

Aryan Age

The Age of Truth

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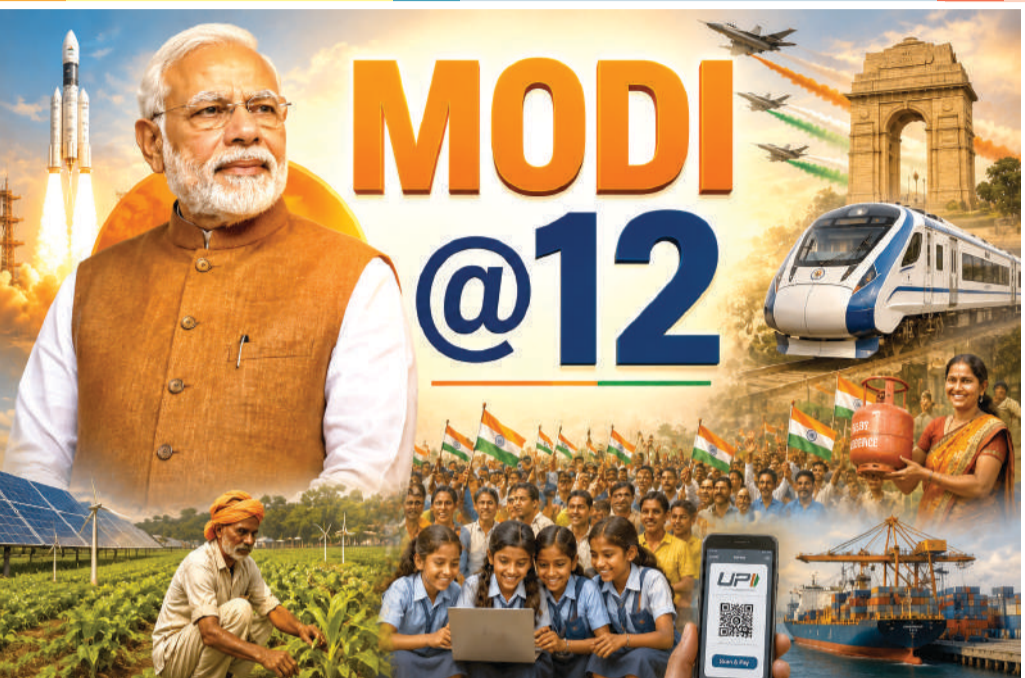
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New Delhi : As Prime Minister Narendra Modi stands on the cusp of a historic milestone on June 10, set to surpass Jawaharlal Nehru as India's longest-serving Prime Minister, the Bharatiya Janata Party on Tuesday projected the past 12 years as a defining period of national transformation marked by welfare-driven governance, cultural resurgence and rising global influence.

At a special interaction with the print media at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi, senior BJP leaders and union ministers showcased what they described as the Modi government's achievements across multiple sectors, presenting a vision of a country that has moved from developmental challenges to aspiring for the goal of Viksit Bharat by 2047.

Held under the banner of "12 Saal Vishwas Ke, Vikas Ke, Jan Kalyan Ke" (12 Years of Trust, Development and Public Welfare), the event featured a documentary chronicling the NDA government's journey since 2014, highlighting major reforms, welfare programmes, infrastructure expansion, digital transformation and India's enhanced standing on the world stage.

BJP celebrates 'New India' built on welfare, national pride and global influence

Nadda, Ashwini Vaishnaw, Piyush Goyal and Dharmendra Pradhan, Nabin said Indian traditions and cultural symbols had gained unprecedented global acceptance over the past decade. "Yoga is a symbol of Bharatiyata. So is the Ganga Aarti. Even 'Namaste' has become a global diplomatic language today," he remarked, crediting initiatives such as Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat for strengthening national integration while celebrating the country's diversity.

The BJP president argued that Modi's leadership had helped India move beyond what he described as a colonial mindset and instilled a fresh sense of confidence among citizens. Drawing a contrast with previous governments, Nabin said, "There was a Prime Minister who once said that 54 crore people were a liability. Today, under Modi ji, 140 crore Indians are viewed as the nation's greatest asset."

He further said governance under Modi had focused on empowering citizens through transparency, technology and direct benefit transfers, ensuring that welfare schemes reached intended beneficiaries efficiently. Reflecting on the government's broader legacy, he said the past 12 years had generated momentum across every key sector.

He further underscored India's growing diplomatic profile, citing the successful G20 Presidency, expanding global partnerships and the country's increasing role in international discussions on climate action, technology, trade and development. Central to the BJP's narrative was Modi's self-description as the nation's "Pradhan Sevak", a philosophy that Nabin said had shaped the government's approach over the last 12 years.

12 years of NDA rule marked by service, development and good governance: PM Modi

New Delhi : Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said the NDA government's 12 years in office have been defined by dedication to nation-building, public welfare and inclusive development, asserting that continuous efforts guided by the principle of "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas" have placed India firmly on the path towards becoming a strong and self-reliant nation.

In a series of posts on X marking 12 years of his government at the Centre, Modi highlighted the achievements of his administration and reiterated its commitment to the vision of a "Viksit Bharat" (Developed India). "Dedication and a spirit of

'Nation First,' we have left no stone unturned in empowering our youth, women, and farmer brothers and sisters," he said. The Prime Minister credited his government's initiatives across sectors for enhancing India's global standing and transforming the country's development landscape. "It is the result of our relentless efforts that the country has gained a new identity across the world today, from infrastructure development to the digital revolution," Modi said, adding that the government would continue to work towards realizing the goal of a developed India.

"We will continue to move forward on this path of service, good governance, and prosperity to realize the vision of a Developed India," he said. The remarks came as the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance completed 12 years in power at the Centre, a period during which the Modi government has frequently highlighted achievements in infrastructure expansion, welfare delivery, digital governance, financial inclusion, manufacturing and economic reforms. The government has also made the vision of "Viksit Bharat 2047" a central theme of its policy agenda, aiming to transform India into a developed nation by the centenary of Independence.

World leaders hail Modi's leadership as he becomes India's longest-serving elected PM

New Delhi : Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday received congratulatory messages from several world leaders on the eve of becoming India's longest-serving elected Prime Minister, with leaders from across continents praising his leadership, governance record and contributions to global diplomacy.

According to a government release, the messages highlighted Prime Minister Modi's role in driving India's economic and social transformation, strengthening the voice of the Global South and enhancing India's stature on the world stage. Among those extending their greetings was Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Disanayaka, who, in a letter dated June 8, conveyed the congratulations of the Government and people of Sri Lanka.

"This milestone is a testament not only to your years in office, but also to the trust and confidence that the people of the world's largest democracy have repeatedly placed in your leadership," Disanayaka wrote. The Sri Lankan President also praised India's progress under Modi's leadership and noted that his vision had inspired countries beyond India's borders, including Sri Lanka. He recalled the close partnership between the two neighbours and India's support during Sri Lanka's economic crisis in 2022.

CBI arrests 2 key accused in cyber slavery and human trafficking network linked to Southeast Asian scam Compounds

New Delhi: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Tuesday said it has arrested two key accused in connection with an ongoing investigation into a human trafficking network that lured Indian nationals to scam compounds operating in Southeast Asia under the guise of lucrative overseas employment opportunities.

The accused have been identified as Nipender Chaudhary and Nilesh Narpatnis Purohit. The investigation pertains to a criminal network of agents and facilitators who recruited Indian citizens by promising attractive jobs in countries across Southeast Asia. The victims were subsequently transported to scam compounds, primarily located in Myanmar and Cambodia, where they were subjected to conditions described as "cyber slavery."

These scam compounds are operated by transnational cybercrime syndicates and serve as hubs for large-scale cyber-enabled financial fraud targeting victims across multiple countries. Indian nationals trafficked to these facilities were allegedly coerced into participating in illegal cybercrime activities. Their freedom of movement was restricted, passports were confiscated, and several victims reportedly faced physical and psychological abuse. In many cases, families were compelled to pay substantial sums of money to secure the release of their relatives.

One of the arrested accused allegedly worked on behalf of a scam compound operator and played a critical role in arranging logistics for Indian nationals trafficked to Myanmar through Thailand. Victims were transported from Bangkok to Mae Sot before being illegally moved across the Thailand-Myanmar border into scam compounds operating in Myanmar. The accused is alleged to have coordinated transportation and logistical support for the trafficking network.

The second arrested accused allegedly played a central role in managing a network of sub-agents across India on behalf of scam compound operators. Investigations indicate that he operated from an office located within a scam compound near the Thailand-Myanmar border and received payments in cryptocurrency from operators of the illegal establishments.

Earlier, in May 2026, the CBI conducted coordinated searches at eight locations across four states as part of the same investigation and arrested another accused allegedly involved in the trafficking network.

The government release highlighted that Modi's visit to Papua New Guinea in May 2023 for the Third Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIIC-III) Summit was the first-ever visit by an Indian Prime Minister to the Pacific nation. The visit was regarded as a significant milestone in India's outreach to Pacific Island countries and its broader engagement with the Global South.

Congress issues 12-year charge sheet against Modi govt, alleges gaps between promises and performance

New Delhi : Stepping up its attack on the Narendra Modi-led government as it completed 12 years in office, the Congress on Tuesday released an "accountability report" detailing what it described as the Centre's failures across key sectors, including the economy, employment, agriculture, governance and social welfare.

Unveiling the report at a press conference in New Delhi, AICC Research Department Chairman Rajeev Gowda and Communication Department Research and Monitoring In-charge Amitabh Dubey accused the government of focusing more on publicity than delivery, arguing that several high-profile promises remained unfulfilled despite extensive promotion. "Propaganda has replaced

performance," Gowda said, contending that the government's claims of success were not reflected in the everyday experiences of citizens. Questioning the Centre's economic narrative, Gowda took aim at assertions that India was on course to become the world's third-largest economy. He argued that the depreciation of the rupee against the US dollar had weakened the country's global economic position and raised concerns about the effectiveness of economic management.

"The government continues to make grand announcements, but the weakening rupee and investor exits indicate deeper concerns about economic management," he said, alleging that foreign investors had withdrawn significant funds from Indian markets in recent months. The Congress leader also highlighted rising inflation, claiming that the prices of essential commodities and household goods had increased considerably during the BJP's tenure. Referring to LPG cylinders, petrol, diesel, milk and pulses, he said that rising costs had placed additional pressure on family budgets while income growth had lagged behind.

The opposition party further criticised changes linked to the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, arguing that the reduction in subsidised LPG cylinder benefits would adversely affect women and economically vulnerable households that rely on the scheme. On the issue of employment, Gowda accused the government of falling short of its promises to generate large-scale job opportunities. He said unemployment among educated youth remained a major concern and warned that the country's demographic advantage could be undermined if sufficient employment opportunities were not created.

"Graduates and young professionals are finding it increasingly difficult to secure stable jobs. If quality employment is not created, India's demographic dividend could become a demographic challenge," he said. Gowda also alleged that micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), widely regarded as the backbone of job creation in the country, continued to face significant difficulties. Linking the sector's troubles to policy decisions such as demonetisation,

he claimed that many small businesses had either scaled down operations or shut altogether. Turning to the agricultural sector, the Congress leader recalled the government's commitment to doubling farmers' incomes and said the target had not been achieved. He maintained that rural distress persisted and cited continuing reports of farmer suicides as evidence of unresolved structural challenges. The report also raised questions about India's foreign policy direction, with Gowda arguing that the country had become increasingly susceptible to external pressures in areas ranging from trade to energy security despite the Prime Minister's extensive diplomatic outreach. In addition, he accused the government of weakening democratic institutions and expressed concerns over changes in the process of appointing Election Commission members. Referring to allegations of voter deletions in some states, he said such developments had raised questions about electoral transparency and fairness.



The Congress also criticised the government's handling of examination paper leak incidents, including controversies involving major entrance examinations. Gowda said repeated leaks and retests had created uncertainty for students and damaged confidence in the education system. Referring to the continuing ethnic violence in Manipur, he alleged that the Centre had not acted with sufficient urgency to restore peace and normalcy. He said many people remained displaced and questioned the effectiveness of the government's response to the crisis. The report was released as the BJP marked 12 years of the Modi government by highlighting achievements in infrastructure, welfare programmes, economic growth and India's enhanced international standing. The Congress, however, maintained that governance should be assessed on measurable outcomes and argued that the government must be held accountable for what it described as persistent shortcomings affecting citizens across the country.



Yogi calls India's progress under Modi's leadership a symbol of Amritkaal

Lucknow: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Tuesday, described the past 12 years under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership as years of "trust, development, and public welfare," saying that the entire world is witnessing India's unprecedented progress under the successful leadership of the service-oriented Prime Minister.

Sharing a post on his social media account, Yogi said that every moment of Prime Minister Modi's life symbolises unwavering dedication to service and national interest.

For him, public service is not a duty, but a continuous lifelong pursuit. His goal has been to bring development, respect, and opportunity to the last person in the country.

The Chief Minister said that with this vision, based on the spirit of "Nation First," the resolve for Antyodaya, and the mantra of public service, the Prime Minister transformed public participation into the great-



est force for development and transformed good governance into a mass movement.

The Chief Minister said that under revolutionary leadership, India has not only accelerated the pace of development but has also given a new dimension to

both its direction and vision. Structural reforms, digital transformation, encouragement of entrepreneurship, and transformative initiatives like GST and PM Gati Shakti have positioned India as one of the world's leading economic powers.

This is not just a story of

economic progress, but also an inspiring example of sensitive, inclusive, and sustainable development.

Referring to initiatives like Mission Life, renewable energy, and clean mobility, CM Adityanath said that these have presented a new global model of balance be-

tween development and the environment.

He said that from the welfare of the poor to the prosperity of farmers, from women's empowerment to youth empowerment, from health security to technological innovation, from defense modernization to cultural renaissance—this mantra of public service has become the basis for positive change in the lives of millions of Indians today.

The Chief Minister described this Amritkaal, which has given new impetus to the resolve of a 'developed India', as a symbol of the continuous pursuit of service, good governance, and dedication.

He said that this practice has given India new confidence, new energy, and a new direction.

He expressed his heartfelt gratitude to Prime Minister Modi for this inspiring and powerful chapter in the immortal era of a self-confident, self-reliant, and developed India.

Eggs, cow dung hurled at arrested TMC leader Sabyasachi Dutta amid public outrage

Kolkata: Scenes of public outrage erupted outside Bidhannagar North Police Station on Tuesday morning as arrested Trinamool Congress leader Sabyasachi Dutta was greeted with protests, with some members of the crowd allegedly throwing eggs and cow dung at him while he was being escorted by police for a medical examination and later produced before a court in connection with an alleged extortion case.

Dutta, a former chairman of the Bidhannagar Municipal Corporation and the sitting councillor of Ward No. 31, was arrested late on Monday night following a complaint lodged by a businessman based in Salt Lake. The complainant accused the senior Trinamool Congress leader of extortion and criminal intimidation, triggering a police investigation that culminated in his arrest.

According to police sources, the businessman alleged that Dutta and his associates had been pressuring him to pay several lakh rupees. He further claimed that he had received repeated

threats when he failed to comply with the alleged demands, prompting him to approach the police seeking protection and legal action.

