

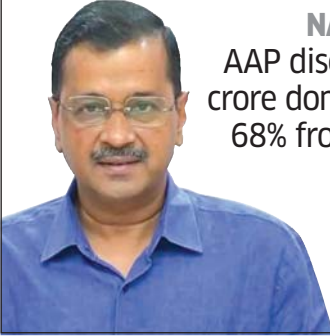
Ensure your
FREE copy
with Wednesday Edition

Largest circulated
Travel & Lifestyle magazine

PAGE 6

NATION

AAP discloses ₹12.1 crore donations, down 68% from last year



PAGE 10

LAW & JUSTICE

SC to review plea against Sohrabuddin encounter acquittals



PAGE 11

TECH/AIDE

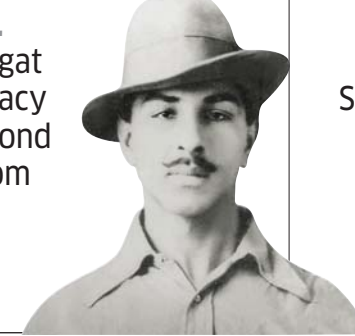
AdiVaani: Technology for the margins



PAGE 12

GLOBAL

What Bhagat Singh's legacy means beyond martyrdom



PAGE 15

SPORTS

India at Asiad: Silver for shooter Esha, runner Gulveer



SC steps in on women's safety in Capital

The court also sought scrutiny of fast-track and POCSO courts and sexual-offender databases

RAJESH KUMAR ■ New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday passed a slew of directions while taking cognisance of news reports of crimes against minor girls and women across the Delhi-NCR while directing the Delhi Police Commissioner to constitute dedicated police teams to conduct an immediate survey and inspection of vulnerable pockets. The SC directed the commissioner to constitute dedicated police teams for each police district, headed by an officer not below the rank of deputy superintendent of police within a period of four weeks. "The audit shall be based upon National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data, local intelligence, past and present complaints received, previous incidents and other objective indicators to identify locations prone to such crimes. These teams shall identify locations where poor lighting, lack of surveillance, insufficient patrolling, abandoned structures, poor access control or other deficiencies may increase the

Students during the Hum Azad Hain Solidarity March organised at the Delhi University North Campus on Monday

risk of crime. A district-wise vulnerability map shall be prepared and shared across adjoining police stations to ensure that information on recurring patterns of crime and habitual offenders is not confined to individual police-station jurisdictions," the Bench of Justices JB Pardiwala and K Vinod

Chandran said. The SC directed that appropriate patrolling and security arrangements shall be deployed at all identified public parks and vulnerable areas at all times, particularly during evening and early morning hours. A designated officer shall be responsible for each such

location, and the authorities shall prescribe a mechanism for periodic inspection, the SC said. "An immediate lighting and CCTV audit shall be carried out across all public parks and vulnerable zones to eliminate blind spots. Non-functional CCTV cameras and lighting infra-

structure shall be repaired or restored in an expeditious manner. Additional lights and CCTVs to be installed wherever inadequacy is sensed or reported by citizens.

A similar audit shall be undertaken in respect of Metro stations, bus stops, bus terminals, railway stations and other major public-transport facilities, particularly those falling within or adjoining identified vulnerable zones," it said. The Bench directed concerned authorities to utilise the existing citizen grievance-redressal mechanism, including the CM Jan Sunwai Portal, as an additional source of information for identifying deficiencies in public-safety infrastructure.

The SC also directed the registrar general of the Delhi High Court to submit within four weeks, comprehensive information regarding the present status and functioning of the fast track special courts and exclusive POCSO courts in Delhi.

CONTINUED ON >> P4

A traffic policeman issuing a fine for violation in Hyderabad. Representative image

WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

SC flags ₹20,000 crore in unpaid traffic fines

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday noted that States and Union Territories have a massive outstanding balance of ₹20,000 crore to recover towards unpaid traffic e-challans and suggested linking such challans to electricity bills to recover the amount.

A Bench of Justices JB Pardiwala and KV Viswanathan was informed that despite issuing a vast number of traffic challans, recovery of fines is minimal. The SC said it is not just sufficient to keep issuing e-challans and that recovery of fines is important.

"If people are not paying traffic challans, add it to their electricity dues bill. They will have to pay electricity bills else power line will be disconnected. Work it out. In this country, you have to find a way out," the Bench remarked.

The suggestion came after

the SC was apprised that States and UTs had an outstanding of around ₹45,000 crore towards e-challans, of which approximately ₹25,000 crore has been recovered so far.

The court also opined blacklisting vehicles which have not paid challans on the Parivahan portal and blocking ownership transfers.

Justice Pardiwala said authorities need to work at the ground level and also suggested random checks of vehicles to identify those against which e-challans remained unpaid.

"Let there be random checking of vehicles and if found that e-challan has not been honoured, necessary steps to be taken to impound the vehicle itself," the bench said.

The SC was hearing a plea concerning comprehensive systemic reforms in road safety, traffic enforcement, and post-accident victim care.

SC GIVES ECI FOUR MONTHS TO SETTLE TMC DISPUTE

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday directed the Election Commission of India (ECI) to decide within four months the dispute between the two rival factions of the All India Trinamool Congress over the party name and the flowers-and-grass election symbol.

Mamata Banerjee addressing a public rally, at Serampore Court Maidan, in Hooghly district on Saturday

PTI

A Bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana asked the rival factions to complete their pleadings before the poll panel within four weeks and directed the ECI to decide the issue within three months after the parties complete their pleadings. The SC passed the order while hearing a plea filed by former West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee against the ECI's decision to freeze the TMC's name and party symbol.

While hearing the matter on September 24, the court had asked the ECI to apprise it of the time frame within which it can finally decide the dispute between the two rival factions.

CONTINUED ON >> P4

The Bystander

PIONEER IN SHORT

SENSEX SINKS, NIFTY BELOW 22,800

Indian equities suffered their sharpest fall in months on Monday as surging crude prices, renewed geopolitical uncertainty and weak global cues triggered selling. The Sensex plunged 1,124.02 points, or 1.52 per cent, to 72,771.72, its lowest close since March 30, while the Nifty fell 360.25 points, or 1.56 per cent, to 22,780.25. The Sensex had dropped as much as 1,179 points during the session. Twenty-nine of its 30 constituents closed lower, with Larsen & Toubro, Power Grid, Adani Ports, HDFC Bank and Reliance Industries among the major losers. Infosys was the sole gainer. The broader market also weakened, with the BSE SmallCap Select and MidCap Select declining.

FRESH POCSO CASE AGAINST VEERAMANI

The Special Investigation Team probing the alleged sexual abuse of minor girls by granite industrialist R Veeramani registered another case under the POCSO Act on Monday following a complaint by the mother of a minor girl, police said. The woman appeared before the all-women SIT on September 28 and submitted her complaint, following which investigators registered a fresh case and began probing the allegations. The SIT was formed on the direction of Tamil Nadu Director General of Police Mahesh Kumar Aggarwal to conduct a comprehensive investigation into the case against Veeramani and others. Meanwhile, the NCPDR has taken suo motu cognisance of allegations involving girls aged 12-16 and said its fact-finding team would visit Chennai.

CM Yadav pitches Anuppur as a key driver of MP's millet push

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Bhopal

Anuppur can make a significant contribution to Madhya Pradesh's goal of becoming a millet state, Chief Minister Mohan Yadav said on Monday while interacting virtually with farmers during the Balram Krishi Mahotsav organised in Anuppur. Addressing the event from his residence under the Krishak Kalyan Varsh-2026, Yadav said Anuppur was rich in water resources and that irrigation facilities were being strengthened through the Kevai Lift Irrigation Project. He said the government aimed to expand the state's irrigation capacity to 100 lakh hectares through technology and innovation while increasing agricultural production and

PIONEER PHOTO

farmers' income. The Chief Minister said farmers in the state would be provided 10 hours of electricity during the day.

CONTINUED ON >> P4

SC to hear UPI fee challenge, seeks Government, RBI, NPCI replies

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

On Monday, the Supreme Court refused to grant an interim stay to pause the Government's plan to add Merchant Discount Rate (MDR) on UPI payments over ₹2,000 made to merchants, starting October 15. The court agreed to review the challenge against the MDR and asked the Government, the RBI, and the National Payments Corporation of

WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

India (NPCI) to respond within four weeks.

A Bench of Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and

V Mohana was responding to advocate Anjan Datta's public interest petition challenging the Government's notifications dated September 14 and 15 that introduced MDR on UPI payments over ₹2,000 to merchants.

The Government will charge a 0.4 per cent fee on UPI payments over ₹2,000 made to merchants from October 15 ending almost six years of free UPI payments.

CONTINUED ON >> P4

Delhi braces for winter smog curbs

RAJESH KUMAR ■ New Delhi

The Delhi Government on Monday announced a series of measures ahead of winter and worsening pollution in the national Capital. The measures include staggered office timings, restrictions on vehicular and industrial emissions and curbs on dust generating construction and demolition activities. The measures will be

Anti-smog guns spraying water near India Gate amid haze on February 7, 2026

PTI

introduced in phases from November 1, 2026, with some restrictions continuing until February 2027.

A complete ban on construction and demolition activities will also be imposed.

CONTINUED ON >> P4

Ujjain road widening turns tense ahead of Simhashta Kumbh 2028

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Ujjain

Tension briefly flared in Ujjain on Monday when police used tear gas and mild force to disperse a crowd that allegedly resorted to stone-pelting while protesting the removal of a portion of the Shahi Masjid at Chhatra Chowk for a road-widening project ahead of Simhashta Kumbh 2028.

The road from Kanthal Crossing to Gopal Mandir is being widened to 15 metres to facilitate the movement of pilgrims expected to visit the city for Simhashta. The project involves removing or modifying structures within the proposed road alignment.

CONTINUED ON >> P4

Barricades placed in front of Shahi Masjid following stone-pelting incidents and protests against the proposed removal of a portion of the mosque for a road-widening project in Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh

PTI

From choppers to Google ads: Inside BJP's ₹529 core poll spending

RAJESH KUMAR ■ New Delhi

The recently concluded Assembly polls in West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Assam, and Kerala saw major political parties spend nearly ₹1,006 crore, according to expenditure statements filed with the Election Commission of India (ECI), with the BJP spending more than half that amount. The party submitted its poll expenditure statements to the ECI in August.

The party's expenditure details record that the BJP received receipts of around ₹1,500 crore between March and April 2026. The filing shows the BJP's opening balance rose from ₹6,782.65 crore to ₹7,793.88 crore. Of the donations received, the party spent

₹529.38 crore on the Assembly elections the recent polls across five States and a Union Territory, with more than half the expenditure (₹286.99 crore) incurred in West Bengal. This includes ₹217.16 crore on party propaganda in the State and ₹69.83 crore on candidate-related expenditure.

The Congress's total expenditure across five states and a Union Territory, according to the filings, was ₹248.55 crore. The party reported spending ₹42.08 crore in West Bengal. This included ₹12.96 crore on general campaigning and ₹29.12 crore on candidates and related expenses. In Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry, the party spent ₹91.92 crore, ₹83 crore, ₹51.52 crore and ₹12 crore

Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a roadshow ahead of the West Bengal Assembly polls in Howrah on April 23

PTI

respectively. The Trinamool Congress, which split into several factions post-poll, has yet to file its expenditure details.

The filing also shows the scale of the BJP's campaign-related spending. The party's central headquarters reported ₹51.50 crore in travel expenses for star campaigners, while ₹55.76 crore was spent on media advertisements for party propaganda. The listed expenses include aircraft and helicopter travel involving several senior BJP leaders. The filing further shows that Google received around ₹24 crore and Facebook ₹5 crore from the BJP during the campaign in West Bengal.

The BJP's Kerala expendi-

ture statement records gross election expenditure of ₹82.67 crore, combining party propaganda (₹54.93 crore) and candidate-related expenditure (₹27.74 crore). Within this, the State unit reported ₹41.13 crore on propaganda, including ₹26.01 crore on media advertisements, ₹5.01 crore on publicity material and ₹8.30 crore on travel for star campaigners.

While limits cap how much a candidate can spend on contesting elections, parties can spend unlimited amounts on fighting polls.

TVK spent ₹19.8 crore for the 2026 Assembly election in Tamil Nadu. In comparison, DMK reported poll expenditure of ₹197.8 crore and AIADMK ₹112.4 crore.

Jabalpur to be developed on the lines of Bhopal and Indore: CM

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh government is committed to the comprehensive development of the Mahakaushal region, including Jabalpur, and will create new opportunities in industry, trade, tourism and infrastructure, Chief Minister Mohan Yadav said while interacting with representatives of the Mahakaushal Chamber of Commerce and Jabalpur Traders Association. Yadav said Jabalpur had significant potential for industrial and commercial growth and announced that the city would be developed as a metropolitan city, following the ongoing development of Bhopal and Indore as metropolitan centres. He also sought suggestions from traders and entrepreneurs for the city's future master plan, saying relevant proposals would be considered in its draft.

The Chief Minister said a special seminar with industrial representatives would soon be organised in Jabalpur ahead of the Global Investors Summit-2027. He said the government wanted the region to benefit fully from the summit and was working to create opportunities in emerging sectors.

Yadav said Jabalpur should be provided opportunities in the IT and mining sectors on the lines of the Telecom Manufacturing Zone being developed in Gwalior. He also announced plans to connect Indore, Bhopal and Jabalpur through a special greenfield industrial corridor to accelerate industrial



activity in the state. Representatives from the business community highlighted investment opportunities in semiconductors, medical education, mining, logistics, hotels, tourism, automobiles, infrastructure, education and sports, including the development of an international stadium. The Chief Minister agreed with the proposal to develop a logistics hub in Mahakaushal and said Katni could be considered for the facility given its mining potential. He said such a hub could support commercial activity and benefit industries across the region. Yadav also highlighted the tourism potential of Mahakaushal, particularly Kanha National Park, and said facilities for tourists would be strengthened. A modern zoo and rescue centre is also being developed in Jabalpur, which he

said would provide another attraction for visitors. He said around 25 new policies were being implemented to provide facilities to entrepreneurs and assured that the government would support local businesses in turning their expansion plans into viable projects. He also highlighted the potential of Jabalpur in defence production, iron production, mining, dairy and education. Public Works Minister Rakesh Singh said Jabalpur and Mahakaushal had witnessed several development initiatives under the present government. He said Rs 87 crore had been allocated for the comprehensive development of Bhedaghat and that urban infrastructure remained a priority. Industrialist Ravi Gupta stressed the need to accelerate industrial development in Jabalpur and said the city had adequate land availability

for setting up industries across sectors. Business representatives also suggested measures to promote the hotel industry, relax certain RERA provisions, accord industry status to ready-mix concrete material, develop forest-product processing, expand tourism facilities and strengthen the road network. Senior officials from the Chief Minister's Office, Department of Industrial Policy and Investment Promotion and MPIDC attended the meeting. The government will also focus on strengthening Jabalpur's connectivity, logistics and tourism infrastructure to support its expanding economic base. The proposed industrial and urban initiatives are aimed at creating more opportunities for investment, employment and entrepreneurship across the Mahakaushal region.

Kulaste dismisses dengue fears

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Mandla

BJP Mandla MP Faggan Singh Kulaste was discharged from Delhi's AIIMS on Monday, seven days after being admitted for dengue, and returned to Mandla. Speaking after his return, Kulaste said his health was now good and urged people not to panic over dengue. Kulaste said he had travelled from Mandla to Delhi on September 18 after his health deteriorated. Medical examinations at AIIMS confirmed that he had dengue, following which he underwent treatment. He said he had recovered and was now back in Mandla.

"Dengue does not mean that a person will die. I am standing before you," Kulaste said, adding that there was no need for people to be afraid of the disease. He advised dengue patients to eat adequately, drink plenty of water and take sufficient rest during recovery.

Responding to remarks made by Niwas MLA Chain Singh Warkade about his treatment in Delhi, Kulaste said, "What can I do if the MLA says something? Will I die because he says so? I am healthy and there is no need to worry." Warkade had raised questions about Mandla's healthcare facilities during a Congress membership drive at Barbaspur village in Anjanjia on September 21. Referring to Kulaste's long tenure as an MP and his experience as a Union minister, including health minister, Warkade questioned why he had to travel to Delhi for treatment and whether adequate hospitals were available in Mandla.



Police use water cannons to disperse Congress party workers during a protest against the Election Commission's SIR exercise, demanding the resignation and arrest of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, in Bhopal on Monday.

HC clears online access to Bhagirathpura report

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Indore

The Indore Bench of the Madhya Pradesh High Court on Monday directed that the report of the commission headed by retired Justice Sushil Gupta, which investigated the deaths linked to contaminated water in Bhagirathpura, be uploaded online. The order came during the hearing of public interest litigations filed in connection with the deaths of 36 people in Bhagirathpura. The court considered an application moved on behalf of lawyers representing the petitioners seeking access to the investigation report and its publication. The nearly 600-page report was submitted before the High Court in August after the inquiry commission, constituted by

the court in January, completed its investigation. The report had subsequently remained confidential following a request that it not be made public. The petitioners had sought that the report be made available publicly and that copies be provided to the parties concerned. The court had earlier permitted lawyers representing the petitioners to inspect the report before the registrar and take notes of its contents, while keeping its wider publication on hold. With Monday's direction, the report can now be uploaded on the High Court website, allowing lawyers connected with the case to access and study its findings. The report is expected to be scanned and made available on the website within the next one or two days. An intervenor petition

seeking publication of the report and access to its copy has been filed through advocates Manish Yadav and Ritesh Inani. A total of seven PILs have been filed in connection with the Bhagirathpura case. The commission was constituted by the High Court to examine the circumstances surrounding the Bhagirathpura incident and submit its findings. With the report now set to become accessible online, the lawyers involved in the PILs will be able to examine the commission's observations in detail and use the findings during further proceedings before the court. The move is also expected to provide greater clarity on the issues examined by the commission as the High Court continues to hear the petitions related to the incident.



Local transporters stage a road blockade protest during their strike against the alleged harassment of traffic police, imposition of heavy penalties in the name of pollution and other issues, at Chunabhatti in Bhopal on Monday.

Pioneer photo

Police launch combing drive, arrest 82 warrant holders

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Guna

Guna police conducted a district-wide combing operation late Monday night, simultaneously checking criminal elements across all police station areas. The drive targeted habitual offenders, history-sheeters, externed criminals, wanted offenders and absconding accused. During the operation, police arrested 82 people who had been evading arrest for a long time. The arrests included 43 permanent warrant holders and 39 arrest warrant holders. Before the operation, sub-divisional police officers and station-in-charges briefed the teams and issued necessary instructions. Police personnel were then deployed to designated areas, where they conducted checks and searches until late at night. In Guna Kotwali, police arrested three permanent and four arrest warrant holders. Cantt police caught 12 permanent and seven arrest warrant holders, while Bajranggarh police

arrested one permanent and seven arrest warrant holders. Myana police arrested three permanent and one arrest warrant holder. In Bamori, two permanent and one arrest warrant holder were arrested. Fatehgarh police caught five permanent and one arrest warrant holder, while Sirsi police arrested three arrest warrant holders. Raghogarh police arrested three permanent and four arrest warrant holders, while Aron police caught two permanent and one arrest warrant holder. Vijaypur recorded two permanent and three arrest warrant arrests, while Dharanawada police arrested two arrest warrant holders. In Chachoda, police arrested three permanent warrant holders, while Kumbhraj police caught three permanent warrant holders. Madhusudangarh police arrested two permanent and three arrest warrant holders, while Jamner police caught two permanent and two arrest warrant holders.

Youth's body found after 3 days

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Narsinghpur

The body of a 22-year-old man who drowned in the Shakkar River during Ganesh idol immersion was recovered three days later. The deceased was identified as Shivam Jatav, a resident of Baranj village. His body was found near Kajrota Ghat. Three youths had entered the river three days ago to immerse the Ganesh idol. While two of them managed to return safely, Shivam was swept into deeper water and went missing. An SDRF team conducted a search operation in the river for two days. On the third day, people who had gone to cut fodder near the Kajrota Ghat spotted a body in the river and immediately informed the police and administration. Dongargaon police and the SDRF team reached the spot and recovered the body there. Police prepared a panchama and registered a case of unnatural death. Further investigation is underway.

SIR row: Congress workers clash with police officials

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Bhopal

The Congress staged a protest in Bhopal on Monday against the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, with Pradesh Congress Committee president Jitu Patwari leading party workers towards the Chief Electoral Officer's office. The protesters attempted to surround the CEO office, prompting police to deploy barricades. Tension escalated when some Congress workers tried to climb the barricades, leading to a scuffle between the protesters and police. Police used water cannons to disperse the crowd and later detained several protesters in buses. Congress leaders alleged that the SIR exercise could result in the deletion of names of a large number of eligible voters from electoral rolls. They questioned the Election Commission's role and demanded greater transparency in the revision process. Party leaders also raised the demand for conducting elections through ballot papers instead of EVMs.

Service should become a lifelong commitment: Tetwal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Rajgarh

Minister of State Gautam Tetwal welcomed the service yatra being taken from Varanasi to Vadnagar as part of the Seva Sankalp Abhiyan marking 25 years of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's public life. He also joined citizens in travelling with the yatra from Pachore to Sarangpur in the assembly constituency. The yatra, which began in Varanasi and is headed towards Vadnagar, involves participation from different groups. Its objective is to carry water from sacred rivers for Jalabhishek at the Kashi Vishwanath Dham in Varanasi and Harkeshwar Mahadev in Vadnagar. Along with religious faith, the yatra seeks to convey messages of service, environmental protection, social participation and service to the nation.



Tetwal said the 25 years of Modi's public life represent years of service, dedication and continuous commitment to the nation. He said service should not be limited to a particular occasion or campaign, but should become a sustained responsibility towards society and the nation. He called for greater public participation in helping those in need, protecting the environment, empowering women and

connecting young people with skills and employment opportunities. At a programme held in Udankhedhi, service travellers shared their experiences of the Varanasi-Vadnagar journey and were felicitated. A tree plantation programme was also held at the Shiva temple premises. Tetwal said combining religious faith with environmental protection was an important need of

the time and urged people not only to plant trees but also to take responsibility for their care. The minister also interacted with women associated with self-help groups and Lakhpati Didis, seeking information about their self-employment activities, group-based initiatives and economic work. The women shared their experiences of becoming financially self-reliant through these initiatives. Tetwal said women's empowerment was aimed not only at making women economically independent but also at strengthening their participation in decision-making within families and society. He said rural women were increasingly taking up self-employment through self-help groups, while the success of Lakhpati Didis was inspiring others.

5,969 power camps resolve 2.66 lakh complaints in MP

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Bhopal

The "Sampark Abhiyan 2026" launched by Madhya Kshetra Vidyut Vitaran Company to provide faster solutions to electricity consumers near their homes has received a significant response. Since its launch on May 14, the campaign has organised 5,969 special camps across 16 districts in the Bhopal and Gwalior regions, resolving 2,66,294 consumer complaints on the spot. The campaign is being conducted to support the objectives of the Chief Minister Jan Vishwas Abhiyan and promote transparency, accessibility and consumer satisfaction in electricity services. In the Bhopal region, 440 camps in Bhopal city resolved 26,656 complaints, while 529 camps in Betul (O&M) addressed 35,180 complaints. Bhopal (O&M) recorded 11,934 resolutions through 303 camps, while 160 camps in Harda resolved 20,350 complaints. Narmadapuram reported 30,659 resolutions through 400 camps, followed by

Raisen with 18,755 complaints resolved through 301 camps. Rajgarh recorded 6,538 resolutions through 433 camps, Sehore 8,921 through 384 camps and Vidisha 13,419 through 255 camps. In the Gwalior region, 353 camps in Gwalior city resolved 8,598 complaints. Ashoknagar addressed 19,524 complaints through 176 camps, while Bhind (O&M) resolved 6,770 through 337 camps. Datia (O&M) recorded 8,879 resolutions through 208 camps and Guna 10,671 through 304 camps. Morena resolved 19,813 complaints through 467 camps, while Shivpuri addressed 8,713 through 399 camps. Other districts included Gwalior (O&M), Sheopur and Datia. The camps addressed faulty bills, meter-reading issues, load enhancement, name and category changes, temporary and permanent connections, e-KYC, NOCs, defective meters, smart-meter complaints, serviceable issues, voltage problems and transformer-related complaints.

Four more MP heritage sites enter UNESCO Tentative List

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh has added another milestone to its efforts to secure global recognition for its rich historical and cultural heritage, with four more heritage sites being included in UNESCO's Tentative List. The newly included sites are the Bagh Caves murals in Dhar, Ginnaurgarh Fort in Sehore, the Bateshwar-Padavali-Kakramath temple complex in Morena and the Udayagiri Caves in Vidisha.

With these additions, 19 of India's 78 properties on the Tentative List are now located in Madhya Pradesh, underlining the state's extensive archaeological, historical and cultural heritage.

Tourism Secretary and Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board Managing Director Dr Ilaiyaraaja T said the inclusion

of the four sites was an important recognition of the state's cultural and archaeological wealth. He said the development would provide greater international visibility to Madhya Pradesh's tourism and enable visitors from across the world to explore its distinctive history and culture.

