it has over a million followers

He failed the entrance exam, enrolled in BSc instead, then learnt about the IHM Pusa exam. “I cleared it. But my mother would say, ‘*Bawarchi banega, karchi chalayega*.’” He went anyway in 1995 and, by his second year, he knew he would be a chef. He graduated with a gold medal but no job in sight.

After several rejections, he joined TGFIF in Delhi in 1998, spent six months shredding cabbage, slicing cheese and packing pasta. Later that year, he received a call at 5pm from The Oberoi Cecil in Shimla, asking him to be present the next morning at nine. He borrowed a coat, boarded an overnight bus, bathed in warm water a kind nurse arranged at a Christian hospital nearby, arrived at Cecil, only to be told that ‘Mr. Oberoi was in-house.’ They would have to reschedule.

“I said, ‘I don’t think I can come back again... I have bunked many times for interviews. This is my last bunk, after this I will be thrown out. So if you are giving me a job, I will stay back. If not, I might as well go.’” The manager asked him to wait. Chopra slept on the

The Real Chow Man

How the street-style chowmein and a Covid-induced YouTube channel paved the way for Ajay Chopra’s rise as one of India’s top celebrity chefs



SANKHADEEP BANERJEE

table. “At 11.30 am, the manager returned. ‘Should we do the interview?’ and half an hour later, I had the job.”

He spent a year-and-a-half at Cecil, where, in his words, for the first time, a chef took a commis and genuinely prepared him for OCLD (Oberoi Centre of Learning and Development). Without it, the path to sous-chef takes eight to nine years. Through it, only two years. Then came London. Before he arrived, he had been cooking at Saffron at JW Marriott, serving Akshay Kumar, Amitabh Bachchan and Hrithik Roshan. “But in London, there were complaints every day.” He called chef Atul Kochhar, who has been working in London since 1994. “He said, ‘buddy, when in Rome, do as Romans

LIGHTS CAMERA ACTION
Chef Ajay Chopra shooting a cooking video at his studio in Mumbai

do. These *goras* love their meat but they want to taste the flavour of the meat.’ So I put the sauce, made it more intense, and cooked the lamb chops separately with some spices. That gave me a spark — How can Indian food be seen differently? The thought for modern Indian food actually started then.”

London was also nurturing in ways that had nothing to do with food. He and his wife Amrita had married only a year before, in 2006. “We were discovering a new country together. That togetherness was the foundation of our marriage.” That she has been his partner — at home, in the kitchen and in the consultancy business — is evident.

Back in India, while working with Marriott in 2010, a production house called.

MasterChef was coming to India. Three months of training followed. “It opened up my personality. I was an introvert. Today I have no inhibitions.” Post *MasterChef* (where he co-host and judge) came a series of culinary shows on television — *Hi Tea*, *Northern Flavours*, *Papad Pickles Aur Pyaala* among others. “Television opened something my hotel job would have never done. My wife prayed what seemed like an impossible prayer — Sunday offs. I told her, Sunday is the busiest day. But from 2015 onwards, for 11 years now, every Sunday is off.”

YouTube began at the very dining table in his house in Mumbai’s Kandivli during COVID. “Amrita would shoot with one phone in her hand, another on a side stand. My



RECIPE FOR VEG CHOWMEIN

INGREDIENTS

Noodles – 1 packet, Oil – 4 tbsp, Garlic (chopped) – 2 tbsp, Ginger & green chilli (chopped) – 1 tbsp, Onion (sliced) – ½ cup, Capsicum (juliennes) – ½ cup, Carrot (juliennes) – ¼ cup, Cabbage (shredded) – 1 cup, Soya sauce – 1 tsp, Red chilli sauce – 1 tsp, Schezwan sauce – 2 tbsp, Vinegar – 1 tsp, Black pepper powder – 1 tsp, MSG – 1 tsp, Spring onion (chopped) – 2 tbsp, Salt – to taste, water – as required

METHOD

TO COOK the noodles, bring water to a boil. Add salt and ½ tsp oil. Add the noodles and cook until 80–90 per cent done (slightly firm). Drain and spread on a plate. Toss with 1/2 tsp oil and let cool to prevent sticking

HEAT A wok on high flame. Add about 3 tsp oil. Add garlic, ginger and green chilli; sauté briefly. Add onions and toss for a few seconds. Add capsicum, carrot and cabbage. Stir-fry on high heat, keeping the vegetables slightly crunchy

NOW ADD the cooked noodles. Then add soya sauce, red chilli sauce, Schezwan sauce, vinegar, salt, black pepper, and MSG (if using). Toss well on high flame until evenly coated

ADD SPRING onions and give a final toss. Garnish with more spring onions and serve hot

team was my two kids.” The couple learnt editing together, bought a mic, then a camera, slowly understood lights and sound. “During COVID, restaurant consultants were the first to let go of. Our business went to a grinding halt. And we realised we needed multiple income sources,” says Chopra.