Acting on the complaint, officers from Bidhannagar North Police Station launched an operation at Dutta's residence in the Raigachi area of Rajarhat on Monday night. Police personnel reached the premises and escorted the Trinamool leader to the police station for questioning regarding the allegations made against him.

Dutta was interrogated for several hours by investigating officers. Following the questioning process and based on the preliminary findings of the investigation, police formally placed him under arrest late on Monday night under relevant sections pertaining to extortion and intimidation.

News of the arrest spread quickly across the area, drawing a sizeable crowd outside the police station by Tuesday morning. Many gathered to witness the development, while others voiced anger over the allega-

tions against the veteran political leader.

As police personnel brought Dutta out of the station premises and attempted to escort him to an official vehicle, the atmosphere turned increasingly tense. Protesters shouted slogans and expressed their resentment, accusing him of misusing his political influence.

The situation escalated when some individuals in the crowd allegedly hurled eggs and cow dung at the arrested councillor. The objects narrowly missed or struck near Dutta as police officers formed a protective cordon around him and rushed him into the waiting vehicle to prevent any further disturbance.

Security personnel acted swiftly to bring the situation under control and avoid any physical confrontation between the crowd and the accused leader. Additional police presence was deployed in the vicinity to maintain law and order as Dutta was taken for the mandatory medical examination before being produced before the court.

Bihar makes industrial investment easier, introduces 30-day approval timeline

Patna: The Bihar government on Tuesday approved a major policy reform aimed at speeding up industrial investments in the state by ensuring time-bound approvals and introducing a deemed clearance mechanism for projects facing delays in official decision-making. The move is being viewed as one of the most significant steps taken by the state to improve its business environment and attract fresh investments.

Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary announced that the State Investment Promotion Board (SIPB) Secretariat will now function as a fully empowered Single Nodal Agency for granting industrial approvals under the Bihar Industrial Investment Promotion Act, 2016.

The reform seeks to streamline the approval process and eliminate bureaucratic hurdles that often delay the establishment of new industries.

The Chief Minister said the Bihar government remains committed to creating an investor-friendly ecosystem that offers simplicity, transparency and efficiency. According to him, industrial-

ists and entrepreneurs should be able to establish businesses without navigating a complex web of departmental procedures and prolonged waiting periods.

Under the new framework, all competent authorities responsible for granting approvals related to industrial projects will be required to take decisions within 30 days of receiving recommendations from the SIPB Secretariat. In cases where a different statutory timeline already exists under law, departments will be bound by those prescribed limits.

Officials believe that fixing a clear timeline for approvals will bring greater predictability to the investment process and boost investor confidence. Delays in obtaining clearances have long been cited as one of the major concerns among businesses considering investment opportunities in emerging states.

In a significant investor-friendly initiative, the government has introduced a deemed clearance provision to prevent projects from getting stuck due to administrative inaction.

If any department or competent au-

thority fails to communicate its decision within the stipulated period, the SIPB Secretariat will automatically issue a deemed clearance.

Such deemed approvals will carry legal validity and will be binding on the department concerned. Importantly, departments that fail to act within the prescribed timeline will not have the authority to subsequently review, modify or reverse those clearances, thereby providing certainty and protection to investors.

The government believes this provision will enhance accountability among departments while reducing opportunities for unnecessary delays. It also sends a strong message that time-bound governance is central to Bihar's new industrial policy approach.

To further accelerate the processing of investment proposals, officers from various technical and regulatory departments will be deputed to the SIPB Secretariat.

These officials will function under the direct administrative control of the Industrial Development Commissioner.

BJP emerging as strong alternative in Telangana: Ramchander Rao

Hyderabad: Telangana BJP State President N Ramchander Rao on Tuesday said the BJP was steadily emerging as a strong political alternative in Telangana and expressed confidence that the party would form the government in the state in the future.

Addressing the Pandit Deendayal Prashikshan Abhiyan programme of BJP karyakartas at Yadagirigutta in Bhongir district, he said the training programmes were playing a key role in strengthening party ideology, discipline and organisational culture among workers. He said the BJP had successfully conducted Prashikshan programmes in 950 mandals across Telangana.

Ramchander Rao said the BJP had grown significantly in Telangana from a



small cadre-based party to one with eight MPs, MLAs, three MLCs and representation from Parliament to Gram Panchayats. He said recent local body election victories in Bhongir district reflected the growing support for the BJP among the people. Targeting both Congress and BRS, he alleged

that the two parties were working together against the BJP as they feared its growing popularity. He accused the Congress government of corruption and failing to implement promises related to fee reimbursement, Rythu Bharosa and paddy procurement. The BJP leader said the Narendra Modi-led Central

Government had contributed over Rs 13 lakh crore to Telangana in the last 12 years through infrastructure, welfare and development initiatives. He praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, stating that India had achieved stability, growth and corruption-free governance under his tenure.

Ramchander Rao also said the BJP supported the development and rejuvenation of the Musi river but opposed displacement of poor people and wasteful expenditure in the name of redevelopment projects.

Calling upon party workers to work with dedication and discipline, he said the people of Telangana were looking towards the BJP with hope for corruption-free and development-oriented governance.

Zameer audio row adds new twist to Karnataka cabinet expansion

Bengaluru: A viral audio controversy involving senior Congress leader Zameer Ahmed Khan has added a fresh twist to Karnataka's Cabinet expansion exercise, triggering intense political speculation over his exclusion from the first list of ministers and sharpening the battle for berths in the ruling party.

The controversy centres on an audio clip purportedly featuring a conversation between Zameer and local Congress functionary Mohammed Siraj during the Davangere South by-election campaign.

The recording allegedly

suggested that voters unwilling to back the Congress candidate could be mobilised in favour of another candidate, prompting allegations of anti-party activity from sections within the Congress.

The clip has since snowballed into a major political issue, with KPCC General Secretary D Basavaraj lodging a complaint before the party high command and seeking a forensic examination of the recording. He has also demanded action against those allegedly involved, arguing that party interests were compromised during the by-election.

Though the authenticity

of the audio remains unverified, its political fallout has been immediate. Party leaders and workers have openly linked the controversy to Zameer's omission from the first phase of Cabinet formation, turning the issue into a focal point of discussions surrounding the impending expansion.

Zameer has strongly denied the allegations, describing the audio as fabricated and politically motivated. He has maintained that he is prepared to face any inquiry and has challenged critics to prove the claims against him.

The row has also triggered visible unrest among

Zameer's supporters. In Davangere, members of the minority community staged protests demanding his inclusion in the Cabinet and warned of a larger agitation if he continued to be overlooked.

Some leaders even threatened to organise demonstrations in Bengaluru, arguing that Zameer enjoys influence well beyond his constituency and deserves a prominent role in the government.

At the same time, the controversy has intensified competition among Congress legislators seeking representation in the next round

of appointments. Supporters of SS Mallikarjun, Shivaanga Basavaraj and DG Shantanagoud have stepped up lobbying efforts, with each camp pressing its claim for a ministerial berth from Davangere district.

Political observers say the developments underscore the growing factional pressures confronting the Congress leadership as it prepares to fill the remaining Cabinet vacancies. With regional aspirations, caste equations and community representation all in play, the party faces a delicate balancing act in the next phase of expansion.

Mahila Congress holds protest rally against fuel price hike in Hyderabad

Hyderabad: The Telangana Pradesh Mahila Congress on Tuesday staged a protest rally in Hyderabad against the recent increase in the prices of cooking gas, petrol and diesel, accusing the BJP-led Central Government of placing an unbearable financial burden on ordinary citizens through repeated fuel price hikes. The rally was organised under the leadership of State Mahila Congress President Errabelli Swarna and began from Gandhi Bhavan, the headquarters of the Telangana Congress, before proceeding towards Gun Park in the heart of the city. A large number of Mahila Congress leaders and workers participated in the demonstration, raising

slogans against the Centre's economic policies. Holding placards and banners, the protesters voiced their opposition to the rising prices of essential fuels, arguing that the increases were directly affecting the lives of women and families already struggling with the rising cost of living. The participants demanded immediate intervention by the Central Government to provide relief to consumers. Addressing the gathering, Errabelli Swarna alleged that the BJP-led government at the Centre had consistently adopted policies that adversely impacted common people, particularly those belonging to middle-class and economically weaker sections of society.

She claimed that repeated increases in fuel prices had become a recurring burden for households across the country, making it increasingly difficult for families to manage their monthly expenses. According to her, women were among the worst affected as they were often responsible for balancing household budgets. Swarna alleged that petrol and diesel prices had been increased four times immediately after the conclusion of Assembly elections in five states. She described the timing of the hikes as anti-people and questioned the justification behind imposing additional financial strain on citizens after the electoral process had ended.

Congress undermined Deve Gowda through out his career: Vijayendra

Bengaluru: Karnataka BJP President Vijayendra Yediurappa on Tuesday launched a sharp attack on the Congress, accusing it of shedding "crocodile tears" over former Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda despite allegedly working against him throughout his political career.

Targeting Karnataka Congress in-charge Randeep Singh Surjewala and KPCC President B.K. Hariprasad, Vijayendra said Congress leaders need not express concern for Deve Gowda, claiming the party had played a key role in his removal from the Prime Minister's post and had repeatedly sought to weaken and divide his party.

"Congress leaders seem to have forgotten that the party bears the ignominy of bringing down Deve Gowda from the country's highest

office despite his stature as a proud Kannadiga and Prime Minister," he said in a statement.

Vijayendra alleged that the Congress had "hounded" Deve Gowda throughout his political journey and at-

tempted to split his party, but was now projecting artificial concern for the veteran leader. "Such manufactured sympathy is nothing short of political hypocrisy," he said.



tempted to split his party, but was now projecting artificial concern for the veteran leader. "Such manufactured sympathy is nothing short of political hypocrisy," he said. Defending the BJP's ties



that Prime Minister Narendra Modi was best placed to safeguard India's unity and accelerate its development. The BJP leader alleged that Congress leaders, unable to reconcile themselves

to the BJP-JD(S) alliance, were attempting to use Deve Gowda's name for political purposes. "This represents the height of political opportunism and is deeply unbecoming," he said.

Vijayendra further pointed out that Modi had publicly lauded Deve Gowda's contributions in Parliament and acknowledged the value of his guidance in national affairs. He said the relationship between the BJP and the former Prime Minister was founded on mutual respect and recognition of his service to the nation.

Asserting that the people of Karnataka were fully aware of these realities, Vijayendra said they would not be misled by what he termed the Congress party's attempts to create a false narrative around Deve Gowda and his association with the NDA.

Major Maoist arms dump unearthed in Malkangiri; Huge cache of weapons, explosives seized

Bhubaneswar: In a significant success for security forces engaged in anti-Maoist operations, a major cache of arms, explosives and logistical supplies allegedly belonging to Maoist cadres was unearthed on Tuesday from the dense forested region along the Odisha-Chhattisgarh border. Officials described the recovery as a serious setback to insurgent activities in one of the country's long-affected Left Wing Extremism corridors.

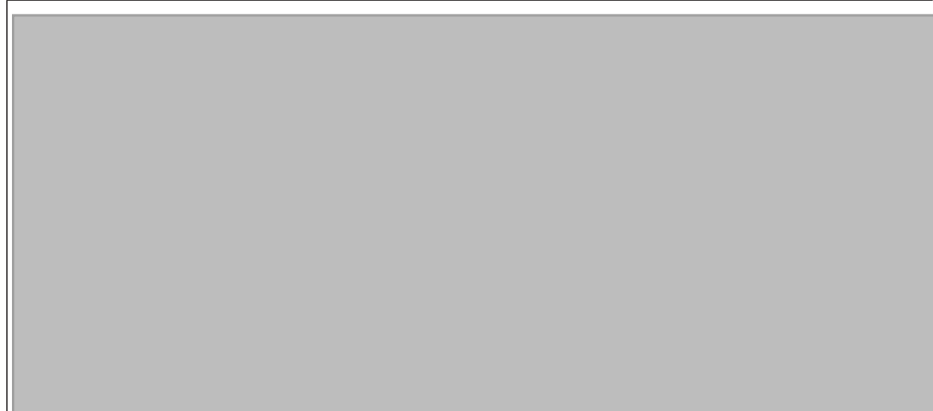
The operation was carried out in the Kirmitti and Katuapadar forest areas under the jurisdiction of Mathili police station in Odisha's Malkangiri district. The region, characterised by difficult terrain and thick forest cover, has historically been considered vulnerable to

Maoist movement because of its proximity to the border with Chhattisgarh's Bastar district. The joint operation involved personnel from the District Voluntary Force (DVF) and the Border Security Force (BSF), who acted on specific intelligence inputs developed during the interrogation of surrendered Maoist cadres. Investigators reportedly gathered crucial infor-

mation regarding the existence of a concealed arms dump used by insurgents operating in the area.

Based on these disclosures, the security teams launched an intensive search and combing operation in the forest belt bordering the Durva police station limits of Bastar district in Chhattisgarh. The operation began during the early hours and involved

meticulous searches through difficult and heavily wooded terrain. At around 5.30 am, the forces located and recovered the hidden cache. The discovery is being viewed as one of the major recoveries made in recent months in the Odisha-Chhattisgarh border region, reflecting both improved intelligence gathering and enhanced coordination among security agencies.



Briefs :

Fire breaks out at building in south Delhi's GK-1; no casualty reported

New Delhi: A fire broke out on the fourth floor of a multi-storey residential building in south Delhi's Greater Kailash-1 area on Tuesday, prompting authorities to rush nine fire tenders, an official said. The Delhi Fire Services (DFS) received a call at 11.36 am regarding a fire in an air-conditioning unit at a house in GK-1 Enclave."Domestic articles caught fire inside a house on the fourth floor of the building. The fire was doused at 1.30 pm," the DFS officer said. No casualties or injuries were reported in the incident. Satendra Singh, president of the GK-1 Residents' Welfare Association, said local residents immediately alerted emergency services after noticing the fire. We got information that an AC had caught fire and immediately informed the fire brigade, ambulance and police. All emergency services reached on time. Everyone was evacuated safely and no casualties were reported," he said. Singh added that the air-conditioner had reportedly undergone servicing two days before the incident. Amarjeet Kaur, said people inside the house reacted quickly after noticing sparks. "An AC sparked and the occupants immediately came into action. They went downstairs to switch off the main power supply of the building after turning off the AC. The room was completely filled with smoke," she said. The exact cause of the fire was yet to be ascertained.

Delhi Police arrest absconding Bawaria gang member wanted in 5 cases

New Delhi: The Delhi Police have arrested a proclaimed offender facing multiple cases with alleged links to the Bawaria gang, who was absconding for years, officials said on Tuesday. Jaiparkash alias Bittu (50), a native of Sharni district in Uttar Pradesh, was wanted in five cases, including for attempt to murder, robbery, snatching and under the Arms Act registered at different police stations in Delhi, police said. According to police, a tip-off about the movement of an active member of the Bawaria gang was received on June 5. Using technical surveillance, including the Inter-operable Criminal Justice System (ICJS), the e-Prisons portal and local intel, a team from the Burari police station in north Delhi tracked and arrested Jaiparkash in the Sant Nagar market area the same day, police said. During verification, the accused was found to be a proclaimed offender wanted in five criminal cases, including a 2013 snatching case, an attempt to murder case, a robbery and cheating case, and cases registered at Hauz Khas and Mehrauli police stations. Various Delhi courts also issued non-bailable warrants against Jaiparkash, police said.