The Bagh Caves, located along the Bagh River near the Vindhya hills in Dhar district, comprise nine Buddhist rock-cut caves dating mainly from the fourth to sixth centuries. Their surviving murals, particularly those in Cave 4, depict court scenes, processions, musicians, dancers and aspects of contemporary social life. The paintings are associated with the wider Buddhist mural tradition seen at Ajanta while retaining a distinct regional artistic character.

Ginnaurgarh Fort, located

on a hill within the Ratapani landscape near Bhopal, represents an important example of a Gond fortified capital. Its natural defences are complemented by fortifications, royal structures, reservoirs, 65 stepwells and four lakes, reflecting aspects of Gond political organisation, military planning, architecture and indigenous water management.

The Bateshwar-Padavali-Kakramath temple complex in Morena represents the regional development of early medieval Nagara temple architecture in the Chambal region. Dating mainly from the eighth to 11th centuries, the complex includes more than 200 temples at Bateshwar, richly carved architectural elements at Padavali and the monumental Kakramath temple.

The Udayagiri Caves near

Vidisha comprise 20 rock-cut caves associated with the Gupta period. The site combines temples, monumental sculptures, inscriptions, pathways and natural landscape. Its celebrated Varaha relief is regarded as a significant representation of Vaishnavism, kingship and cosmic order.

The Tourism Board proposed the four properties under India's World Heritage programme, following which the Archaeological Survey of India, the nodal agency for World Heritage matters, advanced the national-level process. Inclusion in the Tentative List is an important preliminary stage in the process of consideration for the UNESCO World Heritage List.

Madhya Pradesh already has 15 other properties on the Tentative List, including Gwalior Fort, Bhojpur's

Bhojeshwar Mahadev Temple, the Burhanpur water-management system, the Chambal Valley rock art sites, the Gond monuments of Ramnagar, Dhamnar and the historic group of Orchha.

The state's heritage profile also extends to intangible traditions, including Narmada Parikrama, Bhagoria dance, Gond painting, Maihar Band, the Agaria community's traditional iron-smelting techniques and distinctive Nimar cuisine, reflecting the diversity of its living cultural traditions.

The inclusion is expected to strengthen conservation efforts and improve the international visibility of these heritage destinations. It could also support the development of tourism infrastructure and generate new opportunities for local communities.



Teachers under the banner of the Adhyapak Shikshak Sanyukt Morcha during an indefinite protest to oppose the mandatory Teacher Eligibility Test (TET), at Neelam Park in Bhopal on Monday. Pioneer photo



Deputy CM Rajendra Shukla addresses during the award ceremony of a painting competition organised under Seva Sankalp Abhiyan in Rewa, Madhya Pradesh on Monday. Pioneer photo

Fresh face-off sparks tension at Holkar college

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Indore

Tension resurfaced at Holkar Science College on Monday after workers associated with the Karni Sena and Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) confronted each other on the college campus.

The two groups raised slogans against each other, prompting the police to rush additional personnel to the campus. Police separated the groups and took steps to prevent the situation from escalating. Security has been strengthened on the campus as a precaution.

The latest confrontation

comes days after a dispute during a Ganapati immersion procession at the college. The earlier incident reportedly began with an argument between two groups and later turned violent in the parking area, where students were allegedly attacked with belts and sticks.

The dispute subsequently spread to the computer laboratory. Some BSc and MSc students were reportedly injured in the incident.

Following the earlier clash, the college administration convened a disciplinary committee meeting and suspended some students. The suspended stu-

dents have also been barred from entering the college campus during the suspension period.

On Monday, the two groups again came face-to-face, triggering fresh tension on the premises. Police intervened and brought the situation under control. Additional security personnel remain deployed at the college, while the administration and police are examining the developments and further action in the matter. The police are also reviewing the circumstances that led to the fresh confrontation to prevent any further escalation on the campus.

BJP youth leader dies after touching live pole

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Bhopal

BJP Yuva Morcha district general secretary Divyarishi Tiwari died after suffering an electric shock from a roadside pole in the MP Nagar area on Sunday night. The incident took place around 9 pm when Tiwari had gone shopping.

According to eyewitness head constable Jagdish Dangi, Tiwari was trying to cross the road by climbing onto the divider.

He held a roadside electric pole with one hand for support and reached towards a wall with the other hand. The pole was apparently live, causing a powerful electric shock.

A woman was also reportedly affected by the current

during the incident. People and police personnel present at the spot immediately intervened. Tiwari collapsed after receiving the shock, following which traffic police personnel began rescue efforts and administered CPR.

He was subsequently taken to AIIMS Bhopal, where doctors declared him dead after examination.

The street-light pole had reportedly been installed during construction work for the metro project and is maintained by the municipal corporation. Officials also found that a wire near the pole was exposed. Police are investigating how the pole became electrically charged and why the exposed wire had not been repaired.

Polling for panchayat seats today

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh government has declared September 29, 2026, a public holiday in areas going to polls for the 2026 urban local body and three-tier panchayat by-elections, in accordance with the schedule announced by the State Election Commission.

Polling for the panchayat by-elections will be held on Tuesday from 7 am to 3 pm. Counting for the post of Panch will be conducted immediately after polling at the respective polling stations.

Counting of votes for Sarpanch, Janpad Panchayat member and Zila Panchayat member posts through EVMs will be held at block headquarters from 8 am on October 3. The results for Sarpanch and Janpad Panchayat member posts will also be declared on the same day.

Results for Zila Panchayat member and Panch posts will be declared from 10.30 am on October 5.

Under the panchayat by-elections, polling will be held for seven Zila Panchayat member posts, 28 Janpad Panchayat member posts, 110 Sarpanch posts and 4,090 Panch posts.

EOW catches sarpanch, husband in bribe trap

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Mandsaur

The Ujjain unit of the Economic Offences Wing (EOW) on Monday caught Daloda gram panchayat sarpanch Durga Kaithwas and her husband and sarpanch representative Anil Kaithwas while allegedly accepting a Rs 3,500 bribe at the panchayat office in Mandsaur district.

According to EOW Deputy Superintendent of Police Ramniwas Yadav, the action followed a complaint by Vikram Singh, a resident of Muvala in Sitamau tehsil. Singh had sought a panchayat certificate permitting construction according to an

approved building map so that he could obtain a bank loan.

The complainant alleged that the sarpanch, through her husband, had demanded Rs 5,000 for issuing the certificate. Following directions from EOW Ujjain Superintendent of Police Samar Verma, officials verified the complaint.

During verification, the alleged bribe was negotiated to Rs 4,000. The complainant had already paid Rs 500 as an advance to the sarpanch's husband, while the remaining Rs 3,500 was to be paid on September 28.

After confirming the complaint, the EOW laid a trap at

the Daloda gram panchayat office. The team allegedly caught the sarpanch and her husband while accepting the remaining Rs 3,500 from Singh.

The operation was conducted by DSP Ramniwas Yadav, inspectors Reema Yadav and Arjun Malviya, Sub-Inspector Ashok Rao and other EOW personnel.

The agency said further legal action and proceedings at the spot were underway.

The EOW said the trap was laid after verification of the complaint, and the alleged bribe amount was recovered during the operation at the Daloda gram panchayat office.

MP Transco commissions 200 MVA transformer

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Jabalpur

Madhya Pradesh Power Transmission Company (MP Transco) has strengthened the state's power transmission network by upgrading the capacity of its 220 kV substation at Ratlam. A new-generation 220/132 kV, 200 MVA power transformer has been installed and successfully energised, replacing a 160 MVA transformer that had been operational since 1988.

Energy Minister Pradyuman Singh Tomar congratulated MP Transco personnel on the commissioning and said Ratlam district has received a transformer of this capacity for the first time. He said the upgrade would

strengthen the regional transmission network and help ensure quality and uninterrupted power supply to farmers and other consumers during the upcoming Rabi season.

MP Transco Superintending Engineer YR Mandlekar said the newly energised transformer is the 19th 200 MVA power transformer in the Madhya Pradesh and the fifth such transformer in the Malwa region.

With the commissioning of the new transformer, the total transformation capacity of the Ratlam 220 kV substation has increased to 520 MVA. The upgraded facility is expected to improve power availability across the Malwa region.

Speeding car kills college student

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Bhopal

A 19-year-old college student, Saima Shahid, died after being hit by a speeding Tata Nexon near Holy Family School on September 26. Saima was walking with her friends when the car hit her. She was rushed to hospital but died during treatment. Hailing from Vaishali, Bihar, Saima was a first-year student at Maulana Azad College and lived in Bhopal for her studies. Her family reached the city on Monday, after which police conducted the post-mortem. Her uncle Mohammad Arif alleged that the college had no hostel facility for female students and Saima had been advised to stay in a rented room.

Neemuch plans cheetah, water and heritage tourism push

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Neemuch

A district tourism conclave was held at the Collectorate under the chairmanship of Collector Himanshu Chandra as part of the Seva Sankalp Abhiyan-2026, with officials and tourism stakeholders discussing a comprehensive plan to tap Neemuch's natural, historical and cultural heritage and create new employment opportunities for local communities.

A key focus of the meeting was linking the district's Cheetah Project with tourism. Officials were directed to explore the development of homestays around the project to provide accommodation to visitors. The CEO of Manasa Janpad Panchayat was

asked to study the feasibility of establishing homestays along the Rampur-Basi stretch. A proposal was also sought for organising educational tours based on the Cheetah Project for students.

The tourism potential of the Ring Water area in Rampura was discussed in detail, with emphasis on developing it as a water and adventure tourism destination. Proposed activities included motor boating, water sports, designated water routes, sunrise and sunset points, ziplining, rock climbing, cycling tours and camping.

The conclave also discussed the development of tourist infrastructure, including motels, restaurants, travel agencies, reception and booking centres, swim-

ming pools and homestays. Officials stressed the need to ensure participation of local residents in these facilities so that tourism generates economic opportunities within the district.

Collector Chandra directed officials to prepare proposals for installing direction boards and signage along major roads to make tourist destinations easier to access. He emphasised coordinated efforts by different departments to improve tourism infrastructure and visitor facilities.

The meeting also explored the possibility of linking Tarapur's traditional sari-printing craft in Jawad block with tourism. Participants discussed promoting local arts, crafts and products as part of the tourism experience, with the objective of

giving traditional skills wider recognition and creating employment opportunities, particularly in rural areas.

Historical and heritage tourism also featured prominently in the discussions. Officials considered identifying and developing sites associated with the 1857 uprising, conserving historical forts and stepwells and developing them as tourist attractions.

Historian Dr Surendra Sakataw stressed the need for a museum in Neemuch and highlighted the importance of preserving the district's historical heritage, including its association with the birthplace of noted historian and archaeologist Wakankar.

The conclave further discussed opportunities for

eco-tourism, local cultural hubs, Malwa cuisine, local food products and handicrafts. The establishment of environmental awareness centres, organisation of environmental education workshops and the possibility of introducing jungle safaris in the district were also considered.

Collector Chandra directed the concerned departments to work in coordination, prepare concrete proposals and make focused efforts to expand tourism infrastructure and facilities across Neemuch.

Chief Executive Officer of Zila Panchayat Aman Vaishnav, Manasa SDM Mayuri Jock, PO-DUDA and Deputy Collector Chandra Singh Dharve, and other officials and stakeholders attended the conclave.



Bollywood actor Govinda visits Mahakaleswar Temple in Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh on Monday. Pioneer photo

IN FOCUS



People perform rituals at Assi Ghat on the second day of Pitra Paksha, in Varanasi Uttar Pradesh, Monday

PTI

Telangana CM objects to SIR mass deletions



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Launching a blistering attack on the BJP-led Central Government, Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy drew a parallel between the pre-independence era and current times, urging the nation to unite and chant "SIR Go Back", much like the historic "Simon Go Back" movement against the Britishers. Speaking on Monday as the chief guest at The Conclave 2026, organised by the Pratidin Media Network, Assam, in New Delhi, the Chief Minister accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of

weaponising the Election Commission of India (ECI) to strip the poor of their voting rights. "While the Congress party stands firmly with the underprivileged, the BJP aligns itself exclusively with the wealthy," Reddy asserted. The Chief Minister levelled serious allegations regarding the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process, claiming it is a calculated political exercise targeting the 2029 general elections. Reddy alleged that 13 crore votes have already been deleted across the country, with active efforts underway to purge another 7 crore votes.

SC steps in on Capital women's safety

The Bench sought a comprehensive status report on the measures presently undertaken to ensure adequate safety and security arrangements in public places frequented by women and children.

The report shall indicate whether such arrangements remain equally effective during peak hours, late evening hours and early morning hours, when public spaces may have reduced visibility and footfall, it said.

The Bench also sought a report on the manner in which the National Database on Sexual Offenders (NDSO) is presently being utilised by the Delhi Police.

"We would require the authorities to indicate whether the database is being regularly accessed for antecedent verification and identification of repeat or habitual sexual offenders...", the bench said, while also seeking a report on the manner in which the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) is utilising the Investigation Tracking System for Sexual Offences (ITSSO).

"The authorities shall place on record the manner in which ITSSO is being utilised in Delhi, including the mechanism for monitoring investigations which are required to be completed within the statutory period, the officers responsible for such monitoring, the frequency with which cases are reviewed and the remedial steps taken where an investigation is delayed.

"The report shall also indicate whether senior officers receive alerts or periodic reports in cases where the prescribed timelines are not being adhered to," it said.

Delhi braces for winter smog curbs

Unveiling the Winter Action Plan, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said the Government has ordered a ban on dust-generating demolition activities and outdoor civil construction work from November 1, 2026, to January 31, 2027. A complete ban on construction and demolition activities will be imposed from December 10, 2026 to January 20, 2027.

Also beginning November 1, BS-IV vehicles registered outside Delhi will be completely prohibited from entering the city.

The CM also said parking charges across the Capital will be doubled from November 1, while office timings will be staggered and 50 per cent work from home will be implemented. Electric vehicles and parking spaces owned and managed by the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) will be exempt from the revised charges.

The decisions were taken after Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change Bhupender Yadav chaired a high-level meeting with CM Gupta. PWD Minister Parvesh Verma, Environment Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa and senior officials of Delhi Government were also present.

LPU violence sparks political row in Punjab over safety

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Chandigarh

The violence in Phagwara's Lovely Professional University following allegations of a woman student being raped on campus snowballed into a full-scale political controversy on Monday with Opposition parties lashing out at Punjab's ruling AAP over law and order and blaming the police for laxity.

The BJP also alleged that the violence was linked to Union Home Minister Amit Shah's rally scheduled in Jalandhar on September 3, and accused the Bhagwant Mann Government of sending miscreants to the university.

Shah will address the rally to mark the culmination of



Lovely Professional University students carrying their luggage prepare to leave for their hometowns outside the university campus in Phagwara

PTI

the BJP's 'Nasha Mukht Punjab Yatra'. LPU students allegedly went on a rampage on the campus late Saturday, vandalising property and blocking a stretch of the New Delhi-Amritsar highway outside their campus over claims that a plumber had

raped a female student on the university premises. Another wave of violence erupted on Sunday evening after the protesting students allegedly pelted police personnel with stones and attacked their vehicles, leaving several cops injured

on Sunday, officials said.

The situation remained peaceful on the LPU campus on Monday.

BJP leader and former Union minister Ravneet Singh Bittu alleged that the AAP was "rattled" by the support for the BJP's anti-drug yatras and blamed the Mann Government for "allowing riots" in Jalandhar to disturb Shah's scheduled rally. He said the Government in Punjab is set to change in a few months and officials will be held accountable. Punjab is scheduled to go to polls early next year. Bittu claimed that police adopted a "lax" approach, allowing miscreants to indulge in arson and vandalism and leaving police personnel and students injured.

Crimes against women in Delhi-NCR show systematic police failure, recalls Nirbhaya: SC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday observed that cases of crimes against girls and women across Delhi-NCR underline a systematic failure of the police and said one cannot help but draw painful parallels to the 2012 Nirbhaya case, calling into question whether systemic law enforcement mechanisms have made any meaningful progress in the decade since then.

The top court also passed a slew of directions while taking cognisance of news reports of crimes against minor girls and women across Delhi-NCR while directing the Delhi Police Commissioner to constitute dedicated police teams to conduct an immediate survey and inspection of vulnerable pockets. The court also asked media outlets, journalists and publishing platforms to practise responsible, empathetic and restrained journalism while reporting sexual



offences. A bench of Justices JB Pardiwala and K Vinod Chandran said sensationalist headlines, graphic or lurid descriptions of sexual violence, and insensitive phraseology fail to serve any public interest and risk causing severe secondary trauma to the victims and their families. The Supreme Court made these observations while taking suo moto cognisance of the alleged gang rape of a 17-year-old girl at Aastha Kunj Park in Delhi, alleged gang rape and murder of a teenage girl in the Swaroop Nagar area of Delhi and alleged sexual assault of a minor girl

inside a moving sleeper bus. The law enforcement agencies allegedly failed to intercept while it traversed a distance of over 47 km from Greater Noida to Delhi.

The court said these incidents, considered alongside other recent reports of sexual offences across Delhi-NCR, starkly underline a systemic failure on the part of law enforcement and civil administrative authorities to guarantee basic public safety.

"The right to live with dignity, free from the fear of violence, is an intrinsic facet of the fundamental guarantee of life and personal liberty enshrined under Article 21 of the Constitution. Public spaces, including parks, roads, buses, metro stations, subways, foot bridges, etc. cannot be permitted to become zones of high risk due to grossly inadequate illumination, poor surveillance, lax patrolling, or other preventable administrative deficiencies," the bench said.

FROM PAGE - 1

more time be given. The Bench said in case of any exigency, the poll panel may approach the court. The ECI on September 17 allotted separate names and symbols to the two rival factions following its interim decision to bar both groups from using the All India Trinamool Congress name and its reserved symbol pending a substantive determination of the dispute.

The poll panel allotted the name Mamata All India Trinamool Congress and football player as its symbol to the Mamata Banerjee-led faction, while the Ritabrata Banerjee-led faction was allotted the name Democratic Trinamool Congress and given the symbol of an envelope. Assembly bypolls to Nandigram in East Medinipur district and Rejinagar in Murshidabad district of West Bengal are scheduled for October 6, with vote counting on October 9.

A similar case related to Shiv Sena is before the SC, which had on September 24 said the dispute should be decided expeditiously and asked the ECI to suggest a time frame that would allow both sides a fair opportunity to present their evidence while enabling the poll panel to reach a final decision.

Ujjain road widening turns tense ahead of...

Members of the Muslim community and the Shahi Masjid committee agreed to voluntarily remove the portion of the mosque within the proposed widening area after a meeting with the district administration on Sunday night.

Removal work began Monday morning. Ujjain Collector and District Magistrate Roushan Kumar Singh said the work was progressing with community cooperation. He said some people tried to disrupt the process but police brought them under control. Singh appealed to people to ignore rumours and maintain peace.

Superintendent of Police Pradeep Sharma said some people attempted to obstruct the work and later resorted to stone-pelting. Police used tear gas and mild force to disperse the crowd. He said no one was injured. Police arrested some people, while 15 others were detained. Police registered a case against seven people, including some social media influencers accused of sharing inflammatory content and inciting people. Police have intensified surveillance in the area, with CCTV and drone cameras being used to identify those allegedly involved in stone-pelting. Sharma said police would take legal action against those found responsible. Police also conducted flag marches in the city as a precautionary measure.

Police cordoned off the area around Chhattri Chowk and temporarily restricted movement. Senior police and administrative officials remained on site to monitor the situation.

Ujjain Shahar Qazi Khalil-ur-Rehman and senior members of the Muslim community appealed to people not to believe rumours. Khalil-ur-Rehman said the mosque issue had been resolved through mutual consent during

discussions on Sunday night.

The administration said the road-widening exercise is part of preparations for the large influx of devotees during Simhastha. Singh said people from different religious communities were voluntarily cooperating with the development work and removing obstructions falling within the planned road alignment.

SC to hear UPI fee challenge, seeks...

It is capped at ₹300 for payments of ₹75,000 or more. Person-to-person payments and smaller amounts will still be free, the NPCI has clarified.

Additional Solicitor General N Venkataraman, representing the Government, told the court that 96 per cent of people using the payment gateway would not be affected by the new fee. "The Government of India is not taking even a single rupee out of it," the law officer said.

The court asked the Government to submit a written explanation about why it decided to charge a fee on UPI merchant transactions over ₹2,000. Venkataraman said charges for essential services are capped at ₹5. He said, "It is neither a tax nor a fee." The court said, "We need all these facts in a short affidavit. It will help us understand better. It is less a legal issue and more a technical issue... Is it a tax or a fee? If not a fee, then what is the executive basis for making this expropriation?"

ASG explained that the fee is a settlement charge between payment aggregators and banks. He added, "The Government is several steps away from this money."

After the Bench issued notice on the plea, the petitioner's lawyer requested, "Please stay it till then." Payments made to mutual funds, securities, and through stockbrokers and dealers will have a 0.02 per cent MDR, with a maximum charge of ₹300.

The petition claims the new fee was introduced without enough legal safeguards, transparency, or public input. It challenges the constitutional validity of the amended Section 10A of the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007, alleging that it gives the executive unguided power to decide which electronic payment modes would receive the no-charge protection. "Declare that no MDR or analogous compulsory charge may be imposed or recovered merely on the strength of a press release or FAQs absent a duly authorised, authenticated and published statutory instrument," it said.

The petitioner also questioned why UPI transactions are treated differently from RuPay debit card payments, noting that RuPay cards still have no-charge protection with no upper limit. The petition argues that the new rules are unfair and could hurt merchants with small profit margins. It also warns about possible hidden costs for consumers and the risk that some people could be left out of digital payments.

It has sought to quash or suspend the frame-

West Bengal speaker to decide fate of TMC rebel

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ Kolkata

The Supreme Court has for the time being left it on the Bengal Assembly Speaker, Rathin Bose, to decide on the petitions seeking the disqualification of 10 rebel TMC MLAs.

The Bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V. Mohana left it on the Speaker to take a decision by October 10, stating the three-month deadline fixed by the Court in the matter would expire on October 10.

The petition was filed by pro-Mamata Banerjee MLA and former minister Sobhandeb Chattopadhyay, who sought an early decision on the disqualification petitions. Recently the Election Commission of India froze the name and the symbol of the All India Trinamool Congress for the

time being, bifurcating the party into two—Mamata All India Trinamool Congress allotting it a football player as a symbol and the Democratic Trinamool Congress allotting it an envelope.

With the present orders of the ECI and the Apex Court, both groups of the TMC were likely to contest the coming civic elections in the state as per the temporary arrangement made by the poll panel.

The Trinamool Congress split up into two parts after Mamata Banerjee's party was defeated by the BJP in the April-May Assembly elections this year.

While BJP won 208 seats, TMC won 80. Out of these, about 60 MLAs left Mamata Banerjee and formed a parallel group led by present Opposition Leader Ritabrata Banerjee.

1,500 pilgrims rescued after landslide hits Kedarnath trek

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Uttarkashi

About 1,500 pilgrims stranded in the Chirbasa area along the Kedarnath trek route after a landslide were successfully evacuated, officials said on Monday.

Joint teams comprising State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and District Disaster Response Force (DDRF) successfully rescued and escorted approximately 1,500 pilgrims to Gaurikund after they were stranded late at Sunday night, the SDRF said in a press statement.

It said that the Sonprayag police received information that several pilgrims were stranded in the Chirbasa area — located about 3 kilometres from Gaurikund — due to a landslide. Upon receiving the information, an SDRF team from Sonprayag, led by Sub-



Members of the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) specialised high-altitude team trek through forest terrain during a rescue operation along the Kalindi Trek near the Auden's Col area in Uttarkashi district

PTI

Inspector Ashish Dimri, arrived at the site and found debris accumulated on the road near the Chirbasa helipad due to the landslide, officials said. Additionally, continuous rockfalls from the hillside made the movement of pilgrims extremely hazardous. Assessing the situation, the

SDRF, NDRF, and DDRF teams launched a joint rescue operation, officials said. The rescue teams carefully guided the pilgrims across the landslide zone; they were safely escorted to the other side and sent onward to Gaurikund, according to the statement.

work insofar as it imposes an MDR on UPI transactions above ₹2,000.

Alternatively, the petition wants the rules reviewed after open consultation, data sharing, and an impact study, with protections for micro and small businesses.

"Direct that any future MDR classification be based on relevant considerations including merchant turnover, statutory MSME status, actual margins, geography and ability to bear the cost, and avoid cliff-edge treatment unsupported by evidence," the plea said.

CM Yadav pitches Anuppur as a key...

He urged officials and public representatives to use farmer meetings to disseminate information about welfare schemes and resolve farmers' problems locally.

Yadav said registration had begun for procurement of paddy as well as millets such as sorghum and pearl millet, and urged farmers to complete the process on time. He said Anuppur farmers were producing paddy, wheat, pulses and oilseeds while also adopting newer crops and technologies. Mushroom and strawberry cultivation were among the emerging activities in the district.

He encouraged farmers to diversify their income through animal husbandry and dairy production and adopt modern technology and innovation. "The future of agriculture is bright," he said, urging farmers to connect their children with agriculture-related industries.

The Chief Minister also highlighted the recently launched Mukhyamantri Sugam Parivahan Seva, saying it would benefit residents of remote villages. He said the state had also introduced a provision for free registration for rural residents. The government was working to improve educational opportunities for children and create employment opportunities for youth, he added.

