

Draped in veshti and angavastram, PM visits iconic Cholapuram Temple in Tamil Nadu

On Rajendra Chola's birth anniversary, PM Modi visited the 11th-century Gangaikonda Cholapuram Temple in Tamil Nadu, offering prayers and participating in Aadi Thiruvathirai festivities.

New Delhi. (Agency) Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday visited the iconic Gangaikonda Cholapuram Temple in Tamil Nadu's Ariyalur district to pay tribute to the legacy of the Chola dynasty. The visit coincided with the birth anniversary of Rajendra Chola I, one of the greatest rulers of the Chola empire, known for expanding its reach as far as Southeast Asia. The 11th-century Shiva temple, built by Rajendra Chola himself, stands as a monumental symbol of the dynasty's architectural and military prowess. PM Modi offered prayers at the temple and took a tour of the complex, which is considered a UNESCO World Heritage Site as part of the "Great Living Chola Temples". Draped in traditional Tamil attire — veshti and angavastram — the Prime Minister participated in the rituals at the temple, offering prayers and

performing customary ceremonies. PM Modi's visit is being seen as part of the BJP's broader cultural outreach in Tamil Nadu, a state where the party has been seeking to expand its political footprint. The Chola emperor, often celebrated in

1,000 years ago. PM Modi arrived at the temple to attend the Aadi Thiruvathirai festival.

The grand finale of the festival that commenced on July 23 was marked by celebrations today. Shivacharyas and

Othuvamurthys, scholars well-versed in Saivaite scriptures, recited sacred hymns to welcome the Prime Minister. A special musical performance on Tiruvasagam by maestro Ilayaraja was also planned.

On the occasion, Gangaikonda Cholapuram was adorned with floral green arches leading up to the temple, while police took control of the entire area to manage the security arrangements. Tamil Nadu Governor RN Ravi, Finance

Minister Thangam Thenarasu, Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Minister PK Sekar Babu, Transport Minister SS Sivasankar and Union Minister L Murugan also took part in the event.



Tamil literature and folklore, has also been referenced in PM Modi's past speeches.

Gangaikonda Cholapuram was the 'victory city' constructed by Rajendra Chola following his victorious maritime expedition to South East Asia about

Congress leader calls Rahul Gandhi 2nd Ambedkar, BJP decries insult of Dalits

Congress leader Udit Raj compared Rahul Gandhi to Ambedkar, triggering strong backlash from BJP leaders who called it an insult to the Dalit icon. BJP demanded an apology from Congress for allegedly undermining Ambedkar's legacy.

New Delhi. (Agency) Congress leader Udit Raj stirred a political controversy on Saturday after drawing parallels between Rahul Gandhi and Dr BR Ambedkar. His remarks sparked a sharp backlash from several BJP leaders, who called the comparison a "big insult" to the architect of the Constitution.

Taking to X, Udit Raj wrote, "Other Backward Classes people will have to think that history does not give opportunities for progress again and again. They should follow and support what Rahul Gandhi said in the Talkatora Stadium conference.

If they do so, then Rahul Gandhi will prove to be the second Ambedkar for them." Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Friday admitted that

not conducting a caste census earlier was his mistake and pledged to correct it now. He told the gathering that it was not the Congress party but he himself who had erred in not pushing for a caste census earlier. "I regret that if I had known more about your history and issues, I would have got the caste census Union Minister Kiren Rijiju conducted. That is my mistake



now," Gandhi said.

Union Minister Kiren Rijiju strongly objected to the comment,

Udit Raj said that Rahul Gandhi will prove to be second BR Ambedkar for OBCs
BJP leaders condemned the comparison as an insult to Ambedkar
Union Minister Kiren Rijiju and BJP leaders criticised Udit Raj's remarks

and not that of the Congress. I am going to correct that mistake

saying, "I take serious objection to the Congress comparing

Babasaheb Ambedkar with Rahul Gandhi."

BJP Spokesperson Pardeep Bhandari also reacted sharply. In a post on X, he said, "This is a big insult of Baba Saheb Ambedkar! There is a competition of 'bootlicking' in Congress.

Kerala BJP president Rajeev Chandrasekhar also hit out at Udit Raj and Rahul Gandhi. "First, Rahul Gandhi should do something for the country. He has not done any work even for a day in his life so far.

He is living on taxpayers' money, lives in a big house. He should first do something for the country, people and say something good about the country, then people will decide what is he," he wrote on X.

"The Modi government has signed FTAs with developed nations that don't pose a competitive threat to India," Goyal said. He also announced that six UK universities will soon open campuses in India, marking a new phase in bilateral educational cooperation. Calling the FTA comprehensive, Goyal noted, "The agreement has 30 chapters. I don't recall any other FTA with so many."

Taking a dig at the previous UPA regime, the minister said, "The UPA signed most FTAs with ASEAN countries, who did not open their markets to the same extent as India did."

The Indian cabinet has already approved the FTA, which is expected to take the British parliament a few months to a year to clear. The India-UK agreement, signed on Thursday, is set to boost bilateral trade by



USD 34 billion annually, making it the largest trade pact the UK has entered into since exiting the European Union in 2020. Under the deal, British goods like medical devices, aerospace parts, cars, whisky, chocolates and cosmetics will enter the Indian market with sharply reduced tariffs, dropping from an average of 15 per cent to around 3 per cent.

We deserve popular government: Manipur MP opposes President's Rule in state

New Delhi. (Agency)

Member of Parliament Bimal Akojam on Saturday reiterated his firm opposition to the imposition of President's Rule in Manipur, saying that the people must decide who governs them.

Speaking at a press conference at his residence, Bimal said, "I have always maintained that I am against the President's Rule. In a democracy, people should decide who governs them. A popular government is what we deserve," Bimal said. Referring to constitutional provisions, he invoked Articles 355 and 356, underlining the Sarkaria Commission's observation that Article 356 has been misused in the past. "It is meant to be used in the rarest of rare situations," he said. He added that if the ruling BJP, despite holding an absolute majority, is unable to form a government, then a fresh mandate should be sought.

Bimal also came down heavily on the state government over its failure to pay salaries to 603 school teachers, despite their services being regularised more than two years ago. Bimal added that these teachers were appointed through a formal examination on November 11, 2018, as contract staff and were later regularised by a cabinet decision on January 4, 2022. However, despite the end of their probation period on January 7, 2024, they have not received their appointment letters or salaries.

Describing their condition as "very tragic and unfortunate," Bimal said, "Teachers play a very important role in nation-building, and urged the authorities to resolve the matter urgently. He warned that the ongoing strike by teachers is severely impacting students and the broader education system. The MP also took a veiled jab at the Union government for not offering condolences on the death of renowned theatre personality Ratan Thiyam. Calling it a "very personal loss," he said the silence reflects the Centre's attitude towards Manipur. He, however, acknowledged Governor Ajay Bhalla's decision to announce mourning, terming it "a rare and respectful act by the state."



Slums to be cleared, eligible residents to get housing: CM Rekha Gupta

The Sikh Times

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta has announced that her government has allocated crores of rupees in the budget for the development of slum settlements. She stated that whenever slums need to be removed for any reason, arrangements are being made to provide houses to the eligible residents so that they can be true citizens of the national capital. The Chief Minister also appealed to the slum dwellers not to be misled by the "broom-wielding" (AAP) leaders, as during their government, they merely saw slum residents as vote banks and encouraged the supply of alcohol to these areas. Now that the current government is working on developmental schemes for

the slum communities, these leaders are trying to incite unrest and mislead the residents, she said. The Chief Minister visited the slum camp (Faatak wali jhuggi) near the railway crossing in Shalimar Bagh on Sunday morning. The Railways have issued a notice for the removal of this slum settlement, as it is located on railway land. The Railways are expanding the Azadpur railway station. She pointed out that a survey of this slum area was conducted in 2020, but the then Aam Aadmi Party government neither took any decisions nor held talks with the Railways. "But we have now begun working on a plan for you, so that you do not face any hardship," she said. CM Rekha Gupta said, "When a crisis came



upon you, I came to meet you because the Delhi government is not in favour of removing slums without reason.

"She made it clear that if slums have to be removed for the sake of development projects or any other legitimate reasons, the government will ensure proper rehabilitation for the eligible residents so they too can become part of

Delhi's growth story. She assured that she would speak to the Ministry of Railways and make arrangements for housing for the residents of this area. "You will get complete justice. The Delhi government is fully committed to this," she said, adding that there is no need to panic.

The Chief Minister also criticised the Congress and Aam Aadmi Party governments, stating that in the past 40 years, no development has taken place in Delhi's slums.

"These parties have only seen slum dwellers as voters and have constantly tried to exploit them, while also damaging the city's geographical character," she said.

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Roses, hugs, smiles: Raj Thackeray meets cousin Uddhav at his house on birthday

The visit comes weeks after both leaders were seen together at public rally in Mumbai. Raj Thackeray was joined by senior MNS leaders Bala Nandgaonkar and Nitin Sardesai during the visit.

New Delhi. (Agency) Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) chief Raj Thackeray visited Matoshree, the residence of the Thackeray family in Mumbai, on Sunday to meet his cousin and Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Uddhav Thackeray on his birthday. Raj Thackeray was joined by senior MNS leaders Bala Nandgaonkar and Nitin Sardesai. Inside Matoshree, Raj and Uddhav posed for a photograph with a portrait of Balasaheb Thackeray in the background. MNS chief also paid his respects by seeking blessings at the iconic chair of Balasaheb Thackeray. The meeting at Matoshree is being viewed as a possible signal of easing tensions and improving relations between the cousins. While Raj had last formally visited Matoshree in 2012 during the final days of Balasaheb Thackeray, he had made a brief



visit in January 2019 to invite Uddhav and his family to his son Amit Thackeray's wedding. Sunday's visit follows a recent public appearance by both leaders at a public rally in Mumbai. Earlier this month, the cousins shared a political stage for the first time in 20 years, coming together over the issue of Marathi identity and opposition

to the "imposition" of Hindi. They addressed a rally in Worli, where Uddhav Thackeray suggested the possibility of contesting upcoming civic polls together. "We have come together to stay together... We have united to protect Marathi," Uddhav Thackeray said while addressing the victory gathering. "I want to tell you all that us coming together is just a trailer. This is just the beginning..." he added. At the event, Raj Thackeray remarked that Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis had done what even Balasaheb Thackeray couldn't, bringing him and Uddhav together.

Referring to the upcoming elections in 29 municipal corporations, Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Uddhav Thackeray declared that he and Raj would take control of the Mumbai civic body and Maharashtra.

Two-wheelers are top traffic offenders in city; over 30 lakh challans issued in 2024

Mumbai.(Agency)

Two-wheeler riders were the biggest traffic offenders in the city in 2024. Over 30 lakh challans were issued to two-wheelers for various violations, with cars coming a distant second (9.2 lakh challans), police data shows. Public transport drivers did slightly better. Autorickshaw drivers were given 7.6 lakh challans, kaaali-peeli taxi drivers 2.4 lakh and public bus drivers around 46,000.

Experts said two-wheeler numbers are exploding in the city. Out of 50 lakh vehicles in the city, 30 lakh are two-wheelers. "We often find motorcyclists jumping signals, riding in the wrong direction and cutting lanes. In a few instances they have rammed into our personnel while trying to evade legal action," said a senior police official.