Delhi court denies interim bail to Al-Falah chairman in ED case

New Delhi: A Delhi court on Tuesday rejected the interim bail plea of Al-Falah University chairman Jawad Ahmad Siddiqui, accused in a Rs 493-crore money laundering case being investigated by the Enforcement Directorate (ED), saying that he failed to show that his wife required his exclusive care during cancer treatment. Additional Sessions Judge Sheetal Chaudhary Pradhan was hearing the plea filed by Siddiqui seeking six weeks' interim bail to look after his wife, who is suffering from stage-4 metastatic ovarian cancer.

Delhi records season's hottest day at 43.5°C, relief likely from Friday

New Delhi: Delhi sweltered under intense heat on Tuesday as temperatures neared 45°C, forcing residents to shield themselves with dupattas, gamchas and umbrellas while venturing outdoors.

Safdarjung, the city's base weather station, recorded a maximum temperature of 43.5°C, the highest of the season so far. The Ridge station recorded 44.7°C, which was 3.6 degrees above normal.

According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), hot and humid conditions are likely to persist over the next two days.

The maximum temperature is expected to rise by around 1°C over the next 24 hours and hover between 43°C and 45°C on Wednesday, IMD officials said.

Relief, however, may be on the horizon. The IMD has forecast very light to light rain on Thursday and Friday,



accompanied by thunderstorms, lightning and strong surface winds under the influence of a fresh western disturbance.

Squally winds with speeds of 50-60 kmph, gusting up to 70 kmph, are expected on Thursday evening and night. Maximum temperatures are likely to drop

by 7-8°C from Friday, settling between 34°C and 36°C. Daytime temperatures are expected to remain below 40°C until at least Monday. The minimum temperature on Tuesday settled at 29.2°C, 1.6 degrees above normal. It is likely to hover between 29°C and 31°C on Wednesday and Thursday

before falling to 24°C-26°C on Friday.

Even as Delhi remained dry and sweltered under intense heat on Tuesday, strong surface winds signalled changing weather conditions. IMD officials said Palam recorded maximum wind gusts of up to 111 kmph around 7 pm.

Delhi Congress targets AAP and BJP over alleged Rs 650 crore medical procurement scam

New Delhi: Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee president Devender Yadav on Tuesday alleged that the recently reported Rs 650 crore medical procurement scam, in which Delhi's Anti-Corruption Branch (ACB) has registered an FIR over alleged irregularities in the purchase of medicines and medical equipment, highlights systemic issues in the Capital's public healthcare administration.

Addressing a press conference, Yadav claimed that corruption in the health sector had persisted under both the previous Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government and the current BJP government. He alleged that procurement-related irregularities and financial mismanagement had adversely affected healthcare services in Delhi. Referring to the Central Procurement Agency (CPA), which was established to centralise the purchase of medicines and equipment for government hospitals and Mohalla Clin-



ics, Yadav alleged that officials misused the system by inflating procurement orders, manipulating supplier selection processes, and approving purchases at rates higher than prevailing market prices. According to Yadav, following the registration of the FIR, notices have reportedly been issued to several doctors and officials associated with procurement, stores, and administrative departments across Delhi government hospitals and the CPA. The Congress leader also linked the alleged scam to previous controver-

sies in the healthcare sector, including cases related to spurious medicines and the alleged diversion of government-supplied medicines into private markets. Yadav further criticised the implementation of health insurance schemes, including the Ayushman Vay Vandana scheme for senior citizens, claiming that shortages of medicines and equipment in government hospitals and reluctance among some private hospitals to accept insurance liabilities could limit the effectiveness of such initiatives.

ED raids AAP leader Sanjeev Arora premises in Noida, Greater Noida

New Delhi: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) is conducting search operations in Noida and Greater Noida on Tuesday in connection with a money laundering investigation linked to Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader and Rajya Sabha MP Sanjeev Arora.

The searches are being carried out under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) at premises associated with individuals and entities under the agency's scanner.

According to sources, ED officials are examining documents, digital devices, and financial records as part of the ongoing probe. The agency is seeking evidence related to alleged financial irregularities and suspected money laundering transactions.

Reacting to the ED action, AAP national convenor Arvind Kejriwal accused the central agency of targeting traders in Punjab. In a post on social media platform X, Kejriwal alleged that the ED was con-

ducting raids against Hindu businessmen and small traders in the state.

"There is no need to be afraid. The entire Punjab and the Punjab government stand with you. Together, we will face the ED," he said, appealing to the trading community to remain calm.

The search operations are still underway, and officials are scrutinising materials recovered during the raids. Further details are expected as the investigation progresses.

Delhi Congress Trains Booth-Level Agents, Raises Concerns Over Voter Verification Process

New Delhi: Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee president Devender Yadav on Tuesday addressed training camps for Booth Level Agents (BLA-2) in Adarsh Nagar and Tilak Nagar as the party intensified preparations for the ongoing voter verification exercise and future electoral contests in the national capital.

The training programmes formed part of the Congress party's broader strategy to strengthen its grassroots network and ensure effective participation in the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls

being carried out ahead of upcoming elections.

According to a statement issued by the Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee, the party has appointed BLA-2 workers at more than 13,000 polling booths spread across all 70 Assembly constituencies in Delhi.

The large-scale deployment is aimed at establishing an active booth-level presence and improving coordination between party workers and voters during the electoral roll verification process.

The training sessions

were organised under the supervision of the party's Booth Management Committee headed by Rajesh Garg, who briefed workers on their responsibilities and the procedures involved in voter verification. Addressing party functionaries and volunteers, Devender Yadav said the Congress was committed to strengthening its organisational structure from the booth level upward, describing booth workers as the backbone of any successful electoral campaign. He stressed the importance of ensuring that every eligible

voter is included in the electoral rolls and that no citizen is deprived of the right to vote due to procedural lapses during the revision exercise. Yadav alleged that concerns had emerged regarding the possible deletion of names of genuine voters from the electoral lists and said Congress workers would closely monitor developments at the ground level. He maintained that party representatives would remain vigilant throughout the SIR process and would report any irregularities noticed during voter verification activities.

Delhi may recruit ex-Agniveers to fill Fire Dept vacancies

New Delhi: In a significant move aimed at strengthening Delhi's emergency response system, Lieutenant Governor Taranjit Singh Sandhu on Monday suggested utilising ex-Agniveers to fill operational vacancies in the Delhi Fire Services, as the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) reviewed fire safety enforcement, illegal constructions, heatwave management and monsoon preparedness across the Capital.

The proposal came during a DDMA meeting chaired by the L-G and attended by Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, Home Minister Ashish Sood and PWD Minister Parvesh Verma. The meeting undertook a comprehensive review of ongoing operations against illegal and vulnerable buildings, misuse of licences related to fire safety and measures required to improve disaster preparedness in Delhi.

The L-G said while Delhi faces multiple disaster-related challenges, these should be treated as opportunities to improve preparedness and resilience. Reviewing the ongoing enforcement drive against illegal con-

structions and licence violations, he stressed that the authorities must act firmly without troubling ordinary citizens.

"While safety rules must be followed, enforcement should never become an excuse for the harassment of



ordinary residents," he said.

At the same time, he directed agencies to stop "ongoing blatant and brazen non-compliant illegal construction in the city and unauthorised plotting of land being carried out." The meeting also reviewed plans to increase the number of fire stations across Delhi to improve response times and emergency coverage.

Expressing concern over the implementation of fire safety enforcement measures, the L-G was informed

that the Delhi Fire Services had not issued even a single notice till now. He expressed strong displeasure and directed the Principal Director of the Delhi Fire Services to immediately take necessary action and submit reports to the offices of the L-G, Chief

Minister and the Home Minister. To strengthen accountability, special teams comprising District Magistrates, Deputy Commissioners of Police, MCD officials and Delhi Fire Services officers have been instructed to submit regular action taken reports (ATRs). The L-G warned that any negligence, lack of diligence or failure to perform duties would directly affect officers' annual confidential report (ACR) grading.

In another key decision,

the DDMA accepted Home Minister Ashish Sood's suggestion to enforce Section 32 of the Delhi Fire Services Act, 2007, extending fire prevention and fire safety measures to all multi-storey buildings in Delhi, irrespective of whether they require a fire safety certificate.

To improve transparency and public participation, the L-G suggested that the MCD allows citizens to upload photographs of illegal constructions through its 311 App and public portal.

Reviewing monsoon preparedness, the L-G called for strict implementation of desilting works and directed agencies to work towards "absolute zero tolerance for waterlogging and flooding during the upcoming rainy season." He stressed that "administrative learning must never stop," urging officials to remain open to practical solutions and suggestions from all available sources. The DDMA meeting also reviewed the implementation of Delhi's Heat Wave Action Plan and preparedness measures for the forthcoming monsoon season, with officials directed to ensure seamless coordination among all departments.

Delhi Govt, CSIR-CRRI & SPA Sign MoA to Upgrade Roads Using Tech-driven System

New Delhi: Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Monday unveiled an ambitious initiative aimed at transforming the Capital's road infrastructure by making it safer, more durable, environmentally sustainable and better prepared to meet future urban requirements.

As part of the initiative, the Delhi government will implement a Standard Framework for Paving and Greening of Urban Roads, which seeks to promote scientific road redesign, beautification and environmentally conscious development across the city.

In a significant step towards achieving these objectives, a tripartite Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) was signed between the Delhi government's Public Works Department (PWD), the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research-Central Road Research Institute and the School of Planning and Architecture.

The agreement marks a shift in Delhi's approach towards road infrastructure, moving beyond conventional construction practices to adopt a technology-driven and scientifically managed system for planning, maintenance and urban design.

According to Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, the gov-

ernment's vision extends beyond merely constructing new roads. Instead, it seeks to build an integrated urban road ecosystem that prioritises sustainability, public safety and long-term efficiency.

She said that rapidly increasing traffic volumes, worsening air pollution and recurring water-logging issues require innovative solutions and modern management techniques rather than traditional maintenance practices. Under the new framework, road maintenance and development activities will increasingly rely on scientific assessments and data-driven decision-making processes designed to improve service delivery and optimise infrastructure performance. One of the most significant features of the initiative is the development of Delhi's first comprehensive Road Asset Management System (RAMS), which will create a centralised digital platform for monitoring and maintaining road infrastructure. The proposed RAMS will scientifically evaluate the condition of roads by analysing parameters such as traffic load, structural strength, maintenance requirements and the expected service life of individual road stretches.

The system will help authorities identify potential deterioration and structural deficiencies before they become major problems, enabling timely repairs and preventive maintenance instead of reactive interventions. A detailed digital database of road assets will also be created under the system, facilitating periodic condition assessments and helping officials prioritise maintenance activities based on urgency and public need.

Officials believe that such an evidence-based approach will ensure more effective utilisation of public resources, minimise wastage and significantly enhance the durability and quality of Delhi's road infrastructure. The initiative also places strong emphasis on environmental sustainability. Green belts will be developed along roadsides, sustainable landscaping practices will be adopted, and efforts will be made to improve the aesthetic appeal of public spaces throughout the Capital.

Additionally, rainwater harvesting mechanisms and strengthened storm-water drainage systems will be integrated into road projects to address persistent water-logging challenges and improve urban resilience during the monsoon season.

Decide plea to stay Jaipur Polo Ground eviction order: Delhi High Court asks district court

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court on Monday asked a district court to decide on a plea by the Indian Polo Association seeking a stay on a government notice to evict them from the 15.20-acre Jaipur Polo Ground in the Race Course area. A vacation Bench of Justice Neena Bansal Krishna directed the parties to appear before the District and Sessions Judge for a hearing on June 10.

Even as the counsel for the Indian Polo Association urged the Bench to pass an order restraining the authorities from evicting them

during the pendency of the stay application, Central Government counsel Ashish Dixit submitted that the execution of the notice was not likely till Friday. Asked for the reason for eviction, the Central Government counsel informed the court that the land in possession of the Polo Ground as well as other nearby establishments, including the Delhi Gymkhana Club, was being taken over for public purposes.

The court expressed its concern about the fate of the heritage structures in such properties, and lamented the



construction of high-rises in the capital amid rising pollution. Delhi will suffocate. Whatever little breather we

have in the NDMC area that is going to go. We will all suffocate and die," Justice Krishna orally said. The

court also observed that the government did not feel the need to take over the land in 200 years, and asked if making high-rises was in public interest. "What are you going to make Delhi into? Delhi people go to 'chhotamota' mountain and stay there. It is a small lung that we have and you want to take away that also. Ensure that people stop coming to Delhi. We have only high-rises all over. All two-storey buildings are gone. Every colony has been demolished. If this is how you want Delhi to live, then God help us," the court orally re-

marked during the hearing. "You have the might. But the thing is, Delhi will choke," it added. The Central

Government lawyer said the Capital has limited space, and the government also requires land to carry out its functions.

Editorial

12 Years of the Modi Government

The spectacle of press conferences and grand documentaries orchestrated by the Bharatiya Janata Party at the luxurious Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi under the fanfare of slogans proclaiming "12 years of trust, development, and public welfare" epitomizes the sheer brazenness of power. On June 10, Prime Minister Narendra Modi stands on the verge of surpassing the record held by the country's first Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, for the longest tenure in office. To mark this occasion, a phalanx of Union Ministers including Nitin Nambh, Rajnath Singh, Amit Shah, J.P. Nadda, Ashwini Vaishnaw, Piyush Goyal, and Dharmendra Pradhan has painted a rosy picture of "New India" and "Viksit Bharat 2047"; this is merely a pathetic attempt to mask the grim reality of a severe economic slowdown and the panic stemming from public outrage. The ideological bankruptcy of this authoritarian mindset was laid bare when BJP National President Nitin Nambh intoxicated by the arrogance of power ridiculed previous governments with the ludicrous claim that "a population of 54 crore was a burden on the country, whereas today, under Modi's rule, the 140-crore populace has become the nation's asset." These rulers, who equate symbolic gestures like Yoga, the Ganga Aarti, and the "Namaste" greeting with the language of global diplomacy, maintain a convenient silence regarding the terrifying quagmire of unemployment and economic distress gripping the country's heartland. The "Charge Sheet" and "Accountability Report" regarding these 12 years, released by the Congress party, expose the true economic and social reality behind this publicity-obsessed government, highlighting the systematic harassment faced by India as a nation and its educated youth. The criticism raised by Rajeev Gowda and Amitabh Dubey that "propaganda has replaced performance" reflects the reality faced by every family in the country reeling under inflation. It is deeply humiliating for the nation that, while the Prime Minister himself posts on social media claiming self-reliance across all fronts under the slogan "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas" (Together with all, Development for all), the Indian Rupee has plummeted by a staggering 6% against the US dollar in international markets, hitting a historic low. Due to this dismal state of the Rupee in the global market and flawed economic policies, foreign investors have withdrawn a massive ₹2.25 lakh crore in capital from the Indian market and fled abroad. Making hollow boasts about becoming the "world's third-largest economy" while the economy's grip is actually loosening is a cruel joke played on the people of the country. Prices of essential commodities like petrol, diesel, cooking gas, milk, and pulses have skyrocketed, yet the income of the common man continues to decline. The very 'Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana' that was trumpeted to garner votes has seen its gas cylinder subsidies slashed, forcing poor women in rural areas to return to cooking on traditional wood-burning stoves.