During the virtual interaction, progressive farmers shared their experiences of modern agricultural machinery, irrigation facilities, organic and natural farming, crop demonstrations, farmer field schools and improved animal husbandry. Farmers from Pushprajgarh explained the benefits of mechanisation and irrigation, while others spoke about natural farming and artificial insemination techniques that had helped increase milk production.

Progressive farmers and meritorious students were also felicitated at the event. Five farmers were recognised for their contribution to agriculture, while five students of Government Model Higher Secondary School, Anuppur, were honoured for academic achievements.

An exhibition showcasing agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry and fisheries schemes was also organised. Farmers received information about modern farming techniques, improved equipment, horticultural crops, livestock management, dairy production, fisheries and government welfare schemes.

Shah launches India’s first counter-terrorism policy

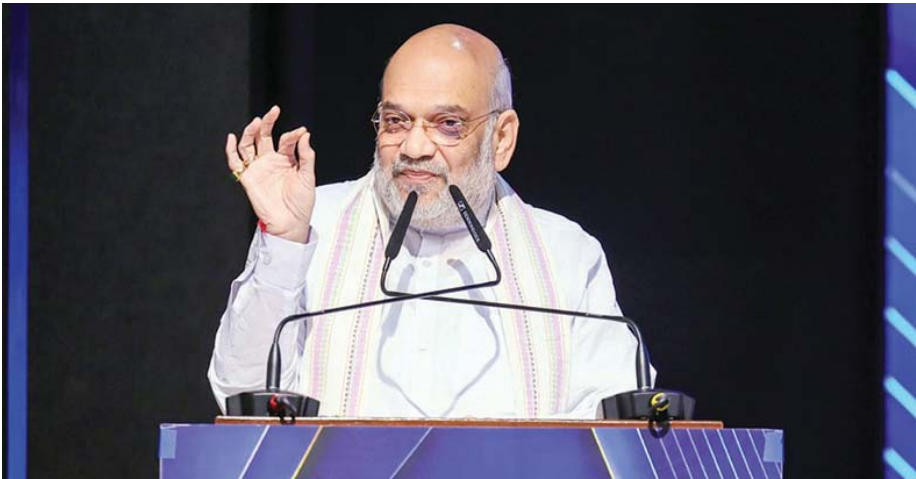
PRAMOD KUMAR SINGH
■ New Delhi

Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Amit Shah on Monday inaugurated the Conference on 'PRAHAAR-CT Policy and Strategy' in New Delhi. The meeting brought together senior security and police officials to review and implement India's first national counter-terrorism doctrine.

Shah said the Government of India, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has adopted a zero-tolerance policy against terrorism. He called for ongoing review of the PRAHAAR framework based on analysis of terror incidents, and for building a mechanism that can serve the country over the next decade. He said the principles of PRAHAAR must be implemented at the police station level, and that all levels of the security system should act proactively.

Shah called for an automated counter-terrorism response at every level to avoid delays and ensure effective action. He said central agencies, state police, and other stakeholders must coordinate closely so that there is no delay when a threat arises.

The Home Minister said the Government has already used this coordinated approach in recent operations. Between 2019 and 2026, authorities brought back 288 fugitive criminals from 36 countries. Improved coordination led to the dismantling of over 40 modules of the Shahzad Bhatti network, which was involved in cross-border smuggling of weapons, explosives, and narcotics. Authorities registered more than 100 FIRs and arrested 350 people



across 15 States.

The network has been declared a terrorist organisation under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. Shah also launched a new Extradition Portal to speed up efforts to bring back fugitives. He directed state police to form teams to work with central agencies so they can prepare and follow up on extradition requests quickly. For decades, India's counter-terrorism efforts relied on separate laws, agencies, and practices that developed over time. In 2026, PRAHAAR brought these elements together as the country's first unified National Counter-Terrorism Policy and Strategy. Shah has stressed that the policy needs regular updates, should become part of daily operations, and must be implemented at every police station.

The doctrine is built on seven main pillars. Prevention relies on intelligence to stop plots, propaganda, sleeper cells, funding, and arms networks before attacks happen. Response means local police act quickly and appropriately, with fast

backup from central forces to avoid delays in the crucial first hours.

Aggregating Internal Capacities means updating state police, standardising training, and working closely with agencies like the Multi-Agency Centre, the National Investigation Agency, the National Security Guard, and the Central Armed Police Forces. It also stresses the importance of human rights and the rule of law to keep counter-terrorism efforts legal and trustworthy. Attenuating Conditions for Terrorism focuses on de-radicalisation, involving communities, and supporting youth and women in at-risk areas to lower recruitment. Aligning International Efforts covers sharing intelligence, legal help, extradition, and diplomacy to stop terrorists from finding safe havens, weapons, or funding abroad.

Recovery and Resilience takes a society-wide approach to help communities, rebuild infrastructure, and restore public trust after an attack. Shah pointed out that these pillars are important because earlier methods were often reactive and scat-

tered across different ministries and agencies.

PRAHAAR does not set up new organisations. Instead, it gives a single framework for the ones already in place. This framework should be used at every level and tested in real situations to make sure it stays effective. Shah has also linked the doctrine to current tools, such as faster return of fugitives, trials in absentia, stronger investigations under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, and joint action against networks that mix crime, drugs, weapons, and ideology.

The doctrine moves away from one-off responses and instead uses a single national approach. It covers every part of terrorism, such as propaganda, funding, logistics, overseas handlers, and recovery after attacks. Local police handle the first response, with quick help from central forces. The doctrine also combines security work with social and economic steps to reduce radicalisation and shows India's strong commitment to working with other countries and maintaining zero tolerance.

TRAI orders cheaper voice-and-SMS packs

PRAMOD KUMAR SINGH
■ New Delhi

For millions of Indians who mostly use their phones for calls and texts, prepaid recharge has often felt like being forced to buy a combo meal. Staying connected at the lowest cost usually meant paying for mobile data they hardly used. Now, that is starting to change.

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has notified the Telecom Consumers Protection (Thirteenth Amendment) Regulations, 2026, directing operators such as Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea to expand voice-and-SMS-only Special Tariff Vouchers. The rules take effect about 30 days after gazette publication, putting the new packs on shop floors and apps around late October.

TRAI saw a clear problem. After a 2024 rule required at least one voice-and-SMS-only pack, most companies offered only long-term options, like 80- or 84-day packs, or annual plans lasting 336 to 365 days.

Those packs suited people who could lock in money for months. They did little for daily-wage workers, elderly users, feature-phone owners, rural subscribers and people who keep a second SIM only



for calls. Short-duration, no-data choices were scarce. If an operator sold a 28-day or 30-day bundle with calls, texts and data, a cheaper The new rules fix this gap. If a company already sells a bundled pack for 30 days or less, it must now offer a similar voice-and-SMS-only voucher at a lower, fair price, voucher at an "appropriate" lower price.

TRAI did not set a strict formula after hearing from stakeholders, but the main idea is simple: if you remove data, the price should go down. Operators must also offer at least one voice-and-SMS pack that renews on the same date each month. If that date does not exist, like February 31 (This month has 28 days), the renewal happens on the last day of the month. They also need to keep at least one longer-term no-data pack that

matches their quarterly or annual plans. This monthly-date rule is important. Many prepaid packs still use 28-day cycles, which means users recharge 13 times a year. A same-date monthly option brings it back to 12 payments, making it easier for families to plan their budgets.

For families who recharge on salary day, this small calendar change can be as helpful as a lower price. It is easy to imagine who will benefit: a grandparent who never uses YouTube, a shopkeeper who relies on Wi-Fi at home and only needs the phone for customers, a migrant worker who cannot afford a big quarterly payment, or a student with campus internet who wants a cheap backup number. Right now, voice-and-SMS annual packs cost between ₹1,748 and ₹1,849, and quar-

terly packs are about ₹448 to ₹470. Shorter, cheaper options should make it easier for these users to stay connected.

TRAI finalised the amendment after sharing a draft on April 7, 2026, receiving 1,132 public comments, and holding an open-house discussion in June. The regulator says its goal is not to slow India's data growth, but to ensure bundling does not become an extra cost for people who do not want data. Feature phones, second SIMs, and Wi-Fi-first homes are still a big part of the market. Customers will no longer have to buy unused gigabytes to keep a number alive. Implementation will test the operators. They must redesign menus, recast prices and make the new vouchers easy to find in apps, USSD codes and kirana-store recharge counters.

Clarity will matter as much as price. If the no-data packs are buried under flashy unlimited-data offers, the reform will exist only on paper. If they are visible, affordable and easy to renew, the next recharge will feel less like buying extras and more like paying only for what the phone is actually used for: a call, a message, and a connection that lasts as long as the user can afford.

Gunners remain pillar of India’s defence: Rajnath

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The historic Regiment of Artillery marked its 200th Raising Day on Monday, with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh saying the Gunners have distinguished themselves through courage, precision and unwavering commitment across generations, while remaining a "formidable pillar" of India's combat prowess.



The Indian Army and its chief, General Dhiraj Seth, also extended greetings to the serving personnel and veterans of the Regiment, saying that with precision,

firepower and an unwavering commitment to mission accomplishment, the Gunners remain a formidable force on the battlefield, serving with pride and upholding the motto of 'Sarvatra Izzat-O-Iqbal'.

September 28 has a special significance in the annals of the history of the Regiment of Artillery as the first Indian Artillery unit, 5 (Bombay) Mountain Battery equipped with 2.5 inch RML Gun, was

raised on this day in 1827. The Regiment celebrates the occasion every year as Gunners Day on September 28.

The Regiment of Artillery also proved its mettle during the military operations of 1947-48, 1962, 1965, 1971 and 1999. After the 1999 Kargil conflict, the artillery acquired further prominence, and with its vast array of weapons, it is acknowledged as a significant "Arm of Decision", the defence ministry had said earlier.

Piyush Goyal to visit US for G20 meet, push for interim trade deal

ASHOKE RAJ
■ New Delhi



Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal will travel to the United States from September 29 to October 5 to attend the G20 Trade Ministers' meeting and hold discussions with his US counterpart on efforts to advance an interim India-US bilateral trade agreement (BTA).

Goyal is visiting Milwaukee, Wisconsin, at the invitation of the US Trade Representative. He is scheduled to participate in the G20 Trade Ministers' meeting on September 30 and October 1 before travelling to Chicago for meetings with American business leaders and members of the Indian diaspora, according to the Commerce Ministry.

At the G20 meeting, India will seek to work with member countries towards an open, transparent and non-discriminatory global trading system, with the World Trade Organization (WTO) remaining at its centre. India will also emphasise the need to preserve sufficient policy flexibility for developing economies.

Goyal is expected to hold bilateral discussions with several trade counterparts on the sidelines of the meeting. The talks will focus on expanding opportunities for Indian farmers, fishermen, women entrepreneurs, startups, micro, small and medium enterpris-

es and other businesses.

A key component of his US visit will be discussions with the US administration on the India-US BTA. The two sides have been working towards an interim arrangement as part of broader efforts to establish a balanced and mutually beneficial trade framework.

India and the US had reached a framework for an interim BTA in February. However, the proposed agreement has faced delays following developments surrounding the legal basis for the preferential tariff structure offered by Washington. New Delhi is seeking a competitive tariff arrangement that would provide Indian exporters a level playing field with competing economies.

During his meetings in Milwaukee and Chicago, Goyal will also interact with senior executives from major US companies across sectors including manufacturing, consumer goods, agribusi-

ness, retail and technology. He is expected to promote India as a manufacturing and investment destination and participate in discussions with businesses, startups and innovative companies.

The Commerce Ministry said the visit is aimed at strengthening the India-US trade and investment relationship while deepening New Delhi's engagement with its G20 partners.

In Chicago, Goyal is also scheduled to pay tribute to Mahatma Gandhi on Gandhi Jayanti and Swami Vivekananda. He will meet professional associations representing the Indian community during his visit.

Before leaving for the US, Goyal on Monday co-chaired the 14th meeting of the India-UAE High-Level Joint Task Force on Investments in Mumbai with Sheikh Hamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, managing director of the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority.

Income Tax Department raids 12 Mumbai sites linked to Rakul Preet, Vashu Bhagnani

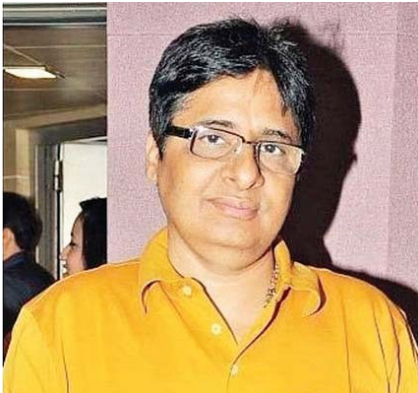
PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Mumbai

The Mumbai Income Tax Department on Monday began simultaneous search operations at 12 locations across the city linked to actor Rakul Preet Singh, her father-in-law and producer Vashu Bhagnani, and the production-distribution company Panorama Studios. Separate teams fanned out to offices and other premises associated with the film personalities and the banners around them. The action, according to people familiar with the matter, follows inputs that funds may have been sent abroad in the name of film financing.

Officials are examining whether remittances described as project costs were used to move money out of India and, in the process, under-report income or evade tax. The suspected cover includes foreign location shoots, international production expenses and the sale or purchase of overseas distribution rights. Investigators have been examining paper files, digital records, ledgers, and bank statements related to those cross-border transfers. No official amount has been disclosed, and the department



Actor Rakul Preet Singh, Producer Vashu Bhagnani



has not issued a detailed public note on what has been found so far.

The sites under search include premises linked to Rakul Preet Singh and the Bhagnani family as well as offices associated with Pooja Entertainment and Panorama Studios. Rakul Preet Singh is married to actor-producer Jacky Bhagnani, son of Vashu Bhagnani.

Pooja Entertainment, the family banner, has produced more than forty Hindi films, among them the 1990s commercial hits Coolie No. 1, Hero No. 1 and Biwi No. 1. Panorama Studios, headed by Kumar Mangat Pathak, is known for titles such as Raid and the Drishyam series. One of its forthcoming releases, Drishyam: The Conclusion, is

scheduled for October 2.

As of late Monday, the searches were still in progress. Reporters who sought comment from Rakul Preet Singh's team, the Bhagnanis and Kumar Mangat Pathak received no reply by the time early accounts were filed. That is not unusual while teams are still on the premises and records are being taken into custody. A search is an investigative step. It does not by itself prove wrongdoing, and it does not amount to a charge. The department will first study the material recovered, match it against declared income and permitted remittances, and then decide whether notices or further proceedings are warranted.

The case has drawn

notice because overseas spending is a normal part of film work. Foreign shoots, co-productions and international rights deals happen regularly, and money can leave India for those purposes when invoices, contracts and tax treatment are in order. The present inquiry turns on whether the remittances under review were genuine project costs or a way to shift funds and conceal income. Until the papers are analysed, that question remains open.

No list of specific films, no names of foreign counterparties and no seizure value have been made public by the IT department. Sources said clearer official word is expected only after the searches end and the records are processed.

Kolkata to drop Marx, Lenin names from road names for Indian icons

SAUGAR SENGUPTA
■ Kolkata

Soon Karl Marx, VI Lenin, Ho Chi Minh, or, for that matter, Prince Anwar Shah, the grandson of Tipu Sultan, would go off Kolkata roads, giving way to Desi exemplars like Debaprasad Ghosh or Michael Madhusudan Dutt and even Ram Kothari, one of the brothers who were killed in Ayodhya police firing.

The 10-member committee constituted by the State Government has already started functioning, with Kartik Maharaj, or Swami

Pradiptananda of the Bharat Sevashram Sangha, among its members. Among others on the committee are former Bengal BJP president and ex Tripura Governor Tathagata Roy and Subrata Gupta, the Chief Advisor to Bengal Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari.

The monk, who has already been allocated an office at the Kolkata Municipal Corporation, has started his work in earnest on the road rechristening project, one was told.

"There are many roads of Kolkata which were arbitrarily named after people who

neither visited Bengal or India or left any contribution for this country... so where is a need to lug their so-called legacy by us," the Swami said, adding the panel has already received names of a few roads for consideration, including Biswa Bangla Sarani (named by former Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee) and Ho Chi Minh Sarani — "names which are not connected either to Bengal's culture or history."

Recommendations had been sent on a few roads: "the members will consider their connections with Bharatiya



Lenin Sarani, Kolkata

WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Sanskriti (Indian culture) and that of Bengal and draw up a proposal after careful consid-

eration," he said, adding that the proposal will then be recommended to the State

statesman who founded the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in 1945 and became its first president.

The road-renaming exercise is not new to Kolkata; previously, roads like Amherst Street were renamed Rammohan Roy Sarani, Lansdown Road was rechristened Sarat Bose Road, and Bidhan Sarani was called College Street. Similarly, today's Lenin Sarani was called Dharamtalla Street, whereas Karla Marx Sarani was known as Kidderpore Circular/Garden Reach Road. According to sources,

members have suggested renaming Ho Chi Minh Sarani (avenue) after Debaprasad Ghosh, a mathematician and former president of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh. Proposals have also come to rename the Karl Marx Sarani Kidderpore/Circular Garden Reach Road after prominent Bengali poets Michael Madhusudan Dutt or Rangalal Bandyopadhyay. Parallel names have also been suggested for Ho Chi Minh Sarani (formerly Harrington Street), according to which it should be renamed after US civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr.



States Focus



NAVAL COMMANDERS' MEET TO FOCUS ON WEST ASIA CRISIS

The Navy top brass will review operational readiness, with a special focus on the ongoing West Asia conflict and ongoing modernisation of the naval fleet during the three-day biannual conference starting Tuesday.

Giving details, an official said on Monday that the senior leadership will undertake a comprehensive review of its operational preparedness and contribution to safeguarding India's maritime interests, including energy security amid the West Asia conflict.

The commanders' conference - the Navy's apex-level forum - will be attended by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General NS Raja Subramani and Navy Chief Admiral Krishna Swaminathan. Army Chief General Dhiraj Seth is also scheduled to interact with participants.

(PNS)



GOA CM SAWANT SLAMS CONGRESS FOR TARGETING ECI

Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant on Monday hit out at the Congress for targeting the Election Commission of India (ECI), saying political parties cannot win elections by repeatedly levelling accusations against constitutional institutions and demanding proof of electoral procedures. Addressing a press conference in Panaji, Sawant alleged that the Congress questions the credibility of EVMs only when it loses elections but accepts the same system after winning in States like Karnataka, Telangana and Himachal Pradesh. He also cited Goa's zilla panchayat elections, which are conducted using ballot papers, to argue that the party's electoral setbacks cannot be attributed solely to EVMs.

"When the EVM issue does not work, they (Congress) start making allegations against constitutional institutions," he said, alleging that the Opposition party's actions aim to create doubts in the minds of voters. Sawant's remarks have come amid a row over the ECI's functioning after the Indian Express reported that Election Commissioners SS Sandhu and Vivek Joshi objected on record at least 14 times over the past 10 months to decisions concerning voter registration, deletions and restoration of names and the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. The Election Commission is an independent body, and repeatedly levelling allegations against institutions was not appropriate, Sawant said.

(PNS)

J&K passes resolution demanding full Statehood

MOHIT KANDHARI
■ Jammu

Notwithstanding stiff opposition from Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) legislators, the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly on Monday passed another resolution calling upon the Government of India for the immediate and urgent restoration of full Statehood to the Union Territory.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah moved the resolution on Friday, September 25, during the ongoing autumn session. It was deferred after several members sought to speak on the issue and after protests disrupted proceedings.

On Monday, it was taken up again and passed by voice vote after BJP members walked out.

The resolution will be forwarded to the Government of India.

Meanwhile, four MLAs were also marshalled out of the Assembly after BJP members created a ruckus in the House, protesting the resolution moved by the Chief Minister to restore Statehood.

The text of the resolution



PDP MLA holds a placard amid a protest in support of statehood resolution moves by Jammu and Kashmir CM Omar Abdullah during the Autumn session of union territory Legislative Assembly in Srinagar on Monday

PTI

States: "In addition to the resolutions passed by this House on June 26, 2000 and 6 November 2024, the House calls upon the Government of India for the immediate and urgent restoration of full statehood to Jammu and Kashmir and resolves that this resolution be forwarded to the Government of India."

The 2000 resolution, passed during Farooq Abdullah's tenure, had sought restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's pre-1953 constitutional position. The

November 2024 resolution had called for dialogue on special status and constitutional guarantees after the abrogation of Article 370.

BJP legislators strongly objected to those references, arguing they amounted to an attempt to revive autonomy and special-status demands under the cover of a Statehood resolution.

Leader of Opposition Sunil Sharma said the party supports restoration of Statehood but rejects linking it to the pre-August 5, 2019 status.

The BJP said the reference

to autonomy and special status in the resolution was an insult to the Constitution and it would not allow a discussion on it or its passage in the House.

The Opposition BJP protested against the resolution with party members jumping into the well of the House, tearing business papers and conducting mock proceedings.

BJP members also demanded Speaker Abdul Rahim Rather leave the chair.

The party also submitted a notice seeking the Speaker's

AAP discloses ₹12.1 crore donations, down 68% from last year

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The AAP has disclosed Rs 12.10 crore in contributions for 2025-26, down 68 per cent from the previous year, with nearly 83 per cent of the amount coming from Prudent Electoral Trust and Trident Limited, a company founded by former party MP Rajinder Gupta.

According to the party's contribution report to the Election Commission, Ashutosh Ranka, now a co-convener of the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) and former AAP spokesperson, donated ₹21,100 to the party.

The contributions were made during 2025-26, before he took up his role in the CJP.

Prudent and Trident each gave ₹5 crore to the AAP. The remaining contributions totalled about ₹2.10 crore.

Gupta was elected to the Rajya Sabha on an AAP ticket in October 2025.

Trident's ₹5-crore cheque was dated January 9, 2026, when Gupta was with the Arvind Kejriwal-led party. He joined the BJP in April this year.

AAP had disclosed ₹38.10 crore in contributions in 2024-25, more than three times the ₹11.06 crore it reported in 2023-24. Prudent was its largest



AAP National Convener Arvind Kejriwal during an interview session on Day 2 of 'The Conclave 2026' in New Delhi on Monday

PTI

donor in 2024-25, giving ₹16.40 crore.

The latest filing covers the first full financial year since the AAP lost power in Delhi in February 2025. The party continues to govern Punjab, where Trident is based.

Its report contains 1,202 numbered entries.

Party chief Arvind Kejriwal is listed

against three contributions of ₹10,000 each. Former Delhi chief minister Atishi made 12 payments of ₹3,500 each, totalling ₹42,000, while Punjab AAP president Aman Arora is listed against 12 payments of ₹10,000 each, totalling ₹1.20 lakh.

Reports filed by three other regional parties also show how their dis-

closed contributions have changed since the 2024 Assembly elections.

The Telugu Desam Party (TDP), which came to power in Andhra Pradesh, reported ₹58.25 crore in contributions for 2025-26, down from ₹83.03 crore the previous year. Prudent Electoral Trust gave it ₹45 crore, up from ₹40 crore in 2024-25.

The YSR Congress Party, which was ousted from power by the TDP, reported contributions worth ₹24.31 crore, down from about ₹140.04 crore in 2024-25. Its largest donor in the latest filing was Goodwood Sanctuary Private Limited, listed against ₹10 crore.

The Biju Janata Dal, which lost power in Odisha in 2024, listed no contributions above ₹20,000 in its latest report. It had disclosed ₹60 crore in 2024-25, all received in April and May 2024, before the election results were declared. The party had also filed nil reports for such contributions in 2022-23 and 2023-24, when electoral bonds were still available.

Under the rules, parties must identify donors whose contributions exceed ₹20,000 during a financial year. These contribution reports do not show a party's full annual income, which is reported separately in its audited accounts.

CJP will not back down till CEC resigns: Ranka

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Guwahati

CJP spokesperson Ashutosh Ranka on Monday asserted that the outfit would not back down from its demand for the resignation of CEC Gyanesh Kumar over the alleged exclusion of 13 crore names from electoral rolls and challenged him to clear the allegations against him before the press and the public.

Ranka claimed that the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) had "defrauded" 13 crore people by removing their names from electoral rolls and questioned why the BJP was "defending" Kumar over the allegations. "For 48 hours, the ball was in Kumar's court; now it is in CJP's court. We will start our nationwide protest on October 2, and we won't back down till he resigns. CJP is a platform which, if it gets involved in any matter, doesn't let go of it until we win," Ranka told reporters.

CPI(M) rejects ECI clarification, demands CEC's resignation

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) has rejected the Election Commission of India's (ECI) recent clarification regarding the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, reiterating its demand for the immediate resignation or impeachment of Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar.

In a statement issued by its Polit Bureau, the CPI(M) asserted that the ECI's statement on September 26 failed to address fundamental questions raised about the functioning of the poll panel and the integrity of the nationwide electoral roll revision.

The Left party cited recent investigative media reports revealing that two Election Commissioners had repeatedly raised formal objections



regarding procedures for enrolling new voters, the deletion of names, the centralisation of the electoral database, and alleged illegal modifications to Form 6.

"The concerns raised by opposition parties and civil society organisations arose in a specific context—the enforced SIR process across the country. They have only been reinforced by disclosures from within the Commission itself," the Polit Bureau stated.