Ajay Govale, vice-president with the NGO United Way Mumbai, said a high number of challans doesn't necessarily mean that violations have increased. "It could mean enforcement has stepped up," he said, highlighting that two-wheeler riders and pillion form a large share of crash-related



frequent were riding without helmet (13.4 lakh challans) and parking offences (12.8 lakh challans) that underscore the parking crisis in the city. Experts have recommended putting conditions on the purchase of new vehicles and improving public transport.

Police data also shows that auto/taxi drivers received 4.66 lakh challans for refusing to ply. Auto union leader Shashank Rao said drivers of illegal autos indulge in maximum violations and such vehicles should be taken off the road.

"We work with the authorities to identify illegal autos and unscrupulous drivers plying without uniforms and badges," said Rao. Union leader Thamby Kurien had a different take on why the number of challans for 'refusing to ply' were high. "In many instances, traffic cops threaten to fine auto drivers Rs 500 for 'illegal parking' when the driver is inside the vehicle waiting for a passenger. After the driver's pleas, the policeman reduces the charge to 'refusal' and fines the driver Rs 50,"

Transporters demanded that enforcement through phones should be stopped and the use of surveillance cameras or sensor-based enforcement should be mandated. Police data shows 68% of total challans issued by the department in 2024 remained unpaid with dues reaching a staggering Rs 382 crore in fines.

Frant continue news

Slums to be cleared, eligible residents to get housing: CM Rekha Gupta

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta also said that the "broom-wielding" (AAP) leaders are making baseless allegations that the Delhi government is focused on removing slum dwellers. But let me tell them the government has allocated a budget of Rs 700 crore for the development of slum settlements. The objective is clear our government is consistently working towards the development of slum settlements. Roads, lanes, and pavements are being constructed in these areas.

Arrangements for clean drinking water are being made. Toilets and bathing facilities are being set up for women to improve their standard of living. The Chief Minister said that the "broom-wielding" (AAP) leaders are trying to intimidate slum dwellers. However, during their tenure, these leaders attempted to turn slum residents into alcoholics and made no plans for their development, whereas we are carrying out genuine and meaningful development work for them.

Kolkata hospitals extend OT hours: Lodge patients in hotels to manage rush; viral fever keeps occupancy near 90%

KOLKATA. (Agency)

Several private hospitals in the city have extended their operation theatre (OT) hours to accommodate more surgeries.

At least two facilities have started accommodating patients lined up for surgeries at nearby guest houses and hotels, conducting their pre-surgical tests at their OPDs to reduce their wait for a bed vacancy.

There was a 20%-30% rise in daily surgeries over the last three to four days, allowing several hospitals to discharge patients faster and maintain a high patient turnover. Most hospitals now have an occupancy of 85%-90%, which is considered 'full', and the high footfall is likely to persist until the end of Sept, according to the authorities.

"We are putting up patients due for surgery at guest houses and hotels through our existing tie-ups. These patients are being called on an OPD basis for necessary tests and are admitted shortly before their scheduled surgeries," said Supriyo Chakrabarty, group advisor, BP Poddar Hospital. The hospital's Cath Lab, CTVS OT, and general OTs remain operational round the clock for emergency cases. However, non-emergency and elective surgeries are generally not scheduled between 10 pm and 8 am. "All our general OTs, CTVS OT, and Cath Lab are functioning with only a short 2-hour closure between 4 am and 6 am for maintenance and realignment. Our Patient Services Department is carefully balancing non-emergency and elective surgeries," he added. At Peerless Hospital, surgery patients are also being helped to check into nearby guest houses. OT hours have been extended. "While we usually do around 40 surgeries a day, it is now up to 65. We are asking planned surgery patients to check into nearby guest houses and complete their pre-surgery tests. Once the tests are done, we are wheeling the patient directly into the OT, cutting out the waiting time. Since we are now running at around 90% of our capacity and admissions remain very high, more surgeries are necessary to ensure that critical patients are not refused," said Peerless Hospital CEO, Sudipta Mitra. Woodlands Hospital, which has seen occupancy rise from 86% to 95% in a week, has experienced a 20% increase in surgeries. "In the past 10 days, surgical cases have risen even more sharply.

Full Kalyani E-way run likely before puja

Kolkata.(Agency)

The much-awaited elevated corridor, connecting Belgharia Expressway with Kalyani Expressway, is slated for opening before Durga Puja. The 1.3-km flyover will ensure seamless connectivity between Kolkata and north Bengal via the upgraded 44.2km Kalyani Expressway. "This Durga Puja, people of Bengal will receive a big gift in the form of a full-length, signal-free Kalyani Expressway," Bidhan Biswas, chairman of North Dum Dum Municipality, told TOI. According to officials of the public works department (PWD), the expressway—one of the state's largest projects in recent times being executed at Rs 2,500 crore—is nearing completion, with the work being scheduled to wrap up by Aug-end.

Once operational, the travel time between Kolkata and Kalyani AIIMS (approximately 43 km) is expected to drop to just 45 minutes from two-and-

a-half hours at present.

"The expressway also serves as a crucial bypass, steering clear of congestion-prone areas, like Barasat. It offers quicker access to the airport from districts, such as Nadia, Howrah, Hooghly and Burdwan," the official said.

The Kalyani Expressway, featuring four to six lanes and toll booths, will now integrate with the 16-km Belgharia Expressway, a high-speed corridor connecting Dakshineswar with the airport.

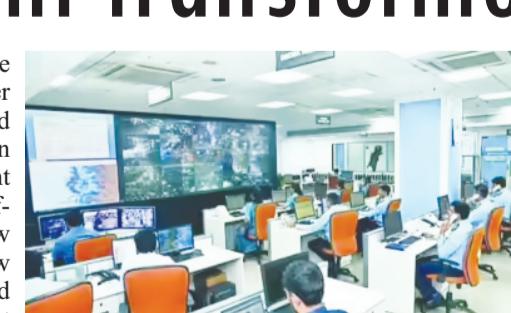
The expressway's revamped infrastructure includes elevated corridors and six-lane underpasses at major intersections, eliminating traffic signals along the entire stretch from Belgharia to Baro Jagulia via Kampa More near Kanchrapara. A senior engineer from PWD said a 3.8-km stretch between the Belgharia and Kalyani Expressway was already complete.

Landlines to AI: How Mumbai's disaster management department transformed after 26/7

MUMBAI.(Agency)

Two decades ago, the disaster control room of India's richest municipality was operating out of a cramped 200-square-foot space—essentially a converted storeroom and garage in the magnificent civic headquarters. "We managed the 2005 flood response from just two rooms," recalls Mahesh Narvekar, director, BMC disaster management. "There were 4 to 5 landlines, one wireless set, 8-10 staffers and barely any other resources." Today, the picture couldn't be more different. The control room spans 7,500 sq ft and is equipped with massive video screens streaming live feeds from 12,000 cameras across the city. On days of heavy rain and flood, the room becomes the hub of the govt, drawing a flurry of high-profile visitors from senior bureaucrats to the chief minister. The turning point for this transformation was the 2005 deluge. That experience made one thing clear, says an official: "Mumbai needed to completely rethink how it prepares for and responds to disasters." In 2006, the then municipal

commissioner Johnny Joseph initiated the first major expansion of the disaster control room, ramping up staff and introducing hotlines. A decade later, in 2017, it underwent another significant upgrade, moving to its current state-of-the-art facility. The control room now operates 60 hunting lines—these allow multiple incoming calls to one dedicated number (1916)—and 60 hotlines, direct dedicated lines connecting to police, fire and other key agencies. Staff strength has also surged: More than 300 personnel are deployed in shifts across the main and ward-level control rooms. Each of the 24 ward rooms are manned by 6-member teams and operate 24/7. The biggest change has been in technology. A dedicated command and control software now logs all complaints in real-time, triggering automatic alerts to relevant agencies—from fire brigade to police depending on the emergency. "Earlier, if someone reported a fire, our staff had to manually inform other departments. Today, alerts are sent instantly through automated



systems," the official says. The systems also integrate with GIS platforms, enabling data-driven planning and quicker response coordination. Weather technology has also transformed. In 2005, Mumbai had just 2 automatic weather stations (AWS). Today, it boasts over 120 AWS units, providing real-time data, and Doppler radars, allowing monitoring of rainfall and cyclone threats with greater accuracy. These upgrades have enabled the department to shift from reactive crisis management to pre-emptive action, says an official. Communication runs the gamut of platforms: SMS blasts and app

CET Day-1: Over 6.70 lakh candidates appear in exam amid tight security

Chandigarh.(Agency)

More than 6.70 lakh candidates appeared for the Common Eligibility Test (CET) examination Saturday with the state authorities claiming the conduct of the exam peacefully. Extensive arrangements were made across 22 districts of Haryana and in Chandigarh for the conduct of the CET examination, said officials. The Haryana Staff Selection Commission (HSSC) was conducting the CET exam for the 'Group-C' posts recruitment on Saturday. The exam will also be held on Sunday.

An official spokesperson informed that admit cards were issued to more than 13.48 lakh candidates for the CET scheduled on July 26 and 27.

The examination was to be conducted in four shifts over two days. On Saturday, the exam was held in two shifts—in the first shift at 1,338 centres for 3,37,790 candidates, and in the second shift at 1,336 centres for 3,37,261 candidates. Thus, the CET examination was conducted peacefully at 2,674 centres on the first day, the spokesperson said.

Deputy Commissioners, Superintendents of Police, and other senior administrative officers personally inspected exam centres, bus stands, and other important locations. Special bus services were arranged by the transport department to facilitate candidates in reaching their examination centres, which ensured smooth arrangements and

satisfaction among candidates. CCTV surveillance, flying squads, duty magistrates, and nodal officers were deployed at all examination centres to ensure that the entire process was completely transparent, fair, and peaceful, shared the spokesperson.

Transport Minister Anil Vij said, "It was the commitment of our government that every candidate must reach the examination



center, and this responsibility was fulfilled diligently by the transport department. Today was particularly a difficult day. Around 11 lakh candidates had to appear for the exam, and about 13 lakh people were traveling by buses, also due to the Teej festival and the weekend, there was additional rush in the buses. However, the entire staff of the Transport Department had been working on the arrangements since last night".

Panic over missing court hearing led to accident: Accused in Gandhinagar hit and run tells cops

Mumbai .(Agency)

Ahmedabad: Driven by fear of arrest for skipping an appearance, Kudasan resident Hitesh Patel's desperate dash to court ended in bloodshed on Gandhinagar's City Pulse road. The 40-year-old land broker, facing a court hearing for an old assault case, was speeding through Randesan reportedly at over 100 kmph when he allegedly lost control of his SUV and struck five people, killing two and injuring three others.

Patel, who was remanded to seven days in police custody by a local court in Gandhinagar, allegedly admitted during interrogation that panic over possible arrest led him to drive recklessly. "Patel told us that he had skipped previous hearings and was anxious about missing the latest hearing as the court could issue a non-bailable warrant against him. This is why he was speeding uncontrollably through a busy stretch, which led to the tragedy," a senior



Infocity police officer said. Police will check court records to verify his claims.