This government, which came to power by dangling the carrot of creating two crore jobs annually, has today left educated graduates and young professionals out on the streets. Jobs are vanishing rapidly due to the slowdown in the Artificial Intelligence (AI) and IT sectors, yet the government lacks any concrete national policy to address this. Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) the backbone of job creation in the country have been completely devastated, caught in the crushing grip of demonetization and a flawed GST regime. Many small factories have shut down, while others have scaled back their operations. Regarding the agricultural sector, the government's promise to "double farmers' income" has proven to be its biggest false assurance. Today, the rural economy across India has collapsed due to drought, inflation, and the failure to secure fair prices for agricultural produce; meanwhile, the tragic cycle of suicides among debt-ridden farmers continues unabated.

On the foreign policy front, this government has compromised the nation's sovereignty by bowing to American pressure. Succumbing to this pressure, India stopped purchasing discounted crude oil from Russia, leading to a surge in domestic fuel prices. A glaring example of the indignity suffered by India's foreign policy is how US Secretary of State Marco Rubio unilaterally announced a visit to India by the Venezuelan President a move the Indian Ministry of External Affairs was completely unaware of. Furthermore, the US announced that India would purchase goods worth a staggering \$500 billion (₹41.5 lakh crore) over the next five years, yet not a single Indian minister dared to utter a word of objection. This amounts to an outright surrender of national self-respect. The autonomy of the electoral machinery has been destroyed by altering the appointment process for Election Commissioners to suit the government's own convenience. Complaints regarding the illegal deletion of lakhs of opposition-leaning voters from electoral rolls across various states have surfaced, casting a serious shadow over the transparency of the electoral process. The spate of question paper leaks in competitive examinations shows no signs of abating. Papers for the NEET and NET exams were openly sold by mafias; repeated re-examinations have demoralized students, and the country's education system has been reduced to shambles. When students take to the streets to demand justice, they are met with lathi-charges. Against this backdrop, it is truly pathetic to see self-congratulation based on formal congratulatory letters sent by foreign leaders like Sri Lanka's Anura Kumara Dissanayake, Papua New Guinea's James Marape, or Trinidad and Tobago's Kamla Persad-Bissessar. Recent events have once again recorded how street-level revolutions and public outrage can topple established regimes across the world. It is precisely when the country's mainstream 'sycophantic media' ignores the people's genuine issues remaining preoccupied with glorifying those in power that satirical and rebellious grassroots movements like the 'Cockroach Janata Party' (CJP) emerge on social media. The youth protests at Jantar Mantar demonstrate that this anger is no longer confined merely to digital memes. The nation witnessed during the withdrawal of the controversial farm laws that when the educated youth, farmers, and workers unite with the aim of reforming the political establishment, even a '56-inch chest' is forced to set aside its arrogance and retreat. The ultimate, bitter reality of this twelve-year tenure is that until the government steps out of the realm of publicity stunts and event management to provide jobs for the youth, relief from inflation, and dignity to farmers, its proclamations of historic records will remain nothing more than words on paper.

National Workshop on R&D in Water Charts Future Roadmap for Research-Led Water Security

The National Workshop on R&D in Water brought together over 500 stakeholders from government, academia, research institutions, industry, MSMEs and startups to deliberate on strengthening India's water research and innovation ecosystem for achieving water security and climate resilience. The workshop was attended by Shri C.R. Patil, Union Minister of Jal Shakti; Dr. Jitendra Singh, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science & Technology; Shri Raj Bhusan Choudhary, Minister of State, Ministry of Jal Shakti; Dr. V. Narayanan, Secretary, Department of Space and Chairman, ISRO, CEO ANRF; Senior Secretaries, scientists, experts and industries from across the country.

Addressing the gathering, Shri C.R. Patil, Union Minister of Jal Shakti, emphasized that "Jal is the hallmark of our civilization" and development. He stressed that addressing emerging water challenges requires a three-pronged approach of research, technological innovation and Jan Bhagidari. Highlighting the Ministry's efforts in promoting research and innovation, he noted that over 315 R&D projects have been undertaken in the water sector, including 113 projects directly supported by the Ministry.

Minister also highlighted the success of the Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari (JSJB) campaign, under which more than 1.5 crore water conservation structures have been reported across the country. He announced the launch of Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari: Catch the Rain (JSJB:CTR) Portal, a nationwide initiative aimed at further strengthening community-led water conservation through participation of citizens, industries, NGOs and government agencies. He also underscored the role of geospatial technologies and partnerships in supporting scientific water management and source sustainability.

Dr. Jitendra Singh underscored the importance of a Whole-of-Government and Whole-of-Nation approach involving academia, industry, MSMEs and startups for realizing the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047. He highlighted the launch of MAHA on Water (Mission for Advancement in High-Impact Areas for Water) and the growing role of science and technology in water management, he welcomed the Ministry of Jal Shakti-ISRO col-



laboration and underscored the potential of advanced technologies, including space-based applications, in addressing water challenges. He also appreciated the Ministry of Jal Shakti's achievements over the past twelve years and highlighted the launch of MAHA on Water as a major step towards fostering innovation in water resources management, climate resilience and drinking water security. He also announced a joint research call by ANRF and the Ministry of Jal Shakti to accelerate research-driven and scalable solutions for the water sector. Shri Raj Bhusan Choudhary emphasized that water is a foundational resource that underpins agriculture, livelihoods, public health, economic growth and environmental sustainability. Highlighting the need to address emerging water challenges through a holistic approach, he stressed the importance of scientific research, technology-driven interventions and community participation in strengthening sustainable water management across the country. He underscored that innovation, evidence-based policymaking and people's participation will be key to ensuring long-term water security and realizing the vision of a water-secure and developed India.

Shri V. L. Kantha Rao, Secretary, Department of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation, emphasized that wa-

ter is a strategic resource requiring sustained investments in research and innovation. He highlighted the need for cutting-edge solutions in drinking water security, groundwater management, flood forecasting, river health and climate resilience, and underscored the importance of collaboration among the Department of Space, DST, ANRF, CSIR and other institutions to develop technology-driven solutions for sustainable water management.

Dr. V. Narayanan, Secretary, Department of Space and Chairman, ISRO, highlighted the transformative role of space technology, remote sensing and geospatial applications in water resources management. He welcomed the Ministry of Jal Shakti-ISRO partnership and emphasized the integration of satellite-based observations with field-level data for strengthening evidence-based water governance.

Shri Ashok Meena, Secretary, Department of Drinking Water & Sanitation, emphasized the need to translate research and technological advancements into practical, field-level solutions for strengthening climate resilience, drinking water security and source sustainability under the Jal Jeevan Mission. States and Union Territories encouraged to establish dedicated R&D committees to address local challenges related to water quality and resource sustainability. Highlighting the importance of data-

driven water governance, he noted that the Ministry's collaboration with ISRO and BISAG-N is enabling village-level mapping and scientific planning, thereby strengthening sustainable water resource management from the village to the national level.

Dr. Shivkumar Kalyanaraman, CEO, ANRF, highlighted the significance of MAHA on Water (Mission for Advancement in High-Impact Areas for Water) as a transformative initiative to strengthen India's water research and innovation ecosystem. He emphasized that the mission will foster high-impact research in priority areas such as water resources management, drinking water security, climate resilience and emerging technologies, while promoting collaboration among academia, research institutions, industry, startups and government agencies. He emphasized that MAHA on Water has the potential to accelerate the development and deployment of innovative, scalable solutions for achieving a water-secure and sustainable future.

The workshop witnessed the launch of several strategic initiatives aimed at accelerating innovation, research translation and technology adoption in the water sector. MAHA on Water (Mission for Advancement in High-Impact Areas) was launched as a collaborative platform to foster convergence

among government agencies, academic institutions, research organisations, industry and startups for addressing emerging water challenges through mission-driven research and innovation.

An Open Call for Startups and MSMEs under the Bharat Water Innovation Network (Bharat-WIN) was also launched to support product and prototype development in the water sector. The initiative aims to identify, nurture and scale innovative solutions for water conservation, water-use efficiency, source sustainability, water quality management and climate-resilient water systems. It seeks to strengthen innovation-to-impact pathways by facilitating collaboration among innovators, research institutions, industry partners, government programmes and end users, thereby accelerating the adoption and scaling of promising technologies.

The workshop also marked the launch of Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari: Catch the Rain (JSJB:CTR) Portal, a nationwide participatory campaign to further strengthen community-led water conservation efforts. Building on the success of the Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari initiative, the platform will facilitate citizen engagement, knowledge sharing, reporting of water conservation works and dissemination of best practices across the country.

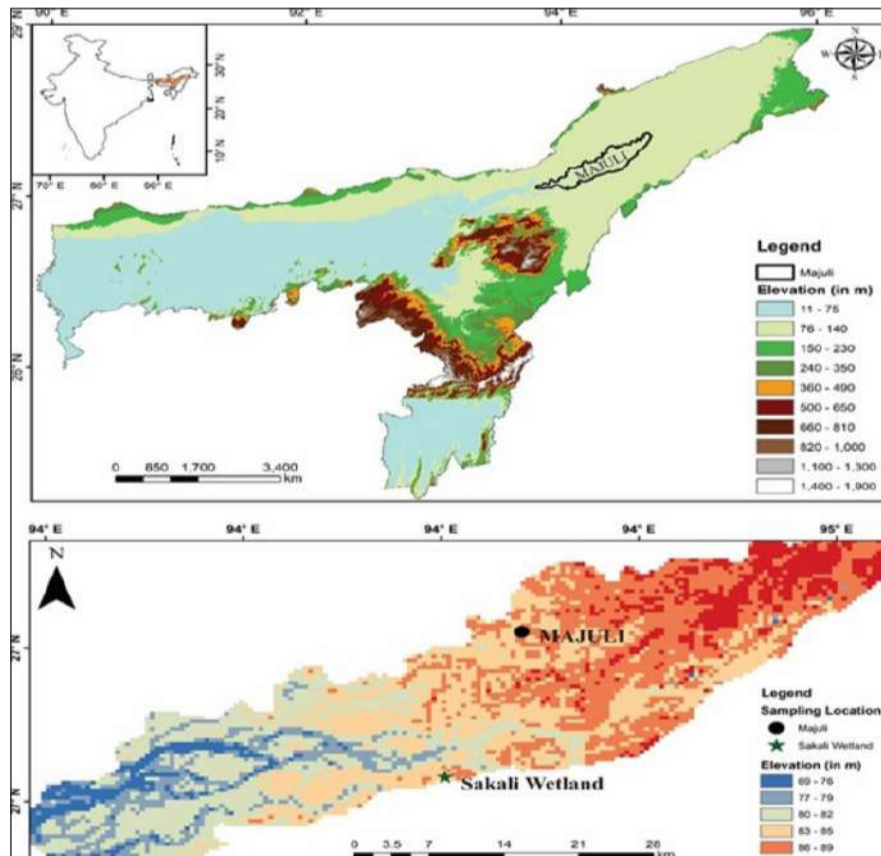
A significant milestone was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Jal Shakti and ISRO to leverage space technology, remote sensing, satellite-based observations and geospatial intelligence for water resources planning, monitoring and decision-making. The partnership is expected to enhance scientific water governance and strengthen data-driven approaches for sustainable water management.

The technical sessions brought together experts from central ministries, State governments, academic institutions, research organisations, industry, startups, development partners and civil society organisations to deliberate on emerging water challenges and future research priorities.

The deliberations covered diverse hydro-climatic and geographical contexts across the country, including Himalayan ecosystems, river basins, groundwater-dependent regions, coastal areas, urban centres and drought-prone landscapes.

4,000 yrs of climate history from world's largest inhabited river island offer adaption insights

A new study has reconstructed nearly 4,000 years of climate and vegetation history of Majuli Island, Assam—the world's largest inhabited river island, culturally significant as the settlement of several tribes and as a major centre of Neo-Vaishnavite culture, a reformist Vaishnavism movement. The study offers a long-term perspective on climate variability, vegetation change, and flood dynamics on Majuli Island and could shape adaptation strategies for flood-affected communities. Majuli Island, perched between the Brahmaputra River to the south and east, the Subansiri River to the west, and a branch of the Brahmaputra to the north, has been severely affected by recurrent flooding and intense riverbank erosion. Despite its global importance in acquiring UNESCO tentative status for cultural significance, the region lacked any comprehensive long-term palaeoecological reconstruction based on palynological evidence resting on integrated modern and fossil pollen records. Pollen serves, as one of the most reliable indicators of past environmental conditions as they are durable and can remain preserved in sediments for thousands to millions of years. Scientists from the Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeosciences (BSIP), Lucknow, an autonomous institute of the Department of Science and Technology (DST) have carried out a pioneering palaeoecological study on the Majuli Island, which has undergone severe land loss and is highly vulnerable to deforestation, urbanization, and recurrent flooding. They collected 150 cm deep sediment core from Sakali Wetland on Majuli Island and used it to combine analysis



of pollen (to reconstruct past vegetation) with grain-size studies (to understand river dynamics and flood intensity), creating the first-ever comprehensive environmental record for the island. The study reconstructs Mid-Late Holocene environmental changes, filling a critical gap in understanding regional climate, vegetation, and wetland dynamics in the Upper Brahmaputra Valley. Supported by modern pollen analogues and pollen based quantitative palaeoclimatic reconstruction method called Coexistence Approach, the research estimates past Mean Annual Temperature (MAT) and Mean Annual Precipitation (MAP) during 4040 to 500 cal. yrs. BP. The results indicate an early warm and humid phase (4040–2260 cal.

yrs. BP) with dense forest cover, suggesting resilience during the 4.2 ka dry climatic event. This was followed by phases of fluctuating monsoon intensity and flood regimes, including a relatively moist period during 1100–500 cal. yrs. BP, corresponding to the Medieval Climatic Anomaly. The last around 500 years show declining temperature and precipitation, consistent with the Little Ice Age, along with increased anthropogenic influence and expansion of scattered vegetation. The study led by Ms. Arya Pandey (DST-INSPIRE SRF) and Dr. Swati Tripathi, Scientist-E (Supervisor) (BSIP), Lucknow, in collaboration with Dr. Sadhan Kumar Basumatary (BSIP), Dr. Salman Khan (Germany) Dr. Hema Singh (BHU), Dr.

Biswajeet Thakur (BSIP), and Dr. Anupam Sharma (BSIP) evaluates the role of fluvial processes of the Brahmaputra and the associated river systems around Majuli in shaping the depositional environment and influencing ecological dynamics on the island. Grain-size data indicate a shift from low-to-high energy fluvial conditions, reflecting increasing hydrodynamic instability over time and advancing understanding of climate-vegetation-fluvial interactions in river island ecosystems. The integration of pollen and grain-size analyses improves understanding of past flood intensity, sediment transport, and erosion processes, which is crucial for river management and disaster mitigation in the Brahmaputra basin.