It added that the core issue remains whether the electoral process is being conducted transparently and in accordance with the law to prevent the wrongful exclusion of eligible voters.

Criticising the official response, the CPI(M) said the poll panel neither denied nor addressed these substantial issues, nor did it fix accountability for the hardships faced by citizens due to "whimsical and authoritarian acts".

CPI condemns alleged RSS attack on West Bengal rally

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Communist Party of India (CPI) on Monday strongly condemned an alleged attack by Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) activists on a massive protest organised by the party in West Bengal's Midnapore.

The demonstration, organised on the birth anniversary of Shaheed Bhagat Singh, was directed against Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar and the Suvendu Adhikari-led Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Government in West Bengal.

In a statement issued from New Delhi, the National Secretariat of the CPI alleged that local administrative authorities initially attempted to derail the gathering by withholding permission for the rally. Despite the denial, party cadres and local residents assembled in large



numbers outside the Midnapore Collectorate to voice their anger against political violence, communalism, and the alleged erosion of democratic rights in the State.

According to the party, violence erupted while CPI National Secretary Rama Krushna Panda was addressing the crowd. Supposed RSS workers allegedly attempted to disrupt the meeting and subsequently tried to physically assault CPI West Bengal State Secretary Swapan Banerjee as he rose to speak.

Unpaid dues leave MP village without power for 3 months

UMESH NIGAM
■ Bhopal

Nearly 70 households in Khajuri village, under Chhaigaon Makhan Janpad Panchayat in Khandwa district, have been without electricity for about three months after the village transformer failed and the power supply was disconnected over outstanding bills. The crisis has now extended to agricultural connections, leaving homes and fields without power.

Residents said the transformer stopped working around three months ago. According to them, the electricity company cited outstanding dues against consumers in the village and did not repair or replace the faulty transformer. Power supply was gradually stopped, leaving the entire village without electricity.



The prolonged outage has affected routine life and agricultural activities. Villagers said they celebrated Rakhi and the Ganesh festival in darkness and have been struggling to operate fans, lights, mobile phones, and other essential electrical appliances.

The situation worsened on Sunday when electricity supply to agricultural fields was also disconnected. Farmers said the move could affect irrigation and other farm-related activities at a time when electricity is

essential for cultivation.

According to electricity company officials, Khajuri has around 70 electricity consumers, of whom only five families regularly pay their bills. Around 65 consumers have outstanding dues estimated at nearly Rs 9 lakh. The company has also said that around 40 to 50 families in the village are tribal households and that some consumers have accumulated dues of up to ₹40,000 each.

The company officials maintain that prolonged non-payment and the substantial outstanding amount led to the disconnection. Officials said some consumers have now started coming forward to deposit their dues following the shutdown and that restoration can be considered after the outstanding amount is recovered.

50 million Indian children still lack sanitation services in schools: WHO-UNICEF report

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Nearly a fifth of the children with no access to sanitation services in schools are in India, the highest for any country in the world, according to the WHO-UNICEF joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) report.

India has 50 million of the world's 244 million children without sanitation services in schools in 2025, the report "Progress on Drinking Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Schools 2015-2025" noted.

The report also added that

India recorded a 14 per cent reduction in the number of schools without sanitation services during the period assessed.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)'s joint monitoring programme produces internationally comparable estimates of progress on drinking water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and monitors the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets related to WASH.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

includes global goals for water and sanitation and for education. Goal 4 aims to ensure "inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning" and includes targets to build and upgrade education facilities that are child-, disability- and gender-sensitive and provide safe and effective learning environments for all.

This includes providing all schools with access to electricity, computers, the internet, adapted infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities, and basic WASH services.



Goal 6 aims to "ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all" and includes targets for universal

access to safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene for all.

"In 2025, despite progress, 244 million children still had no sanitation service at their

school," the report said.

India accounted for 50 million of them, Nigeria 34 million, Ethiopia 26 million, the Democratic Republic of the Congo 11 million and Indonesia 8 million, the report said.

For SDG monitoring, a basic drinking water service means schools have access to a functioning improved water source. A basic sanitation service means schools have improved, single-sex, usable sanitation facilities, and a basic hygiene service means schools have hand-washing facilities with soap

and water available at the time of the survey.

Hygiene remains another area of concern. Around 20 million Indian children had no hygiene service at schools. However, the JMP noted that insufficient recent data meant it could not generate hygiene coverage estimates for India and the Central and Southern Asia region beyond 2024.

"India performed comparatively better on school drinking-water access. In 2025, around 12 million Indian children lacked drinking-water services at school, accounting

for roughly one in every 20 children globally without such services.

"India is among 28 of 62 countries considered on track to achieve universal basic drinking-water coverage in schools by 2030. Its basic drinking-water coverage increased by more than 4 per cent annually during the period assessed," it said.

The monitoring report noted that with just five years remaining until the end of the SDG period, the world is not on track to achieve universal access to basic WASH services in schools by 2030.



PROSPECT

104th MES Day observed at Narangi Cantt



The 104th MES Day was celebrated with enthusiasm at HEADQUARTERS, Additional Director General North East Infrastructure (HQ ADG NEI), Narangi. Officers and staff of HQ ADG NEI, Chief Engineer (Air Force) Borjhar, GE (AF) Borjhar and GE (Projects) AF Digaru attended the event.

Prabhakar Mittal, IDSE, Additional Director General, North East Infrastructure, extended warm greetings to all officers, staff and their families on the occasion.

In his address, the ADG recalled the distinguished journey of the Military Engineer Services and appreciated the dedication and perseverance of its personnel in meeting the Armed Forces' infrastructure requirements under challenging conditions in the North East.

He highlighted that the Armed Forces' expectations of MES are continuously increasing and stressed the need for timely project completion, improved planning and execution, adoption of new technologies, and enhanced quality in both works and maintenance.

He emphasised standardisation of processes to improve efficiency and accountability, and called upon all personnel to discharge duties with the highest standards of integrity, professional ethics and devotion to duty.

On the occasion, Prabhakar Mittal presented commendation cards to deserving officers and staff in recognition of their devotion to duty.

He expressed confidence that with collective effort, MES will continue to uphold its proud legacy and meet future challenges.

(PNS)

Assam Terriers organise veterans' rally in Silchar



An ex-servicemen rally under the 'Atoot Bandhan' initiative was organised by Assam Terriers at Silchar on 28 September, 2026 to strengthen the bond with veterans and address their welfare requirements.

The rally drew over 75 participants, including veer naris, ex-servicemen, and veterans from various arms and services.

Participants discussed welfare and pension-related issues concerning veterans and veer naris. Attendees interacted with representatives of the unit and were assisted on matters pertaining to pension, documentation, welfare schemes and entitlements. The event reaffirmed the Indian Army's commitment towards welfare of its veterans and families, upholding the ethos of 'Once a Soldier, Always a Soldier'.

(PNS)

BSES holds industry workshop on BESS safety

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

As battery energy storage becomes an increasingly important part of India's clean-energy transition, BSES recently organised a three-day workshop on the Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) Safety Framework, bringing together power-sector leaders, global safety experts, utilities, fire and emergency services and industry professionals.

The workshop focused on a priority: ensuring battery storage scales up safely, responsibly, and with the right level of preparedness. Discussions covered safety-by-design, early warning and detection, thermal runaway, recognised testing, emergency preparedness, evacuation protocols and first-responder readiness.

The inaugural session was addressed by Ghanshyam Prasad (Chairperson, CEA), Amal Sinha (Director & Group CEO, BSES), Abhishek Ranjan (CEO, BRPI), Sunil Kumar Jha (Director General, FS, CD & HG), Santosh Kumar (COO, BYPL), Alok Kumar (Director General, AIDA), Asko Rajput (Chairman, Standards Committee, BIS), Tanya Singhal (Vice President &



Country Head, GEAPP); and Dr Rashi Gupta (MD, Vision Mechatronics Pvt Ltd).

The workshop moved beyond discussions to practical preparedness. A major highlight was a live thermal runaway demonstration in a battery module, followed by firefighting intervention by Delhi Fire Service personnel. The exercise helped participants understand how battery failures can develop and the challenges emergency responders may face.

Global experts Richie Stephen (Senior Standards Project Manager, UL Standards & Engagement), Kurt Vollmacher (Director, Intotech & Fire Safety Trainer) and Dr Judy Jeevarajan (UL Standards & Engagement) shared

IRFC signs ₹4,200 crore loan agreement with DVC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Indian Railway Finance Corporation Limited (IRFC), a Navratna Central Public Sector Enterprise under the Ministry of Railways, has taken another significant step in its strategic expansion and diversification with the signing of an ₹4,200 crore term loan agreement with Damodar Valley Corporation (DVC) to finance its renewable energy projects across Jharkhand and West Bengal.

The transaction marks an important milestone in IRFC's evolving role as a diversified infrastructure financier, extending its established long-term financing capabil-

ities to the clean energy ecosystem while remaining closely aligned with the broader railway ecosystem. The loan agreement was signed in New Delhi in the presence of senior officials of IRFC and DVC, led from DVC by Manish Kumar, Member (Finance), DVC, and Manoj Kumar Dubey, Chairman & Managing Director, IRFC.

The financing will support DVC's portfolio of floating solar, ground-mounted solar, rooftop solar and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) projects, leveraging its existing land, reservoirs and transmission infrastructure.

IRFC CMD, Dubey, said, "Renewable energy is no longer peripheral to the



Chairman and Managing Director of IRFC Manoj Kumar Dubey

Railways; it is at the core of Indian Railways' journey towards Net Zero Carbon Emissions by 2030. Through this ₹4,200 crore financing to DVC, IRFC is extending its long-term financing capa-

bility to the clean energy infrastructure that will power India's future. This is IRFC 2.0 in action — strategic diversification that remains firmly connected to the Railways ecosystem and to

KRIBHCO's 46th AGM held at New Delhi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Krishak Bharati Cooperative Limited (KRIBHCO), one of India's premier fertiliser-producing farmers' cooperatives, reported a pre-tax profit of Rs 824.68 crore for the financial year 2025-26. The society declared a 20% dividend on the equity capital of its member cooperative societies for the year.

The annual accounts of the Society were approved during its 46th annual general body meeting, held on 25th September 2026, at the Ashok Hotel, New Delhi. The meeting was presided over by V Sudhakar Chowdary, Chairman of KRIBHCO, in the presence of the board of directors and attended by delegates from various member cooperatives across the country.

KRIBHCO achieved remarkable production figures in FY 2025-26, with Urea production at 21.34 lakh MT and Ammonia production at 12.39 lakh MT, achieving 97.26% and 99.36% capacity utilisation, respectively. Expanding its product offerings to cater to the diverse needs of farmers, KRIBHCO's portfolio includes not only Neem Coated Urea but also imported DAP, MAP, MOP,



Complex Fertilisers, Bio Fertilisers, Compost, Certified Seeds, Hybrid Seeds, SSP, Zinc Sulphate, Natural Potash, Mycorrhiza and Sea Weed Fortified Bio-stimulants. During the year, KRIBHCO sold 45.37 lakh MT of fertilisers (including Urea and P&K Fertilisers).

KRIBHCO Fertilisers Ltd (KFL), a wholly-owned subsidiary of KRIBHCO, also delivered strong performance with the production of 11.02 lakh MT of Urea and 6.68 lakh MT of Ammonia, achieving capacity utilization of 127.48% and 133.16%, respectively. KFL declared a dividend of ₹14.40 crore for the year.

SS Yadav, Managing Director of KRIBHCO, informed the gathering about the sustained high standards of production

and operational efficiency maintained by KRIBHCO and its subsidiaries.

KRIBHCO's wholly-owned subsidiary, KRIBHCO Agri Business Limited (KABL) is contributing significantly. KABL achieved a turnover of ₹1919.35 crore in FY 2025-26, the growth was supported by a substantial expansion in domestic business, which contributed ₹1,436.81 crore, while export sales stood at ₹482.54 crore. Meanwhile, KRIBHCO Green Energy Private Limited (KGEPL), is constructing two plants in Hazira, Gujarat, and Nellore, Andhra Pradesh, expected to be operational in FY 2026-27.

As part of its commitment to rural development, KRIBHCO's social arm, Gramin

Vikas Trust is continuing to build scalable, community-led models integrating livelihoods, environmental sustainability and improved quality of life for underserved communities.

Aligned with the Government of India's vision of "Sahakar Se Samridhi," KRIBHCO is playing a pivotal role in promoting seed and export activities among cooperatives as lead promoter of Bharatiya Beej Sahakari Samiti Limited (BBSSL) and a joint promoter of National Cooperative Export Limited (NCEL) and Sahakar Taxi Cooperative Limited (Bharat Taxi) under the guidance of the Ministry of Cooperation.

In recognition of its outstanding performance, KRIBHCO received several awards from FAI, PRSI and other prestigious organisations.

During the AGM, KRIBHCO also honored two eminent cooperators for their remarkable contributions to the cooperative movement in India. Shankarabhai Chaudhary from Gujarat was conferred the KRIBHCO "Sahakarita Shiromani award", and Bhagwan Singh Yadav from Madhya Pradesh received the KRIBHCO Sahakarita Vibhushan award.



BJP leaders Arvind Menon, Bharati Praveen Pawar, Roop Kumari Chaudhary, Vijay Chauthaiwale, Aseervatham Achary, and others met with the Sri Lankan delegation, led by M Tilvin Silva, General Secretary, Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), during their visit to BJP headquarters under the KNOW BJP initiative on Monday

PIONEER PHOTO

IndusInd Bank MD and CEO says his name unmapped from electoral roll

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

IndusInd Bank MD & CEO Rajiv Anand has said his name has been "unmapped" from the electoral roll and he has been asked to appear for a hearing to avoid deletion from the voter list.

"I have been told my name is "unmapped" from the voting list. I have voted in every election ever since I have been eligible to vote. I hold a passport, PAN Card, voter ID card and Aadhar card. I am now being asked to appear for a hearing else my name will be deleted. Why should I?" Anand said in a X post on Sunday.

"Indians have so many certificates to prove who they are. Aadhar card. PAN Card. Voter ID. Passport. You would think there is an identity crisis!", he said in another post.

Amid the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise, the Election Commission last week announced a slew of decisions for the



IndusInd Bank MD & CEO Rajiv Anand

ease of voters who have been issued notices, including doorstep collection of documents and extending deadlines in Delhi and Maharashtra.

The period for filing claims and objections has been extended till October 30 for Delhi voters, while for Maharashtra it has been extended till October 12.

DERC chairperson visits PPCL's PPS-III in Bawana

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

SCL Das, Chairperson, Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission (DERC), along with Ajay Kumar Jain, Member (Law), DERC, visited the 1,371.2 MW Pragati Power Station-III (PPS-III), Bawana.

The visit was undertaken to review the operations of the largest-capacity power generation plant in northern India and Delhi, which plays a vital role in meeting the uninterrupted power supply requirements of



Delhi Minorities Commission pays tribute to Bhagat Singh

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

A floral tribute and commemorative programme was organised at the office of the Delhi Minorities Commission on the birth anniversary of Shaheed-e-Azam Bhagat Singh. Delhi Minorities Commission Chairman Nirmal Jain, along with Members Kuldeep Singh and Mohammad Haroon, was prominently present on the occasion.

Several social workers, teachers and representatives from different communities, including Jagdeep Singh Kohli, Vivek Singh Mata, Balwinder Singh, Charanjit

Singh Rajput, Manpreet Singh Hanspal, Jaspreet Singh Mata, Harpreet Singh Kalra, Narendra Singh, Darshan Singh, Faiz Khan, Goldy Randhawa and Darshan Pal Singh, among others, also attended the programme. The dignitaries and participants paid floral tributes to Shaheed Bhagat Singh and remembered his supreme sacrifice for the nation.

Addressing the gathering, Delhi Minorities Commission Chairman Nirmal Jain said that Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta had recently paid floral tributes at the statue of Shaheed Bhagat Singh, and inspired by the occasion, the Delhi Minorities



Commission also organised the tribute programme.

Commission Member Sardar Kuldeep Singh said that Sardar Bhagat Singh played a significant role in awakening the spirit of freedom and patriotism

the nation's larger development priorities."

"This partnership with DVC demonstrates how IRFC can bring long-term capital to renewable energy infrastructure that supports the Railways' growing energy requirements while contributing to a greener, more sustainable and future-ready India," Dubey added.

The transaction thus extends IRFC's financing capabilities into clean energy infrastructure that complements its core railway financing mandate, while supporting the broader transition towards a sustainable energy ecosystem.

The DVC transaction marks another important step in

IRFC's calibrated diversification into strategic railway-linked infrastructure sectors, building on its established strength in providing long-term financing.

IRFC's expanding financing portfolio includes sectors such as renewable energy, power, metro rail, logistics and other infrastructure with strong linkages to national development priorities.

The transaction demonstrates IRFC's ability to mobilise long-term capital for nationally important railway linked infrastructure, bringing together its core financing strengths with emerging requirements in clean energy and sustainable infrastructure.

YEIDA approves key projects during 93rd board meeting



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Noida

The Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA) announced major infrastructure and policy decisions at its 93rd board meeting in Noida.

YEIDA reported a sharp rise in revenue, recording ₹4,222.37 crore till mid-September in FY 2026-27, a 182.35% increase over the same period last year. Revenue from industrial and mixed-land schemes alone stood at ₹2,420.7 crore, at 174.47% of the annual budget.

Total expenditure rose to ₹5,501.71 crore, including ₹4,344.34 crore for land acquisition and loan repayments. In a major policy move, the board approved the YEIDA

Corpus Fund Investment Regulation 2026-27, which will ring-fence one-time lease rents and non-recurring receipts into a dedicated fund for long-term maintenance of roads, drainage, lighting and green belts.

To expand its industrial footprint under Master Plan 2041, YEIDA cleared the rollout of the Multi-Modal Logistics Park Policy-2024 through e-auctions. It also reviewed plans for an 8,000-hectare Industrial Node south of Noida International Airport and an International Trade City on the lines of Yiwu, China. On farmer welfare, YEIDA expedited 7% residential plot allotment to 10,069 landholders and released ₹3,142 crore as additional 64.7% compensation.



Editor's
TAKE

It's a matter of the heart:
Don't miss a beat!

India's demographic dividend is only as strong as its arteries. On World Heart Day, the pledge is simple: don't miss a beat, and don't let the country miss one either

Every September 29, World Heart Day asks the world to listen to the one organ we notice only when it falters. Founded in 2000 by the World Heart Federation with the WHO, the day endures because its message never ages: cardiovascular disease is the planet's leading killer, claiming nearly 20 million lives a year. More than four in five of those deaths are heart attacks and strokes, and a third strike people younger than 70. This year's campaign, "Don't Miss a Beat", targets the disease's cruellest feature: it often gives no warning until it is too late.

How did an ailment of old age become an epidemic of the prime of life? Because modern living has industrialised every risk factor. Ultra-processed food, salt, sugar and trans fats have displaced home cooking. Desks have replaced fields. Tobacco persists, air pollution chokes our cities, and sleeplessness is worn as a badge of ambition.

Cardiovascular disease caused 26.6 per cent of all Indian deaths in 2017, up from 15 per cent in 1990. Heart attacks in the thirties and forties, among breadwinners, are at their peak. Kerala, Punjab and Tamil Nadu rank among the top. An estimated 315 million Indians live with hypertension, yet only about 28 per cent know it, and barely one in eight has it under control. Another 136 million have prediabetes. The epidemic is not concealed. We simply are not looking.

The way out is neither exotic nor expensive. First, detect early. Blood pressure, sugar and cholesterol checks must become as routine as a mobile recharge, available at every health and wellness centre. Second, treat cheaply and continuously.

The India Hypertension Control Initiative proves it works: across nine districts, blood pressure control rose from 37 to 48 per cent between 2018-19 and 2023-24, while patients' out-of-pocket medicine spending fell from 47 to 9 per cent. That model belongs in every district.

As a nation, we have to make choices, healthy choices, that can make India fit again. No doubt yoga can be a great way to get healthy, but it must be accompanied by lifestyle choices, eating right, sleeping right and keeping three culprits, hurry, worry and curry, in check. Then there are so many things in the market that are enough to make us unhealthy. Salt and trans-fat limits, tobacco, alcohol and plenty of processed food need to be curtailed. Besides, cleaner air and daily walks can make all the difference. Moreover, it is very important to prepare for emergencies before they happen. Chest pressure, breathlessness and pain spreading to the jaw or arm demand a hospital, not a home remedy, and CPR should be taught in every school and office. World Heart Day is a reminder that the heart is more than an organ that keeps us alive, it is at the centre of our physical well-being, working silently every moment.

Azerbaijan: The art of being everyone's exception

Baku does not balance between friends and enemies. It balances between the interests of its friends, its neighbours and its own survival. In an age increasingly obsessed with blocs, Azerbaijan offers a rather different lesson. The strongest position for a small state may not be choosing a side. It may be making every side need a relationship with you



BHOPINDER SINGH

Azerbaijan is one of those countries that makes conventional geopolitics look strangely inadequate. Here is a predominantly Shia country that is deeply secular, culturally Turkic and strategically close to Israel. It is bound to Turkey by an almost fraternal alliance, maintains a strategic partnership with Pakistan, is deepening ties with China, and yet remains obliged by geography to keep talking to Iran, its fellow Shia neighbour.

On paper, it is a collection of contradictions. In practice, it is a remarkably coherent strategy. Baku has mastered the art of being close without being captive. Azerbaijan does not appear to organise its foreign policy around ideological camps. It organises it around interests. Religion does not dictate its diplomacy. Neither does geography. Neither does friendship.

That is why Israel and Turkey can coexist comfortably in Baku's foreign-policy architecture. Turkey provides strategic depth and an intimate political relationship. Israel provides defence, intelligence, technology and energy cooperation. Pakistan provides political solidarity and a useful partnership in the Muslim world. China offers capital, connectivity and another great-power relationship. Iran, meanwhile, is the unavoidable neighbour whose hostility can never be allowed to become a permanent rupture.

The remarkable thing is not that Azerbaijan has all these relationships. It is that it has managed to keep them from cancelling one another out. This is strategic ambiguity, but not ambiguity in the sense of not knowing where one stands. Baku is remarkably clear about its interests. The ambiguity lies in refusing to let those interests be reduced to membership in a single geopolitical camp. And that distinction matters.

Azerbaijan can be Israel's strategic partner without becoming Israel's proxy. It can be Turkey's closest ally without becoming merely an extension of Ankara. It can cultivate Pakistan without adopting Pakistan's world-view wholesale. It can deepen relations with China without joining a Chinese bloc. And it can quarrel with Iran while still recognising that Iran will remain next door tomorrow, next year and for decades to come. That is the essence of strategic balance among the unnatural and the unthinkable.

The relationship with Iran is perhaps the most revealing. Shared Shia identity has done



BAKU'S
RELATIONSHIP WITH
PAKISTAN IS
EQUALLY
INSTRUCTIVE AND
PARTICULARLY
UNCOMFORTABLE
FOR INDIA.
AZERBAIJAN AND
PAKISTAN CALL
THEIR
RELATIONSHIP A
STRATEGIC
PARTNERSHIP AND
HAVE STEADILY
EXPANDED
COOPERATION IN
DEFENCE, ENERGY,
TRANSPORT AND
DIPLOMACY

The writer is a former Lieutenant Governor of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Puducherry, and a military veteran

Daiv Vani

WISDOM FOR A MEANINGFUL LIFE

The King Who
Became a Sage

Some transformations are not sudden revelations, but the slow result of an entire lifetime spent in struggle.

Vishwamitra was born a king, accustomed to power, command, and the easy deference of an entire army, until an encounter with the sage Vasishtha, whose simple hermitage possessed a wish-fulfilling cow far more valuable than his own considerable military might, humbled him more deeply than any battle ever had. Determined to attain such spiritual power himself, he renounced his throne entirely and undertook centuries of relentless penance, facing repeated setbacks and humiliating failures along the way, including being seduced by the celestial Menaka and losing years of hard-won progress in a single unguarded moment of weakness.

Rather than giving up in shame, he simply began again, and then again, eventually earning the exceedingly rare title of Brahmarishi, a sage born a warrior, but elevated purely through sustained discipline rather than birth or lineage.

His path was never one of smooth, uninterrupted mastery, but rather repeated failure met each time with renewed effort, proving convincingly that persistence mattered far more in the end than an unbroken record of success.

We often abandon our own self-improvement after a single setback or embarrassing failure, quietly believing that failure has permanently disqualified us from ever truly succeeding at it.

Today, return to one goal you abandoned after a setback, and begin again, without treating that earlier failure as the final word on what you are capable of.

—DAIV



SIDDHARTH ROY

2ND OPINION

A civil engineer is trained to calculate how much a structure can carry. But engineering also asks a less celebrated question: how much should remain unbuilt? A river needs a floodplain. A bridge needs expansion joints. A road needs setbacks. A city needs open ground. What appears empty on an engineering drawing may be the space that prevents failure.

This principle has implications beyond engineering. It should influence how governments make decisions about land, infrastructure and urban growth. Yet public policy often rewards visible construction while treating unoccupied space as an opportunity lost. The pressure to build is understandable. But when every space is consumed, efficiency can quietly turn into vulnerability.

Consider floodplains.