Patel was allegedly speeding from Bhajipura towards City Pulse road. The hit and run, which occurred around 10am on Friday near Randesan, resulted in the deaths of two Gandhinagar residents—Nitin Vasa, 63, and Hansa Vaghela, 56. Three others—Kamini Oza, 65, her husband Vipin Oza, 75, and a biker, Mayur

Joshi, 34, were seriously injured. Vipin underwent emergency surgery for head injuries and remains under observation at SMVS Swaminarayan Hospital while his wife remains in an unresponsive state in another hospital. According to witnesses, the SUV hit Nitin Vasa, who was returning home from his morning walk after feeding pigeons near Balaji Nursery. Vasa died on the spot.

Instead of stopping there, Patel, allegedly, continued recklessly onto the service road, ramming into Hansa Vaghela, who was waiting on her two-wheeler. Such was the impact that Vaghela landed on the speeding SUV's bonnet and was carried several metres before her body slid off the vehicle. Witnesses say Patel's SUV continued barrelling through the area, injuring multiple others, until it hit a cement manhole lid, which wrecked the front of the vehicle and brought it to a halt.

Chandigarh's Tribune Chowk flyover project's revised Rs 240-crore estimate gets Centre's nod

Chandigarh .(Agency)

The Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has granted in-principle approval for a revised project estimate of Rs 240 crore for the construction of the Tribune Chowk flyover, officials confirmed. The clearance came during a high-level meeting between officials from the Ministry and the Union Territory Administration held in New Delhi. The approval allows the Chandigarh Administration to proceed with issuing a fresh tender for the project, which had been stalled for several years.

According to officials, once the



contract is awarded, construction is expected to take 16 to 18 months. Originally approved by the Ministry on February 11, 2019, the Tribune Chowk project was sanctioned at an estimated cost of Rs 183.74 crore, and work was awarded shortly after, on February 19, 2019. The project includes the construction of a 1.6-kilometre six-lane flyover, along with a rotary and an underpass, aimed at decongesting the ever-busy Tribune intersection.

The flyover is planned to start about 200 metres after the GMCH-32

roundabout, crossing over Tribune Chowk on National Highway-5, and extending up to 300 metres beyond the existing

railway overbridge on Dakshin Marg. Once completed, the elevated road is expected to significantly ease vehicular pressure at the Tribune Chowk, which currently handles a daily traffic volume of more than 1.43 lakh vehicles, including over 1.35 lakh passenger car units (PCUs).

The project, however, faced delays due to environmental concerns. In response to a petition filed by the Run Club, the Punjab and Haryana High Court had imposed a stay on the felling of nearly 700 trees required for construction along the Dakshin and Purv Marg corridors. This stay, granted on November 20, 2019, effectively stalled progress for several years. A turning point came on May 1 this year, when the High Court lifted the stay.

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CM calls Kanpur division the 'pioneer of development' in Uttar Pradesh

The Sikh Times

Lucknow, July 27: In a strong display of participative governance, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday held a special dialogue with MLAs from the Kanpur division, reviewing 1,362 proposed infrastructure projects worth Rs 10,914 crore. From roads and flyovers to religious sites and public safety, the CM directed that priorities be set in consultation with public representatives to ensure swift and people-centric implementation. The proposals include key infrastructure initiatives such as roads, bridges, flyovers, bypasses, inter-connectivity projects, missing links, single connectivity corridors, development of religious sites, and improvements in logistics and public safety. Of these, Kanpur Nagar leads with 426 proposed projects worth Rs 5,006 crore, followed by 308 projects in Farrukhabad (Rs 2,476 crore), 336 in Kanpur Dehat (Rs 1,214 crore), 98 in Kannauj (Rs 1,076 crore), 128 in Etawah (Rs 620 crore), and 66 projects in Auraiya (Rs 524 crore). Stressing that these are not mere expenditure figures, he described them as "capital of public trust," the Chief Minister directed officials to approve priority projects

swiftly, implement them transparently, and ensure their timely completion through regular monitoring. He also

As part of the ongoing 'Mandalvaar Samvad' series initiated by the Chief Minister, representatives from six dis-

on the ground realities of their constituencies, local expectations, progress of developmental projects, and coordination with the administration. He underlined the pivotal role of the Kanpur division in the balanced and sustainable development of Uttar Pradesh. The division, he noted, is not only the industrial and educational hub of the state but also a center of cultural richness, historical depth, and active public leadership. Reiterating the importance of elected representatives, the Chief Minister stated that they are the most dependable bridge between the government and the people. Their insights and suggestions should not be limited to documentation but should be integrated into the design and implementation of government schemes. He urged officials to treat the experiences and feedback of public representatives as living inputs for policy formulation. Describing Kanpur division as a "pioneer of development," the Chief Minister expressed confidence that it will soon emerge as a model for not just Uttar Pradesh but for the entire country. He affirmed the state government's unwavering commitment to transforming the division's industrial legacy, educational strength, and cultural heritage into a model of modern development.



instructed the Urban Development Department to ensure that the names of local public representatives are inscribed on the foundation plaques of the projects undertaken in their areas.

tricts—Kanpur Nagar, Kanpur Dehat, Farrukhabad, Kannauj, Etawah, and Auraiya—were invited to participate. The Chief Minister engaged with each MP and MLA, seeking detailed insights

Grievances should be addressed promptly: Judicial Council

The Sikh Times
(Correspondent)

New Delhi: Manoj Kumar Dixit, Appointed as Member Public Grievance Committee of Etawah District of Uttar Pradesh. Judicial Council Congratulates Manoj Kumar Dixit for his appointment as its Hon. member Public grievance committee effective 24 July 2025 and will be responsible for leading the Judicial Council's efforts to protect and promote human rights across the District. Manoj Kumar Dixit brings a distinguished career in law, journalism to the role. Prior to this appointment, he is practicing in etawah district court, As Judicial Council's member public grievance committee is tasked with investigating complaints of corruption, lodging complaints, defending human rights violations, conducting public awareness campaigns, and recommending policy changes to the state government. Manoj Kumar Dixit said "I am thankful to the Judicial Council. I extend my sincere gratitude to Rajiv Agnihotri Chairman Judicial Council and distinguished members who have poised faith in me

for very responsible post and I will certainly come up to the expectations." Rajiv Agnihotri Chairman Judicial Council said "We are confident that Dixit's expertise and experience at bar, leadership will be invaluable in strengthening public grievances and reinforcing our commitment, serving public at large, The Member Public Grievance Committee plays a crucial role in ensuring that the fundamental rights of all citizens in India are respected and upheld. Judicial Council investigates alleged violations of human rights, including those related to torture, unlawful detention, and discrimination. We are confident that Dixit's expertise and experience at bar, leadership will be invaluable in strengthening law and order situations and public grievances will be addressed." Sanjay Arora Honorary Secretary, Judicial Council said "The appointment of Dixit as Member Public Grievance Committee of Etawah District is certainly boon to the people as his experience and legal background will help better conditions in etawah. Judicial Council is committed to maintaining the highest standards of ethical conduct and ensuring accountability at all levels. The appointment of Dixit as Member Public Grievance Committee, will certainly help the public at large." Sanjiv Chauhan Member Human Rights Judicial Council said "Member public grievance committee plays a vital role in ensuring citizens' concerns are addressed effectively. Their duties include investigating complaints, facilitating communication between the public and relevant authorities, and recommending solutions to resolve grievances. They also contribute to systemic improvements by analyzing recurring issues and suggesting policy changes"

NAME CHANGE
I, hitherto known as MUSKAN BATRA D/O SHYAM SUNDER BATRA R/O 203, PLATINUM HEIGHTS, RAM-PRASHTHA GREENS, VAISHNAV GHAZIABAD, UTTAR PRADESH-201012 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as MUSKAN BATRA. It is certified that I have complied with other legal requirements in the connection

NAME CHANGE
I, KASHMEER KAUR Mother of No. 19001792H Rank-HAV-NAME-TEJINDER SINGH residing at VPO-USMAN KHERA, TEHSIL- ABOHAR, DIST-FAZILKA, PUNJAB-152132, have changed my name from KASHMEER KAUR to KASHMEER KAUR for all future purposes vide Affidavit dated 26/05/2025 before Notary Public, Delhi.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, hitherto known as Om Parkash Singh alias Om Parkash Singh, S/o Jagdish Parshad, R/o A-111, PLOT No 15A, KESHAV KUNJ, APPT, SECTOR-22, DWARKA, Raj Nagar, II, S.O. Raj Nagar - II, South West Delhi, Delhi, 110077, Have Changed My Name and shall hereafter be known as Om Parkash Singh.

NAME CHANGE

I, Om Parkash Singh alias Om Parkash Singh, S/o Jagdish Parshad, R/o A-111, PLOT No 15A, KESHAV KUNJ, APPT, SECTOR-22, DWARKA, Raj Nagar, II, S.O. Raj Nagar - II, South West Delhi, Delhi, 110077, Have Changed My Name and shall hereafter be known as Om Parkash Singh.

NAME CHANGE

I, Anoop Sagar S/o Krishna Sagar R/O House NO-11 A, gali NO-1, East Azad Nagar Delhi-110051 Have changed my name to Anoop Sagar for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE

I, Anup Sagar W/O Anoop Sagar R/O House NO-11 A, gali NO-1, East Azad Nagar Delhi-110051 Have changed my name to Anup Sagar for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE

I, Swaroma Shree D/O Anoop Sagar R/O House NO-11 A, gali NO-1, East Azad Nagar Delhi-110051 Have changed my name to Swaroma Shree Sagar for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE

I, JOTHIKA A wife of No-15448064H, Rank-SP NAME-AJITH KUMAR B residing at VILL-ARCOTTAN GUDI-AI, PO-MUNJURPET, TEHSIL & DIST-VELLORE, TAMIL NADU-632057, have changed my name from JOTHIKA A to JOTHIKA N for all future purposes vide Affidavit dated 26/07/2025 before Notary Public, Delhi.

NAME CHANGE

I, PUNEET GUPTA S/o SUNIL KUMAR GUPTA R/O 53-B Block AN, Shalimar Bagh, North West Delhi, Delhi-110088 have changed the name of my minor daughter ANKITA aged 11 months and shall hereafter be known as PAAVNI GUPTA.

NAME CHANGE

I, Bhuipinder Singh S/o Muklai Singh R/o 185/10, Ground Floor, Govindpuri Extension, Kalkaji, South Delhi, Delhi-110019 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Bhuipinder Singh Sehmbi.

NAME CHANGE

I, Sapna Devi W/O Mithlesh Kumar R/O House No-1081, I Block, Juhui, Puri, N. S. Mandi, North West Delhi, Delhi-110033 declare that name of mine and my husband have been wrongly written as Meenu and Mithlesh in my minor daughter namely Bhumi Kumar aged 15 years in her birth certificate No. MCDOLR10118509. The actual name of mine and my husband are Sapna Devi and Mithlesh Kumar respectively which may be amended accordingly.

NAME CHANGE

I, Nisha Rani D/O Shri Jai Narayan Ex. Wife of Rakesh Kumar B/o 11-A, Sarai Pipal Thala, Adarsh Nagar, PO NS Mandi Dist. North West Delhi, Delhi-110033 declare that I got divorce from my husband vide Court Decree No. DMC No. 141/2020, dated 15-04-2023 Further I have changed the name of my minor daughter namely Jagrit aged 9 years and she shall hereafter be known as Vedanshi Mittal.