In the kitchen, he takes a thick-bottomed pan, adds a little oil, all the chopped vegetables, boiled noodles, sauces, salt, MSG, and stirs. “I like that it can be made in one pot and so quickly.” His kids arrive from school. He asks if they want noodles. “Not again,” they laugh. During the meal, the conversation turns to parenting — Amrita and Chopra are taking classes on it. Like always, they are on the same page.



Neil Patil

Founder, COO & CTO, Veena World
neil@veenaworld.com

I want to start with a question. Think about your last holiday, not the photos you posted, not the highlights reel you narrated to friends and family when you got back. Think about the other parts. The small, frustrating, sometimes absurd moments that filled the gap between arriving and actually enjoying yourself. Sound familiar?

Here is what I have come to realise after years of travelling, both personally and professionally: the gap between a holiday in our imagination and a holiday in reality is almost always filled with frustrating moments. Not the kind that ruin everything, not disaster-level chaos, but a steady drip of small, avoidable, sometimes hilarious things that erode the first day or two of a trip before the holiday finally finds its rhythm.

I wrote an article some time ago about flying frustrations, the four phases of a flight experience and how to navigate each one without losing your mind. The response was remarkable, because almost everyone, regardless of whether they fly once a year or once a month, had a story. A missed gate. A destroyed suitcase. A middle seat on a fourteen-hour flight next to someone who immediately wanted to have a conversation. And the thing is, more often than not, these frustrations don’t stop at the airport. They continue, right into the holiday itself.

So today, I want to talk about this, the holiday frustrations that we don’t discuss enough, because we’re too busy curating the good parts, and what I have personally learned to do about them.

The Planning Trap

It starts before you even leave home. In fact, it starts the moment you decide to go somewhere. Planning a holiday today means dealing with information overload: multiple booking platforms showing different prices for the same hotel, reviews that contradict each other, and recommendations from friends who visited years ago and whose

favourite restaurant has since shut down. I have, as part of my job, spent entire evenings researching a destination, bookmarked a dozen hotels, and closed my laptop having booked nothing, paralysed by two options that were essentially identical.

The advice problem is real. You mention you are going somewhere and within a day your phone is full of WhatsApp messages from people recommending places, half of which are outdated or based on a completely different kind of trip. I now ask for recommendations from one or two people whose travel sensibility I actually trust and who have been there recently. That’s it.

The other trap is over-scheduling. When you have spent a significant amount on flights and accommodation, there is a natural urge to fill every hour and see everything. What actually happens is that you exhaust yourself by Day Two trying to execute a plan that was never realistic. Some of the best moments on any trip come from having no plan at all, and that requires deliberately leaving space for it.

The Hotel Surprise

Hotel photos are optimistic at best. The wide-angle lens, the carefully chosen lighting, the one corner of the room that photographs well. I have checked into rooms that looked spacious and bright in the listing and turned out to be neither. ‘Sea views’ that require you to lean out the window at a specific angle. ‘City views’ that face a car park. Heta has become very good at identifying the tell-tale signs in hotel photos before we book, and she is almost always right about what we will actually find.

The check-in time problem is one that doesn’t get talked about enough. You land at 9am, check-in is at 2pm, and you now have several hours in a new city with your luggage and nowhere to leave it. I now either book the previous night’s room if I know I am arriving early, or I email the hotel in advance to ask about early check-in. It works more often than most people expect, and the alternative, dragging bags around all morning, is simply not worth it.

There is a third thing worth mentioning: the negative review you chose to ignore. Every hotel listing has at least one review mentioning noise, ongoing construction, or thin walls, and almost every traveller has at some point decided it probably won’t be an issue, and then spent a night discovering that



it very much is. I read those reviews carefully now and take them seriously. If multiple people mention the same problem, it is a problem.

The Sightseeing Ambush

This is where holidays get properly humbling. You have done the research, you know what you want to see, and you have a rough order in mind. Day One: the famous old town. Day Two: the museum everyone talks about. Day Three: the viewpoint at sunset. You feel prepared. And then the destination politely dismantles your plan. The museum is closed on Tuesdays. It is Tuesday.

The landmark under renovation. The attraction closed for a local holiday you didn’t know about. The viewpoint accessible only by a trail that, per a sign at the trailhead, is currently closed for maintenance. The old town market that runs only on weekends, and you are there on a Thursday. None of these things are disasters. All of them are entirely avoidable, and yet almost all of us fall prey to at least one of them at some point during a holiday.