The wisdom of leaving space

A river does not recognise a zoning map when heavy rainfall arrives. Its floodplain is part of its natural drainage system, providing temporary storage when water levels rise. Allowing extensive construction in such areas may generate short-term economic value while transferring the eventual cost to taxpayers, insurers and residents.

A policy that protects floodplains may appear restrictive in the present while preventing far greater losses in the future. The same logic applies to wetlands, urban ponds and drainage corridors.

They can look economically unproductive because their value is not always captured in a land-price calculation. Yet they store water, recharge groundwater, moderate heat and support ecosystems. The policy question is not simply, "How much revenue can this land generate?" It is also, "What public function will disappear if this land is built over?"

Engineering offers another useful analogy.

Materials expand and contract with temperature. Structures move under changing loads. Expansion joints deliberately provide room for that movement. Without such allowances, stresses accumulate until something cracks.

Infrastructure policy requires margins. Roads, drainage networks, electricity systems and hospitals cannot be designed only around average demand. They need capacity for rainfall, traffic surges, heatwaves, power failures and shocks. Building precisely to today's demand

may seem efficient, but leaving no reserve capacity can make tomorrow's emergency much more expensive.

This is where policy must resist the seduction of short-term arithmetic. The cheapest project today is not necessarily the least expensive choice over its lifetime. Preventive spending, protected open spaces and unused capacity can be difficult to justify because their successes are often invisible: the flood that did not become a disaster, the road that did not collapse into congestion, the hospital that could accommodate a sudden surge.

Leaving space also raises a question of intergenerational responsibility. Once a wetland is filled or a public ground disappears beneath concrete, restoring it may be impossible. Today's planning decisions therefore consume land and the options available to tomorrow's citizens.

The wisdom of leaving space is ultimately a philosophy of restraint. It does not oppose development. It asks development to recognise limits, uncertainty and public risk. A river needs room to overflow.

A structure needs room to move. Infrastructure needs spare capacity. Perhaps good policy, like good engineering, is not about using every space. It is about knowing which spaces society cannot afford to lose.

The writer is a consultant to Rashtriya Raksha, a civil engineer, short story writer, columnist, public policy expert and contemporary affairs commentator

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Youth deserve to be heard

Whether the ruling party likes it or not, the youth are deeply concerned about their future. Given concerns over education, healthcare and employment, along with corruption and the growing influence of criminals and the affluent in governance, many young people have little reason to feel secure about what lies ahead.

It is natural for citizens to seek changes that could lead to a better future. Denying people the right to voice their concerns and protest against government policies can further deepen their dissatisfaction. Suppression, threats or intimidation may only strengthen their determination to raise their concerns. The government would be better served by engaging with young people through dialogue and addressing their demands with the seriousness and priority they deserve. Constructive engagement can help build trust and provide a democratic avenue for resolving grievances.

After all, young people are citizens of the country and deserve to be heard. Their concerns about education, healthcare, employment and governance should receive meaningful attention. A responsive administration must ensure that democratic participation remains open and that citizens can express their views peacefully and without fear.

AG RAJMOHAN | ANDHRA PRADESH

King Kohli rewrites ODI history

There are innings that win matches, and then there are innings that remind the world why a cricketer has become an era-defining figure. Virat Kohli's magnificent 139 not out, featuring 10 fours and nine sixes in the first ODI against the West Indies, belonged firmly to the latter category.

Kohli's performance was more than another entry in an extraordinary record book. It was a statement from a batter whose appetite for runs remains undiminished. During the innings, he extended his record of ODI centuries to 55, became the fastest batter to reach 15,000 ODI runs and moved ahead of Sachin Tendulkar for the most ODI runs on home soil. He also surpassed Mohammad Azharuddin's record for the most ODIs played by an Indian against the West Indies, making his 44th appearance against them.

Yet statistics tell only part of the Kohli story. His defining quality has always been his ability to approach every innings with the urgency of a newcomer and the confidence of a champion. He refuses to live on past achievements. Every innings becomes another challenge, another opportunity to prove himself. For millions of Indian cricket fans, watching Kohli walk to the crease remains an event in itself. His intensity and ambition continue to create lasting memories.

AP THIRUVADI | CHENNAI

Diplomacy must follow strong words

With reference to "Jaishankar's rebuke: Necessary message" (September 28), the significance of the External Affairs Minister's UN statement will depend on what India does after the applause has faded. His remarks came after Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif raised Kashmir and the 2025 conflict at the General Assembly. India responded by reiterating that terrorism cannot be normalised and that it retains the right to defend itself.

The next step should be a diplomatic campaign explaining India's position to governments. It should include verifiable evidence, briefings and closer cooperation on intelligence and terrorist financing. Equally important is maintaining communication mechanisms that reduce the risk of escalation. India and Pakistan remain neighbours, and any prolonged crisis can have consequences beyond their borders. India should pursue a calibrated policy: oppose terrorism firmly, respond when necessary, but keep diplomatic avenues available for de-escalation. The United States, Gulf countries, European nations and influential partners should be engaged through diplomacy. The international community should be encouraged to judge competing claims on evidence. A statement can set the tone; coherent policy and diplomacy must carry it forward.

BA NEBOBA | TAMIL NADU



People perform 'Tarpan' ritual at Assi Ghat on the second day of 'Pitra Paksha', in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh. PHOTO: PTI

PICTALK

Sri Lanka’s dilemma: Can the system change without being overthrown?

The test now for Sri Lanka is whether political change can move beyond changing rulers. Uyangoda sees a struggle between an old ruling class and a new political force, almost “like a class war”. A system designed to protect established power may resist transformation through the very institutions that give it legitimacy



Sri Lanka's most dangerous political question is no longer whether democracy should survive. It is whether democracy can survive being used to dismantle the political order that has lived comfortably inside it. Recently, I sat down with Professor Jayadeva Uyangoda and found myself returning to that question. He entered politics believing revolution could remake society, joined Rohana Wijeweera's underground movement, survived 1971, spent six years in Welikada prison, and emerged not as a liberal convert but as something more troublesome: a Marxist who believes liberal democracy is indispensable, yet fundamentally insufficient.

“I was never converted to liberal democracy,” he told me. He retained his suspicion of capitalism and concentrated power while discovering, through defeat, imprisonment, reading and reflection, that freedom cannot be postponed until after revolution. “Liberal democracy is indispensable for political and social progress. But it is inadequate.” In that contradiction lies the central argument of his political life.

Uyangoda's critique begins where conventional celebrations of democracy end. Sri Lanka has elections, universal franchise, constitutional rights and competing parties. Yet democracy has repeatedly operated alongside concentrations of wealth, political power, family influence, bureaucratic authority and ethnic privilege. His objection is therefore not to democracy but to democracy emptied of substance. “People, demos, are the true owners of democracy. And democracy had been captured by the elites.” That is a brutal formulation in a country where the establishment presents itself as democracy's guardian. Parliament can function while citizens remain powerless; elections can occur while the same networks recycle power; constitutionalism can survive while inequality determines who can actually exercise freedom. His argument also goes beyond the familiar Marxist complaint about class. Liberal political theory, he argues, has treated society as an aggregation of autonomous individuals while neglecting communities, cultures and historically disadvantaged groups. For Sri Lanka, that omission is not theoretical. “Actually, liberal political theory doesn't have a theory of the state. It has only theories of government and regimes.” Changing governments, in other words, is not necessarily changing the state.

His transformation began in prison. “The Welikada prison was my second university after Peradeniya.” He read Marxism, literature, philosophy, political theory, novels, the Bible and prison literature; he sat law examinations and wrote poetry. Marxism gave him a language for class, production, exploitation and material suffering.

Prison exposed him to loneliness, emotional pain, guilt, loss and the interior life of people trapped inside an institution designed to deprive them of freedom. “I saw in others and experienced myself the emotional suffering while living in a prison for long years.” A political philosophy that cannot adequately account for the inner life of human beings cannot explain human emancipation completely. That is why his later politics combines individual freedom, social equality, pluralism and collective rights.

His most provocative lesson from revolutionary experience is harder to dismiss. “I learned that violent revolution can overthrow capitalism. But it cannot replace it with a humane society.” Uyangoda's prison education forced him to ask the more frightening question: what happens after victory? The Russian, Chinese, Cuban and Korean experiences showed that overthrowing exploitation does not automatically abolish domination.

A revolution can destroy one prison and build another. This is where his present interest in the National People's Power becomes politically explosive. A movement once committed to overthrowing the state is now attempting to govern through elections, Parliament, courts and the constitutional framework. “They are working within the very system they want to change,” he said. “That's why I am waiting and watching this process with great curiosity and deep concern.” He is watching whether an inherited state



THE ETHNIC QUESTION MAKES THE EXPERIMENT HARDER. UYANGODA HAS SPENT DECADES ARGUING THAT SRI LANKA'S CRISIS CANNOT BE RESOLVED BY CHANGING GOVERNMENTS WHILE LEAVING POLITICAL POWER UNTOUCHED

The writer is a columnist based in Colombo

can be transformed from within without reproducing the habits of the old order. That is where the real political gamble now begins.

The ethnic question makes the experiment harder. Uyangoda has spent decades arguing that Sri Lanka's crisis cannot be resolved by changing governments while leaving political power untouched. “Reforming the post-colonial ethno-ocratic state was the central task and challenge in all our conflict resolution efforts.” He rejects Sinhala Buddhist ownership of the state and insists that equal citizenship must mean more than formal equality. Tamils, Muslims, Malaiyaha Tamils and other communities must have genuine access to power.

Yet he is sceptical of inherited vocabularies. Federalism, self-determination and old constitutional arguments have become so politically poisoned that repeating them can reproduce the divisions they were meant to solve. His preferred language is democratic pluralism: a republic in which identities remain real without becoming permanent political enemies. “Differences should not lead us to divisions. Rather, they should bring all of us together as citizens in a Democratic Republic with diverse identities, not keeping us apart as enemies.”

His treatment of violence is equally unsentimental. Uyangoda refuses to romanticise either side of Sri Lanka's conflict. He speaks of Tamil civilians suffering violence from the state and from Tamil militant organisations, just as he has never denied the brutality of the revolutionary movement with which he was once associated.

His proposal for reconciliation is “strategic forgetting”: not erasing history, but refusing to allow unresolved memories to dictate every political relationship in the present. Can a society permanently organised around its wounds ever become politically reconciled? He does not ask people to deny what happened. He asks whether memory itself can become a political prison.

This is why his reading of the Aragalaya and the current political moment matters, even where one may disagree with his interpretation. He sees the uprising not as a fashionable youth revolt but as a social movement exposing a rupture between citizens and the old political class. “The challenge today is to re-democratise Sri Lanka's democracy.” Sri Lankans did not revolt because they had lost faith in democracy; they revolted because the democracy they inherited had become remote from ordinary citizens.

The test now is whether political change can move beyond changing rulers. Uyangoda sees a struggle between an old ruling class and a new political force, almost “like a class war”. But his warning is difficult to ignore: a system designed to protect established power may resist transformation through the very institutions that give it legitimacy. Asked what he would tell his younger self, the man who entered revolutionary politics believing history could be remade through struggle, he answered: “Never abandon political hope for a better society and a better political system. And always be an idealist.”

After revolution, defeat, prison, Marxism, liberalism, ethnic conflict and decades of scholarship, he has arrived not at certainty but at an insistence that political imagination must survive disappointment. For Sri Lanka, that is not a comforting message. It is a challenge to everyone who believes changing governments is the same thing as changing the country.

From incredible India to intelligent India



ADITI RAWAT | KRISHNA GIRI

For more than two decades, Incredible India has told the world what this country offers — civilisations, landscapes, spirituality, cuisine and cultural diversity. The next phase requires a different proposition, one that goes beyond putting an AI chatbot into a booking engine. This year's World Tourism Day theme, “Digital Agenda and Artificial Intelligence to Redesign Tourism”, invites a more consequential question: can

technology make journeys more meaningful, destinations safer and better managed, and tourism's economic gains more widely shared?

AI's most immediate contribution is hyper-personalisation. Industry has traditionally segmented travellers and designed products around broad categories; AI can move closer to the individual, building around a person's interests, budget, diet, mobility and pace, and revising the plan mid-trip.

A visitor could say, in her own language, that she has four days in Tamil Nadu, is exploring Chola history, prefers vegetarian food and wishes to avoid crowds. An intelligent system could weigh those preferences against weather, transport and live conditions to build the journey. Done well, such personalisation can deepen the experience. On a recent visit to Japan, one of the authors used AI to curate a day around a seafarer family member. Personalisation, in this form, makes travel more meaningful rather than merely more convenient. The gain is equally significant for tour operators. AI can help them research unfamiliar circuits, rework routes when conditions change and curate experiences around individual preferences rather than sell one itinerary to everybody. The quality of the output, however, still depends on human judgement deciding what the technology should optimise for. Destination management is another area where AI could have significant impact. In Tirupati in January 2025, six devotees died and around forty were injured in a crush while waiting for Vaikunta Dwara darshan tokens. The episode illustrates the limits of digitisation: a system may know how many tokens it has issued

without recognising that thousands of people are converging on one point faster than the space can safely absorb them. Research shows that crowd density and movement patterns can provide measurable warning signs. Studies of the 2006 Mina disaster and dense crowds suggest that such signals could support early detection of dangerous conditions. Maha Kumbh 2025 demonstrated India's ability to deploy AI-enabled cameras and command systems. The next step is predictive decision-making, using risk triggers to manage inflows, open alternative routes and position medical teams. Even a few minutes of warning could improve prevention and response, particularly in fragile Himalayan destinations.

Access itself can be managed more intelligently. What a destination can safely absorb changes with season, weather and emergency preparedness. Venice's day-tripper fee raised more than 15 million in 2025, yet visitor pressure remained high. Pricing can raise resources, but intelligent systems can do more to regulate flows through timed entry, seasonal quotas and, where justified, restrictions on repeat visits to the most fragile circuits. The economic opportunity may be greatest for small tourism establishments, which dominate tourism in many developing economies. Large hotel groups can employ specialists in pricing, analytics, multilingual marketing and demand forecasting. A five-room homestay, village guide or family-run restaurant generally cannot. AI can narrow this capability gap by turning heterogeneous information on booking patterns, reviews, seasonality and traveller preferences into usable business intelligence. It can also help them develop websites, translate listings, create marketing material, etc.

This can also address longstanding information asymmetries. Travellers often lack reliable information about smaller operators and emerging destinations, while those businesses know little about consumer demand and preferences. Reducing this asymmetry can allow them to compete more on the quality and distinctiveness of their experience than on the scale of operations. India cannot import global AI systems and assume they understand its tourism ecosystem. Models trained mainly on Western languages, destinations and traveller behaviour under-represent Indian languages, cultural practice and lesser-known places. An algorithm that knows Delhi but barely recognises Ziro is not merely imperfect; at scale, such systems decide which destinations and businesses are visible at all. Localisation, reliable local data and transparency about why one route is recommended over another are therefore not optional.

Safeguards matter equally. Tourism systems handle sensitive information about identity, location, spending and preferences. The Digital Personal Data Protection Act and the rules notified in November 2025 provide a general framework, but tourism will need clearer practices around consent, data sharing and retention across hotels, platforms, transport providers and public authorities. Access to intelligence itself must also not become another source of inequality. Rural operators who stand to gain most may have weaker connectivity, fewer digital skills and less capacity to pay. Multilingual voice interfaces, assisted adoption and shared digital infrastructure will therefore be essential.

None of this diminishes the importance of human hospitality. Tour operators who use these tools well will spend less time assembling routine itineraries and more time exercising judgement, curating experiences and solving problems. AI can translate a menu, optimise a route or analyse thousands of reviews, but it cannot replicate the host who explains a family recipe, the guide who brings history alive or the unexpected conversation that becomes the memory of a journey. Intelligent India should mean artificial and human intelligence used together, removing friction and spreading opportunity, while leaving more room for what makes travel worthwhile: people, places, culture and pleasure. Incredible India sent a powerful invitation to the world. Intelligent India should determine what happens once it is accepted.

Rawat is Associate Fellow at Pahle India Foundation. Giri is Distinguished Fellow and Special Advisor to the Chairperson at Pahle India Foundation

World Heart Day: Why every Indian must pay attention to blood pressure



Hypertension's cruelty is that it asks nothing of you until it takes everything. Most people feel no pain or symptoms, though a small minority get warning signs like headaches or dizziness. For years, it slowly damages the heart, brain and kidneys, then, without warning, speaks all at once with a stroke, a heart attack, or failed kidneys. A parent driving to work may struggle to speak, walk, or recognise loved ones. Survivors call stroke worse than death; families ask too late how this happened when all seemed normal.

Often, the answer is a number no one thought to check: blood pressure. High blood pressure is quietly at work for years before it declares itself. This World Heart Day, observed under the theme “Don't Miss a Beat”, the most important beat may be the pressure pulsing, unnoticed, through our arteries.

Cardiovascular disease is the world's leading killer, claiming nearly 20 million lives a year, and in India it strikes earlier: heart attacks and strokes are increasingly common among adults in their forties and fifties, with uncontrolled blood pressure driving many premature

deaths. The WHO estimates 1.4 billion adults aged 30-79 live with hypertension; only 1 in 5 have it controlled. India's numbers are more sobering: the ICMR-INDIAB study estimated 315 million Indian adults have hypertension, and a survey found fewer than three in ten were aware of it, one in seven were on treatment, and just one in eight had it controlled. Hypertension is a key modifiable driver of India's cardiovascular epidemic, raising the risk of heart attack, stroke and kidney disease.

The consequences ripple far beyond the patient. Stroke is now India's fourth leading cause of death and fifth leading cause of disability, leaving many survivors unable to walk, speak or work independently. Families bear the brunt: incomes vanish, caregiving shifts, and parents postpone children's education or weddings. A survey found nearly three in ten



households seeking stroke treatment in public hospitals face catastrophic expenditure, while more than a third resort to distress financing, selling assets or taking on debt. Hypertension prevention thus protects household stability and dignity, not just health. There is real progress to build on. The India

for hypertension and diabetes. Hypertension is predictable and largely preventable, and small, consistent choices can make a measurable difference. Indians consume 8 to 11 grams of salt a day, nearly double the WHO's recommended limit of under 5 grams; reducing intake by reducing

Hypertension Control Initiative by the ICMR, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, and global partners including the WHO and Resolve to Save Lives showed what is possible. Blood pressure control in public facilities increased from 37 to 48 per cent between 2018 and 2024, while out-of-pocket medicine costs fell from 47 to 9 per cent. This proves that simple, well-run systems with reliable drug supplies, standard treatment protocols and follow-up care can result in favourable outcomes. Extending this further, the ICMR's STAR NCD programme is evaluating system-level interventions for ambulatory care, particularly to improve the care cascade

total salt consumption, or by using low-sodium, potassium-enriched substitutes, can be highly effective. A large Chinese trial followed nearly 21,000 people for five years and found such a substitute reduced strokes by 14 per cent, major cardiovascular events by 13 per cent and deaths by 12 per cent. Diets rich in fruits and vegetables, regular activity, managing weight, and limiting alcohol and tobacco all help in controlling high blood pressure. Routine check-ups, even when well, can catch the condition before a catastrophic emergency. Therefore, every adult should measure BP around age 20 and every five years thereafter if normal. Those with prehypertension (BP 120/80 to 140/90) should check annually, and those diagnosed should stay compliant with prescribed medication and follow a healthy lifestyle.

Hypertension prevention does not demand reinvention, only consistency. These modest choices compound into a lower risk of heart attacks and strokes that can upend not just one life, but an entire family's future. This World Heart Day, the message is clear: do not wait for symptoms that may never come. Know your numbers, get checked, and encourage your family to do the same. High blood pressure may be silent, but our response must not be, and the time to act is today.

The writer is the Executive Director, Centre for Chronic Disease Control

Your Trusted Management Advisory

www.transglobeadvisors.in

Order Order

HC to hear Abhishek Banerjee's petition on his security cover



The Calcutta High Court will on October 6 hear a petition by Mamata Banerjee's TMC faction leader Abhishek Banerjee over the "sudden withdrawal" of his Z-plus security cover following the West Bengal assembly election results in May. The Diamond Harbour MP's lawyer moved the court of Justice Krishna Rao on Monday, seeking urgent hearing of his petition. Justice Krishna Rao said the plea will be taken up for hearing on October 6, and directed the petitioner to serve notice upon the parties in the meantime. Abhishek Banerjee's lawyer Ayan Bhattacharjee stated that his client had been allotted Z-plus security cover since 2016. Bhattacharjee said that in 2024, after an assessment of the threat perception to Abhishek Banerjee by the Union home ministry, the MP was granted Z-plus security cover all over India. His counsel alleged that this security cover was suddenly withdrawn following West Bengal assembly election results in May, which BJP won. (PTI)

SC stays Delhi HC order on search of advocate's office



The Supreme Court on Monday stayed the Delhi High Court order that upheld the GST authorities' search of a lawyer's office and seizure of his computer. A bench of Justices Dipankar Datta and Sheel Nagu issued notice on lawyer Puneet Batra's plea and stayed the HC's order. On September 25, the top court asked the Goods and Services Tax (GST) authorities not to proceed with analysis of data seized from Advocate Puneet Batra's office till September 28. It had asked Additional Solicitor General S V Raju, appearing for the authorities, not to take action till the court hears the lawyer's plea. Batra challenged the Delhi High Court's September 18 judgment, which held that law enforcement agencies can search a lawyer's office if there is prima facie evidence that the legal professional has committed an offence. Last week, the top court took note of submissions from senior advocates Vikas Singh and N Hariharan and agreed to list for urgent hearing a plea challenging the Delhi HC judgment that upheld GST search of Batra's office. (PTI)

SC issues contempt notice against Prof Bhrigu Nath Singh, VC of RGNAU and aviation ministry officials

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Supreme Court of India has issued contempt notices against Bhrigu Nath Singh, Vice Chancellor of the Rajiv Gandhi National Aviation University (RGNAU), and senior officials of the Ministry of Civil Aviation i.e. Samir Kumar Sinha IAS, Secretary and Madhu Sudan Sankar (Lateral Entry, Joint Secretary). It is glaring to note that Madhu Sudan Sankar is a repeated contemnor of court orders, who came from private company and joined on 3 years contract as Joint Secretary

This decisive step follows repeated non compliance with judicial directions, including the Allahabad High Court Single Bench order (17 September 2021), the Division Bench ruling (17 December 2021), Division Bench Order by the CJ Court (22 May 2024 & 15 Jul 2024) and the Supreme Court judgment dated 21 May 2026, which categorically quashed arbitrary & illegal administrative actions against the petitioner Jitendra Singh, First Registrar of RGNAU.

The most disturbing fact is that Visitor's Orders being quashed not once but twice for the same cause, is indeed unprece-



ented in India's constitutional and administrative history. The President of India, acting as Visitor to central universities, issues orders only after due process and advice; for those orders to be overturned twice by the judiciary underscores the depth of misrepresentation and malafide intent involved by the officials of RGNAU & MoCA. Despite clear and binding orders from the highest judicial authorities of the state & the country, it is therefore a matter of grave concern that despite clear directions, Prof Bhrigu Nath Singh (VC RGNAU), continue to act in open violation



SC to review plea against Sohrabuddin encounter acquittals

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday agreed to examine a plea against the Bombay High Court order that upheld the acquittal of all 22 accused in the alleged fake encounter killings of gangster Sohrabuddin Shaikh, his wife Kausar Bi and aide Tulsiram Prajapati in 2005, while voicing concern that 92 witness statements had turned hostile.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana issued notice on the plea filed by Nayabuddin Shaikh, brother of Sohrabuddin Shaikh, challenging the May 7 judgment of the High Court that acquitted 21 police personnel from Rajasthan and Gujarat and a farmhouse owner.

The bench indicated it would examine selected witness statements relevant to the acquittal.

"We would like to see



statements of some witnesses. We are not summoning the record. You give us whatever three-four statements you feel are vital. We will examine acquittal," CJ said. Justice Bagchi observed that the fact that 92 prosecution witnesses had turned hostile was a matter requiring consideration, particularly in assessing whether

the trial had been fair and just. "Ninety-two witnesses turning hostile is a concern. Whether there was a fair and just trial... that's to be considered," Justice Bagchi said. The High Court had dismissed appeals filed by Rubabuddin and Nayabuddin Shaikh against the December 2018 judgment of a special CBI court in Mumbai, which

had acquitted all 22 accused. The CBI had investigated the case after the probe was transferred to it by the Supreme Court.

Of the 22 accused acquitted in the case, 21 were police officers from Gujarat and Rajasthan. The remaining accused was the owner of a farmhouse in Gujarat where, according to the prosecu-

tion case, Sohrabuddin and Kausar Bi were illegally detained.

According to the prosecution case, Sohrabuddin, his wife and Prajapati were travelling by bus from Hyderabad to Sangli in Maharashtra when they were allegedly taken into custody by a police team on the night of November 22-23, 2005.

The couple and Prajapati were allegedly taken in separate vehicles. According to the CBI, Sohrabuddin was killed on November 26, 2005, near Ahmedabad in an encounter involving Gujarat and Rajasthan police personnel. Kausar Bi was allegedly killed three days later. Prajapati, who was lodged in Udaipur Central Jail and was considered a key witness to the alleged encounter, was killed in a police encounter near the Gujarat-Rajasthan border on December 27, 2006.