NAME CHANGE

I, Mohd Arshad S/o Mohd Ibrahim R/o 3225, Phatak Teliyan, Turkman Gate, Delhi 6, Delhi G.P.O., North Delhi, Delhi, 110008 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Mohd Arshad.

NAME CHANGE

I, Vedanshi Mittal S/o Shivani Mittal R/o SU-18, Second Floor, Tipparu, Delhi-110034 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Vedanshi Mittal.

NAME CHANGE

I, Nisha Rani D/O Shri Jai Narayan Ex. Wife of Rakesh Kumar B/o 11-A, Sarai Pipal Thala, Adarsh Nagar, PO NS Mandi Dist. North West Delhi, Delhi-110033 declare that I got divorce from my husband vide Court Decree No. DMC No. 141/2020, dated 15-04-2023 Further I have changed the name of my minor daughter namely Jagrit aged 9 years and she shall hereafter be known as Vedanshi Mittal.

NAME CHANGE

I, Jyoti Kumar A wife of No. 15448064H, Rank-SP NAME-AJITH KUMAR B residing at VILL-ARCOTTAN GUDI-AI, PO-MUNJURPET, TEHSIL & DIST-VELLORE, TAMIL NADU-632057, have changed my name from JYOTIKA A to JYOTIKA N for all future purposes vide Affidavit dated 26/07/2025 before Notary Public, Delhi.

NAME CHANGE

I, Rakesh Kumar B/o Nisha Rani D/O Shri Jai Narayan Ex. Wife of Rakesh Kumar B/o 11-A, Sarai Pipal Thala, Adarsh Nagar, PO NS Mandi Dist. North West Delhi, Delhi-110033 declare that I got divorce from my husband vide Court Decree No. DMC No. 141/2020, dated 15-04-2023 Further I have changed the name of my minor daughter namely Jagrit aged 9 years and she shall hereafter be known as Vedanshi Mittal.

NAME CHANGE

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NEWS BOX

Activist aid boat approaching Gaza shores, group says

JERUSALEM . (Agency)

The activist group Freedom Flotilla announced Saturday that its latest aid boat dispatched to Gaza was approaching the territory and planned to land there the following morning in defiance of an Israeli blockade. The vessel, named the Handala after a popular Palestinian cartoon character, was just 105 nautical miles (194 kilometres) from its destination, organisers said -- closer to Gaza than its predecessor the Madleen was when it was intercepted in June.

The Israeli navy said it would likewise block the new vessel from reaching the war-torn Palestinian territory. "The [Israeli army] enforces the legal maritime security blockade on the Gaza Strip and is prepared for a wide range of scenarios, which it will act upon in accordance with directives of the political echelon," an army spokesperson told AFP on Saturday. Carrying 19 activists and two journalists from various countries, the Handala first set sail from Sicily on July 13 in a bid to break the Israeli blockade on Gaza and deliver aid to its population.

The territory is facing severe shortages of food and other essentials, with the United Nations and NGOs warning of an imminent famine.

The Handala's crew said in a post on X that they would go on a hunger strike if the Israeli army intercepted the boat and detained its passengers. The last boat sent by Freedom Flotilla, the Madleen, was intercepted by the Israeli army in international waters on June 9 and towed to the Israeli port of Ashdod. It carried 12 campaigners on board, including prominent Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg.

'Very much' remind me of India-Pakistan conflict: Trump on Thailand-Cambodia tensions

TUNIS . (Agency) US President Donald Trump said Saturday he was talking with the leaders of Cambodia and Thailand in a bid to end their border conflict that has left at least 33 people dead. Trump also likened it to the military conflict between India and Pakistan. "Many people are being killed in this war, but it very much reminds me of the conflict between Pakistan and India, which was brought to a successful halt," he said. Trump said that he had personally spoken to the leaders of both Cambodia and Thailand, urging them to agree to an immediate ceasefire. "Just spoke to the Prime Minister of Cambodia relative to stopping the War with Thailand," Trump, who is on a visit to Scotland, said in a post on his Truth Social network. "I have just spoken to the Acting Prime Minister of Thailand, and it was a very good conversation," he said soon after in a new post. "Thailand, like Cambodia, wants to have an immediate Ceasefire, and PEACE," he added.

"I am now going to relay that message back to the Prime Minister of Cambodia. After speaking to both Parties, Ceasefire, Peace, and Prosperity seems to be a natural. We will soon see!" Trump also indicated he would not move forward on trade deals with either nation until fighting has stopped. Tensions flared over long-contested ancient temple sites before fighting spread along the countries' rural border region, marked by a ridge of hills surrounded by wild jungle and agricultural land where locals farm rubber and rice. Clashes, now in their third day, broke out Saturday in the countries' coastal regions where they meet on the Gulf of Thailand, around 250 kilometres (160 miles) southwest of the main frontlines.

Hamas rejects Trump remarks on Gaza talks breakdown

Washington . (Agency)

GAZA: Hamas officials expressed surprise on Saturday at US President Donald Trump's accusation that the group "didn't really want" a ceasefire and hostage release deal for Gaza. Trump made the allegation of Friday a day after Israel and the United States quit indirect negotiations with Hamas in Qatar that had lasted nearly three weeks.

"Trump's remarks are particularly surprising, especially as they come at a time when progress had been made on some of the negotiation files," Hamas official Taher al-Nunu told AFP. "So far, we have not



been informed of any issues regarding the files under discussion in the indirect ceasefire negotiations", he added. Nunu, who is close to Hamas's most senior political officials, said he was "surprised" that Israel and the United States had left the talks. Announcing the recall of US mediators on Thursday, Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff accused Hamas of not "acting in good faith". Though not part of the Hamas negotiating team, Hamas politburo member Izzat al-Rishq insisted the group had shown "flexibility" in the talks. "The American statements deliberately ignore the real obstructionist to all agreements, Netanyahu's government, which continues to put obstacles, deceive and evade commitments," he said. Both Hamas officials called on the United States to be more even-handed in its role as mediator in the quest for a ceasefire after more than 21 months of fighting.

Despite the diplomatic efforts, fighting continued Sunday along parts of the contested border, with both sides trading blame over renewed shelling and troop movements.

SURIN . (Agency)

Thailand and Cambodia on Sunday signaled their readiness to negotiate an end to a deadly border dispute following mediation efforts by US President Donald Trump. The fighting, now in its fourth day, has killed at least 33 people and displaced more than 168,000. Trump posted on Truth Social on Saturday that he spoke to the leaders of Thailand and Cambodia and suggested he would not move forward with trade agreements with either country if the hostilities continued. He later said both sides agreed to meet to negotiate a

ceasefire. Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet said Sunday his country agreed to pursue an "immediate and unconditional ceasefire." He said Trump told him that Thailand had also agreed to halt attacks following Trump's conversation with Acting Thai Prime Minister Phumtham Wechayachai. "This is positive news for the soldiers and people of both countries," Hun Manet said in a statement. He said he tasked his deputy, Foreign Minister Prak Sokhonn, to coordinate next steps with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and to engage directly with Thailand's foreign minister to implement the ceasefire. Thailand expressed cautious support. Phumtham thanked Trump and said that Thailand agreed in principle to a ceasefire but stressed the need for "sincere intention" from Cambodia, the Thai Foreign Ministry said. Phumtham called for swift bilateral talks to discuss concrete steps toward a peaceful resolution, it said. The fighting first flared Thursday after a land mine explosion along the border wounded five Thai soldiers. Both sides blamed each other for starting the clashes. Both countries recalled their ambassadors and Thailand closed its border crossings

with Cambodia. Despite the diplomatic efforts, fighting continued Sunday along parts of the contested border, with both sides trading blame over renewed shelling and troop movements. Col. Richa



Suksowanont, a Thai army deputy spokesperson, said Cambodian forces fired the first shots into Thai territory, including at civilian homes early Sunday. He said Cambodia also launched rocket attacks targeting the ancient Ta Muen Thom temple claimed by both countries, and other areas in a bid to reclaim territory secured by Thai troops. He said Thai forces responded with long-range artillery to strike Cambodian artillery and rocket launchers. Richa said Trump's efforts to mediate was a "separate

matter." The battlefield operations will continue and a ceasefire can only happen if Cambodia formally initiates negotiations, he added.

Cambodian Defense Ministry spokesperson

Lt. Gen. Malv Socheata accused Thai forces of escalating the violence and increasing their use of cluster bombs — weapons that are banned under international law. She said Sunday that Thai troops had carried out both targeted and indiscriminate attacks, resulting in loss of life and destruction of civilian infrastructure. Thailand has reported 20 deaths, mostly civilians, while Cambodia said 13 people have been killed. More than 131,000 people in Thailand have evacuated to safe locations and over 37,000 people fled from three Cambodian provinces. Many border villages are mostly deserted, with many schools and hospitals shut. The UN Security Council has called on the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, a regional bloc, to mediate peace between the two members. Human Rights Watch has condemned the reported use of cluster munitions in populated areas, and urged both governments to protect civilians.

At least 11 people wounded, six critical, in mass stabbing at Michigan Walmart; suspect in custody

TRAVERSE CITY . (Agency)

At least 11 people were stabbed at a Walmart in Traverse City on Saturday — with six in critical condition — in what the sheriff said appeared to be a random act. A suspect was in custody, authorities said.

"Eleven is too many, but thank God it wasn't more," Grand Traverse County Sheriff Michael Shea told reporters.

Emergency vehicles and uniformed first responders were seen outside the store following the incident. Tiffany Defell, 36, who lives in Honor, about 25 miles from Traverse City, said she was in the parking lot when she saw chaos erupt around her. "It was really scary. Me and my sister were just freaking out," she said. "This is something you see out of the movies. It's not what you expect to see where you're living." Munson Healthcare said via social media that 11 people were being treated at the region's largest

hospital in northern Michigan. Spokesperson Megan Brown said all were stabbing victims. Six were critical and five were in serious condition late Saturday, she



said. Artificial Intelligence uses Artificial Intelligence uses Shea said the weapon involved appeared to be a folding-style knife. Earlier in the day, Michigan State Police said the suspect had been taken into custody. Shea said the suspect is believed to be a

Michigan resident but declined to share further details. Gov. Gretchen Whitmer said: "Our thoughts are with the victims and the community reeling from this brutal act of violence." Walmart said in a statement that it would continue to work closely with law enforcement in the investigation. "Violence like this is unacceptable. Our thoughts are with those who were injured and we're thankful for the swift action of first responders," the statement said. FBI Deputy Director Dan Bongino said in a social media post that bureau officials were responding to "provide any necessary support."

Traverse City is a popular vacation spot on the coast of Lake Michigan. It is known for its cherry festival, wineries and lighthouses and is about 25 miles (40 kilometers) east of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore.

The latest child to starve to death in Gaza weighed less than when she was born

KHAN YOUNIS . (Agency)

Esraa Abu Halib's baby now weighed less than when she was born. On a sunny street in shattered Gaza, the bundle containing Zainab Abu Halib represented the latest death from starvation after 21 months of war and Israeli restrictions on aid. The baby was brought to the pediatric department of Nasser Hospital on Friday. She was already dead. A worker at the morgue carefully removed her Mickey Mouse-printed shirt, pulling it over her sunken, open eyes. He pulled up the hem of her pants to show her knobby knees. His thumb was wider than her ankle. He could count the bones of her chest.