And then there is the queue problem. The world’s most visited attractions are popular for good reason. They are genuinely extraordinary. But between you and the extraordinary thing is often a line of fellow human beings stretching far enough to make you question your life choices. I have stood in queues at the Vatican, at the Eiffel Tower, at various temples and palaces and natural wonders, watching the minutes tick by,

calculating whether I will make it in before closing time. Timed entry tickets, booked in advance, have transformed my sightseeing life. Not every attraction offers them, but for the major ones, the Colosseum in Rome, the Uffizi in Florence, Machu Picchu, the Louvre, they are almost always available, often for the same price as a walk-in ticket, and the difference in experience is enormous. You walk in. Other people are still in the queue. You feel, briefly, like you have figured something out.

The other sightseeing reality that guidebooks somehow never fully prepare you for is distances. Google Maps will tell you that two attractions are a twelve-minute walk apart. What it will not tell you is that the walk is uphill, on uneven cobblestones, in the full afternoon sun, and that you are wearing shoes that were entirely reasonable this morning and are now your enemies. I now wear comfortable shoes every single day of a holiday, without exception, regardless of what we are doing in the evening. It is a small decision that has had an outsized impact on my enjoyment of every trip since I made it.

The Food Gamble

This one is deeply personal to me, because I care about food probably more than I should. When I travel, eating well is not optional. It is, for me, one of the primary reasons to go somewhere. The food of a place tells you something about its history, its geography, its culture, and its people that no museum

can match. A bowl of pho in Hanoi, a plate of fresh seafood in a coastal town in Spain, a wood-fired pizza in Naples. These are experiences I look forward to for weeks in advance and remember for years afterwards.

Which makes the bad food experiences sting a little more than they probably should. Here is a situation I have been in more times than I would like: you have done your research, you have a list of restaurants you want to try, and you arrive at the first one to find a ninety-minute wait with no reservations accepted. Fair enough. You didn’t book. You move to the second option. Also full. By this point it is 9pm, you are tired, and you end up at a place nearby that looked acceptable from the outside. The food is fine. Not bad. Just fine. And you sit there eating fine food, knowing that somewhere in this city there is a perfect meal happening without you.

I pre-book at least one restaurant per day now. Not every meal. I like the spontaneity of wandering and finding something that looks good. But one meal per day, the one I am most looking forward to, gets a reservation. It is a small habit that has removed more frustration than almost anything else on this list.

The other food frustration worth naming honestly is the vegetarian problem. Heta is a vegetarian, and while the world has made enormous progress on this front, major cities everywhere now have excellent vegetarian options, there are still destinations, restaurants, and airlines where being vegetarian is treated as an unusual preference that nobody quite planned for. I have had the experience of being handed a menu and finding that the vegetarian section consists of french fries and a salad. I have pre-ordered vegetarian meals on long flights for Heta only to be told, somewhere over the middle of an ocean, that they have run out. I now always confirm our meal selections before boarding, and when travelling to destinations where vegetarian food requires more effort to find, I do that research seriously before we arrive, not optimistically on my phone at lunchtime when we are already hungry.

The Group Dynamic

Travelling with family or a group of friends has its own category of frustrations that have nothing to do with the destination. Someone wants to sleep in; someone wants to leave at 8am. Someone wants to shop; someone wants to sightsee. No one is ever hungry at the

ADVERTORIAL

same time. The lunch decision alone can consume forty-five minutes of a perfectly good travel day.

The one thing I have found that genuinely helps is building deliberate free time into the itinerary. A few hours each day, or at least one half-day, where everyone splits up and does their own thing. You reconvene for dinner with stories to tell and without the accumulated friction of trying to keep everyone happy all day. It sounds obvious, but most group trips never do this, and that is usually where the tension comes from.

And Yet, It’s Always Worth It

Despite everything I have described, the trips I remember most vividly are rarely the ones that went smoothly. They are the ones where something went sideways and we adapted. The restaurant that was full, so we ended up at a street stall that turned out to serve the best meal of the trip. The closed viewpoint that sent us down a different path entirely. The over-scheduled day that collapsed, and we spent the afternoon just sitting somewhere doing nothing, which, honestly, was exactly what we needed.

Frustrations are part of travel. Checklists help reduce them, but they won’t eliminate them. What they do is protect the parts of the holiday that matter most, so that when something unexpected does happen, you have the energy and the good humour to deal with it.

So, how many of these did you recognise from your last trip? And what have I missed? I would love to hear your frustrations and, more importantly, what you have learned to do about them. See you next week.

Email: travel@veenaworld.com
Toll-Free: 1800 313 5555
veenaworld.com



Stories that'll make you pack tonight!

Watch Now on Veena World's YouTube channel



VEENA WORLD
Travel. Explore. Celebrate Life.