In its judgment, the High Court had held that there was

no ground to interfere with the trial court's acquittal.

It observed that the prosecution case was based largely on circumstantial evidence and that several links in the alleged chain of circumstances were missing.

The High Court had also held that the prosecution failed to establish that Sohrabuddin Shaikh and Kausar Bi were abducted by Gujarat and Rajasthan police personnel or that there was a motive to stage a fake encounter.

It further rejected the contention that the trial was not conducted properly merely because 92 prosecution witnesses had turned hostile.

The special CBI court, while acquitting the accused in December 2018, had held that the prosecution failed to establish a cogent case of a conspiracy to kill Sohrabuddin, Kausar Bi and Prajapati or establish the involvement of the accused in such a conspiracy.

Collegium recommends three new judges for SC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Supreme Court Collegium on Monday recommended the elevation of three High Court Chief Justices as judges of the apex court. According to the resolution issued by the Supreme Court, the Collegium recommended the elevation of Justice Sunita Agarwal, Chief Justice of the Gujarat High Court, as judge of apex court.

The collegium also recommended the name of Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya, Chief Justice of the Delhi High Court, as a judge of the apex court. Justice Apareesh Kumar



Justice Sunita Agarwal



Justice DK Upadhyaya



Justice Apareesh Kumar Singh

Singh, Chief Justice of the High Court for the State of Telangana, is also recommended for the judgeship at the Supreme Court.

The recommendation was

made at the Collegium meeting held on Monday.

Besides the CJ, Justices Vikram Nath, B V Nagarathna, M M Sundresh and P S Narasimha were part of the

Supreme Court Collegium.

The Collegium's recommendation will now be processed in accordance with established procedure for appointment of judges to Supreme Court.

SC asks registry to forward petition on adulterated medicines for consideration

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday asked its registry to forward a copy of a petition seeking a comprehensive framework to curb the manufacture and sale of counterfeit and adulterated medicines to authorities for consideration. "Have you given any suggestions to the authorities before filing this petition?" a bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana asked petitioner Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay.

Upadhyay referred to the "vacuum" in the existing framework and said there were reports about how fake



cancer drugs were supplied to many hospitals in Bengaluru.

"We will send your writ petition to be treated as a representation. That will be more effective than keeping the petition pending here," the bench observed.

It noted that the petitioner had not approached the authorities before filing the writ petition.

"In such circumstances where different kinds of actions are required to be undertaken by the respon-

dents, we dispose of this writ petition without expressing any opinion on the merits with a direction to the registry to forward a copy of the writ petition to the respondent authorities for their consideration," the bench said.

In his PIL filed through advocate Ashwani Kumar Dubey, the petitioner had made the union ministries of Health and Family Welfare, Law and Justice and Women and Child Development, all states and union territories and the Law Commission as parties.

The plea sought directions to the Centre and states to complete investigations into fake medicine cases within three months and trials within one year.

Court acquits three in 2017 firing case

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

A Delhi court has acquitted three men accused of firing at a man in Mundka in 2017, saying that the prosecution failed to prove the charges beyond reasonable doubt as the complainant and his brother did not identify them as the assailants.

Additional Sessions Judge Shiv Kumar was hearing a case against Amit alias Toto, Rahul alias Kalu and another Amit, who were accused of charges under IPC Sections 307 (attempt to murder), 323 (voluntarily causing hurt) and



34 (common intention). In an order dated September 26, the court said, "Complainant and brother of complainant have not identified the accused persons in the court as assailants and not supported the case of prosecution...

prosecution has failed to prove all the charged offences against the accused persons." Toto was also acquitted of charges under Sections 25 and 27 of the Arms Act relating to possession and use of illegal firearm.

The case related to an incident on July 14, 2017, when Devender alias Dholu was allegedly assaulted and fired at by a group of men at Mundka's Rani Khara Road.

According to the prosecution, the police later apprehended three men from bushes near the Rani Khara underpass. A pistol was allegedly recovered from Toto

and two empty cartridges were recovered from the spot.

However, during trial, the complainant did not identify any of the accused in court. He told the court that it was dark at the time of the incident and that he could not identify the assailants. He also denied that a pistol had been recovered from Toto in his presence. The complainant's brother, Joginder, also failed to identify accused and said he had not seen the assailants. He denied that the accused were arrested in his presence or that the pistol and cartridges were recovered in his presence.

HC pulls up Jehanabad officials over neglect of Barabar Caves

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Patna

The Patna High Court has pulled up the Jehanabad district administration over the alleged neglect of the historic Barabar Caves and sought details of revenue generated from the annual Shrivani Mela and its utilisation for permanent development of the site. Justice Rajiv Roy, in an order passed on September 21, observed that the administration appeared to be interested in revenue collection without adequately investing in infrastructure at the Mauryan-era site. "Certainly, the district administration is only interested in the collection of revenue with zero responsibility towards investing the money back to build infrastructure there," the court said.

It was hearing a petition filed by Rajballav Prasad, who had secured the tender for the 2024-25 Barabar Shrivani Mela for ₹1.77 crore. The fair was halted



after a stampede on August 12, 2024, in which seven people were killed and several injured. The petitioner eventually deposited the entire tender amount, with the final payment made on October 19, 2024, but was later asked to pay ₹1.37 lakh as penalty for delayed payment.

"The petitioner deposited the entire tender amount. Instead of appreciating the same, he has now been slapped with the penalty amount," the court said, terming the action "insensitiveness on the part of the respondents" and saying it

"defies logic". The court said the stampede "clearly shows a mismanagement affair so far as the district administration is concerned" and noted that despite collecting ₹1.77 crore for the fair, permanent facilities at site remained inadequate.

"It has to be reiterated that the courts have repeatedly held that money so realised from a fair must be invested on the upliftment of the area to ensure proper sanitation, safety, improved infrastructure on permanent basis," the court said, adding these facilities were lacking "not only in year 2024 but till date". The court directed the Jehanabad District Magistrate to submit details of revenue generated from the Barabar Shrivani Mela during the last five years and the amount spent on permanent development. It also sought a blueprint covering permanent toilets, year-round drinking water, benches, vending zones, cleanliness and greenery.

AdiVaani: Technology for the margins



RANJANA
CHOPRA

India is home to over 700 tribal communities and more than 100 distinct tribal languages and dialects yet only a handful have a script, a dictionary or any presence online. For a Gondi speaking farmer trying to read a Government health advisory or a Santhali student searching for a word in a textbook, the digital world has, until now, simply not spoken their language. AdiVaani is changing that through one sentence, one recording, one translated page at a time. AdiVaani is an AI based translation and language technology platform being developed under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) by IIT Delhi. Its mission is deceptively simple: build tools that let English and Hindi speak to tribal languages and let tribal languages speak back in text and in voice and vice versa. AdiVaani has gone live with four languages - Santali, Mundari, Bhili and Gondi — with Kui and Garo close behind, and a further eight languages, including Katkari, Koya, Kokborok, Betta Kuruba, Chodri, Thadou Kui and Tangkhul, lined up for the next phase.

A full toolkit, not just a translator

AdiVaani brings together a full toolkit under one roof, not merely a translator. It offers Text-to-Text Translation, converting English or Hindi text into a tribal language and back again, instantly; Speech-to-Text , which turns spoken tribal language into text and offers a lifeline for languages with few or no fluent readers; Text-to-Speech, which generates natural spoken tribal-language audio from written text so that non-literate speakers can access information aurally; and Speech-to-Speech, a cascaded pipeline that lets two people speaking different languages understand each other in near real time. The platform also carries an Optical Character Recognition feature that digitises old textbooks, folk manuscripts, primers and dictionaries existing only on paper, often the last surviving record of a dialect, alongside a public mobile App and Web Access portal carrying dictionaries, learning



modules and feedback tools for continuous improvement.

Bringing the periphery to the centre

For decades, India's tribal languages have existed at the edge of the country's digital and administrative life rich in oral history, ecological knowledge and cultural memory, yet almost invisible to the internet, to AI systems and often to policy itself. AdiVaani inverts that equation. A welfare scheme notification, a health advisory or an NCERT textbook chapter that once existed only in Hindi or English can now be rendered accurately and respectfully into Santali or Bhili and read aloud to someone who cannot read at all. Government officials, teachers, and health workers can, in turn, understand what a tribal citizen is trying to communicate in their own words. The traffic runs both ways and that is the point: AdiVaani is not simply "giving" tribal communities access to the mainstream; it is



giving the mainstream access to tribal India.

The project treats tribal languages not as data sources for AI but as living knowledge systems connected to oral tradition, agriculture, ecology and community identity.

Not just for tribal India — A platform for everyone

AdiVaani's promise extends well beyond tribal households. Researchers and linguists gain a

reproducible, benchmarked dataset for some of the world's most under documented languages. Civil servants, doctors, teachers and NGO field workers posted in tribal districts most of whom are not themselves tribal get a real time translation companion that turns awkward, error prone communication into genuine dialogue. Students of linguistics and anthropology gain digitised manuscripts and oral archives that would otherwise decay unseen in local libraries. And every Indian, tribal or not inherits a small but meaningful correction to the digital record: languages that were at risk of existing only in memory now have a searchable, speakable, teachable home online. This is what makes AdiVaani more than a translation app, it is public infrastructure for inclusion, built the way inclusion should be built: with the community at the

centre, not at the receiving end.

Community first, technology second

AdiVaani's most distinctive feature may not be its models at all but its method. Native speakers, translators, field linguists and community elders are treated as knowledge partners not just annotators. Every dataset passes through a maker checker superchecker workflow, where community validators catch the subtle ways AI tends to "flatten" a minority language toward Hindi or English, a dropped suffix, an over normalised idiom, a lost oral register. Machine generated translations are never treated as final: they return to native speakers for correction before they re enter the corpus. It is AI development grounded in consent, cultural respect and the recognition that a language is not a dataset it is a way a people remembers itself. This is where the State Tribal Research Institutes (TRIs) become indispensable. Long before a sentence reaches an AI model, it is the TRIs in Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and elsewhere that anchor the entire corpus-building effort on the ground - mobilising native speakers, verifying dialectal variations across villages and blocks, and vetting every translated or transcribed sample before it is accepted into the training data. Their field knowledge decides which recordings are authentic and which idioms have been flattened in translation, making them the frontline check between raw community language and a usable digital corpus. Without this continuous, on-the-ground vetting by the TRIs, the models AdiVaani builds would carry the very distortions the project was set up to avoid.

Looking ahead

AdiVaani's work is far from finished. Over the next nine months, it plans to add ten more languages improve its speech recognition and voice technology, and build much larger collections of verified recordings reaching hundreds of thousands per language. But beyond the numbers, AdiVaani stands for something bigger: proof that technology can protect and support tribal languages instead of erasing them. In a country where languages are vanishing every few years, AdiVaani gives tribal communities a way to be heard in their own voices, on their own terms and gives the rest of India a reason finally to listen.

The author is Secretary, Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs

The machine age, read at last from India

The world's AI bookshelf has long spoken with an American accent. In an eight-volume series, IAS officer Dr Manish Ranjan gives the machine age an Indian voice — and gives the anxious general reader what has been missing all along: clarity



DR MANISH
RANJAN

A strange weather has settled over our conversations. In drawing rooms and departmental canteens, in coaching centres and boardrooms, the same two questions circle endlessly: What exactly is this Artificial Intelligence? And what is it going to do - to my work, my children, my country? The buzz is everywhere; the understanding, almost nowhere. Between the salesmen of the future promising paradise and the prophets of doom promising apocalypse, the ordinary Indian reader has stood unattended - anxious, curious, and largely uninformed.

It has taken a serving administrator to attend to them. Dr. Manish Ranjan of the Indian Administrative Service has produced, in eight volumes, what may be described as the first complete Indian atlas of the machine age - written with deep analysis, current data and patient research, and illuminated throughout by case studies drawn from across the world and from within India. The series' quiet ambition is announced by its architecture: eight books, eight dimensions of a single subject - Artificial Intelligence, its knowledge, its systems, its impact.

The journey is designed like a well-planned expedition. Base camp is "Artificial Intelligence: Concepts and Applications," which does the patient, foundational work - what this technology actually is, and where it already operates, unnoticed, in our daily lives. From there the ascent begins. "AI for Everyone: How AI Turns the Promise of Equality into Reality" confronts the question on which this century may turn: will AI become the great equaliser - the tutor beside the furthest child, the doctor's knowledge at the poorest door - or a new and more efficient instrument of division? Dr. Ranjan does not flinch from either possibility, and it is precisely this honesty that gives his hope its weight.

"The Future of Humans in the Age of AI" lifts the gaze to what human learning, labour and society will look like when intelligent machines become our constant companions. Then the series turns to the reader's most immediate worry - the working professional's future. "20 Careers That Will Win by 2033: How to Stay Valuable When AI Rewrites the Rules of Work" is perhaps the most practically useful volume of the



set, mapping the professions that will flourish and the human capacities - judgment, empathy, creativity, accountability - that no algorithm can replicate.

Two volumes then venture into territory where technology writing rarely dares. "The New Psychology of Love: Human Hearts, Machine Minds" examines how AI is quietly rearranging our personal, social and professional relationships - and, more unsettlingly, our very perception of what is real. Its darker sibling takes up that theme as a battle cry: framed as the human fight for your mind, your identity and a reality of your own, "AI and the War for Truth" confronts deepfakes, engineered misinformation and the new generation of cyber crimes - dangers that have already emptied bank accounts and reputations across the world, and that arrive in India with particular force in an election-rich, WhatsApp-forward society.

The final ascent is the boldest. "Will Artificial Intelligence Enslave Humans by 2033?" examines, with striking candour, the race between human control and machine capability - and locates the true danger not in rebellious machines but in resigned humans. And "Win the AI Decade: The New Rules of Work, Wealth and Success" plants the summit flag: a practical playbook for prospering in the ten years that will decide the next hundred.

Now to what makes this series historic rather than merely comprehensive. Until now, nearly every notable book on AI has been written through an American lens - American companies, American anxieties, American case studies - leaving the Indian reader to translate someone else's future into his own. For the first time, a series maintains genuine balance: global research standing shoulder to shoulder with Indian aspirations; international examples alongside the initiatives underway in our states; and a serious, sustained reckoning with what

the future of AI in India actually looks like. Nowhere is the author's vantage more valuable than in the chapters on governance — for who better than a serving administrator to see how AI will transform the delivery of public services, the functioning of the welfare state, and the daily transaction between citizen and sarkar?

A word on the prose, because it is the series' secret weapon. The language is engaging and research-rich, yet scrubbed entirely of technical jargon - written in words a general reader can comprehend, and better still, enjoy. Not one line of code is required of the reader; only curiosity.

If the eight volumes had to be distilled into five sentences, they would perhaps be these. That AI is a tool and not a destiny - it will amplify whatever values we bring to it, and its direction remains a human choice. That understanding AI is now a civic necessity - the truly disadvantaged of this age will not be those who cannot code, but those who cannot question. That we must not compete with machines but compound with them, building careers on the judgment, empathy and accountability no machine possesses. That truth itself now needs defending - pause before believing, verify before sharing - and every alert citizen is a soldier in that war. And that a machine can attend to you, but only a human being can choose you - technology must serve our relationships, never substitute for them.

The books are available online across all major platforms, and they reward the reader with something this noisy decade rarely offers: clarity, and a certain calm courage about what is coming. Read them for the analysis; stay for the humanity. Artificial Intelligence, in these pages, is not merely explained. It is, at long last, demystified - and in an Indian voice.

The author is an IAS and the author of the eight-book series *The AI Series: From AI Basics to the Future*. An alumnus of the Goldman School of Public Policy, University of California, Berkeley, and the Said Business School, University of Oxford, he writes on Artificial Intelligence, society and the human future

China's eyes, Pakistan's finger, India's risk

Xi promised Trump that AI will stay under human control. But a human in the loop means little when the loop runs through Beijing



NISHANT
SAHDEV

There is one sentence that hit me. It was spoken last July by India's Deputy Army Chief, Lt. Gen. Rahul R Singh. Describing Operation Sindoor, he said that when the two sides' military operations chiefs spoke on the hotline, Pakistan already knew which important Indian weapon system was "primed and ready for action", and asked India to pull it back. Then came the sentence: "He was getting live inputs from China."

As a country, we heard this, filed it under "China-Pakistan collusion", grumbled for a day and moved on. I think that was a serious mistake. That sentence is the most important thing any Indian official has said about nuclear danger in years, and we have not yet understood what it means.

Here is my argument. The world is worried that one day a nuclear power will hand its button to a machine. That is a real fear, and I wrote about it in my last week's column. But India faces a nearer and stranger danger. Pakistan will not need to hand its button to a machine. It is already handing its eyes to China. And in the age of AI, whoever controls the eyes increasingly controls the decision.

The bargain that kept us alive

Why has nuclear deterrence worked for 80 years? Not because leaders are wise. It has worked because of a brutal bargain: the person who decides to fire is also the person whose own cities will burn. Fear and responsibility sit in the same chair. That is what makes a leader pause.

What Lt Gen Singh described breaks that bargain. In the next India -Pakistan crisis, the eyes may sit in Beijing, the finger in Rawalpindi, and the risk in Delhi, Mumbai and Lahore. China would help shape the picture on which a nuclear-armed army acts, while its own cities stay out of harm's way. That is influence without exposure. It is the most dangerous kind of power there is, because it carries no reason to be careful.

Beijing played down the General's claim, and I accept it is the Indian Army's assessment rather than a proven fact. But nobody should doubt the direction. Around 80 per cent of Pakistan's imported weapons now come from China. Its jets, missiles, air defences and drones are Chinese. It would be naive to think the data that guides them will be anything else. **Doubt on trusting a borrowed detector**

I have spent my working life around scientific instruments, and they teach you one lesson early: never trust a result from a detector you did not build, cal-



ibrate or understand. Detectors see ghosts. They mistake noise for signal. That is why it's difficult to announce a discovery on the strength of somebody else's black box.

Now think about what AI does to a war room. It does not just pass on photographs. It delivers conclusions: "launcher identified", "missile armed", "strike likely". It delivers them in seconds, in a region where a missile can cross the border in under ten minutes. And it delivers them with a confidence that tired, frightened human beings find almost impossible to resist.

So picture the moment that matters most. A Pakistani general, in the worst hour of his career, looks at a clean, confident screen. He did not build the system. He does not know what data trained it. He cannot know what its makers chose to show him and what they chose to leave out. Yet on that screen may rest a decision about nuclear escalation.

And we must be clear-eyed about the interests of the country that builds the screen. I do not believe Beijing wants a nuclear war in South Asia. No sane state does. But China gains when India is pinned down on its western front. Lt Gen Singh called it killing an enemy "with a borrowed knife". He also said China was treating the conflict as a "live lab" for its weapons. A laboratory needs test subjects. In that experiment, India is on the other side of the glass. **The hollow heart of "human control"** This is why I found the Washington summit's language on AI so unsatisfying. Xi Jinping told President Trump that AI must always remain "under human control". The two sides agreed to set up a channel for AI incidents. Fine words, and a useful step.

But human control of what, exactly? Every major pledge so far, including the one Joe Biden and Xi made in 2024, is about a country's own trigger. None of them says a word about the targeting data a country pours into a friend's war. By this definition, a Pakistani general acting on a Chinese machine's verdict counts as a "human in the loop".

I say a human in the loop is only as good as the loop. If the loop runs through a third capital, with its own software and its own agenda, then the human at the end of it is not in control

in any sense that matters. He is simply the last person to press the button.

Physicists have a name for this kind of trouble. Two bodies moving under each other's pull are predictable. Add a third, and they are not: a tiny nudge can send the whole system somewhere nobody chose. Washington and Beijing have been working on a two-body problem. South Asia is a three-body problem, and no hotline between two capitals can fix it.

Let us be honest about ourselves

Some will say India is being hypocritical. We, too, receive intelligence from friends. Since 2020, India and the United States have shared geospatial data under the BECA agreement.

That objection deserves an answer, and here it is. The problem is not that friends share information. It is live, automated targeting support flowing into a nuclear crisis from a country that bears none of the risk. India should argue for a rule, not against a country, and it should be willing to live by that rule itself. That is what gives the argument its force. A principle India applies to its own partners is one Beijing will struggle to reject without revealing its intentions.

What India must do

First, India should draw the line out loud. Any country that feeds live targeting data or AI-driven intelligence to a side fighting India should be treated as a participant in that conflict, not a bystander. This is not a threat of war. It is a statement of consequences, and India is not without leverage. Our trade deficit with China crossed \$110 billion last year. Beijing cannot be our trading partner in peacetime and our adversary's eyes in wartime.

Second, India must build its own eyes. The answer to a borrowed eye is a sovereign one. The 52 military surveillance satellites the Government approved in 2024 should be treated as urgent, because in a crisis the side that sees clearly is the side least likely to panic.

Please read the complete article online at dailypioneer.com

The author is a physicist at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a contributing opinion writer at *The Wall Street Journal*

FROM THE WORLD

UK

RAF base threat probe widens

The UK's Counter Terrorism Policing (CTP) on Monday said that all five men arrested on suspicion of terror charges over an explosives threat to a Royal Air Force (RAF) base are British nationals aged in their 20s.

CTP are leading the investigation after three suspicious vehicles travelling towards RAF Fairford in south-west England were intercepted by armed officers on Sunday.

It led to five arrests in the Whelford area of Gloucestershire on suspicion of committing offences under the UK Explosives Act and further on suspicion of preparation of a terrorist act, contrary to Section 5 of the Terrorism Act.

"The [London-based] men are being held under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) and a custody extension has been secured until later today," CTP said in a statement. (PTI)

THAILAND

Floodwaters begins to recede

Floodwaters in Bangkok capital were slowly receding on Monday after continuous rainfall over the weekend, although some neighbourhoods and major roads remained inundated.

Rain continued intermittently, but Bangkok city officials said conditions had improved enough to accelerate drainage efforts. Water levels in four main canals had risen too high over the weekend to take in runoff from surrounding communities. More rain was forecast across much of Thailand, although Bangkok was expected to receive less. The weekend flooding affected 3,29,000 households, or about 7,00,000 people, the Bangkok Flood Control Centre reported, according to Deputy Gov. Tavidia Kamolvej.

Gov Chadchart Sittipunt declared a flood emergency Saturday across all 50 city districts, although some were relatively unscathed. He said authorities were prioritizing assistance for vulnerable residents, including older people and those with disabilities, bydelivering supplies or evacuating them. City officials said nearly 7,000 people were staying in shelters. (AP)

What Bhagat Singh’s legacy means beyond martyrdom



Bhagat Singh was 23 when British authorities hanged him in Lahore on March 23, 1931. His execution helped make him one of India's best-known revolutionaries. Yet the story of his lasting influence is larger than the courage he showed in prison or the anger his death provoked. Singh wanted British rule to end. He also argued that independence would mean little if workers and the poor remained subject to exploitation. His socialism, secular politics and faith in reason gave his revolutionary commitment a broader purpose.

At the same time, his use of political violence, including an act that killed a police officer, remains difficult to defend. Any serious account of Singh must hold these facts together. His courage mattered, but so did his ideas and the human consequences of his actions. Born in Punjab in 1907, Singh came of age amid growing resistance to British rule.

He joined the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association, or HSRA, a revolutionary organisation that sought independence and a social-republic. Its members accepted the risks of arrest, imprisonment and death. Those risks weren't abstract. Singh spent his early 20s organising and writing under the threat of surveillance and prosecution. Stories about his private life, including a frequently repeated account that he refused to marry, have become part of his public image.

His political record offers clearer evidence of his priorities: he gave his youth to a cause that could cost



him his future. In December 1928, Singh and fellow revolutionary Rajguru killed police officer John Saunders in Lahore. The attack followed the death of nationalist leader Lala Lajpat Rai after police assaulted demonstrators. Accounts commonly identify officer James A. Scott as the intended target, but the familiar version of the killing as a simple case of mistaken identity is not certain. Saunders was killed, and the motive doesn't erase that fact. The case became central to the prosecution of Singh and his comrades. Authorities hanged Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev on March 23, 1931.

Their deaths brought grief and anger across India, but their significance rests on more than the spectacle of execution. Singh's political vision challenged the idea that independence alone would deliver justice. By the late 1920s, the HSRA had adopted socialism as a goal.

Singh argued that transferring power from British officials to Indian elites wouldn't be enough if most people remained poor and powerless. Freedom, in his view, must guide political action.

His jail notebook and writing for young activists reveal a thinker who continued to read and argue while imprisoned. They offer a fuller portrait than images of him at the gallows or slogans detached from his politics. His actions, however, weren't all the same. On April 8, 1929, Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt threw low-intensity bombs in the Central Legislative Assembly in Delhi. They stayed at the scene and submitted to arrest.

The bombing was designed as a symbolic protest against colonial laws, not as an attempt to kill. That intent explains the act's political purpose, but it doesn't erase the risks of using explosives in a public chamber. The Assembly bombing also differed sharply from the killing of Saunders. One took a life; the other sought publicity without intending to kill.

Treating them as interchangeable obscures both Singh's strategy and the moral questions it raises. In jail, Singh joined a hunger strike demanding political-pris-

oner status and equal treatment for Indian prisoners.