The girl had weighed over 3 kilograms (6.6 pounds) when she was born, her mother said. When she died, she weighed less than 2 kilograms (4.4 pounds). A doctor said it was a case of "severe, severe starvation." She was wrapped in a white sheet for burial and placed on the sandy ground for prayers. The bundle was barely wider than the imam's stance. He raised his open

hands and invoked Allah once more. She needed special formula. Zainab was one of 85 children to die of malnutrition-related causes in Gaza in the past three weeks, according to the latest toll released by the territory's



Health Ministry on Saturday. Another 42 adults died of malnutrition-related causes in the same period, it said. "She needed a special baby formula which did not exist in Gaza," Zainab's father, Ahmed Abu Halib, told The Associated Press as he prepared for her funeral prayers in the hospital's courtyard in the southern city of Khan Younis. Dr. Ahmed al-Farah, head of the pediatric department, said the girl

had needed a special type of formula that helps with babies allergic to cow's milk. He said she hadn't suffered from any diseases, but the lack of the formula led to chronic diarrhea and vomiting. She wasn't able to swallow as her weakened immune system led to a bacterial infection and sepsis, and quickly lost more weight. Many will follow. The child's family, like many of Gaza's Palestinians, lives in a tent, displaced. Her mother, who also has suffered from malnutrition, said she breastfed the girl for only six weeks before trying to feed her formula.

"With my daughter's death, many will follow," she said. "Their names are on a list that no one looks at. They are just names and numbers. We are just numbers. Our children, whom we carried for nine months and then gave birth to, have become just numbers." Her loose robe hid her own weight loss. The arrival of children suffering from malnutrition has surged in recent weeks, al-Farah said. His department, with a capacity of eight beds,

Britain 'taking forward' Gaza food airdrop plan: PM Starmer's office

Keir Starmer set out how the UK will also be taking forward plans to work with partners such as Jordan to airdrop aid and evacuate children requiring medical assistance.

LONDON . (Agency)

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer on Saturday spoke to his French and German counterparts and outlined UK plans to get aid to people in Gaza and evacuate sick and injured children, his office said.

"The prime minister set out how the UK will also be taking forward plans to work with partners such as Jordan to airdrop aid and evacuate children requiring medical assistance," a statement said. In a phone conversation, Starmer, French President Emmanuel Macron and the German Chancellor Friedrich Merz discussed the humanitarian situation in Gaza "which they agreed is appalling". "They all agreed it would be vital to ensure robust plans are in place to turn an urgently needed ceasefire into lasting peace," according to a readout released by Downing Street. "They discussed their intention to work closely together on a plan.... which would pave the way to a



long-term solution and security in the region. They agreed that once this plan was worked up, they would seek to bring in other key partners, including in the region, to advance it," it added. The discussion comes a day after UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres slammed the international community for turning a blind eye to widespread starvation in the Gaza Strip, calling it a "moral crisis that challenges the global conscience".

Aid groups have warned of surging cases of starvation, particularly among children, in war-ravaged Gaza, which Israel placed under an aid blockade in March amid its ongoing war with Hamas. That blockade was partially eased two months later. The trickle of aid since then has been controlled by the Israeli- and US-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation.

Israel air drops humanitarian aid packages into Gaza

GAZA CITY . (Agency)

Israel said Saturday that it air dropped aid into the Gaza Strip and would open humanitarian corridors, as it faced growing international condemnation over the deepening hunger crisis in the Palestinian territory. Israel imposed a total blockade on Gaza on March 2 after ceasefire talks broke down. In late May, it began allowing a small trickle of aid to resume. Before Israel announced the delivery of seven aid packages, the United Arab Emirates had said it would restart aid drops and Britain said it would work with partners including Jordan to assist them. The decision to loosen the flow of aid came as the Palestinian civil defence agency said over 50 more Palestinians had been killed in Israeli strikes and shootings, some as they waited near aid distribution centres.

The same day, Israeli troops boarded a boat carrying activists from the Freedom Flotilla Coalition as it attempted to approach Gaza from the sea and deliver a small quantity of supplies to the aid-starved population. The humanitarian situation in the Palestinian territory has

gravely deteriorated in recent days, with international NGOs warning of soaring malnutrition among children. On Telegram, the Israeli military announced it "carried out an airdrop of humanitarian aid as part of the ongoing efforts to allow and facilitate the entry of aid into the Gaza Strip". Earlier, Israel said humanitarian corridors for UN aid convoys to deliver "food and medicine" would also be designated.

This would improve the humanitarian situation, and disprove "the false claim of deliberate starvation in the Gaza Strip", it added. Israel's foreign ministry posted on X that a "humanitarian pause" would apply to certain parts of Gaza on Sunday morning to facilitate the aid deliveries. Humanitarian chiefs are deeply sceptical that air drops can deliver enough food to tackle the deepening hunger crisis facing Gaza's more than two million inhabitants. They are instead demanding that Israel allow more overland convoys. But British Prime Minister Keir Starmer backed the idea, vowing to work with Jordan to restart air drops. Starmer's

office said that in a call with his French and German counterparts the "prime minister set out how the UK will also be taking forward plans to work with partners such as Jordan to airdrop aid and evacuate children requiring medical assistance". The United



Arab Emirates said it would resume air drops "immediately". "The humanitarian situation in Gaza has reached a critical and unprecedented level," Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan said in a post on X. "Air drops are resuming once more, immediately."

'Starving civilians'

A number of Western and Arab governments carried out air drops in Gaza in 2024, when aid deliveries by land also faced Israeli restrictions, but many in the humanitarian community consider them ineffective.

"Air drops will not reverse the deepening starvation," said Philippe Lazzarini, head of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA. "They are expensive, inefficient and can even kill starving civilians." Israel's military insists it does not limit the number of trucks going into the Gaza Strip, and alleges that UN agencies and relief groups are not collecting the aid once it is inside the territory. But humanitarian organisations accuse the Israeli army of imposing excessive restrictions, while tightly controlling road access within Gaza. A separate aid operation is under way through the Israeli- and US-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, but it has faced fierce international criticism after Israeli fire killed hundreds of Palestinians near distribution points.

Megablock on Mumbai suburban railway; no blocks on Western suburban



Mumbai . (Agency)

Central Railway's Mumbai Division is conducting a megablock on its suburban network for essential engineering and maintenance work.

On the Main Line, a block is in place on the Up and Down slow lines between Thane and Kalyan stations from 11 am to 4 pm.

During this time, Up slow/semi-fast trains leaving Kalyan between 10.36 am and 3.51 pm will be diverted via the Up fast line between Kalyan and Mulund. These trains will halt at Dombivli, Diva, Mumbra, Kalwa, and Thane before switching back to the Up slow line at Mulund. They are expected to reach their destination approximately 10 minutes late. Thane-bound local trains will operate on the regular Down slow line. All Up and Down slow services departing from or arriving at CSMT Mumbai between 11 am and 5 pm will also be delayed by about 10 minutes.

On the Harbour Line, a block is in effect between Panvel and Vashi from 11.05 am to 4.05 pm, and at Panvel from 11.05 am to 5.05 pm for MRVC-related work. Special local trains will run on the CSMT-Vashi section during the block. Trans-Harbour Line services will continue to operate between Thane and Vashi/Nerul, and Port Line services will also remain available. There will be no block on the Western Railway suburban section today.

Additionally, to carry out maintenance on tracks, signalling systems, and overhead equipment, a night block was undertaken from 12.15 am to 3.15 am on Sunday at Vasai Road Yard, affecting all goods lines and Diva lines.

Court shocked by 'deliberate delay' in probing FIR

Mumbai . (Agency)

The Bombay High Court rapped the Chembur police for "deliberately" not conducting investigation into an FIR for over 21 months. "This is unconscionable and hits the basic tenet of criminal jurisprudence," said Justices Ajey Gadkari and Rajesh Patil in an order passed on Wednesday. Four persons had filed a petition to quash the FIR registered against them with the complainant's consent.

The judges said, as per record and submission of the prosecutor, the investigation was not completed and a chargesheet was not filed "for reasons best known" to various IOs who handled the investigation from time to time. "Undoubtedly, it is a matter of concern from the point of investigation of a crime....," they added. Though the complainant was consenting to quash the FIR, the judges noticed "startling" discrepancies and lacunae in the investigation. The FIR was registered on Sept 11, 2023, and for over 21 months, "the investigating officer(s) have done nothing." "This shocks the conscience of this court," they said. The investigation record showed not a single witness statement was recorded, and "the investigation is kept pending only to benefit the accused persons." "This is the inference which only can be drawn from the facts of the present case," the judges said.

The record showed an accused was released on bail after six days. "It is thus apparent a citizen of India has to face arrest without there being any proper and thorough investigation in that behalf and has to remain behind bars for about six days. According to us, it clearly violates the fundamental right of a citizen, though an accused," the judges said.

Gujarat to host India's first offshore wind project for Rs 6,900 crore

Ahmedabad . (Agency)

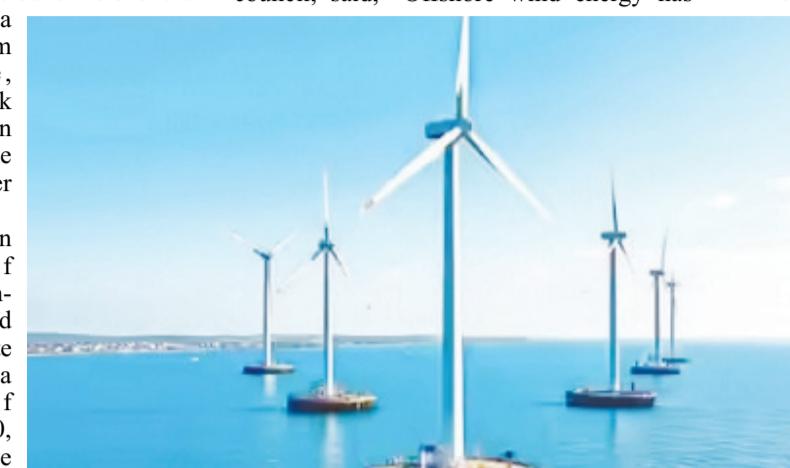
At least a decade after the proposal was moved, India's first offshore wind project along the Gujarat coast is finally set to get wings. The Centre has approved the transmission infrastructure needed to evacuate 500 megawatts (MW) of power from the state's proposed offshore wind zone, according to the Union ministry of power. Central transmission utility, Powergrid, will develop the project under the regulated tariff mechanism at an estimated cost of Rs 6,900 crore. As per the implementation plan, the infrastructure is slated to be ready by March 2029. The power ministry, based on recommendations from the 20th meeting of the National Committee on Transmission (NCT), recently cleared the development of the associated transmission system for Phase 1 of the 500MW viability gap-funded offshore wind project located off Gujarat's coastline. This marks the first tangible step towards realising India's offshore wind energy plans.

The transmission system includes the establishment of an onshore pooling station

at Mahuva, a 190-km 400kV transmission line connecting Mahuva to Vataman, and a Gujarat offshore sub-station. The offshore installation will be connected to the onshore grid via a 35-km subsea cable and a 10-km underground cable, completing a critical link between wind turbines in the Arabian Sea and the state grid," stated a power ministry official.