Haryana to commence smart metering works from 31st August

Union Minister for Power and Housing & Urban Affairs Manohar Lal on Tuesday chaired a comprehensive review meeting on Haryana's power sector in Chandigarh, stressing the need for greater efficiency, financial discipline and accelerated reforms to strengthen the state's electricity distribution system. The meeting was attended by Haryana Power Minister Anil Vij, senior officials from the Haryana government, representatives of the Ministry of Power, Government of India, and officials from Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) associated with the power sector. During the meeting, the Union Minister outlined key focus areas where the State Power Department and state-owned power utilities could improve performance through a detailed and time-bound action plan. He underlined the importance of adopting a strategic approach to address operational challenges while ensuring long-term sustainability of the sector. A significant portion of the review centred around the implementation of the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS), a flagship initiative aimed at improving the quality and reliability of power supply through infrastructure upgrades and reforms in distribution utilities. The operational and financial performance of Haryana's power distribution companies (DISCOMs) also came under scrutiny. Manohar Lal observed that electricity should be treated as an economic good and emphasised that power utilities must function on sound commercial principles. He said that utilities can remain viable only when they focus simultaneously on reducing the cost of power procurement, rationalising expenditure and enhancing revenue generation through improved ef-

iciency.

The Union Minister noted that Haryana had made consistent progress in reducing Aggregate Technical and Commercial (AT&C) losses over the years. However, he maintained that there was still room for further improvement and urged the state authorities to set higher benchmarks to minimise losses and strengthen the financial health of the DISCOMs. He also highlighted the issue of delayed payments from government departments and stressed the need for timely settlement of outstanding dues and subsidies. According to him, adopting an automated payment mechanism would improve cash flow management and prevent the accumulation of liabilities that often affect the functioning of distribution utilities. The progress of the smart metering programme in Haryana was reviewed in detail during the meeting. Manohar Lal advised officials to expedite the award of contracts and ensure that implementation moved swiftly from the planning stage to execution on the ground. Responding to the review, the Haryana government committed that smart metering works would commence across the state from August 31. The move is expected to enhance billing efficiency, improve energy accounting and empower consumers with better control over electricity consumption. The Union Minister further advocated a phased rollout of prepaid smart meters, beginning with government establishments and employees before extending the initiative to high-end consumers with connected loads exceeding 10 kilowatts. He suggested that suitable incentive mechanisms should also be introduced to encourage voluntary adoption among consumers.



Briefs :

Police Tear Down Secret Cameras Installed by Drug Sellers

Sirsa : The local police have dismantled a network of security cameras that drug sellers were using to spy on police cars and officers. The action took place in a neighborhood that has become notorious for illegal drug sales.

The police took action after local residents complained that drug dealers had installed dozens of cameras at different corners of the neighborhood. The criminals used these screens to see police patrols coming and would run away before a raid could happen. Officers marched into the area, pulled down all the hidden cameras from walls and houses, and have now increased their regular patrols to completely clean up the neighborhood.

The Bhakra Beas Management Board has officially requested Punjab and Haryana to increase their water intake from the Bhakra dam.

This request comes as farmers across the region begin planting rice, a crop that demands significant water resources. Board officials explained that water levels in the Bhakra reservoir are currently exceptionally high, and inflows are expected to surge further due to melting mountain snow and the approaching monsoon season. Current data indicates that the reservoir level is much higher than at the same time last year and remains well above the historical average for this

Sacred Journeys Bring Communities Together Says Chief Minister

Kurukshetra : The Chief Minister of Haryana stated that religious journeys are an excellent way to bring people closer and protect the country's deep cultural history. He made these remarks while addressing a crowd during the departure of a special train carrying over 1,100 pilgrims from Kurukshetra to a famous temple in Somnath.

The leader explained that the government is putting a lot of effort into restoring and beautifying religious sites across the country. Through major national heritage projects, the nation is successfully connecting back with its ancient history. He noted that this is a special time for the country because modern development and ancient heritage are growing together.

He added that even though the modern world faces many difficult challenges, traditional culture teaches people values like compassion and balance. He praised the history of the Somnath temple, calling it a great symbol of faith because even though it was attacked and damaged many times in the past, it was rebuilt stronger every single time. The Chief Minister of Haryana recently emphasized the profound impact of sacred journeys during a public address in Kurukshetra, highlighting how these traditional pilgrimages serve as a vital mechanism for uniting diverse communities across the nation.

Speaking to a large and enthusiastic gathering, the leader pointed out that these spiritual travels do far more than fulfill individual religious duties; they actively foster a sense of collective belonging and mutual understanding among citizens from various walks of life.

Severe Heatwave to Blast the Region Followed by Sudden Storms

Chandigarh : Weather officials have warned that a dangerous heatwave will grip parts of Punjab and Haryana, with temperatures expected to rise and spread across the entire region over three days.

The heatwave will first hit several western and southern districts before expanding to cover over a dozen districts on the following day. By June 10, the extreme heat will cover both entire states along with the city of Chandigarh, making outdoor conditions very difficult for residents.

However, some relief is expected on June 11 due to a changing weather pattern coming from the west. Heavy thunderstorms and strong winds blowing up to 60 kilometers per hour are expected to hit several districts.

Other areas will experience slightly lower wind speeds alongside rainy storms, and weather officials predict that these widespread storms will cover the entire region by June 12.

The regional weather office has issued a critical advisory regarding an incoming weather pattern that is expected to bring a severe heatwave to major portions of Punjab and Haryana.

According to meteorologists, the intense heat will steadily escalate over a three-day period, drastically raising daytime temperatures and altering daily life



across the agricultural heartland. This prolonged spell of extreme weather is anticipated to push local infrastructure and public health resources to their absolute limits as residents prepare for exceptionally harsh outdoor conditions.

The onset of this intense thermal wave is projected to initially impact specific vulnerable zones, concentrated primarily within the western and southern districts of the two states. These initial areas will bear the brunt of the rising temperatures first, experiencing scorching winds and a rapid climb in the thermometer well before the rest of the region.

Local authorities in these early-hit sectors are already urging vulnerable populations, including outdoor laborers and the elderly, to take immediate precau-

tions against the early waves of heat.

As the weather system progresses into its second day, the geographic footprint of the heatwave is expected to expand dramatically, swallowing up over a dozen additional districts in its path. This rapid territorial expansion means that areas previously experiencing relatively manageable summer conditions will suddenly find themselves under the same oppressive thermal blanket.

The swift spread of the heat underscores the power of the high-pressure system currently dominating the atmospheric conditions over northern India.

By June 10, the meteorological phenomenon is forecasted to reach its absolute peak, completely engulfing the entirety of both Punjab

and Haryana, alongside the joint capital city of Chandigarh. During this peak phase, there will be virtually no geographic escape from the extreme temperatures within the region, creating uniform and highly challenging conditions for millions of citizens. Public spaces, local markets, and educational institutions are expected to see a significant drop in afternoon activity as the population retreats indoors to escape the sun.

The intense meteorological conditions predicted for June 10 are expected to make basic outdoor activities exceedingly difficult and potentially hazardous for anyone exposed for prolonged periods. Health officials are particularly concerned about the combination of high ambient temperatures and direct solar radiation, which can

quickly lead to dehydration and heat exhaustion. Consequently, residents across Chandigarh and the surrounding states are being advised to alter their daily schedules, avoiding unnecessary travel during the peak afternoon hours.

Fortunately, weather scientists have identified a shifting atmospheric trend that promises to break the oppressive heatwave just as it reaches its maximum intensity. A fresh weather pattern, originating from the western direction, is currently tracking toward the region and is expected to introduce much-needed relief starting on June 11. This incoming western disturbance carries cooler air masses and significant moisture, which will collide with the pre-existing hot air to trigger a dramatic shift in local conditions.

The immediate consequence of this colliding air masses on June 11 will be the development of severe thunderstorms accompanied by violent, turbulent winds. Meteorologists warn that these localized storms could see wind gusts accelerating up to speeds of 60 kilometers per hour in several districts, presenting an entirely new set of environmental challenges. While the wind and rain will effectively break the heat, the sheer velocity of the gales could pose risks to temporary structures, standing crops, and overhead power lines.

New Testing Kits to Check Soil Health in Farming Fields

Chandigarh : The state government has decided to buy special carbon testing kits to check the quality of farming soil across the region. The main goal of this plan is to improve the health of agricultural land and stop productive fields from turning into barren waste.

During a high-level purchasing meeting, top ministers gave the green light to buy 332 advanced testing kits, spending around 2.5 crore rupees. These kits will be sent out to over a hundred government laboratories to test soil samples brought in by local farmers. Once the tests are complete, farmers will get a clear report showing the exact amount of natural carbon in their ground. Officials explained that for a field to grow healthy crops, the soil needs to have a specific level of organic carbon, and these tests will help farmers understand what their land needs.

The government has officially launched an initiative aimed at safeguarding agricultural productivity by approving the procurement of specialized carbon testing kits designed to analyze soil health across the region. The primary objective of this comprehensive strategy is to elevate the quality of farming land and proactively prevent fertile fields from degrading into unproductive, barren waste. By equipping local laboratories with these modern diagnostic tools, au-

thorities hope to provide rural communities with the precise scientific data needed to manage their fields sustainably.

This decision was finalized during a high-level purchasing committee meeting, where top ministers and administrative heads reviewed and ultimately greenlit the procurement package. The financial allocation for this agricultural project is estimated at approximately 2.5 crore rupees, a budget dedicated entirely to securing 332 advanced carbon testing kits. This substantial investment reflects the administration's commitment to prioritizing long-term food security and supporting the livelihood of the region's extensive farming population through technological intervention. Once the procurement process is finalized, these state-of-the-art testing kits will be systematically distributed to over one hundred government-run laboratories operating throughout the region. These decentralized facilities will serve as accessible hubs where local farmers can easily bring in physical soil samples collected directly from their respective properties. This widespread distribution ensures that even remote farming communities will have convenient access to advanced scientific analysis without having to travel long distances to major urban research centers.

National Goals Require Help from Every Single Person Says Speaker

Chandigarh : The Speaker of the Lok Sabha stated that building a developed nation is a shared goal that needs the active help of every citizen and organization. He emphasized that government policies, welfare programs, and budgets must bring positive changes to the poorest people in society.

Speaking at a political conference in Chandigarh, the leader explained that lawmakers have a massive responsibility because they can drive real change in local areas through helpful welfare plans.

He described the current century as a highly important time, noting that even though there are many political tensions around the world, India keeps moving forward because of stable laws and good governance.

The speaker called for a massive public movement to help reach national goals well before the target year of 2047.

He expressed great trust in young people, saying that when everyone works together, the nation's collective strength will become unstoppable. The event was attended by top state leaders and lawmakers from 12 different states.

The Speaker of the Lok Sabha recently emphasized that the grand task of building a fully developed nation is a shared goal that cannot

be achieved by the government alone, but instead requires the active, daily cooperation of every single citizen and organization across the country. Speaking to a large audience, the legislative leader pointed out that national progress is a collective responsibility, requiring a synchronized effort from both the public and private sectors.

He asserted that true national growth can only be measured when the benefits of development reach every corner of society, ensuring that no community is left behind in the country's march toward progress.

During his address, the Speaker focused heavily on the moral and functional direction of governance, stating that all future government policies, welfare programs, and national budgets must be specifically designed to bring positive, measurable changes to the lives of the poorest and most vulnerable people in society. He argued that economic indicators mean very little if they do not translate into improved living standards, better education, and enhanced financial security for those at the bottom of the economic ladder.

The true success of any administration's financial planning, he noted, lies in its ability to uplift the marginalized.

The venue for these sig-

nificant remarks was a major political conference hosted in the city of Chandigarh, which served as a forum for deep discussions on governance and legislative responsibilities.

Addressing the gathered delegates, the leader explained that elected lawmakers bear a massive, non-negotiable responsibility toward their constituents because they possess the direct legislative power to drive real, tangible change within their local areas. By initiating and oversight-testing helpful welfare plans, local representatives have the unique opportunity to transform the physical and social infrastructure of their respective regions.

Expanding on the global context, the Speaker described the current century as a highly important, defining epoch for the country on the international stage.

He noted that even though the modern world is currently fractured by intense political tensions, economic instability, and regional conflicts across various continents, India has managed to consistently move forward on its upward trajectory.

This steady advancement in an otherwise chaotic global environment is a rare achievement, signaling the country's growing resilience and its emerging role as a major anchor of stability in

Doctors Strike in Kurukshetra Over Unpaid Salaries

Kurukshetra : Specialist doctors at a prominent medical institute in Kurukshetra went on a one-day mass leave to protest because they have not received their salaries for the last two months. While regular check-up clinics remained closed because of the strike, emergency rooms and in-door patient care kept running.

The nursing staff and other workers have also threatened to stop working next week if their dues are not paid immediately. Contract workers are refusing to sign new agreements because they cannot afford these long delays, and even the construction of a new college building has stopped because the contractor has not been paid. The hospital usually sees around 600 patients every day, and doctors performed hundreds of surgeries last month despite not getting paid.

The financial trouble started after a court battle over who owns the institute. Since a local state committee claimed ownership, the previous trust stopped sending money, leaving all payments to workers and suppliers stuck. Doctors tried to meet with committee leaders to solve the problem, but no one showed up for the scheduled meetings. The hospital needs a large budget to pay



its 400 workers and keep running smoothly, and officials are currently begging the medical staff to return to work while they try to find a solution.

Specialist doctors at a prominent medical institute in Kurukshetra recently executed a one-day mass leave, staging a significant protest to draw immediate attention to the fact that they have not received their professional salaries for the past two months.

This collective absence served as a direct demonstration of their growing financial distress and frustration with the ongoing administrative impasse. The mass leave effectively brought several routine operations within the medical facility to a sudden

halt, signaling a deepening crisis within the local healthcare framework.

While the regular outpatient check-up clinics remained entirely closed throughout the duration of the strike, the striking medical professionals ensured that critical care services were not completely abandoned.

Emergency rooms, urgent triage operations, and in-door patient care units continued to run under essential staffing levels to prevent any immediate loss of life or severe medical complications among hospitalized individuals. This strategic decision allowed the doctors to register their intense labor grievance while still adhering to basic ethical obligations re-

garding life-saving medical care.

The labor unrest is rapidly expanding beyond the specialist medical staff, as the institute's nursing personnel and various support workers have officially issued threats to completely halt their services by next week if their outstanding dues are not cleared immediately.

The potential exit of the nursing and auxiliary staff threatens to completely paralyze the daily functioning of the entire facility, as these workers form the operational backbone of patient management and sanitation. Administrative leaders are now facing an incredibly tight deadline to secure funds before the entire workforce

States Urged to Take More Water as Dams Fill Up

Gurugram : The Bhakra Beas Management Board has asked Punjab and Haryana to use more water from the Bhakra dam. This request comes as farmers start planting rice across the region, which requires a large amount of water.