The protest focused attention on prison conditions and the unequal treatment of inmates. Revolutionary Jatin Das died during the strike, bringing further public scrutiny to the authorities' handling of prisoners. The strike didn't secure every demand, but it made prison treatment part of the wider political debate. Singh and his comrades also used their trial as a platform. The proceedings gave them an opportunity to challenge British rule before an audience far larger than those who attended revolutionary meetings.

That visibility turned a criminal prosecution into a political argument. It didn't end colonial rule or settle whether revolutionary violence was justified, but it helped spread Singh's ideas. The HSRA was only one part of India's independence movement.

Mass protests, labor and farmer organizing, political negotiations and nonviolent civil disobedience also challenged British authority. Gandhi's campaigns relied on non-violent resistance and broad public participation. Singh and his comrades accepted political violence.

Their methods differed, but both drew attention to a government that denied Indians control over their political future. Singh's fame shouldn't be mistaken for a claim that he alone secured independence. India's freedom came through the efforts of many people and organisations over decades.

His distinctive contribution was to insist that ending colonial rule wasn't enough if the new nation preserved deep economic inequalities. Today, Singh remains a figure of public commemoration and debate. March 23 is observed in India as Shaheed Diwas, or Martyrs' Day, in memory of Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev. Students, activists, labor groups, writers and filmmakers continue to draw on his image. Some emphasise his patriotism

and willingness to face death; others focus on his socialism, secularism or criticism of inequality.

Commemoration can simplify a life. The fearless martyr is easier to celebrate than the political thinker who questioned religious authority and argued over class. A slogan about revolution can obscure what Singh believed revolution should achieve.

His legacy is more meaningful when his ideas remain attached to the familiar image. His methods also demand scrutiny. Killing Saunders was a deliberate, lethal act, even if Singh and his comrades believed they were retaliating against colonial violence. The Assembly bombing had a different purpose, but it still involved explosives and risked harm.

Admiration for Singh's opposition to British rule doesn't require accepting every tactic as justified. Accounts of his final words and private conversations often circulate without firm evidence. The same care is needed with the date of his birth, which historical accounts place on September 27 or 28, 1907.

September 28 is widely used for commemorations, but that convention doesn't erase the uncertainty. Accuracy matters because the record of Singh's writing, trial and actions is substantial enough without embellishment. Bhagat Singh remains important because his demand for freedom extended beyond the end of British rule.

He wanted a society in which ordinary people had a fairer share of power and resources. His execution made him a martyr; his writings show the political questions that martyrdom alone cannot answer. Remembering him fully means honoring his courage while confronting both the life taken at Lahore and the ideals he wanted an independent India to pursue.

The author is a veteran journalist and freelance writer based in Brampton Canada

Russian drones pound civilian areas in Ukraine

HANNA ARHIROVA /BARRY HATTON ■ Kyiv

Russia's round-the-clock bombardment of targets in Ukraine killed at least three civilians and wounded 41 others, officials said Monday, while Ukraine's army claimed more successes in a recent push on the front line.

The attacks followed a week of diplomatic efforts at the United Nations to get traction for negotiations on ending Moscow's invasion that began 4½ years ago.

Battlefield positions have changed little since last year, in part because swarms of drones severely restrict troop movements, but Kyiv's forces launched a recent offensive, codenamed Operation Vivaldi, on part of the 1,250-kilometer (800-mile) front line. Ukraine's Third Army Corps said Monday it had recaptured another 51 square kilometers (20 square miles) from the Russians, bringing the total to 176 square kilometers (68 square miles) since the offensive began several months ago.

The corps said that in



order to break through Russian defenses, it converted Soviet-era BTR-60 armored personnel carriers into kamikaze vehicles that blew up the strongest Russian fortifications. The operation has also used ground robots to attack Russian positions.

The claimed breakthroughs came in the Donetsk region of eastern Ukraine, which the bigger Russian army has been trying in vain to conquer.

Russian officials made no immediate comment on the Ukrainian claim. Russia's Defense Ministry, meanwhile, said that Russian troops captured the villages of Novovodiane in the Donetsk region and Ulanove

said. The strikes aim to curb Ukraine's grain exports, though they may also create food shortages in countries that rely on Ukrainian imports.

The Russian aerial attacks regularly hit civilian areas. Moscow claims it targets only military-related sites.

Russian drone attacks on the Kyiv region killed three people and wounded eight, said Tymur Tkachenko, head of the regional military administration.

A Russian strike on a nine-story apartment building in the northeastern city of Kharkiv wounded 38 people, including 10 children, Mayor Ihor Terekhov said.

Four people, including two teenage girls, were hurt when a Russian drone struck a residential area in northern Ukraine's Chernihiv region on Sunday evening, said Viacheslav Chaus, head of the regional military administration.

Ukrainian long-range drones have targeted fuel depots and industrial plants deep inside Russia that are a mainstay of Moscow's economy and war effort. (AP)

India joins SCO coordinators’ meeting in Islamabad under Pakistan’s chairmanship

ASHOKE RAJ ■ New Delhi

India is participating in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Council of National Coordinators meeting in Islamabad from September 28 to 30, as Pakistan begins its 2026-27 chairmanship of the organisation's Council of Heads of State. Indian Joint Secretary and National Coordinator Alok Dimri is expected to lead the Indian delegation at the three-day meeting, which is among the first major SCO engagements under Pakistan's chairmanship.

National coordinators from SCO member states and representatives of the SCO Board of Trade under the Secretariat are attending the meeting. Discussions are focused on coordinating the organisation's activities, finalising the programme for Pakistan's chairmanship, preparing for upcoming meetings and events, and addressing other matters on the SCO agenda.

Pakistan assumed the SCO chairmanship from Kyrgyzstan earlier this month. It has adopted the theme



"Turning Vision into Action: Connectivity, Innovation and Shared Prosperity" for its tenure, with connectivity, innovation, economic cooperation and people-to-people contacts identified among its priorities.

India's participation comes amid continuing differences between New Delhi and Islamabad. However, the two countries have continued to engage through SCO mechanisms since becoming full members of the organisation in 2017.

India has previously attended SCO meetings hosted by Pakistan. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar travelled to Islamabad in October 2024 for the SCO Council of Heads of Government meeting. An Indian delegation

also attended an SCO meeting of heads of border services in Islamabad in July 2026, according to reports.

Security cooperation is another important area of the SCO's work. The organisation addresses issues including terrorism, separatism and extremism through mechanisms such as the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (SCO-RATS). India has consistently raised counterterrorism concerns at international forums and remains involved in SCO security-related activities.

The current meeting is primarily focused on coordination of the SCO's programme under Pakistan's chairmanship rather than bilateral India-Pakistan discussions.

The series of meetings during Pakistan's tenure will lead towards the SCO Council of Heads of State summit, scheduled to be held in Islamabad in August 2027. Pakistan has said leaders of all member states will be invited. Reports have indicated that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to receive an invitation, although his participation has not been confirmed.

China, US slash tariffs on \$30 billion on imports: Chinese Commerce Ministry

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Beijing

China and the US have agreed on 10 outcomes from their latest economic and trade talks, including reciprocal tariff reductions on \$30 billion worth of imports and the arrangement for the artificial intelligence (AI) dialogue, the Chinese Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) said on Monday.

The economic and trade teams of the two sides held consultations in New York and Washington from September 20 to 23, ahead of the summit meeting between President Xi Jinping and his US counterpart Donald Trump.

Significantly, Trump was silent about the Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act of 2026 that authorises him to impose sanctions on Russia and steep tariffs on its trading partners in oil and gas, including India and China. China has rejected US attempts to impose tariffs on its purchases of Russian oil and gas, saying normal trade cooperation between countries should not be subject to



US president Donald Trump along with Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping

third-party interference. The two sides did not mention thornier issues such as export controls on rare earths in their latest statements.

"China's dominance in the mining and processing of key rare earths and other critical minerals is the strongest card it has in its negotiations with the US," Alfredo Montufar-Helu, the China-based managing director at Ankura

Consulting, told Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post.

China accounts for about 70 per cent of global rare earth mining and nearly 90 per cent of their processing. The minerals are critical for manufacturing electronics, automobiles, wind energy, and defence equipment and a host of modern gadgets.

China and the US have

agreed to reduce tariffs on about USD 30 billion worth of imports from each other on a reciprocal basis, with tariffs on about 90 per cent of the products on each side to be lowered to most-favoured-nation (MFN) rates, according to the MOFCOM.

Under the agreement, the US will reduce tariffs on about \$ 30 billion worth of imports from China, including toys,

home appliances, baby products, kitchen and bathroom products.

China will reduce tariffs on about \$30 billion worth of imports from the US, including agricultural products, personal care products, medical devices and coal, official media here reported, citing MOFCOM.

The two sides agreed to jointly release their respective lists of products subject to the tariff reductions. The reductions will take effect simultaneously after both sides complete their respective domestic legal procedures, state-run Global Times reported, quoting MOFCOM.

The arrangement will help stabilise China-US trade and create more favourable conditions for exports of relevant Chinese products to the US, while also helping meet domestic market demand and strengthen bilateral trade cooperation in areas including agricultural products, energy, manufactured goods and consumer products, MOFCOM said.

Observers said the tariff

reductions were modest considering the US-China trade amounted to about USD 414.7 billion in 2025, with Chinese exports amounting to over \$308 billion and US exports totalling around USD 106.3 billion.

As part of the positive outcomes, China and the US have agreed to establish a China-US Board of Trade under the bilateral economic and trade consultation mechanism, with the main task of improving two-way trade, the MOFCOM said.

The economic and trade teams from both sides have reached a consensus regarding the board's mandate, structure, responsibilities, and consultation arrangements; details will be released subsequently, it said.

Notably, tariffs on China's coal imports from the US will be included in the "USD 30 billion for USD 30 billion" reciprocal tariff reduction framework, as part of the consensus reached by the Chinese and US economic and trade teams. This will facilitate China's coal imports from the US in both

2027 and 2028.

The MOFCOM noted that coal imports from the US would be a useful supplement to China's domestic coal market while bringing stable revenue and jobs to the US coal industry. They would also help stabilise and expand bilateral trade, the MOFCOM official said.

"It is hoped that, through joint efforts, China and the US will continue to deepen cooperation in the coal sector and achieve mutual benefits," the official said.

Agricultural products are also included in the reciprocal tariff reduction framework agreed in principle in the bilateral economic and trade consultation in May.

Against this backdrop, the two sides have agreed in this round of talks to establish an agricultural working group under the Board of Trade, with relevant regulatory agencies from both countries participating, it said.

The board is also expected to provide an important platform and institutional guarantee for "lengthening the list of

cooperation and shortening the list of problems in the economic and trade field," and to help keep China-US economic and trade relations on a stable, positive track, the MOFCOM said.

Another highlight of the outcomes is the creation of the AI dialogue. The two sides agreed that under the China-US economic and trade consultation mechanism, they would establish an AI dialogue. They have held the first session, exchanging views on the risks and benefits of AI, according to the MOFCOM.

China and the US have agreed to convene the next AI dialogue before the end of November, and to set up a communication channel for AI-related incidents, it added.

China and the US have also agreed to extend the Kuala Lumpur trade arrangement, under which certain tariff and non-tariff measures were suspended through November 10, 2026, to January 10, 2027, while continuing active discussions aimed at reaching a solution agreed by both sides.

iexceed

Appzillon™

AI Powered Digital Banking Solutions

WWW.i-exceed.com

Plan rabi sowing scientifically: Agriculture Minister tells States

Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Monday asked state governments to approach the upcoming rabi season with scientific planning, keeping in mind the drought and water scarcity that some regions faced during the just-concluded kharif season due to climate change.

Addressing a two-day national conference on preparedness for the rabi (winter) season, Chouhan said, "When we speak of the Rabi season, we must also consider the Kharif season, which caused great concern because of climate change. Weather patterns have shifted." He said kharif crops had been affected in places, though they had not failed everywhere. "In many places the crop is very good, but there is a threat of drought and water scarcity in some regions," he said, adding that rainfall had been excellent in some areas and below average in others.

"I urge state officials to approach Rabi planning scientifically by assessing water availability and soil moisture in specific regions and making advance arrangements for irrigation water," he noted.

"Since water resources are limited, we must plan strategically and must not delay preparations," he said, stressing the need to plan for pre-sowing and subsequent irrigation. Crop selection, he said, must align with water availability rather than favour water-intensive varieties that could fail later. State teams must ensure farmers do not sow on impulse, which could lead to a crisis, he cautioned.

He also stressed moisture conservation, timely sowing and choosing the right variety. "If water is abundant, select the appropriate variety; if there is a shortage, choose accordingly," he said. The minister asked states to draw up a comprehensive district-wise strategy for sowing pulses in rice-fallow areas, based on available soil moisture.

He said cultivation of gram (chana), lentil (masoor) and mustard should be increased using appropriate techniques in suitable regions. Chouhan said farmers would naturally look for the most profitable crops, and the government could not succeed unless procurement systems, including government-led procurement and wider marketing strategies, were perfected. (PTI)

कार्यालय नगर पालिक निगम, भोपाल

सामरिक विभाग (मुख्यालय) अटल भवन लिंक नम्बर 02 तुलसी नगर

लिखित आमंत्रण घोषणा पत्र

क्रमांक 154 /यां.वि./26

भोपाल, दिनांक 24/09/2026

निम्न कार्य हेतु म.प्र. लोक निर्माण विभाग में पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों से ऑनलाईन निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है। विस्तृत विवरण website <https://www.mptenders.gov.in> पर है।

नोट- संशोधन वेबसाइट पर ही देखे जा सकेंगे समाचार पत्रों में प्रकाशित नहीं होंगे ।

नि.क्र. 783/026/027

कार्यालय नगरी (सिविल) नगर निगम भोपाल

INDORE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION, INDORE

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, 107-109, First Floor, Palika Plaza, Indore

Email : pmayindore@gmail.com, Ph.: 0731-2547774

NIT No.: 22/PMAY/2026-27

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Date : 23.09.2026

Online Percentage Rate Tenders are invited for the following work based on MPPWD SOR 01/04/2024 and amendments till date from Contractors/Reputed firms who have successfully executed works of similar nature and magnitude.

Sr. No.	Name of Work	Probable Amount of Contract (₹ in Lakhs) (PAC)	Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)	Cost of Bid Document	Period of Completion (in Months)
1	Supply, Installation, Testing, Commissioning of 33/11 KV Sub Station Work and 11 KV line at Bada Bangarda Bhudhania for Kshipra Parisar (KH-16), under PMAY Located in Indore, M.P.	293.17	₹1,46,590/-	₹15,000.00 + GST	04 Months (Including Rainy Season)

Note: The EMD shall be in the form of online payment only as given in the Bid Data Sheet.

Important dates for tender processing are as under:-

1. Last date for purchase of tender document and online submission of tender

23.10.2026 before 18.00 Hrs.

2. Pre-Bid meeting will be held on

01.10.2026 at 15.00 Hrs.

3. Technical Bid will be open on

27.10.2026 at 16.30 Hrs.

• If the office happens to be closed on the date of opening of the technical bid as specified, the bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.

• Note- Bid should be submitted online only, Physical copy will not be accepted.

• Tender document and other details shall be available on Website - www.mptenders.gov.in

• For any Information regarding website please contact on 0120-4001-002 & 0120-4001-005

Executive Engineer (PMAY)

Indore Municipal Corporation, Indore

The Pioneer

BHOPAL | TUESDAY | SEPTEMBER 29, 2026

BUSINESS13

Sensex tanks 1,124 pts, hits 6-month low

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Mumbai

Stock markets tumbled on Monday, with the benchmark Sensex plunging 1,124 points to a six-month low and the Nifty closing below 22,800 as surging crude oil prices, geopolitical uncertainties, and weak global trends hit investor sentiment.

The 30-share BSE Sensex tanked 1,124.02 points, or 1.52 per cent, to settle at 72,771.72, the lowest closing level since March 30, 2026. During the day, it lost 1,179.51 points, or 1.59 per cent, to 72,716.23.

The 50-share NSE Nifty dropped 360.25 points, or 1.56 per cent, to end at a near six-month low of 22,780.25. As many as 47 Nifty shares

closed lower while three were up, reflecting across-the-board selling.

Analysts said surging crude oil prices following the US-Iran stalemate over the reopening

of the Strait of Hormuz, foreign fund outflows, a spike in US bond yields and weak Asian markets triggered selling in financial, PSU banks, metals, FMCG, oil & gas and auto

Sensex, Nifty tumble over 5% in past month

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty have dropped more than 5 per cent over the past month, wiping out ₹17.17 lakh crore in investor wealth as surging crude oil prices, geopolitical uncertainties, and elevated bond yields dampened market sentiment.

Indications of further monetary tightening by the US Federal Reserve also weighed on sentiment during this time. The 30-share BSE Sensex tumbled 4,161.87 points or 5.40 per cent since August 27 last month. The 50-share NSE Nifty also plunged 1,310.6 points or 5.44 per cent.

Investors' wealth eroded by ₹17,17,487.02 crore to ₹4,74,36,620.19 crore (\$ 4.94 trillion) during this period.

On Monday, the BSE benchmark tanked 1,124.02 points, or 1.52 per cent, to settle at 72,771.72, its lowest close since March 30, 2026.

The Nifty dropped 360.25 points, or 1.56 per cent, to end at a near six-month low of 22,780.25.

Investors' wealth declined by ₹7.52 lakh crore on Monday alone.

"Bears remained firmly in control as the market breached a key psychological support level, reflecting growing investor caution amid deteriorating global macro conditions.

The US rejection of the ceasefire proposal has heightened concerns that tensions in West Asia could persist for longer than anticipated, reducing the likelihood of a near-term diplomatic resolution and

longed supply-side disruptions and higher commodity prices," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, jumped nearly 4 per cent to \$108.3 per barrel. Brent crude at \$108 and the US 10-year yield at 5.2 per cent are strong headwinds that are weighing on markets, an expert said.

"As the geopolitical situation turned bleak amid the escalating US-Iran conflict, global crude oil prices jumped sharply, triggering a broader sell-off in domestic equity markets.

With US bond yields already scaling above 5 per cent and markets seeing little respite from overseas fund outflows, the undertone is likely to remain cautious with a negative bias in the near to medium term,"

shares.

Among the 30 Sensex firms, 29 ended lower. Larsen & Toubro fell the most by 2.81 per cent. Power Grid dropped 2.62 per cent, Adani Ports by 2.38 per cent, HDFC Bank by 2.3 per cent, Hindustan Unilever by 2.27 per cent and Reliance Industries by 2.24 per cent.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, jumped 3.81 per cent to \$108.3 per barrel.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth ₹3,693.93 crore on Friday, according to exchange data. "Bears remained firmly in control as the market breached a key psychological support level, reflecting growing investor caution amid deteriorating global

macro conditions.

"The US rejection of the ceasefire proposal has heightened concerns that tensions in West Asia could persist for longer than anticipated, reducing the likelihood of a near-term diplomatic resolution and increasing the risk of prolonged supply-side disruptions and higher commodity prices," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

Rising US bond yields are narrowing the India-US yield spread, potentially leading to foreign fund outflows and keeping market sentiment cautious, the analyst said. All BSE sectoral indices ended lower. The PSU Bank plummeted 3.25 per cent, Power tumbled 2.30 per cent,

Telecommunication 2.30 per cent, Utilities 2.27 per cent, MidSmall Private Banks 2.17 per cent, Industrials 2 per cent, MidSmall Private Banks Quality Tilt 1.99 per cent Services 1.93 per cent and Private Banks index 1.86 per cent.

"Indian equity benchmarks closed sharply lower, extending their recent weakness as a fresh surge in crude oil prices and renewed uncertainty surrounding US-Iran talks weighed heavily on investor sentiment. Selling remained broad-based through the session, with the broader market underperforming frontline indices," Ponnudi R, CEO of Enrich Money, an online trading and wealth tech firm, said.

बैंक ऑफ महाराष्ट्र

Bank of Maharashtra

पतल लक्ष्मी का अग्रणी

Zonal Office - Wright Town, Jabalpur 482001

TELE : 0761-2480065

E-Auction Sale Notice For Sale Of Hypothecated (Vehicles) Assets

Notice is hereby given to the Borrower/s and Guarantor/s in particular and public in general that despite several notices to the Borrowers/Guarantors, they have failed to repay the Bank's dues in Vehicle loans as mentioned in the said notices. Therefore, the vehicles are seized by the Bank. The vehicles will be put for sale on 15.10.2026. On-line E-Auction / Bidding through website (<http://baanknet.com>) at 12.00 pm to 4.00 pm. The vehicles will be sold "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" basis. For recovery of the balance due to the Bank of Maharashtra from the Borrower (s) and Guarantor(s) as mentioned in the table. Details of the Borrower/s and Guarantor/s, amount due, Short description of the movable property reserve price and the earnest money deposit are given as under – The borrowers are once again requested to deposit total dues along with further interest, cost and expenses before the above date to get back possession of your vehicles/tractor failing which the same will be sold and proceeds adjusted with your account.

Date of E-Auction - 15-10-2026 Time - 12.00 p.m to 04:00 p.m. with auto extension for 10 minutes

S No.	Names of Borrowers & Guarantors and Branch	Amount Due as on	Short description of the Movable (Vehicle)	Reserve Price Earnest Money Deposit Bid Increment value
1.	Borrower- Mr. Katakam Ravinder S/o Katakam Rajeshwar 1-81 Bodepalli, Adilabad Pin 504273 Branch: Panna Road Satna	Rs. 1026198 /- plus unapplied interest at applicable rate of interest, other cost and expenses w.e.f. from 20.07.2026	Model: TATA NEXON SMART + PMT Colour: DAYTONA GREY Regi No. 24BH4907G Engine No. - REVTRN21EVXK65169 Chasis No. - MAT627502RAE19460 Regi Date: 18.06.2024 Mfg Year: 05/2024	Rs.594000/- Rs.594000/- Rs.10000/-

Vehicle Inspection Site- Bank of Maharashtra, Branch- Panna Road, Satna

Date & Time of inspection of property on: 09/10/2026 between 11.00 am to 05.00 p.m. For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link "<https://www.bankofmaharashtra.in/proposal.asp>" provided in the Bank's website and also on psballiance portal (<http://baanknet.com>). Or contact CM Recovery, Shri Bhushan Mohite, Mob.No.9923257090

Date: 29.09.2026 Authorised Officer - Bank of Maharashtra

सेंट्रल बैंक ऑफ़ इंडिया

Central Bank of India

क्षेत्रीय कार्यालय- होशंगाबाद

आई.टी.आई. रोड, हरियाली चौक, होशंगाबाद

अचल संपत्तियों का विक्रय नोटिस : ई-नीलामी दि. 16 अक्टूबर 2026

प्रतिभूति धित (पवर्न) निम्न, 2002 के नियम 8(6) के पठन के साथ पठित वित्तीय अतिरिक्तों का प्रतिभूतिकरण और पुराणन तथा प्रतिभूति धित का पवर्न अधिनियम, 2002 के अधीन अचल अतिरिक्तों के विक्रय हेतु ई-नीलामी विक्रय नोटिस

आम लोगों को तथा विशेष रूप से उभार लेने वाले और प्रत्यक्ष-निर्माण को यह नोटिस दिया जाता है कि नीचे वर्णित अचल संपत्ति जो प्रतिभूति लेनदार के पास निरवधि/प्राप्ति है, का वित्तीय कलह (नीचे वर्णित) प्रतिभूति लेनदार के प्राप्ति अधिकारी द्वारा लिया गया है, जो "जहाँ है जैसा है और जो कुछ भी है, जिस प्रकार है" एवं "दक्षिण रहित" के आधार पर निम्नलिखित देनदारी, प्रत्यक्ष-निर्माण तथा जमानतदारी से प्रतिभूति लेनदार को बकाया राशि की वसूली हेतु ई-नीलामी द्वारा बेचे जाने हेतु विस्तृत विवरण निम्नानुसार है:

क्र.	राज्य	अग्रजाला / अग्रणी प्रत्यक्ष-निर्माण / जमानतदार	मांग/बकाया राशि	संपत्ति के स्वामी का नाम	साथ में/अचल संपत्तियों का विवरण / कलह का प्रकार	आवृत्त मूल्य
			13(2) दिनांक- 18.02.2025			अंतिम धरित उच्च राशि
			13(4) दिनांक- 09.07.2025			विशुद्ध राशि
1	गुजरात	श्री बलराम शर्मा रत. परामर्शदाता के माध्यम से (कांजी वारिस - 1. श्रीमती अमीता शर्मा 2. श्री अरवि शर्मा 3. श्री अरवि शर्मा पुत्र रत. श्री बलराम शर्मा तथा अन्य ज्ञात / अज्ञात कांजी वारिस)	रु. 11,54,578.34/- + रत. कांजी एवं अन्य खर्च	श्री बलराम शर्मा रत. परामर्शदाता के माध्यम से (कांजी वारिस - 1. श्रीमती अमीता शर्मा 2. श्री अरवि शर्मा 3. श्री अरवि शर्मा पुत्र रत. श्री बलराम शर्मा (तथा अन्य ज्ञात / अज्ञात कांजी वारिस)	PN-20, खसरा नं. 384/8- हथवास, पिरिय, जिला नर्मदापुर, रिन कोड - 461775 क्षेत्रफल - 750 वर्गफुट निस्सीकी तुरन्त सीमा इस प्रकार है : उत्तर में - अनेकर का पट्टा, दक्षिण में - निरंजना का अन्य पट्टा, पूर्व में - नादक, पश्चिम में - अनेकर का अन्य पट्टा कांजी वारिस - वित्तीय कलह	रु. 20,40,000.00 रु. 2,04,000.00 रु. 5,000.00