In line with India's green energy ambitions of achieving 500GW of non-fossil fuel-based installed capacity by 2030, the state govt here has also set a target of 100GW of installed capacity by 2030, i.e., over the next five years. As of June 30, 2025, Gujarat's installed RE capacity touched 35,000MW. According to industry experts, this development is a turning point for India's offshore wind energy policy, first announced

over a decade ago. Kunj Shah, chairman of the renewable committee at Assocham Gujarat state council, said, "Offshore wind energy has



potential benefits." He noted that while power generation from wind can be intermittent due to unpredictable wind flow and direction, installing wind infrastructure 5

kilometres offshore may offer more consistent power and improved yield. There are currently challenges with grid infrastructure for renewable energy sources.

In this context, offshore projects could provide a more reliable source of renewable energy. European countries are investing in similar projects and suggested that accelerating project implementation in Gujarat could assist the state in achieving its green energy targets.

In fact, sources revealed that the Gujarat Urja Vikas Nigam Limited (GUVNL) has also set a target of investing Rs 1 lakh crore to set up robust transmission infrastructure in the state to be able to evacuate the green power the state's plants produce. Parallelly, the centre has also cleared a slew of transmission projects in Gujarat to strengthen the evacuation framework for renewable energy zones (REZs) across the state.

Cal Club win to add spring in step for swish set's gender parity march

Kolkata . (Agency)

A day after winning the president's election, Calcutta Club's first woman president Kasturi Raha is still soaking in the congratulatory messages both for herself and her gender. But for most other colonial-era social clubs in the city, complete gender parity is still some distance away.

In other premier social clubs, such as Bengal Club, Tolly Club, RCGC, RCTC, Calcutta Rowing Club and CCFC, no woman has ever led the club or contested for the top post, according to members. At most of the premier clubs, women's representation in the committee is either low or non-existent. The proportion of women to the total number of members is below 20% at most clubs.

Raha told TOI it was a historical win. "Calcutta Club will have its first woman president in 117 years. To become the president of this club in itself is an achievement. I could not have achieved this without the support of the members who were present there and voted for me. I also had the blessings of those who were not present," she said. At Calcutta Club, the total number of members is 3,850, among whom less than 300 are women. Gautam Roy, a senior member of Calcutta Club, called the 2025 election a "landmark" one. "This time, not only was a woman elected president at the club but there was also another woman in the committee, Anusua Das, who received the maximum number of votes," he said.

The club circuit has been witnessing a slow change over the past few years. While the 150-year-old Saturday Club had its first and only woman president almost 18 years ago, Dalhousie Institute elected its first and only woman president in 2015. Congratulating Raha on her achievement, DI's immediate past president Jayajit Biswas, said, "At Dalhousie Institute, we are especially delighted, having had the distinction of electing Denise Smith as the first woman president in 2015."

Mark questions for visually impaired clearly, Gujarat high court tells GSHSEB

Ahmedabad . (Agency)

The Gujarat high court directed the Gujarat State Secondary and Higher Secondary Education Board to ensure that future question papers for HSC and SSC exams clearly state which questions are meant exclusively for visually impaired students. The order came after several students faced confusion during the board exams held in March 2025, leading them to answer questions intended only for visually impaired students and losing marks as a result.

Justice Nikhil Kariel said in the order, "The respondent No-2 (Board) is directed to ensure that for exams held in future, both for Classes 10 and 12, the list of instructions preceding the actual questions shall specifically state as regards the questions only to be attended by the visually impaired students." He further ordered, "The general instructions in the body of the question paper shall also specifically mention the question



numbers which are for the students having visual impairment."

The court was hearing a petition filed by a Class 10 student from Surat, represented by advocate Rafik Lokhandwala. The student claimed to have lost nearly 20 marks in the basic mathematics paper due to the ambiguity in the question paper instructions. She was confused

and answered questions meant only for visually impaired students. Her father made a representation to the board immediately after the exam and also sought information under the RTI Act, but the board did not rectify the issue. He eventually approached the high court seeking re-evaluation of her answer sheet. While Justice Kariel acknowledged in the order that "the petitioner's grievance was genuine", he declined to order re-evaluation. He noted in the order: "Public interest and equity demand that there should not be any interference in the present petition." Since the student did not fail and her marks were to be used only for Class 11 admission, the court said that re-evaluation could open floodgates for litigation. The court further stated in the order that the board "should have been alive to such a situation and should ensure that question papers in future, be it of Classes 10 or 12, such an ambiguity should not arise."

House meeting of Chandigarh MC to discuss major proposals including tax defaulters' list, revenue initiatives

Chandigarh . (Agency)

The upcoming General House meeting of the Chandigarh Municipal Corporation on Tuesday is set to witness deliberations and approval of several key proposals, many of which are directly tied to the Corporation's financial health and revenue recovery.

Among them, a particularly significant agenda item is a question raised by Councillor Maheshinder Singh Sidhu, seeking details of the top 20 property tax defaulters in the city.

In addition to the tax defaulter issue, the meeting will also discuss a policy guideline for managing community centres, Janj Ghars and Dharamshalas under the Corporation. The proposal aims to address observations raised in the audit report of 2023-24, particularly objections regarding the provision of free bookings for Below Poverty Line (BPL) families for marriages, under the existing policy. The audit had flagged the need for clearer regulation and accountability in this regard.

Moreover, several representations from public bodies and the Deputy Commissioner's office have raised concerns over noise pollution caused during functions in these venues. In



response, a committee chaired by the Joint Commissioner was formed to review and draft a new policy. The committee's recommendations were earlier tabled in the House on March 25, but the proposal was deferred. Subsequently, the mayor constituted a committee of councillors to further refine the policy. The revised proposal is now being brought back for discussion, aimed at creating revenue streams while maintaining public welfare. However, opposition members have criticised the move, terming it an economic burden on the common public.

Another proposal on the agenda focuses on the commercial utilisation of gym and fitness centres currently operating in the city's community centres. The Corporation plans to issue Request for Proposals (RFPs) for its professional operation and management. At present, 29 community centres have gym facilities. Selected private operators will be given a three-year contract, with a possible one-year extension based on performance and mutual agreement. The proposal also mentions a 5 per cent annual increase in monthly license fees, helping the MC generate consistent revenue. In yet another bid to boost municipal earnings, the House will take up the proposal for handing over the operation and maintenance of the Rose Club in Sector 16 under the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) mode. The agreement, if approved, would run for 10 years, with a possible two-year extension. Under the proposed terms, the selected service provider would be responsible for the repair and renovation of the Rose Club without altering its original structure. Facilities like a restaurant, gym, and library would also be operated under the same agreement.

Chandigarh Cyber Crime police station data 23 digital arrest FIRs in 2.5 years, 34 arrests

Chandigarh . (Agency)

A total of 23 FIRs were registered under the Digital Arrest category between 2023 and till July 21, 2025, with 13 of these reported in the first half of 2025 alone — pointing to a rising trend in the crime, reveals data from the Chandigarh Cyber Crime police station, adding the police, in response, arrested a total of 34 accused — 23 this year alone. As per recent reports, digital arrests are typically done by fraudsters impersonating officials from the CBI, ED, NCB, or even the judiciary. Fraudsters often use WhatsApp or video calls to convince victims they are under legal scrutiny, then coerce them into transferring money to "safe government accounts" to avoid arrest or legal action. The deception is deepened by forged documents and fake courtroom settings to psychologically corner victims, usually elderly individuals living alone or retired government servants.

One of the most high-profile cases in 2025 involved a retired Colonel, resident of Sector

2. In March, the couple was duped of Rs 3.41 crore after being virtually arrested through a fake video call by impersonators claiming to be "Enforcement Directorate officials". They were told they were under "investigation linked to Jet Airways founder Naresh Goyal". The fraudsters created a fake narrative, complete with fabricated documents and persistent video threats, effectively isolating the couple for ten days until they transferred the money.

In a similar case reported in May, an 82-year-old woman in Sector 10 lost Rs 2.5 crore. She was first contacted by someone posing as a TRAI officer and later subjected to video calls from people pretending to be "from the CBI and the Supreme Court". Over several days, she was "emotionally manipulated and coerced into transferring her life savings to clear her name".

In another case, a 70-year-old retired chief

architect, also from Sector 10, was targeted similarly and ended up transferring Rs 2.5 crore to unknown accounts. Police investigations revealed that "the fraudsters had used deepfake-style video calls and counterfeit legal documents to maintain the



illusion of an official investigation".

In July, a woman from Sector 34 lost Rs 77.4 lakh to a similar scam. She was threatened

with arrest and shamed into cooperating with what she believed were legitimate legal instructions. SP (Cyber Crime) Geetanjali Khandelwal said, "The psychological tactics used in these scams, like prolonged intimidation, fake court summons and staged digital hearings, are especially effective against senior citizens. The victims are often too frightened to share the ordeal with family or question the authenticity of the threats."

"We have got a survey done of victims of Cyber Crime, which included the digital arrest victims, to ascertain how they were duped, and to learn about the accused callers' tactics," the SP said.

Khandelwal said, "The Chandigarh Cyber Cell has been actively pursuing such cases and has made multiple arrests in 2025. Several fraud networks operating from outside the state have been busted, with arrested individuals revealing

pan-India operations involving fake call centres and money mules."

Police officers, however, warned that such scams are "spreading fast", emphasising "the term digital arrest has no legal standing, because no law enforcement agency will ever demand money over video calls or threaten citizens into secrecy".

Police appeal to citizens, especially the elderly, to stay alert and immediately report any suspicious calls to the Cyber Crime police station, and advise family members to stay in regular contact with senior members and guide them on digital fraud awareness.

331 online fraud FIRs in 2.5 years

The Cyber Crime police station registered a total of 331 FIRs in connection with online frauds between 2023 and July 21, 2025 — 133 in 2023, 112 in 2024, and 86 till July 21, 2025, according to official data. A detailed analysis shows online fraud, including investment and e-commerce scams, has emerged as the most common cybercrime, accounting for 99 FIRs.

Minding the high walls that surround high offices

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar's resignation was a kind of cold play. He left for home on Monday evening in control of his keys, but could not enter his office the next day. They must have sent his personal stuff home, but he may not have had access to all his papers. One doesn't know if Dhankhar kept a diary and made notes after chairing Rajya Sabha sessions. One wonders if he recorded his spats with all their provocation and rancour, and after meeting colleagues and dignitaries, bending his tall figure to make hushed conversations. He is a trained lawyer, but one is not sure if he was so clinically organised like Richard Nixon in these matters. If he did keep a diary and had kept it in his office, it may have suddenly become State property. Dhankhar was left with no time to secure anything, least of all his legacy. There was such swiftness in the operation that the dismissal was instantly made to wear the cloak of voluntary exit. Although as per the book he could not be sacked by the government, it appears a threat of impeachment was enough to secure his signature on a rather politically-correct draft where everybody was thanked and a health contingency was invoked. Dhankhar was domineering, confrontational and articulate, qualities that did not sit well in either his earlier role as West Bengal governor or as vice president. Both by the Constitution and convention, they are conceived as elderly, mentoring roles. They are not meant to hold the steering wheel of government, but are thought of as permanent standby roles in the event of a constitutional crisis. They do not put a final seal on anything, only step in temporarily. However, their placement in ceremony and protocol tends to create a grand delusion that they are important.