The board explained that the water levels in the Bhakra reservoir are currently very high. They also expect more water to flow into the dam soon because of melting snow from the mountains and the coming rainy season. Data shows that the water level is much higher than it was at the same time last year and is well above the usual average for this month. Because the dam is filling up fast, there is not



much space left to hold extra water if heavy rains hit the area. Even though the rice-

planting season has started, the states have not yet increased the amount of water

they are taking. Officials want to release water now to help farmers and to make sure the dam does not overflow later during the heaviest monsoon weeks. The Bhakra Beas Management Board has officially issued an urgent directive to the state governments of Punjab and Haryana, strongly advising them to significantly increase their daily intake of water from the Bhakra dam reservoir. This administrative request comes at a critical juncture for the regional agricultural sector, coinciding precisely with the commencement of the annual rice-planting season across the vast farming belts of northern India. Cultivating rice is an incredibly resource-

intensive process that demands a continuous, heavy volume of water to flood the fields during the initial growth stages, making the timing of this water availability highly advantageous for local cultivators. The management board elaborated on the current hydrological situation, explaining that the water levels within the massive Bhakra reservoir are currently sitting at an exceptionally high mark for this time of the year. This current abundance of water is not the only factor driving the board's decision; meteorologists and engineers also expect a substantial, additional influx of water to flow into the dam's catchment area in the immediate future.

Couples Choose Old-School Family Planning Methods for Better Experiences

Chandigarh : Married couples across India are increasingly turning back to traditional family planning methods, according to the latest national health survey. The data shows that the use of natural options like tracking calendar cycles and using withdrawal has risen significantly over the last few years.

With natural rhythm tracking, couples avoid intimacy during fertile days to prevent pregnancy.

While modern options like medical procedures, pills, and condoms are still the most popular choice overall, their usage has seen a slight drop.

Experts note that despite this shift away from modern options, the overall number of couples planning

their families has gone up. States like Goa and Sikkim recorded the highest jump in couples choosing traditional methods, with numbers increasing more than four times over. A

recent study showed that women prefer these natural options because they have absolutely no side effects, are incredibly easy to use, and cost nothing at all.

Experts mention that working women are more independent now and have a stronger voice in personal decisions, but they warn that relying too much on natural methods might lead to unexpected pregnancies. In northern India, Chandigarh had the highest percentage of couples using these traditional methods.

Kulwant Singh's son Sarabjit Samana elected Mohali Mayor amid AAP power play

Chandigarh : The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Tuesday secured the mayoral post in the Mohali Municipal Corporation, with Sarabjit Singh Samana, son of MLA Kulwant Singh, being elected as the city's new Mayor during a meeting of the newly constituted civic body.

Samana's elevation came amid intense political interest within the ruling party, as local AAP leader Dr Sunny Ahluwalia was also considered a strong contender for the position. However, the party leadership ultimately backed Samana, handing him the top post in the municipal corporation.

Following the election, senior party leaders, including Punjab AAP president Aman Arora, MLA Kulwant Singh and Dr Ahluwalia, congratulated the newly elected Mayor. The development is being viewed as a significant political victory for the MLA's camp within the local party unit. The may-



oral election was conducted under tight security arrangements. Councillors were required to deposit their mobile phones before entering the municipal corporation hall, and access to the proceedings was regulated through a formal verification

process.

The election took place days after the conclusion of the Mohali Municipal Corporation polls. The civic elections were held on May 26, while the results were declared on May 29. The 50-member corporation re-

quires 26 votes for a majority, with the local MLA also entitled to vote in the House.

AAP emerged as the single largest party in the elections, winning 27 of the 50 wards. With the support of its MLA, the party's strength in the House rose to 28 votes.

The Congress secured 12 seats, while the Shiromani Akali Dal won four, the BJP three and Independent candidates four.

Before the commencement of the voting process, Congress councillors boycotted the proceedings, while the lone Shiromani Akali Dal councillor staged a walkout from the meeting.

The election marks a change in leadership at the civic body. After the 2021 municipal polls, Congress leader Amarjit Singh Jeeti Sidhu served as Mayor of Mohali. This time, he did not contest the election. A member of his family, Advocate Kanwarbir Singh Ruby Sidhu, contested from Ward No. 10 on a Congress ticket but was unsuccessful. With the mayoral election completed, the focus is now expected to shift to the functioning of the new municipal administration and the implementation of civic projects in the rapidly growing city.

NIA raids 18 locations in Punjab, Haryana in probe against Shahzad Bhatti-linked terror network

Chandigarh : The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Tuesday carried out extensive searches at 18 locations across Punjab and Haryana as part of its investigation into three terror-related cases linked to Pakistan-based terrorist and gangster-turned-terror operative Shahzad Bhatti.

In an official statement, the agency said coordinated raids were conducted across nine districts of the two states. During the searches, NIA teams examined several premises, questioned individuals believed to be connected to the investigations, and seized digital devices, documents, and other materials for further analysis.

The agency said it had also gathered information relating to communication channels, financial transactions, and the activities of suspects believed to be associated with the network.

According to the NIA, all evidence collected during the operation has been sent for forensic and technical examination. The agency has

also issued notices to several individuals for further questioning as investigators attempt to unravel what it described as a larger cross-border conspiracy allegedly operated by Bhatti from Pakistan.

The searches were linked to three separate cases in which Bhatti's involvement has surfaced during investigations. One of the cases relates to the grenade attack carried out in March 2025 at the residence of social media influencer Roger Sandhu in Jalandhar. The NIA said its probe into the incident led investigators to Bhatti's network, following which he was chargesheeted as an absconding accused in April 2026.

Another case under investigation concerns the explosion that took place at the Women's Police Station in Sirsa, Haryana, in November 2025. The agency stated that its inquiry revealed the involvement of Bhatti in the attack. In May 2026, the NIA filed a chargesheet against nine accused in the case, in-

cluding Pakistan-based handler Sohail Ahmed alias Sohail Baloch, who is alleged to have played a key role in coordinating activities linked to the conspiracy.

The third case pertains to the car bomb blast at the Baldev Nagar police station in Ambala, Haryana, in January 2026. According to investigators, one of the accused in the case was found to have links with Bhatti. The agency believes the incident forms part of a wider terror-gangster network operating across borders and is now examining the extent of the connections between the accused and Pakistan-based handlers.

Officials said Tuesday's searches were focused on identifying Bhatti's associates, facilitators, financiers, and other operatives suspected of supporting the network. Investigators are also probing the financial trail, logistical support systems, and communication infrastructure allegedly used to plan and execute attacks in different parts of northern India.

ED raids prominent CA linked to Punjab minister Arora

Chandigarh : The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Tuesday conducted searches at multiple locations in Punjab and other states in connection with an alleged money laundering probe linked to Hampton Sky Realty, a firm associated with Punjab Local Bodies Minister Sanjeev Arora, officials said.

As part of the operation, ED teams carried out searches at the premises of Jalandhar-based chartered accountant and municipal contractor Amit Bajaj, who is known to have professional links with Arora during his tenure as Local Bodies Minister. Sources said the investigation relates to allegations of misuse of investors' funds in the Hampton Sky Realty project.

The searches were conducted simultaneously at several locations, including Delhi-NCR, Ludhiana and Jalandhar. Officials said Amit Bajaj's premises were covered as part of the wider investigation.

Bajaj and his elder brother Inderjit Bajaj are associated with firms that have executed road and street-lighting projects for municipal corporations and government departments in Punjab, Gujarat and other states.

Amid reports that raids



had also been conducted at the residence of an advocate named Amit Bajaj in Jalandhar's Shaheed Udham Singh Nagar area, the lawyer clarified that no ED action had taken place at his residence.

Reacting to the raids, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convener and former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal criticised the agency's action and alleged that the ED was targeting small Hindu businessmen. In a post on social media platform X, Kejriwal said the "ED party" was harassing small Hindu traders while ignoring bigger industrialists and corporations.

Amit Bajaj is a well-known chartered accountant in Jalandhar and provides tax consultancy services to several busi-

nesses and corporate clients across Punjab. He specialises in income tax, GST, corporate auditing and business consultancy.

He is also actively associated with the Jalandhar branch of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) and frequently participates in awareness programmes and seminars on taxation and financial regulations. Apart from his professional practice, Bajaj's family has been engaged in municipal contracting work in Jalandhar for more than three decades through its firm, Bajaj Consultancy, which undertakes street-lighting and road infrastructure projects. Sources familiar with local political circles said Bajaj is associated with the AAP and has played a role in supporting the party's activities

in the region, although he does not hold any official position within the organisation. Responding to Kejriwal's remarks, BJP leader Anil Sareen said central investigative agencies function independently and rejected allegations of political targeting. He, however, alleged that vigilance agencies in Punjab were being used for political purposes by the state government. The latest action comes amid a series of high-profile ED operations in Punjab over the past month.

On May 7, the agency conducted searches linked to the Suntec City land scam case at locations associated with businessman Nitin Goyal and former Deputy Speaker Bir Devinder Singh in Mohali's Kharar area. On May 9, the ED raided the official Chandigarh residence and other premises linked to Minister Sanjeev Arora before arresting him the same day in a money laundering case.

On May 26, the agency searched premises linked to Chandigarh Royal City Promoters and Royal Estate Group in Zirakpur in connection with an alleged cheque-bounce and fund diversion fraud involving GMADA funds worth Rs 32.67 crore.

Nihang man's death after police raid sparks protest in Majitha village, family demands FIR against cops

Chandigarh : Tension gripped a village in Punjab's Majitha area after the death of a Nihang Sikh man whose family alleged that he succumbed to injuries sustained during a police operation at his residence, while police rejected the accusations and said the exact cause of death would be established only after the post-mortem examination.

The incident occurred in Babuwal village of Amritsar district, where family members of the deceased staged a protest by placing the body on a road and demanding legal action against the police personnel involved in the raid. The family also announced that the last rites would not be performed until an FIR is registered against the officers concerned.

According to relatives, a police team arrived at the house in the early hours as part of an investigation and conducted a search operation.

The family alleged that an altercation took place during the raid and claimed that the deceased, identified as Daler Singh, and his son were physically assaulted by police personnel. They alleged that the injuries suffered during the incident led to a deterioration in the elderly man's health and ultimately resulted in his death.

Family members claimed that visible injury



were present on the bodies of those involved and demanded strict action against the officials. The deceased's son alleged that police personnel forcibly took his father and brother away and subjected them to severe physical abuse. While acknowledging that his father had struggled with substance abuse, he maintained that the deceased had never been involved in drug trafficking or any criminal activity.

Several villagers also backed the family's demand for an independent inquiry. Some residents claimed they had witnessed a confrontation between police personnel and members of the household.

The incident has triggered anger in the village, with residents seeking ac-

countability and a transparent investigation into the circumstances surrounding the death.

Meanwhile, CCTV footage from cameras installed in the area has reportedly surfaced and is expected to form part of the investigation. Authorities are examining all available evidence to establish the sequence of events.

Responding to the allegations, DSP Kamalmeet Singh Randhawa said the claims made by the family were unfounded. He stated that Daler Singh had previously faced multiple criminal cases and that the police team had visited the residence only in connection with an ongoing inquiry. According to the officer, the police party had left the loca-

tion after completing the raid, and the man's death occurred later.

The DSP denied any use of force by the police and said conclusions regarding the injuries seen on the body, as well as the actual cause of death, should await the findings of the post-mortem report. He assured that the matter would be investigated impartially and that any further action would be based on evidence and medical findings.

With the family refusing to conduct the cremation until a case is registered, the situation in the village remains sensitive. Authorities are monitoring the developments closely as residents continue to press for justice and await the outcome of the post-mortem examination.

New Political Leader to Take Charge of Congress Group on June 11

Hisar : The newly chosen head of the Haryana Congress party's welfare department for backward classes will officially take over his new role on June 11. The main event will happen at the party's central office in Chandigarh.

A large crowd of politicians, including top members of parliament and local leaders from across the country, are expected to attend the ceremony. The new leader promised to work hard for the rights, justice, and development of his community. He emphasized that addressing the unique challenges faced by backward classes will be his top priority during his tenure.

He also stated that his team will focus heavily on taking the party's main ideas and helpful policies directly to common citizens. This grassroots approach is intended to bridge the gap between policy making and the people who need support the most.

The event is generating considerable interest among local political circles in Hisar and the wider Haryana region. Many community representatives have expressed optimism about the new leadership and the potential for targeted development programs.

Preparations at the Chandigarh office are already underway to accommodate the expected influx of visitors and dignitaries. Security and logistical arrangements are being coordinated to ensure the ceremony proceeds smoothly without disrupting daily operations.

The incoming head has spent the days leading up to the event meeting with various local factions to understand their immediate concerns. These preliminary

discussions are expected to shape the department's agenda for the coming months.

Party organizers believe that this leadership update will bring fresh energy to the welfare department's ongoing initiatives. There is a strong emphasis on mobilizing youth and community volunteers to expand the reach of their social programs.

In his public statements, the leader-designate stressed the importance of unity and collective effort in achieving long-term social goals. He called on all members to actively participate in the upcoming campaigns and outreach activities.

The welfare department plays a crucial role in shaping the party's stance on social justice and economic inclusivity. The upcoming transition is seen as a strategic move to reinforce these core values ahead of future regional discussions.

Supporters from Hisar are planning to travel to Chandigarh in large numbers to witness the official takeover. Local transport arrangements are being organized by community volunteers to facilitate their journey to the capital.

The ceremony will include speeches from senior political figures who are expected to outline the broader vision for the party's welfare initiatives.

Five shops gutted in Haryana's Rohtak after suspected AC compressor blast

Chandigarh : A major fire broke out in a commercial area of Haryana's Rohtak on Tuesday after an air-conditioner compressor allegedly exploded inside a footwear showroom, triggering a blaze that rapidly spread to several adjoining establishments, officials said.

The incident occurred near D-Park, one of the city's busy commercial zones. According to initial informa-

tion, the fire originated in a shoe showroom during the afternoon hours and soon engulfed four neighbouring shops, resulting in a large-scale emergency response.

Firefighters rushed to the scene shortly after receiving information about the blaze. As the flames intensified, additional fire tenders were deployed, with at least nine vehicles engaged in efforts to bring the situation under

control. Rescue teams worked continuously to prevent the fire from spreading further in the densely populated market area.

Authorities said there were concerns that four to five people might have been trapped inside the affected buildings. In view of the possibility of a rescue operation, personnel from the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) were also placed on

standby at the site.

Police evacuated the surrounding area as a precautionary measure and established a security perimeter to facilitate firefighting and rescue operations. A large number of residents and shopkeepers had gathered at the location following the incident, prompting authorities to clear the vicinity to avoid any additional risk.

Senior district officials,

including ADC Narendra and CTM Shubham, reached the spot to monitor the situation. The affected market is located close to the residence of former Haryana Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda, adding to concerns over safety in the area.

Eyewitnesses said a loud explosion was heard at around 1.30 pm, after which flames were seen emerging from the showroom.

AAP linking investigations to religion and politics to hide corruption, says Dhillon

Chandigarh : Punjab BJP president Kewal Singh Dhillon on Monday accused the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) of attempting to divert attention from corruption allegations by linking investigations to religion and politics, and said the state's traders and business community would not be misled by such narratives. Reacting to recent statements made by AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal and Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann regarding central investigative agencies, Dhillon said the real issue before the public was why several leaders of the ruling party were facing allegations of corruption.