ईएमपी(अनिवार्य अग्रिम धरोहर राशि) जमा करने की दिनांक एवं समय : 16.10.2026 को सांय 4.00 बजे या उससे पूर्व, ई-नीलामी की दिनांक एवं समय : 16.10.2026 को सुबह 12.00 बजे से सांय 4.00 बजे तक

विक्रय के निष्पन्न और शर्तों के अन्तर्गत के लिए कृपया नीचे दिए गए प्रतिभूति लेनदार को वेबसाइट अर्थात् www.centralbankofindia.bank.in देखें या बैंक अनुकूलित सेवा प्रदाता में, पीएसबी अल्लयंस के वेबसाइट <http://baanknet.com> पर उपलब्ध लिंक देखें। हेल्पलाइन नंबर +91 - 8291220220 या क्षेत्रीय कार्यालय होशंगाबाद में. +91- 7509555955 से संपर्क कर सकते हैं। ये संबंधित अग्रणी/ प्रत्यक्ष-निर्माण/ जमानतदार को संपर्कित अधिनियम 2002 के नियम 8 (6) के अधिन पंख (15) दिवों की वैधानिक विक्रय सूचना है।

दिनांक: 29.09.2026 स्थान: नर्मदापुर

प्रधिकृत अधिकारी कुंते सेंट्रल बैंक ऑफ़ इंडिया

इंडियन बैंक

Indian Bank

BRANCH: MANERI, VILL-PO- MANERI, DIST. MANDLA (M.P.)- 481885

Mob.: 8290643559, Email: Maneri@indianbank.bank.in

इलाहाबाद

ALLAHABAD

APPENDIX-IV [RULE 9(1)] SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES

E-Auction Sale Notice of sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 9(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rule, 2002. Notice is hereby given to the public in general in particular to the Borrower(s) an Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable properties mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor the possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Indian Bank, Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" basis, for recovery of the amount and Interest due to Indian Bank branch thereon mentioned against account therein below. The specific details of the properties intended to be brought to sale through e-auction mode are enumerated below:

Sl. No.	Branch Name Name of the Account Name of the Borrower/Prop./ Director/ Partner / Guarantor / Mortgagor	Detailed description of the Property For E-Auction	Amount Outstanding Encumbrances On Property Type of Possession	Reserve Price EMD Amount Bid Increment amount
1	Branch- Maneri Borrower- M/s Aadi Industries (Prop. Prashant Daniel Singh) Plot No. 24, Sector-E-IV, IGC Maneri, Tehsil Niwas, Dist- Mandla (M.P.) PIN- 481885 (2) Shri Prashant Daniel Singh, Residential address- H. No. 254/16, CMS Church Compound, Ghamapur, Jabalpur (M.P.) 482001 Contact Person: Gori Shankar Saini (BM), Mob.: 8290643559 Mr. Ashok Choudhary, Mob.: 7898755201	Industrial building at leasehold Plot No. 24, Section-E-IV, IGC Maneri, Tehsil- Niwas, Dist.- Mandla (M.P.) PIN- 481885, its admeasuring area 1000 Sq.Mtr., standing in the name of Shri Prashant Daniel Singh. Boundaries: North: Plot No. 08, South: 18 Mtr Road, East: Plot No. 25, West: Plot No. 23 Prop. ID- IDIBMANERI01	Rs. 28,88,290/- (as on 15.07.2022) + Interest & Other expenses Encumbrances On Property: Total dues Rs. 86,124/- (Lease rent maintenance, Penalty and Water dues) as on 30/09/2026 as informed by MPIDC Physical Possession	Rs. 8,10,000/- Rs. 81,000/- Rs. 10,000/-

Bidders are advised to visit the website (<https://baanknet.com>) of our e-auction service provider PSB Alliance Pvt. Ltd. to participate in online bid. For Technical Assistance Please call 8291220220. For Registration status and for EMD status please email to support.baanknet@psballiance.com

For property details and photograph of the property and auction terms and conditions please visit <https://baanknet.com> and for clarifications related to this portal, please contact PSB Alliance Pvt. Ltd. Contact No. 8291220220. Bidders are advised to use Property ID Number mentioned above while searching for the property in the website (<https://baanknet.com>).

Date: 29/09/2026



Sale Notice to Borrower/Guarantors/Legal Heirs(LR's:)/Coparceners
The above shall be treated as Notice of 15days u/r 9(1) of security Interest (Enforcement) Rule, 2002
 Bidders / Purchasers are requested to register on portal using their mobile number and email id. Please take note that the registration and KYC approval etc take 2-3 working days.
 Active bidders may contact the authorized officials **Contact details: Incharge Recovery Jabalpur Shri Onkar Kumar (Zonal Manager) - 9823296164, Shri Nikhil S Patil (DZM) -**
 Date: 29/09/2026
 Authorised Officer, Bank of Maharashtra

BRIEFLY

Chikitha and Ganesh advance to Asiad archery quarters



Defending champion Jyothi Surekha Vennam was stunningly ousted by 14-year-old Korean Kang Yeonsoo, who shot a perfect score of 150, but debutant duo of Chikitha Taniparthi and Ganesh Mani Ratnam Thirumuru advanced to the quarterfinals of their respective women's and men's individual compound archery competitions at the Asian Games here on Monday.

Jyothi had claimed gold in individual, women's team and mixed team competitions in the previous edition of the Games in Hangzhou.

Against Yeonsoo, Jyothi produced a score of 146 in the pre-quarterfinals, having played catch-up with Kang.

Under pressure after trailing Kang, Jyothi responded with a perfect 30, but the Korean prodigy matched it to retain her four-point lead at 120-116 before eliminating her more experienced opponent from the competition. (PTI)

Asiad volleyball: India go past Hong Kong for second win



The Indian men's volleyball team edged past Hong Kong, China in a Pool C preliminary round match for its second consecutive win at the Asian Games here on Monday.

India prevailed 3-0 (25-22, 25-19, 25-21), raising their level at crucial moments to close out a match in which Hong Kong kept up the pressure for long periods.

India, who began with a 3-0 win over Vietnam, will next face Qatar on Tuesday. Hong Kong were particularly effective with their attacking play from the right flank, finding ways to trouble the Indian defence and remain in contention despite India holding the lead for much of the contest.

India head coach Dragan Mihailovic said the team was "still looking for a good performance". "We had lots of small mistakes. The problem is a little bit mental. The Hong Kong guys were making some easy mistakes, but we cannot, as a serious team, expect that somebody will be giving mistakes for us to win the game," said the coach. (PTI)

The new fearless young generation of Indian sport



SHAKYA MITRA

In what has otherwise been a disappointing Asian Games campaign for India, a far cry from the extraordinary performance in 2023 when the country won a record 28 gold medals and 106 medals overall, one of the brightest stories has been 18-year-old squash player Anahat Singh.

Her semifinal against a higher-ranked and fancied Japanese opponent Satomi Watanabe was a remarkable demonstration of composure and belief. Two games down and facing three match points in the third, Anahat somehow found a way back into the contest and eventually won. The significance of the comeback went beyond simply reaching the final.

A defeat at that stage would still have assured her a bronze medal. For an 18-year-old competing at one of Asia's biggest sporting events, that would hardly have been an outcome to be ashamed of. Yet Anahat appeared unwilling to accept that her story had already been written. She wanted to change her destiny. Though she went down in the final and won a silver medal, her strength of character at such a young age was admirable.

That mentality may well be one of the most significant developments in Indian sport today.

The India in which many of us grew up during the 1980s and 1990s and the India in which a youngster

like Anahat Singh has grown up are almost unrecognisable from each other, at least when it comes to sporting expectations.

For much of the 1980s and 1990s, Indian sport existed under the shadow of Olympic underachievement. India went through three consecutive Olympic editions without winning a medal. At the 1996, 2000 and 2004 Olympics, there was just one medal in each edition. Even the Asian Games and Commonwealth Games, where India's medal prospects were considerably better, rarely generated the kind of expectations that exist today.

Sport was often about celebrating an individual achievement rather than expecting sustained success.

That began to change, particularly with the 2008 Beijing Olympics and the subsequent hosting of the 2010 Commonwealth Games, followed by the Asian Games in Guangzhou later that year. India's sporting ecosystem did not transform overnight, but the psychological shift had begun.

Athletes started believing that



medals were not occasional miracles but achievable targets.

Young athletes today have grown up in that altered environment. PV Sindhu won a World Championship medal at 18 in 2013,



India at Asiad: Silver for shooter Esha, runner Gulveer

PHILEM DIPAK SINGH/AJAI MASAND

■ Nagoya

Young shooter Esha Singh's tenacity fetched her a silver in the women's individual 25m pistol, while distance runner Gulveer Singh's ram-paging form translated into another second-place finish on a rain-soaked day dotted with many missed opportunities and some surprises



for India at the Asian Games here.

Gulveer, who has already claimed the 10,000m silver, added another one to his kitty with a personal best timing of 3:36.72sec in the men's 1500m competition. This was after 21-year-old Esha survived five shoot-offs to clinch perhaps the most hard-fought silver of her career.

Kurash player Picky Balhara threw up a pleasant surprise with her bronze in the -78kg category. She became a two-time Games medallist and thereby the most successful Indian Kurash player at the mega-event by adding to her silver from 2018 edition.

Another brilliant performance was by Vithya Ramraj in the women's 400m hurdles competition as she surged past the legendary PT Usha's over four decade-old national record to claim

the bronze medal. Ramraj clocked 54.75sec, bettering Usha's 55.42sec established at the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics.

The medal haul stood at 41, including four gold, 18 silver and 19 bronze medals. The country was placed just outside the top 10, something that has remained consistent since the start of the Games.

In the boxing ring, Olympic bronze-medallist Lovlina Borgohain (75kg), Priya Ghanghas (60kg) and Kapil Pokhariya (90kg) delivered trademark assured performances to sail into semifinals and be assured of bronze, joining three others in the medal rounds.

Among shockers was defending women's individual compound archery champion Jyothi Surekha Vemman's pre-quarterfinal exit, landing another blow to a largely underwhelming campaign so far by India. Another defending champion who failed to protect his crown was track veteran Avinash Sable in men's 3000m steeple-chase competition. (PTI)

Squash: Indian men and women enter quarters



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

■ Nagoya

The Indian men's and women's teams on Monday marched into the quarterfinals of the Asian Games squash competition with the latter producing a gritty win over Japan here.

Indian women, seeded third, got past Japan 2-1 despite lead player Anahat Singh losing to world number six Satomi Watanabe in five games. The 17th ranked Anahat had beaten the world number six Japanese in the individual semifinals before finishing with a historic silver.

Indian women, bronze medallists in the previous edition, had beaten China 3-0 in their opening match.

Veteran Joshna Chinappa, featuring in a record seventh Asian Games, gave India a 1-lead over Japan with a 11-1, 11-8, 11-9 win over Erisa Sano.

Next up was Anahat against Satomi for the second

time in three days. Satomi was able to get the better of the Indian this time, pulling off a 11-8, 8-11, 7-11, 11-8, 11-9 win in a 43-minute battle. In the decider, Tanvi Khanna had to dig deep against Akari Midorikawa for a 12-10, 11-9, 4-11, 12-10 victory, sealing the match for India and a place in the quarterfinals. The men's team, which won the gold in China, blanked South Korea 3-0 to seal place in last eight stage.

In the opening singles, Velavan Senthilkumar defeated Jooyoung Na 11-6, 11-4, 11-7 before singles silver medallist Abhay Singh had a comfortable 11-4, 11-7, 11-1 result over Jeongmin Ryu. Veer Chotrani outplayed Seojin Oh 11-6, 11-4, 11-2 in inconsequential third singles.

Earlier on Monday, the Indian men were barely troubled as Suraj Chand, Chotrani and Senthilkumar all registered comfortable wins to seal tie in straight matches.

India's sporting challenges remain substantial, from infrastructure and coaching to competition depth and access.

But exceptional athletes can have an influence far beyond their own medals.

When a teenager watches Manu Bhaker compete fearlessly on the Olympic stage or sees Anahat Singh recover from two games down and three match points in an Asian Games semifinal, the message is not merely that these athletes are talented. It is that the stage itself is not something to fear.

The next generation of Indian athletes is not necessarily walking into international competition asking whether India can win. Increasingly, they are asking themselves whether they can win.

There is a subtle but profound difference.

India's Asian Games campaign may not ultimately resemble the historic success of 2023. But sporting progress cannot always be measured only by the medal table. Sometimes it can be seen in the manner in which a young athlete responds when the odds are stacked against her.

Anahat Singh's comeback is therefore more than a memorable squash match. It is a glimpse into a generation that does not remember India's sporting failures because, for them, those failures are history.

They have grown up in an India that expects to compete.

And perhaps, increasingly, they are growing into athletes who expect to win.

The author is a sports management consultant with over a decade of experience in sports promotion and development. His work across both the private and government sectors gives him a well-rounded view of India's sports ecosystem

Shaili Singh's mark wrongly measured by officials: AFI



PHILEM DIPAK SINGH ■ Nagoya

Claiming that the officials at the ongoing Asian Games took a "shorter" measurement of long jumper Shaili Singh's effort which denied her a medal, the Athletics Federation of India (AFI) has decided to move the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) against their decision.

Shaili finished fourth with a best jump of 6.42m in the women's long jump event on Sunday, with compatriot Ancy Sojan taking the silver with 6.53m. China's Huang Yingying took the gold with her final attempt of 6.55m.

The bone of contention is Shaili's fourth attempt, which officially measured 6.41m. According to Shaili's mentor and legendary long jumper Anju Bobby George, the distance was wrongly measured at the behest of an official who was not close to the landing pit.

"We saw her jump was clearly ahead of the gold-winning mark. Initially, the official near the landing pit pointed to Shaili's leg mark for the measurement.

"But later another official who was standing far behind came and pointed to a mark which was far shorter from board," Anju said.

"They took the measurement at the mark pointed by the official who was standing far behind. The measurement should have been done on the mark pointed by the official nearest to the landing pit," said Anju, who won a long jump bronze in the 2003 World Championships.

Shaili herself lodged a protest and videos of the jump were shown at that time. (PTI)

DAILY SUDOKU

		9	6			1	2	
						8		6
				1	3			7
	4		1	3				5
9	2		8		6		4	1
5			4	7		3		
2		6	3					
7		4						
8	5			4	9			

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

HOW TO SOLVE IT

Sudoku is a logic puzzle where you fill a 9×9 grid so that numbers 1 to 9 appear once in every row, column, and 3×3 box, using elimination and logical deduction—no maths involved.

No. SS2256 Distribution: www.knightfeatures.com



SOLUTION (28.9.26)

3	8	9	2	7	1	4	6	5
4	1	7	8	5	6	3	2	9
5	2	6	4	3	9	8	7	1
2	9	8	7	4	3	1	5	6
6	7	3	5	1	2	9	8	4
1	5	4	9	6	8	7	3	2
9	6	2	1	8	7	5	4	3
7	3	5	6	9	4	2	1	8
8	4	1	3	2	5	6	9	7

No. SS2256 Distribution: www.knightfeatures.com

DOUBLE CROSSWORD TUESDAY | SEPTEMBER 29, 2026

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
		9					
10						11	
				12			
13		14				15	16
					18		
17							
				19			
20	21					22	23
24					25		
27						28	
				29			
30							
						31	

SOLUTION (28.9.26)

ACROSS	22. Loot	DOWN	17. Tsars
3. Menai	23. Dear	1. Blair	19. S-cowled
8. Flo-od	24. Drowned	2. Pomfret	20. Blobs
10. Frock	26. B-races	4. (Mon-)Eyed	21. Roman
11. Al-M	29. Lob	5. Afri-C-a	22. Debtors
12. Met-re	31. Sinus	6. I-Rene	24. De-sire
13. Wilfre-d	32. Nettles	7. Score	25. No-t
15. I-nerf	34. Rigid	9. Oil	27. Right
18. Re-d	35. Oak	12. Med.-Lars	28. Cured
19. Sc-en-es	36. Cheer	14. Rep	30. Pokes
21. Replica	37. Ur-G-ed	16. End-Ed	32. Nick
	38. Decks		33. L-ag

- ACROSS
- Spills the beans about the girl holding the money (5)
 - High ones are fun (5)
 - Best imaginable mother? (7)
 - White as an owl (5)
 - Species of tiger, one reads (5)
 - It's a lot more than little, note (5)
 - Stood up tall when dragged around the end of the pier (7)
 - Masculine pieces (3)
 - Just a single right can be a knockout! (4)
 - Withdraw when about to get weary (6)
 - An Indian instrument is wrong for Jack (5)

DOWN

- It has an eye for the tourists (6)
- Hat taken off if too expensive (6)
- Despite the soppy exterior, a person of intelligence (3)
- Figures in black and blue (5)
- A god to swear by? (7)
- I'm having a morning with a holy man (4)
- He may be on time for the match (6)
- They aimed to spread the news (5)
- Those grasping old Oriental secret societies, one imagines (5)
- River (a converted sewer?) (5)
- Imitate an operatic character with a

- Romantic name for a village Green (6)
- Punishment for being thin? (4)
- Title held by Osiris (3)
- It's reasonable for a soldier to go in a pub (7)
- Hundreds of drops of water will seep away (5)
- Blue blooded boy by another name (5)
- Rosie's willowy form (5)
- Remove the ones we doubt? (4,3)
- Piano for the finale? (5)
- She gives thanks for any change (5)

tragic end (5)

- 16 Staircase feature unfamiliar to the Spanish (5)
- 18 Light on artificial silk (5)
- 19 Spoke savagely when all tangled up (7)
- 21 Strictness in interpreting most of our rights (6)
- 22 In a wild feast, one can be fun (6)
- 23 Nominally a man set up with a place (6)
- 25 She's in Colindale (5)
- 26 Start after Elizabeth (but before the French?) on TV (4)
- 28 Blooming well caught? (3)

EXPERTS STRESS EARLY DETECTION, HEALTHY LIFESTYLES AND COMMUNITY AWARENESS FOR HEART HEALTH

HEALTH LEADERS FLAG POLLUTION, STRESS AND CHANGING LIFESTYLES WHILE CALLING FOR STRONGER FOCUS ON PREVENTION AT 'ILLNESS TO WELLNESS' CONFERENCE



Mr. Anil Rajput,
Chairperson, Advisory Council,
Illness to Wellness Foundation



(Padma Bhushan) Dr T.S. Kler,
Chairman & HOD, BLK-Max Heart &
Vascular Institute & Chairman, Pan
Max - Electrophysiology



**(Padma Bhushan)
Dr. (Prof.) K. K. Talwar,**
Chairman, PSRI Heart Institute



(Padma Shri) Dr. Ganesh Kumar Mani,
Chairman, Cardiac Sciences, Cardiac
Surgery (CTVS), Max Smart Super
Speciality Hospital, Saket,



Dr. Gautam Singal,
Member, FICCI Health Services
Committee & Senior Consultant and
Professor of Cardiology, Amrita
Institute of Medical Sciences &
Research Centre

Ahead of World Heart Day 2026, the Illness to Wellness Foundation organised a conference in New Delhi under the theme "Healthy Heart for a Healthy Life", bringing together leading cardiologists, healthcare experts and public health voices to highlight the growing importance of prevention, early detection and healthier everyday choices amid concerns around stress, pollution and changing lifestyles. The conference focused on building a stronger culture of prevention through awareness, healthy living, regular health checks, emergency preparedness and greater community participation.

(Padma Bhushan) Dr T.S. Kler, Chairman & HOD, BLK-Max Heart & Vascular Institute & Chairman, Pan Max - Electrophysiology, said, "It is important to support the call for the Government of India to establish structured preventive cardiovascular programmes and strengthen health education and prevention so that awareness translates into sustained action and reaches people at the community level. This preventive approach must also take into account the broader environmental and lifestyle factors influencing heart health, from air pollution, noise pollution and stubble burning to rising stress, changing work patterns and evolving lifestyle habits."

(Padma Bhushan) Dr. (Prof.) K. K. Talwar, Chairman, PSRI Heart Institute, New Delhi, stressed the importance of community preparedness during cardiac emergencies, saying, "Every minute is important. It is only the person who is by the side that matters." He called for wider community CPR training to enable people to provide immediate assistance while medical help is arriving.

Dr. Talwar also underlined the importance of preventive awareness and CPR skills, saying, "Apart from the awareness, the preventive steps, all of us probably should also have the knowledge how to do a good quality CPR by the side."

(Padma Shri) Dr. Ganesh Kumar Mani, Chairman, Cardiac Sciences, Cardiac Surgery (CTVS), Max Smart Super Speciality Hospital, Saket, Delhi, highlighted the importance of preventive cardiology and healthier everyday habits, particularly the role of stress and sedentary lifestyles. "Preventive cardiology has taken a big centre stage, and we need to move beyond looking at heart disease only when a problem arises. The emphasis should be on prevention, early action and making healthier choices part of everyday life. Small, consistent changes can play an important role in protecting heart health over the long term," he said.

In his address, Mr. Anil Rajput, Chairperson, Advisory Council, Illness to Wellness



L to R Dr. Vinayak Agarwal, Head, Clinical Cardiology, Fortis Hospital; Dr. Krishan Yadav, Senior Consultant, Cardiology, Yatharth Super Speciality Hospital; Dr. (Prof.) Sandeep Bansal, Vardhman Mahavir Medical College & Safdarjung Hospital, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India; Dr. Vanita Arora, Clinical Lead, Cardiac Electrophysiology, Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals and Dr. Rahul Chandola, Senior Cardiothoracic and Heart Lung Transplant Surgeon, PSRI Hospital



Ms. Ritika Samaddar, Regional Head, Department of Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics, Max Healthcare; Dr. Tanu Singh, Founder, Lifeyoga; Dr. Rajesh Kesari, Member, Advisory Council, Illness to Wellness Foundation; Dr. Jyoti Keswani, Director, Central Council for Research in Yoga & Naturopathy (CCRYN) and Additional Charge, Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga, Ministry of Ayush, Government of India; Dr. Mohit Dayal Gupta, Director—Professor of Cardiology, GB Pant Hospital; Ms. Seema Singh, Founder Director, Seema Singh's Diet & Nutrition Clinic and Mr. Ajay Prakash Shrivastava, Chancellor, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi Ramayan Vishwavidyalaya, Ayodhya

Foundation, said "A healthy life is shaped by the choices we make every day - what we eat, how active we remain, how we manage stress and whether we give ourselves enough time to rest and recharge. Building a culture of prevention is not just about responding to illness; it is about making healthier choices a part of everyday life. When individuals, families, communities and institutions come together to prioritise wellbeing, we can create a healthier and more aware society."

In his concluding remarks, Dr. Gautam Singal, Member, FICCI Health Services Committee & Senior Consultant and Professor of Cardiology, Amrita Institute of Medical Sciences & Research Centre, Faridabad, said, "The challenge today is not the lack of knowledge, it is putting that knowledge into action.

Prevention is a collection of small decisions taken every day. We need to make prevention a habit, not just an afterthought or a reaction."

The conference featured two sessions addressing complementary aspects of preventive heart care. The first session, "Know Your Numbers for Heart Care: BP, Blood Sugar & Lipid Profile," moderated by Dr. Vinayak Agarwal, Head, Clinical Cardiology, Fortis Hospital; brought together Dr. Krishan Yadav, Senior Consultant, Cardiology, Yatharth Super Speciality Hospital, Dr. (Prof.) Sandeep Bansal, Vardhman Mahavir Medical College & Safdarjung Hospital, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India; Dr. Rahul Chandola, Senior Cardiothoracic and Heart Lung Transplant Surgeon, PSRI Hospital; and Dr. Vanita Arora, Clinical Lead, Cardiac

Electrophysiology, Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals. The discussion focused on understanding cholesterol, triglycerides and other indicators of cardiovascular risk, regularly monitoring blood pressure, blood sugar and lipid levels, early identification of abnormal readings, timely intervention, lifestyle changes and building a culture of regular health checks and accessible screening across communities, workplaces and institutions.

The second session, "Heart Care through Holistic Wellness: Nutrition, Fitness, Ayurveda & Meditation," moderated by Dr. Rajesh Kesari, Member, Advisory Council, Illness to Wellness Foundation, featured Dr. Jyoti Keswani, Director, Central Council for Research in Yoga & Naturopathy (CCRYN) and Additional Charge, Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga,

Ministry of Ayush, Government of India; Dr. Mohit Dayal Gupta, Director-Professor of Cardiology, GB Pant Hospital; Ms. Seema Singh, Founder Director, Seema Singh's Diet & Nutrition Clinic; Dr. Tanu Singh, Founder, Lifeyoga; Mr. Ajay Prakash Shrivastava, Chancellor, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi Ramayan Vishwavidyalaya, Ayodhya; and Ms. Ritika Samaddar, Regional Head, Department of Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics, Max Healthcare. The session explored the role of balanced nutrition, regular physical activity, healthy weight management, Ayurveda, meditation and mindfulness, adequate sleep, emotional wellbeing and healthy daily habits in supporting heart health, while highlighting holistic heart-care practices suited to an individual's age, health status and lifestyle.