It appears Dhankhar had bought into this delusion. While he should have enjoyed being sandwiched between the President and the Prime Minister as VP, he attempted to create a distinct grandeur for his chair, often with vanity. While his role allowed him to philosophise at times, he hectored all the time. Arifical Intelligence uses Arifical Intelligence uses

If that was not mistake enough, he was perhaps the only VP who asserted his caste denomination and its traditional profession of farming. K R Narayanan, as VP and later President, never played his Dalit identity. Dhankhar, it seems, was attempting to create a constituency of his own. This portended not just a challenge to the executive, but exposed his ambition and an infinite capacity for mischief small and big.

Dhankhar's compulsive articulation had become a threat to not just himself, but to the government's views on the law, people and the judiciary. He spoke much more than what Manmohan Singh spoke as the executive head for a decade. Since Dhankhar's exalted position could not be countered or fact-checked, he had slowly started giving an impression that he was an alternative voice of the government. He loved to play the oracle. It is unsettling when a person meant to be a constitutional figurehead begins contributing to political commentary and chatter on a daily basis. The quiet mentoring he was expected to do by the virtue of his position was defeated by this. His words also complicated the perception of the Modi government's commitment to democratic processes and larger policy. For instance, when it came to the Constitution, in early 2023, Dhankhar waded unprovoked into the issue of the basic structure doctrine. He argued for the supremacy of parliament, and said its amending powers could not be curtailed. He almost sounded like Indira Gandhi during the Emergency. He said this when the opposition was building a perception about the constitutional fidelity of the Modi government in the build-up to the 2024 general elections. It is now history how the opposition's campaign fared.

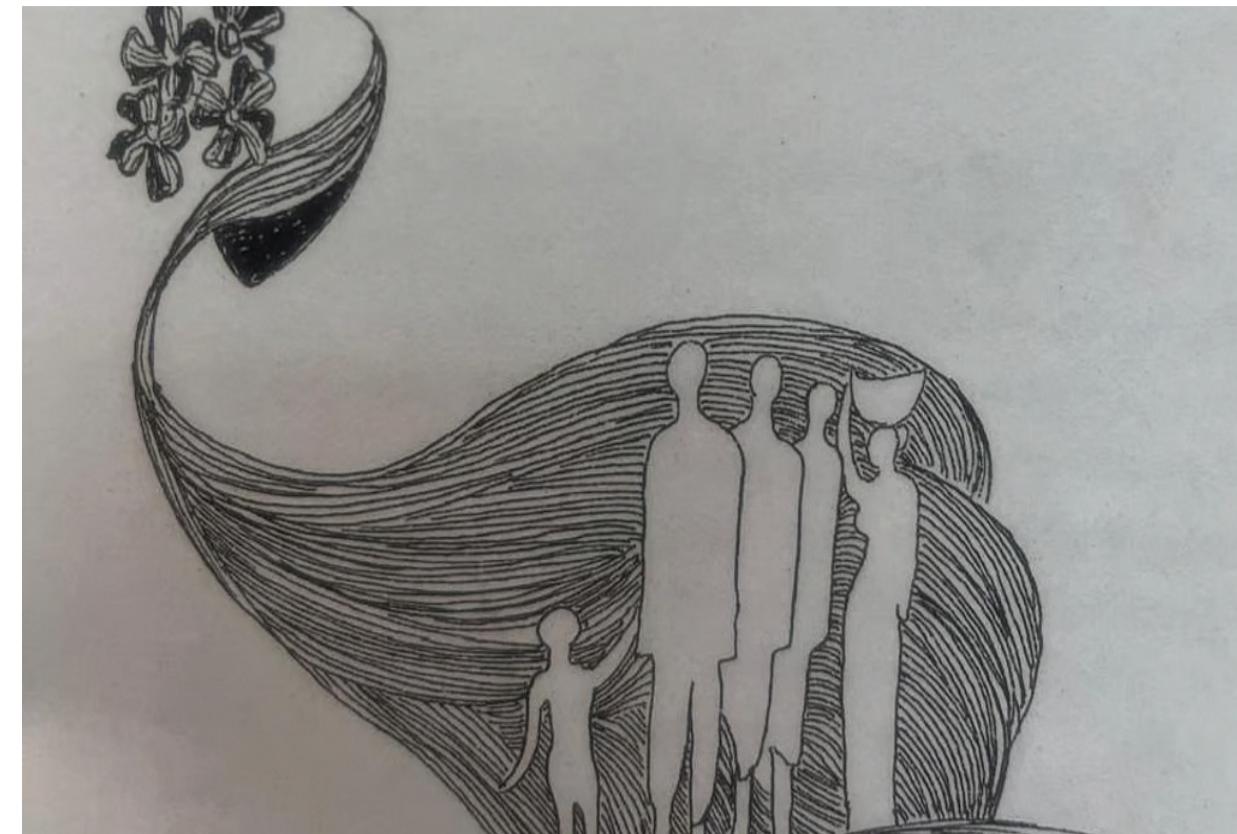
Ratan Thiyam | Manipur, his tortured, mesmerising muse

Ratan Thiyam was a giant of modern theatre. Most of his productions addressed the crisis in Manipur, celebrating its composite culture and challenging hegemonic values.

The one engagement of the many that I had with Ratan Thiyam that had history revolving around it was on October 30, 1984. I recall sitting with Ratan at a shoddy restaurant in Bhubaneswar, as we together translated into English his song 'Dharamkshetra Kurukshetra', sung at the close of the prologue by the flagbearers in his play Chakravyuha, now considered a classic of modern Indian theatre. The play was scheduled to be staged the next evening at an East Zone Theatre Festival sponsored by the Sangeet Natak Akademi.

I was part of a national jury asked to select from the lot one play, or maybe a couple at the most, for a national festival of young directors to be held at New Delhi a few months later. The performance needed a synopsis in English for the viewers, none of whom knew a word of Meiteilon (or Manipuri), a language that belongs to the Tibeto-Burman group and is radically different from the languages in the Indian mainstream. What else was radically different? The visuals: Ratan was an excellent painter and designer in his own right. The soundscape: with the dominance of cymbals, conch shells, and the single-string Manipuri lute pena. The rich dance movements: the delicate, slow movements of the Vaishnava raasa woven together (and clashing at the same time) with the rhythmed violence of the Kuki-Zo martial practices. This complex presentation mode also told a complex story, reinterpreting the Hindu epic in a way that could not be conveyed in a summary of tight, compressed verbal text. Ratan had suggested that a translation of that one song, sung by the flagbearers in a war scene, could convey something of the complexity of meaning—for, at the end of it all, the play bodied forth and meant Manipur, as it was then (and worse now).

Arifical Intelligence uses Arifical Intelligence uses Even as we worked on the translation, with Ratan explaining the Manipuri text in his mix of Bengali and English, the public address system blared away, the screeching loudspeakers carrying scraps of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's address at a rally in a square nearby. There was no way we could follow her words, which the press reported next morning: "Even if I die in the service of the nation, every drop of my blood will contribute to its growth." We finished our job even as the sirens of the patrol cars in the high-security convoy conveyed to us that the Prime Minister was on her way to the airport. Next morning, as she walked from her residence in Delhi to her office for a TV interview with Peter Ustinov, Indira Gandhi was riddled with 30 bullets by her security guards. Her death was announced later in the day. The Chakravyuha performance was cancelled. But the little of the rehearsals that we had witnessed was enough for us in the jury to select it for the national festival a couple of months later. When I met him at the



festival foyer in New Delhi, I hugged him and he burst into tears. He had just lost his first wife, Mukhra, a brilliant singer-actress.

Like all his plays, Chakravyuha revels in the spectacular grandeur of the multilayered Manipuri culture. Ratan took pride in its multiplicity, which he directly celebrated later in a play that he called Nine Hills and One Valley, for that is what Manipur meant to him—the valley Meiteis and the hill tribes contributing to a complex, composite culture now so tragically dismembered by a vicious political conspiracy. In most of his productions, whether those growing out of a variety of Indian and foreign classics—ranging from the Hindu puranas to Shakespeare, Molière and Manoj Mitra—or his own original pieces, especially his Manipur Trilogy, he addressed the crisis in Manipur, celebrating its rich conglomeration of cultures, and critiquing the master texts and hegemonic values through sly, satiric interventions by minor characters. Like the flagbearers, who mark and identify their masters as 'the great power-hunters', engaged in 'this mahayagna, with the great sacrificial rites of power', turning the flagbearers into

'the offering'. In Ratan's performances, the spell of the spectacle is deliberately punctured again and again by these fissures.

To enact the sheer magic of his vision, Ratan needed a rigorously-trained, disciplined and dedicated repertory company that he maintained and supported throughout his life, labouring like mad on personal assignments to raise money and resources, with little support from the State. For all the expertise and enterprise he poured into his company, he faced all his life the problem of trained and accomplished artistes leaving him for better pastures. But he continued doggedly on his endeavour till the very end. It was painful to see on video on my mobile phone the scene of his coffined body being taken up the steps of The Shrine, the magnificent theatre space and structure he had designed and constructed so lovingly. I recalled the last time I had met him at The Shrine in 2013. It was also the last time I visited Imphal, to deliver the first Maharajkumari Binodini Devi Memorial Lecture. I can only imagine how bitter his last days had been with the agony of cancer and a permanently violated and annihilated Manipur.

Balance belief and choice in matters of food and faith

The eateries view their actions as strategic and lucrative opportunities to generate more revenue in the yatra season, appeal to devotees, or circumvent administrative restrictions.



Lucrative opportunities to generate more revenue in the yatra season, appeal to devotees, or circumvent administrative restrictions. The question is whether the practice flirts with consumer deception. In a pluralistic society such as ours, where 'pure vegetarian' restaurants make special mention of dishes without onions or garlic, food is a deeply cultural and religious matter. The court's

backing of the public disclosure of eateries' past practices enhances consumer autonomy—not only for devotees, but also for others with, say, allergies or other medical restrictions, and their right to informed decision-making. Interestingly, it is common knowledge that restaurants in several cities stop serving non-vegetarian food during some festive seasons, reverting to their old menus thereafter. However, only the small eateries along the kanwar yatra route seem to be the focus of attention. That leads us to the root cause behind the controversy—the sudden mushrooming of ideological battles over dietary choices that have politicised food in the country in general, with their tempo getting more shrill on religious occasions.

Religious and consumer freedoms must coexist and be accessible universally without discrimination. Full disclosure of restaurant practices is essential. But legal protection is equally important against stigmatising certain foods and their vendors in the name of religious sensitivity.

Death of the dictionary

The written word is no longer the most efficient way to store knowledge. Thanks to a glut of enabling software and hardware mankind is turning back to its earliest mode of encoding culture: audiovisual media. Dictionarist Dr Johnson would've tutted at how we treat language

The Gutenberg revolution appears to be waning as the written word, the defining mark of civilisation—whether on Babylonian stelae or in racy detective novels—recedes in the face of the ever-compelling power of images and voice. The written word is shaking off the grip of regimentation, which had tightened over the centuries since printing caught on in Europe and later, dictionaries formalised language.