He alleged that instead of responding to questions surrounding those allegations, the AAP leadership was trying to portray legal proceedings as politically or religiously motivated. According to Dhillon, questioning the credibility of constitutional

institutions and investigative agencies to defend party leaders was not in the interest of democratic governance. The BJP leader also questioned the Punjab government's criticism of anti-corruption investigations, saying law enforcement agencies were

carrying out their responsibilities under established legal procedures. He maintained that innocent individuals need not fear an inquiry, while those found violating the law should be held accountable. Highlighting the contribution of the business community, Dhillon said traders, industrialists, and entrepreneurs have played a crucial role in Punjab's economy and deserve an environment that supports growth and security. He claimed that the BJP governments have consistently worked to create opportunities and stability for businesses. Dhillon further alleged that the state government should focus on ad-

ressing concerns such as gangsterism, extortion, and threats faced by members of the trading community instead of using them as part of a political narrative. He said businessmen required protection from criminal elements and a stable environment for economic activity. Reiterating the BJP's stand, Dhillon said the law should apply equally to all citizens and that no individual involved in corruption should expect immunity. He added that the party remains committed to Punjab's economic development, industrial expansion, and the welfare of traders, businessmen, and entrepreneurs across the state.



India welcoming pressure for spots at Women's T20 World Cup

Cardiff: India will take a 15-player squad to the ICC Women's T20 World Cup and selectors might have some tricky moments deciding which ones don't make the starting XI.

The squad's impressive depth was on full display in their warm-up match in Cardiff, claiming a comfortable 26-run victory over the West Indies while also resting a couple of locked-in starters.

It was a chance to give some of their more lightly-used players time in the middle - and they didn't disappoint.

Filling in as skipper, Smriti Mandhana (39 off 23 balls) stepped up with the added responsibility to help get India's score-setting batting innings off to a strong start.

Then it was time to see what Bharti Fulmali could do and the middle order hitter made the most of her opportunity, scoring 56 off 40



deliveries to anchor their post-Powerplay efforts.

With the ball, Shreyanka Patil and Radha Yadav gave India's selectors even more to think about, taking seven wickets between them, according to ICC.

Captaining in Harmanpreet Kaur's absence, Mandhana was full of praise for the trio.

"(It was) really important," she said post-match.

"They have not got a lot of game time coming here in

England... (them performing) is a good headache to have. It's very important for the 15 (player squad) to be in good nick because it always puts everyone else under pressure as well.

"It was especially important for the middle order to bat and I think we did really well. I think all the bowlers were brilliant to restrict them to 150."

India will be back in action continuing their tournament preparations on

Wednesday against T20 World Cup hosts England.

The West Indies, meanwhile, will be focused on fixing their starts, which is what stand-in captain Chinelle Henry pointed to post-game.

"(The start) is something that we will have to work on, the first six (overs), that's something we're going to need to improve on going forward," Henry said.

"I think how we came back in the last 12 overs was

really good to see. To restrict them to under 200 was really good."

The West Indies side will look to ride the form of experienced batter Deandra Dottin heading into the tournament proper, after her top order heroics against India's bowlers.

Dottin played a steady 49-run knock off 44 balls to help set up their run chase. Just sadly for her side, there wasn't enough support in the middle order to reach India's target, falling 26 runs short from their allotted 20 overs.

"Obviously that's the Deandra Dottin we all know," Henry continued.

"Seeing her get some runs today, that's a pretty good sign heading into our first game."

Their warm-up continues when they take on Australia on Thursday in Cardiff in what will be their final hit-out before the T20 World Cup commences.

Prasidh Krishna replaces Mohammed Siraj in T20I squads for Ireland & England

Mumbai: India's pace spearhead Mohammed Siraj has been withdrawn from the upcoming T20I series against Ireland and England as part of a workload management programme, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) confirmed on Tuesday.

The decision was taken after consultations between the Board of Control for Cricket in India medical team and the national team management, who advised the fast bowler to take a short period of rest.

According to BCCI Secretary Devajit Saikia, the move has been made purely as a precautionary step to ensure Siraj gets adequate recovery time ahead of a packed international schedule.

The statement emphasized that the aim is to manage the pacer's workload carefully so he remains fit and available for a long season involving multiple formats of international cricket.

In Siraj's absence, the selection committee has



named right-arm fast bowler Prasidh Krishna as his replacement in both the Ireland and England T20I series.

The reigning ICC Men's T20 World Cup champions are scheduled to begin their assignment with two T20Is against Ireland in Belfast on June 26 and June 28.

These matches will be followed by a high-profile five-match T20I series against England, beginning July 1, which is expected to test India's squad depth and bench strength.

A major talking point of the tour will be the appointment of Shreyas Iyer as the new T20I captain, taking over leadership duties ahead

of former skipper Suryakumar Yadav.

The leadership change marks a significant shift in India's short-format setup, with selectors aiming to build a broader leadership group ahead of future ICC events.

Meanwhile, young batting sensation Vaibhav Suryavanshi has earned his maiden India call-up and is expected to make his international debut during the series.

His inclusion has generated considerable excitement, with selectors viewing him as one of the most promising emerging talents in Indian cricket.

England defender Spence to wear brace at World Cup after suffering broken jaw

New York: England defender Djed Spence is set to play the entire FIFA World Cup with a protective brace after suffering a broken jaw, in a remarkable show of resilience ahead of football's biggest tournament.

The England national football team full-back was a slightly unexpected inclusion in manager Thomas Tuchel's squad, with his selection already drawing attention across football circles.

However, his situation became even more unusual after it emerged that he had sustained a broken jaw shortly before the tournament preparations intensified.

Despite the setback, Spence has continued to remain involved with the squad and has not allowed the injury to derail his World Cup ambitions.

Speaking to The Guardian, the defender described the situation as "crazy," but insisted he had not allowed



the injury to weigh heavily on his mind.

"I didn't really think about it. It was painful but luckily, I play football with my feet and not my jaw, so I was all good," he said.

Spence has been required to wear a specially fitted protective brace, which he will continue using throughout the tournament as a precautionary measure.

He first wore the brace during the final Premier League match of the season, where his club Tottenham

Hotspur secured a crucial win over Everton to avoid relegation concerns.

The same protective gear was also visible during England's 1-0 victory over New Zealand in Tampa, Florida, where Spence played his part in a disciplined defensive display.

In that match, he also contributed offensively by delivering the cross that led to Harry Kane scoring the only goal of the game, further underlining his importance to the squad.

Muzumdar backs India to thrive at T20 World Cup

New Delhi: India head coach Amol Muzumdar believes the team's success over the last few years has helped create a strong winning culture as they prepare to defend their reputation at the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2026.

India head into the tournament as reigning ODI World Cup champions after ending their wait for a senior ICC title last year. While that achievement brings added expectations, Muzumdar feels the players are experienced enough to handle the pressure that comes with being one of the favourites.

"There's pressure in every tournament, and the players are used to it. They've been playing international cricket for some time now. But in a tournament

like the World Cup, we'll be going in as ODI World Cup champions for the first time," Muzumdar told JioStar.

The coach credited India's consistency over the past three years for helping build the mindset needed to succeed at major tournaments. According to him, the team has approached every bilateral series with the same seriousness, regardless of the opposition.

"Winning is a habit. Over the last three years, we've tried to win every series and to treat each one as extremely important, regardless of who we're playing against. Once you get into the habit of winning series, it becomes second nature," he said.

Under skipper Harman-

preet Kaur and Muzumdar, India have become one of the most consistent teams in



women's cricket. The ODI World Cup triumph was a major milestone, but the focus has quickly shifted to ensuring the team continues to push for more success.

Muzumdar also praised the players for the effort they have put into their preparations ahead of the T20 World

Cup.

"The team has been working very hard on this for the past month. I've never seen a team, irrespective of gender, work so hard and be so dedicated towards one goal," he mentioned.

India's squad combines experienced players such as Harmanpreet Kaur, Smriti Mandhana, Deepti Sharma and Jemimah Rodrigues with a few players who were not part of last year's World Cup-winning campaign. Muzumdar said creating a strong team environment and sharing experiences within the group has been an important part of the preparation process.

"It's about bringing the youngsters together. This team has seniors who are always ready to share whatever

experiences they have gained," Muzumdar stated.

The coach also pointed to wicketkeeper-batter Yastika Bhatia as someone who can make a significant contribution despite spending time away from the international game because of injuries.

"There are a few new faces in this team. Yastika has been playing for many years, but she was sidelined due to injury. She knows what international cricket is all about," he added.

As India chase another ICC trophy, Muzumdar said the message to the players remains simple.

"So, there's only one message: go out there, give your best, and try to win games for India. It's as simple as that," he said.

Lewis puts trust in young Ireland team for T20 World Cup

London: The ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2026 is set to be a steep learning curve for Ireland, but captain Gaby Lewis has faith in her young side.

After missing out on the last edition two years ago, Ireland made the cut for the marquee event on the final day of Global Qualifiers in February.

Lewis will captain Ireland for the first time at the T20 World Cup and she leads a young 15-member squad that includes first-time call-ups Ava Canning, Christina Coulter Reilly, Alana Dalzell, Aimee Maguire and Lara McBride.

"There are a lot of players to look out for in our

squad, and we've got some great youngsters," Lewis wrote in a column for the ICC. "Aimee Maguire has been brilliant for us over the last couple of years, and you can't pass over the likes of Orla Prendergast and Amy Hunter as well. We don't rely on one or two players though; we've got a real group of match-winners."

"The more experienced the girls get, the better they are at international cricket. We don't have a major provincial setup that they come through, so they're learning a lot at international level."

The more games they play, the more they learn."

While Lewis was the top run-scorer for Ireland in the

qualifying tournament, with 276 runs from seven matches, Arlene Kelly was the second-highest wicket-taker.

This will be Ireland's fifth appearance at the global event and they have been drawn in Group 2 with Scotland, England, New Zealand, Sri Lanka and the West Indies. In the run-up to the Women's T20 World Cup in England, Ireland registered encouraging wins over Pakistan and

West Indies. Lewis and her teammates are also looking forward to playing so close to home and the prospect of competing in front of Irish fans.

"The fact the ICC Women's T20 World Cup is in

England this year is a really exciting prospect. Having the competition so close to home is going to be really special, and it will be great to see as many fans as possible at all of the matches," the 25-year-old stated.

"Often, when you play at World Cups, they are further afield and it's the hosts or the opposition that brings the fans to the stadiums. So, on this occasion, it will be nice to have a lot of Irish people travelling and a lot of young kids and girls supporting, who I hope have ambitions to one day play for the team."

Since the first edition in 2009, the T20 World Cup has grown in stature and popularity.

Spain cruises to win over Peru in last World Cup warmup game

Puebla (Mexico): Spain wrapped up their final warm-up match ahead of the FIFA World Cup 2026 with a confident 3-1 victory over Peru, a result that boosted morale and offered coach Luis de la Fuente valuable clarity before the tournament begins.

The match saw Spain field a strong starting XI, with Unai Simón starting in goal, protected by a defensive line featuring Marc Cucurella, Marcos Llorente, Aymeric Laporte, and young defender Pau Cubarsí.

In midfield, Spain relied on the control and creativity of Rodri, Pedri, and Fabián Ruiz, forming a balanced core that dictated the tempo of the game.

Out wide, Alex Baena and Ferran Torres provided width and attacking movement, while Mikel Oyarzabal led the line as the central striker.

Spain made a flying start when Oyarzabal scored inside the opening two minutes with a powerful left-footed

strike from outside the box, setting the tone for a dominant performance.

The early goal immediately put Peru on the back foot and allowed Spain to control possession and dictate attacking phases. In the 32nd minute, Spain doubled their lead through a well-constructed team move, with Ferran Torres creating space on the right before delivering a precise cut-back that Pedri calmly finished into an empty net. At half-time, coach de la Fuente rotated his squad, introducing David Raya, Yeremy Pino, Dani Olmo, and Eric García to spread workload and test tactical variations. Spain extended their lead in the 53rd minute when a cross from Pino led to an own goal by Peru goalkeeper Pedro Gallese, effectively putting the match beyond reach. Peru managed to pull one goal back in the 66th minute through Jairo Vélez, who struck a powerful shot to reduce the deficit and give his side a brief moment of hope. Despite

the concession, Spain remained largely in control, maintaining composure and ensuring no injuries were picked up during the match, a key concern for the coaching staff. After the game, de la Fuente expressed satisfaction with his team's overall performance, highlighting fitness levels and squad readiness while confirming that injured players Nico Williams, Lamine Yamal, and Victor Muñoz are expected to recover in time. He emphasized that the squad is in good condition and that preparations are on track ahead of the tournament. Spain will now continue their preparations at their training base in Chattanooga, Tennessee, focusing on fine-tuning tactics and maintaining momentum. Their World Cup campaign will begin on June 15 against Cabo Verde, before facing Saudi Arabia and Uruguay in Group H, where they will look to carry forward their strong form into competitive action.

games.

Uruguay's Federico Valverde contributes relentless energy, powerful running, and long-range shooting, making him a constant influence across both phases of play.

Colombia's Luis Díaz brings unpredictability and explosive acceleration, capable of changing matches in a matter of seconds.

For the co-host nation, the United States will look to Christian Pulisic to provide leadership, attacking sharpness, and experience on home soil.

With such a diverse mix of elite forwards, creative midfielders, and emerging young stars, the Golden Ball race at the FIFA World Cup 2026 is expected to be defined by consistency, decisive moments, and the ability to perform under immense pressure.

New Zealand captain Melie Kerr regains top ranking on eve of T20 World Cup

Dubai: New Zealand captain Melie Kerr will enter the ICC Women's T20 World Cup as the No. 1 ranked T20I all-rounder following the latest update to the ICC Women's Player Rankings.

Kerr returns to the premier position just days prior to the start of the T20 World Cup, with West Indies skipper Hayley Matthews dropping back to the No. 2 slot after she sat out her side's final fixture of the recent tri-series in Ireland. It remains tight at the top of the all-rounder charts, with Kerr's lead sitting at just five rating points as the two influential skippers jostle for positions at the upcoming T20 World Cup in England and Wales that commences on June 12. Australia duo Georgia Voll (first) and Beth Mooney (second) hold on to the top two spots on the

list for T20I batters heading into the T20 World Cup, with India skipper Harmanpreet Kaur (upon one rung to 10th) the only player moving inside the top 10 following her unbeaten half-century in the recent series decider against England in Taunton. England youngster Alice Capsey was the Player of the Match in that fixture with a superb innings of 82 and that saw the right-hander gain 13 slots to improve to 30th on the list for T20I batters, according to ICC.

There were also gains for a host of other batters in this category across the last week, with Bangladesh captain Nigar Sultana Joty (up two slots to equal 18th), England veteran Heather Knight (up four runs to 21st) and Scotland right-hander Sarah Bryce (up four spots to 36th)

among those to make ground.

It's still very tight near the top of the T20I bowler rankings, with England spinner Linsey Smith maintaining her narrow advantage in the No. 1 position ahead of Pakistan counterpart Sadia Iqbal.

There are gains inside the top 10 for England duo Lauren Bell (up one place to equal second) and Charlie Dean (up one spot to fourth), while South Africa spinner Nonkululek Mlaba is up to fifth after she improved two rungs. And while Kerr and Matthews dominate the charts for T20I all-rounders, there are gains for Scotland captain Kathryn Bryce (up nine places to 17th) following some decent efforts during their recent tri-series against Bangladesh and Netherlands.

Mbappe Leads Generational Battle as New Stars Rise

New York: The race for the adidas Golden Ball at the FIFA World Cup 2026 is already generating massive anticipation, with football fans and analysts predicting one of the most competitive individual award battles in recent memory.

As the tournament approaches, the prize for the best player of the World Cup is increasingly becoming a central storyline, almost rivaling the fight for the trophy itself.

Leading the early conversation is France superstar Kylian Mbappé, who continues to dominate the world football with his pace, finishing ability, and consistency at the highest level.

Having already established himself as a generational talent, Mbappé's performances in recent

seasons, including his impactful displays for Real Madrid, have kept him firmly in contention for global individual honours.

England captain Harry Kane also remains a strong candidate, with his evolution into a deeper, more creative forward role adding new dimensions to his goal-scoring reputation.

Kane's ability to combine finishing with play-making could make him one of the most complete attacking forces at the tournament.

A younger generation is also beginning to reshape expectations, with Spain's teenage sensation Lamine Yamal emerging as one of the most exciting talents in world football.

His creativity, fearlessness, and technical ability on the wing have already made him a key figure for

both club and country despite his young age.

France's Michael Olise



is another rising name, impressing with his close control, vision, and ability to unlock defences in tight spaces.

The midfield battle is expected to play a decisive role in shaping the tournament's outcome, with several players capable of controlling matches from the centre of the pitch.

Portugal's Vitorinha has grown into a key orchestrator at club level, known for his composure, intelligent passing, and tactical awareness.

England's Declan Rice brings a contrasting profile, offering defensive stability, ball recovery.

And progressive carries that help transition play effectively.

South America's challenge looks equally formidable, with Argentina's Enzo Fernández playing a crucial role in controlling tempo and linking midfield to attack.

Brazil's Raphinha adds direct attacking threat from wide areas, combining dribbling flair with an eye for decisive moments in big

games.

Uruguay's Federico Valverde contributes relentless energy, powerful running, and long-range shooting, making him a constant influence across both phases of play.

Colombia's Luis Díaz brings unpredictability and explosive acceleration, capable of changing matches in a matter of seconds.

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BSE Sensex		Nifty 50		Nifty 500		Nifty Next 50		Nifty 100		Nifty Bank		Nifty Midcap 100	
Close	Percent change	Close	Percent change	Close	Percent change	Close	Percent change	Close	Percent change	Close	Percent change	Close	Percent change
73,918.76	0.54%	23,242.10	0.52%	22,370.15	0.89%	69,945.85	1.41%	24,275.60	0.68%	55,194.50	2.09%	60,715.45	1.35%
Previous close	Open	Previous close	Open	Previous close	Open	Previous close	Open	Previous close	Open	Previous close	Open	Previous close	Open
73,524.26	74,035.41	23,123.00	23,259.05	22,173.70	22,298.85	68,975.40	69,351.10	24,111.10	24,251.00	54,063.75	54,265.00	59,905.65	60,265.10
High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low
74,035.41	73,426.18	23,279.40	23,104.45	22,390.50	22,233.45	70,052.00	69,311.90	24,309.30	24,128.55	55,318.35	54,242.30	60,796.60	60,221.60

Top Gainers

Company	Current	% Gain
Interglobe Avi	4,537.60	4.08
Jio Financial	234.21	2.34
Eicher Motors	7,203.00	2.17
SBI	1,002.70	2.11
ICICI Bank	1,275.00	1.98

Top Losers

Company	Current	% Loss
ONGC	259.00	-2.13
Titan Company	4,104.90	-2.09
NTPC	355.65	-1.86
Power Grid Corp	285.70	-1.58
Tech Mahindra	1,483.80	-1.30

Commodities

Commodity	Price	Change (%)
Gold Aug 05	154,764.00	-20.00 -0.01
Silver Jul 03	247,877.00	1,488.00 0.60
Crudeoil Jun 18	8,460.00	-247.00 -2.84
Naturalgas Jun 25	297.90	-2.90 -0.96

Stock markets snap two-day losing streak, Sensex Gains Nearly 400 pts

Mumbai: Indian equity markets staged a strong rebound on Tuesday, ending a two-day losing streak as investor sentiment improved on the back of easing geopolitical tensions and a moderation in global crude oil prices.

The BSE Sensex closed higher by 394.50 points, or 0.54 percent, finishing the session at 73,918.76, reflecting renewed buying interest across key heavyweights.

Similarly, the Nifty 50 advanced 119.10 points, or 0.52 percent, to settle at 23,242.10, supported by gains in financials, auto, and energy-related counters.

Broader markets significantly outperformed benchmark indices, with the Nifty midcap index rising 1.3 percent and the smallcap index climbing 1.7 percent, highlighting strong participation from retail and institutional

investors.

Sectoral performance was largely positive, with most indices ending in the green, although IT and media stocks remained under pressure and acted as a drag on overall sectoral momentum.

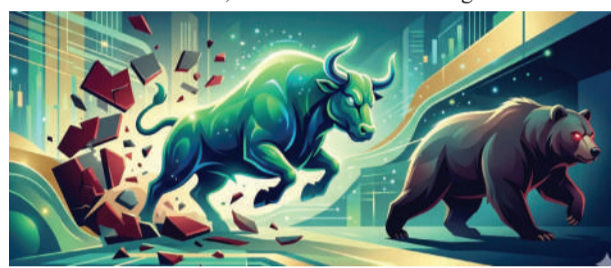
Banking and financial stocks emerged as the primary drivers of the rally, with the PSU Bank index surging 3.6 percent, while the Nifty Bank index gained 2 percent and the private banking index advanced 1.6 percent.

The real estate sector also witnessed healthy buying interest, with the realty index rising 1.6 percent as investors continued to bet on sustained demand in housing and infrastructure-linked segments.

Among the major contributors to gains on the Nifty index were Interglobe Aviation, Jio Financial Services, Eicher Motors, State Bank of India,

and Apollo Hospitals, all of which recorded strong upward movement during the trading session.

On the other hand, select



heavyweight stocks such as Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC), Titan Company, NTPC, Power Grid Corporation, and Tech Mahindra ended in the red, limiting the overall upside in the broader market.

In the currency market, the Indian rupee appreciated by 36 paise to close at 95.35 against the US dollar, compared to the

previous closing level of 95.71, indicating improved foreign exchange sentiment and easing external pressure.

The strength in domestic

equities was further reflected in the broader exchange activity, where more than 100 stocks on the Bombay Stock Exchange touched their 52-week highs, underscoring widespread bullish momentum.

Notable stocks hitting fresh 52-week highs reflected strong and broad-based participation across sectors, with

names such as Cemindia Project, Data Patterns, Jammu and Kashmir Bank, Aster DM Healthcare, Syrma SGS, Federal Bank, and Sai Life Sciences leading the momentum, underscoring continued investor confidence in both industrial and financial counters.

This wave of fresh highs suggested that buying interest was not limited to a single segment but was instead spread across diverse industries including banking, healthcare, manufacturing, and specialty chemicals, highlighting the depth of market participation.

Individual stock movements during the session remained mixed, as the broader rally saw selective profit booking in some counters even as others posted strong gains.

Rail Vikas Nigam (RVNL) gained around 3 percent, supported by continued optimism in infrastructure-related pub-

lic sector undertakings and order flow expectations.

InterGlobe Aviation stood out among the gainers, rising nearly 4 percent, as aviation stocks continued to benefit from strong travel demand and improving passenger traffic trends.

In contrast, NLC India slipped around 2 percent, reflecting mild selling pressure in select energy and power-linked stocks despite the overall positive market tone.

BlueStone Jewellery also declined by about 1.7 percent, indicating some profit-taking in retail and consumption-oriented segments after recent volatility.

Adani Green Energy added to the positive sentiment in the market, with its shares advancing over 3 percent during the session amid renewed investor interest in renewable energy and clean power themes.

Nearly 12 lakh MSEs registered on GeM, procurement reaches Rs 8.69 Lakh Crore

New Delhi: The Government e Marketplace (GeM) has emerged as a key driver of India's digital governance transformation by enabling transparent, technology-driven, and citizen-centric public procurement, the platform said on the occasion of its milestone journey since inception on August 9, 2016.

Designed as a major governance reform, GeM has shifted government procurement from manual and fragmented processes to a digital, data-driven ecosystem. The platform has reduced human intervention, enhanced transparency, and simplified access to government procurement opportunities for businesses across the country.

The GeM has also contributed to improving the ease of doing business by enabling enterprises of all sizes to participate in government supply chains through online onboarding, transparent bidding, digital contract management and end-to-end procurement processes.

Over the years, participation of micro and

small enterprises (MSEs) on the platform has witnessed significant growth. Registered MSEs have increased from 2,396 in 2016-17 to more than 11.9 lakh currently. Procurement from MSEs has surged from Rs 69 crore to over Rs 8.69 lakh crore, while order volumes have grown from 2,994 to more than 2.17 crore during the same period.

The platform has also expanded opportunities for traditionally underrepresented groups.

Women-owned MSEs registered on GeM have risen from 268 in 2016-17 to over 2.16 lakh, with procurement value increasing from Rs 8 crore to more than Rs 93,327 crore.

Startup participation has also grown sharply, rising from 88 entities to over 40,000, while procurement from startups has increased from Rs 2 crore to over Rs 61,400 crore.

Similarly, registered SC/ST MSEs have increased from 38 to over 66,000, with procurement value crossing Rs 21,800 crore.

Centre notifies Coal Exchange Rules for establishment of Coal Exchanges

New Delhi: The Ministry of Coal has notified the Coal Exchange Rules, 2026, paving the way for the establishment of Coal Exchanges in the country. The rules were published in the Official Gazette, following the enactment of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2025.

The Gazette had introduced the concept of a Mineral Exchange and empowered the Central Government to promote transparent and efficient trading of minerals, including coal and its processed

forms.

The Ministry of Coal had already designated the Coal Controller Organisation (CCO) in December 2025 as the authority responsible for registering and regulating Coal Exchanges.

Eligible entities will be authorized by CCO to establish and operate Coal Exchanges, frame market rules and bye-laws, and facilitate coal trading. Registrations will be granted for a period of 25 years.

"The introduction of Coal Exchanges marks a paradigm shift in coal mar-



keting by moving from the traditional 'one-to-many' sales model to a competitive 'many-to-many' trading platform. This will enable transparent and market-driven price discovery, improve efficiency, and provide coal producers,

including commercial and captive miners, with easier access to a wider pool of buyers. Public Sector coal companies can also leverage the platform to enhance market participation," Ministry of Coal said in a statement.

The Coal Exchange initiative reflects the Government's commitment to enhancing ease of doing business, promoting transparency, and building a modern, self-reliant energy ecosystem. Recently, the Multi Commodity Exchange of India Ltd (MCX) received approval from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) to invest in a proposed coal exchange company. MCX plans to invest up to Rs 100 crore as initial capital to meet net worth requirements under the draft coal exchange framework.

TN is critical hub under Make in India, PLI initiatives : DPIIT Joint Secy

Chennai: Tamil Nadu has emerged as a critical hub under the Make in India and Production Linked Incentive (PLI) initiatives and it accounts for over 40% of India's leather production and is successfully transitioning toward technology-driven, export-oriented manufacturing.

Ms. Nidhi Kesarwani, Joint Secretary, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), said on Monday.

Interacting with StartupTN officials at the RANITEC Common Efflu-

ent Treatment Plant (CETP) in Ranipet district of Tamil Nadu, she highlighted India's economic transformation from 2014 to 2026 and commended Tamil Nadu's strong performance, noting its 11% real GDP growth in FY 2024-25 and the reduction of 2,521 regulatory compliances.

She said Tamil Nadu has emerged as a critical hub under the Make in India and Production Linked Incentive (PLI) initiatives. The State accounts

for over 40% of India's leather production and is

successfully transitioning toward technology-driven, export-oriented manufacturing.

To strengthen this sector, the central government's Rs. 1,700-crore Indian Footwear and Leather Development Programme (IFLDP), which concluded on March 31, 2026, approved a Mega Leather, Footwear and Accessories Cluster at Panakkam, Ranipet, spanning 290.58 acres with Rs. 125 crore in Central assistance.

Additionally, eight Common Effluent Treatment Plant (CETP) projects under

the STEP sub-scheme, 89 modernized units under the IDLS sub-scheme, and infrastructure upgrades at the FDDI Chennai Campus were supported to boost global competitiveness.

The Joint Secretary emphasized that the state's leather sector is also supporting India's Defence Corridor through specialized materials.

With over 35 major defence companies active and 30 more in the pipeline, Tamil Nadu is building an integrated industrial ecosystem. Ms. Kesarwani also

lauded the State's leading startup ecosystem and its progress in intellectual property filings.

Furthermore, she outlined DPIIT's forward-looking Reform Agenda 2026, which features the BHAVYA scheme to develop 100 investment-ready, plug-and-play industrial parks nationwide, a sector-focused BRAP framework comprising 60 targeted reforms, and the institutionalization of Regulatory Impact Assessments to ensure swift business clearances under 30 days.

IT Ropar, Rocket Learning ink MoU to boost

Bengaluru: The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Ropar has entered into a strategic partnership with ed-tech nonprofit Rocket Learning to strengthen early childhood education in India through the use of artificial intelligence and technology-enabled training systems. The collaboration seeks to enhance the capabilities of frontline workers and caregivers who play a crucial role in shaping children's foundational years.

The partnership was formalised through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), marking a significant step towards integrating advanced technological solutions into early childhood development initiatives. The initiative combines IIT Ropar's research expertise with Rocket Learning's extensive grassroots presence across the country.

The MoU was signed by Prof. Rajeev Ahuja, Director of IIT Ropar, and Azeez Gupta, Co-Founder of Rocket Learning. The signing ceremony was held in the presence of Dr. Sarang Gumfekar, Dean at IIT Ropar, and Namya Mahajan, Co-Founder of



Rocket Learning, underscoring the commitment of both institutions to the shared mission.

At the heart of the collaboration is the goal of upskilling frontline public workers and caregivers involved in foundational learning. Special emphasis will be placed on Anganwadi educators and parents, who often serve as children's first teachers and are instrumental in supporting cognitive and emotional development during the formative years.

Prof. Rajeev Ahuja highlighted the importance of investing in early childhood development, describing it as one of the most impactful yet under-resourced areas of social development. He noted that the partnership aims to create a generation of well-equipped caregivers capable of improving life outcomes for millions of children through stronger foundational support. He further stated that empowering those who interact with children during their earliest years

can have long-lasting effects on educational attainment, health and overall well-being. According to him, equipping caregivers with the right tools and knowledge can help bridge developmental gaps before they widen over time. Dr. Sarang Gumfekar emphasised IIT Ropar's commitment to contributing to India's broader development goals through meaningful collaborations involving academia, civil society and government institutions. He said the institute remains focused on ensuring that advanced technology and innovative learning solutions reach underserved communities. He pointed out that technology should not remain confined to laboratories and elite institutions but should instead be leveraged to address pressing social challenges. The collaboration with Rocket Learning, he said, reflects IIT Ropar's belief in socially relevant research that creates measurable public impact. Rocket Learning Co-Founders Azeez Gupta and Namya Mahajan said the partnership strengthens their mission of using artificial intelligence and digital tools to drive large-scale social change.