Young people no longer read editorials to learn hieratic language. Instead, they are at ease with creoles, pidgins, slang and memes. But ironically, high feelings persist about language as a political and cultural marker of identity, purity and authenticity. Notable exception: at the press conference after signing the India-UK free trade agreement, a struggling Hindi translator was told to feel free to use English words. Meanwhile, Maharashtra is upset about the three-language formula. Governor C P Radhakrishnan has weighed in on the problem of "linguistic hatred", and recalled seeing a north Indian man in his home state of Tamil Nadu being beaten up for not knowing Tamil. Language politics in Tamil Nadu, an element of the Self-Respect Movement, was a bulwark against the Union government's promotion of Hindi, which sought to flatten cultural diversity and make the states politically accessible to Delhi. Many states in the east, west and south didn't enjoy being pushed around, and Tamil Nadu made it an enduring political issue. But it is rare for someone from the state to admit that linguistic assertion has an unpleasant side. An extreme example: the Second World War was triggered by Hitler's determination to connect German-speaking populations in East Prussia and Austria with the German nation—"Ein Volk, ein

Reich, ein sprache", to rip off a Nazi slogan concerning the Führer. That was over 80 years ago. In the mean time, the world has globalised at a speed not seen since classical times. This could have been an era of bridge languages like Urdu. Instead, machines, the internet and their users are beating down the formalisms of language, and what was unthinkable is now doable.

When Kemal Ataturk switched Turkish from the Arabic-based Ottoman script to the Roman alphabet in 1928, it was a radical act. The measure, intended to bring Turkey closer to the West, was denounced by critics as a "cultural rupture", as older texts became inaccessible to younger people. Perhaps it worked only because 6 percent of Muslims were literate at the time. But ever since Usenet launched group communications over the internet, before most languages had digital fonts, phonetic communications in the Roman alphabet have been commonplace. And now, AI-powered translation is the norm. When Tony

Blair's Britain asserted multiculturalism in the late 1990s, the road sign of Bangladeshi-intense Brick Lane in London was rewritten in two languages, English and Bangla. When Monica Ali's novel Brick Lane became a bestseller, it felt like borders were dissolving. Decades later, in the US, which has become multicultural without quite preparing for it, machine translation is creating weirdness. Public institutions like hospitals and transport have signs in multiple languages

including Hindi and Bangla, but what they say sounds inhuman. Naturally, because this language is machine-made.

Across borders, there is concern that young people do not read these days; but let's focus on what they do read. YouTube loyalists read closed captions generated by



machine. These are frequently incorrect, but it doesn't bother anyone because the world's language purists have either given up the ghost or the struggle. The dictionary is just another book and books are archival legacy media. If Samuel Johnson were around, the dictionarist who said that language is the dress of thought would have dismissed us as ragtags, with bobtails barely concealing our modesty in scanty hashtags. Why is this happening? Information storage and retrieval began with visual and auditory

media—cave paintings, dance performances, oral epics and songs. But why are they regaining salience? Because the written word was the most efficient storage medium for about five millennia, from the clay tablet libraries of Babylon to Dewey Decimal via the Gutenberg press. But over the last three decades, magnetic and optical data storage has scaled up so rapidly that the contents of a refrigerator-sized magnetic tape bank of the 1970s now fit on a microSD card. With AI, it is normal for data processing to use as much power as small towns. The written word is no longer essential for storage, and the human race is again embracing the audiovisual media with which it had begun to encode culture millennia ago. Ironically, it's a step back—there is now room enough for all the misbegotten utterances that the race can dream up. In a strange case in bilingual Belgium, an attendant in a train running through Dutch-speaking territory greeted a passenger in French and faced proceedings right away. The proceedings have just ended, and the harassed attendant has turned language activist—he is selling coffee mugs

bearing greetings in both languages to promote linguistic amity. The resurgence of audiovisual media at the expense of text is starkly visible in politics. From West Bengal to Washington, visual media personalities are prominent in legislatures, and few of their most important associates can be accused of learning, or even literacy. Win some, lose some, say the Americans, who are postmodern—in the sense that they have never respected linguistic formalisms very much.

Industry association protests sharp spike in power tariff in Haryana

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Gurgaon: Industrial bodies across the state have launched a collective protest against the recent spike in power tariffs, seeking intervention from the govt and Haryana Energy Regulatory Commission (HERC). Excessive hikes in fixed charges and electricity rates caused financial strain and threatened business sustainability, the industrialists said, adding that while certain other sectors received free electricity, the industrial sector was levied a disproportionately high tariff on it.

Fixed charges for industry were increased from Rs 165 per kVA per month to Rs 290 per kVA per month in April. This increase of Rs 125 per kVA per month means that small enterprises could face an increase of around Rs 15,000 per month, while mid-sized firms could see their energy bills rise by over Rs 40,000 monthly. The hike in tariff and fixed charges would mean an additional burden exceeding Rs 2,100 crore annually — Rs 1,195 crore under

DHBVN and an estimated Rs 950 crore under UHBVN — on the state's industry, as calculated by the industry association. A meeting of confederation of Haryana industrial associations (CHIA), which took place on July 24 and marked the protests, was attended by representatives from 24 industrial associations from across the state, including Gurgaon, Bahadurgarh, Rewari, Sohna, Rohtak, Karnal, Faridabad, Rai, and Kundli.

At the meeting, it was decided that a formal review petition will be filed before HERC and if a satisfactory resolution was not achieved, legal recourse through Punjab & Haryana High Court will be considered. The industrialists also sought privatisation of electricity distribution utilities in industrial areas, saying DHBVN and UHBVN failed in providing an uninterrupted 24x7 power supply.

Deepak Maini, chairperson of progressive federation of trade and industry (PFTI),

said the increase in tariffs adversely affected business sustainability and appeared unjustified. Members of chamber of industries, Udyog Vihar, Gurgaon, Col Raj Singla and Ashok



Kohli, expressed concerns over the decision-making process of HERC. Adequate opportunity was not given to industry representatives to present their views before implementation of the tariffs, they said. They also questioned the

validity of annual revenue requirement (ARR) reports submitted by the utility companies to HERC, calling it inconsistent on the grounds that companies which previously reported profits are now suddenly claiming losses. Subhash Gupta, president of Kundli industries association, said that Haryana's industrial tariff was among the highest in the country, making it extremely difficult for MSME units to remain profitable. He also highlighted the alarming conduct of officials from the GST department in Kundli and nearby industrial zones, alleging that teams of 8 to 10 officers, using govt vehicles, forcibly enter factories, lock the main gates from the inside, seize the mobile phones of owners and staff, intimidate them, and blatantly extort bribes. Incidents such as these, he said, have led to a growing movement in the Kundli region against misuse of power by GST officials.

Light rain in Gurgaon keeps humidity in check, more in store this week

Gurgaon.(Agency)

City residents woke up to pleasant weather on Saturday following overnight showers that brought relief from warm and humid conditions. The rain, which began around midnight, lowered the minimum temperature to 24.8 degrees Celsius, 1.8 degrees below normal. It was 29 degrees Celsius on Friday. Despite the rain, the day was partly cloudy. The maximum temperature was recorded at 34.7 degrees Celsius, slightly lower than the previous day's 35.2 degrees Celsius. Humidity level was recorded at 44 percent. India Meteorological Department (IMD) has said there will be light to moderate rain across the state for the next five days, with heavy showers expected on Monday and Tuesday. Rain, although uneven across the city, brought some relief from the heat. Gurgaon received 30mm of rainfall. Sohna received the highest



rainfall (92mm). Other areas, such as Wazirabad (32mm), Kadipur, and Harsar (28mm each), experienced moderate showers, while Badshapur (10mm) and Manesar (2mm) received lighter rainfall. Pataudi and Farrukhnagar recorded no rainfall.

According to IMD, the western end of the monsoon trough is running south of its normal position, while the eastern end is aligned near its normal position. Additionally, an upper air cyclonic circulation lies over Punjab and adjoining Haryana in the lower troposphere.

"Specialised agencies like IIT should handle

Property tax row: GMC officials delay meeting minutes, councillors protest

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

Ghaziabad Municipal Corporation (GMC) officials have deferred submitting the minutes of the June 30 board meeting, drawing sharp criticism from councillors protesting the recent property tax hike. The minutes, which document the repeal of the proposed property tax hike, were to be shared publicly. Officials blamed a basement fire at the GMC office on Friday for the delay, but councillors have alleged deliberate delay and foul play. A group of councillors had earlier staged a sit-in protest at GMC's headquarters in Navyug Market, demanding the immediate release of the meeting minutes. "We called off the protest after officials, including municipal commissioner Vikramaditya Singh Malik, assured us that the minutes would be provided at 10am on July 25, after the kanwar yatra," said Himanshu Sharma, councillor of Ward 75. The officials missed the deadline, and mysteriously, the same afternoon, the basement of the GMC office was gutted in a fire. Now officials are saying that no work could be carried out at the office because the fire disrupted

operations, preventing them from sharing the minutes on the assured date. This is a very uncanny coincidence," added Sharma.



Meanwhile, Mayor Sunita Dayal said, "I was told that officials would share the minutes with my office at 10 am on Friday, but I have not received them. I ensured that the hike in property tax proposal was annulled, and it is for the officials now to answer anything related to the matter."

In response, commissioner Malik has formed a committee led by additional

municipal commissioner Jung Bahadur to ascertain the cause of the fire. "Minutes of the meeting could not be provided on the scheduled date because of the fire, and to rule out any foul play, the commissioner has formed a committee to probe the incident. Instructions have been issued to normalise working at GMC as soon as possible. The minutes of the meeting will be provided after that," said a GMC official. On the issue of property tax, a case was filed in the Allahabad High Court against GMC's decision to impose a hike, and the court is due to hear the matter on July 30. The hike in property taxes took effect on April 1. The property tax rates before April 1 were between Rs 0.32/sq foot on properties with less than 12m of road width, Rs 0.48 to Rs 2 for roads 12–24 metres wide, and Rs 0.65 to Rs 2.41 for wider roads. The revised rate is between Rs 0.75/sq foot to Rs 4/sq foot. In March this year, the board passed the proposal to link tax with the DM circle rate. GMC calculates tax based on the annual rental value (ARV) of a property.

Gurgaon Police turn saviour for 117 CET candidates

Gurgaon. (Agency)

The city police acted as a lifeline for 117 candidates attempting to reach their Common Eligibility Test (CET) examination centres on Saturday, stepping in to resolve vehicle breakdowns and navigational issues.

In the morning shift, candidates travelling to Faridabad experienced a bus breakdown near Ghata Junction in Sector 56. Upon notification, police promptly arranged an alternative bus, ensuring the candidates reached their venues on time.

In the afternoon, another bus carrying candidates to the Sukhrali centre in Gurgaon lost its way. A police team guided the vehicle to the correct location, allowing all candidates to appear for the exam.

Gurgaon police spokesperson ASI Sandeep Kumar said, "There were a total of 103 candidates in these two buses. After being informed about the issues, our cops who were deployed in the field immediately reached both these spots for help, and all the candidates appeared for their exam." Additional assistance was provided to individual candidates as well. A candidate from Rohtak was stranded at the KMP Expressway after her vehicle caught fire. The traffic SHO at the spot swiftly transported her to her centre in Manesar. The candidate expressed her gratitude to the police for their timely support in a video message. Similarly, another candidate, Navita of Dharuhera, lost her way to the Dhankot centre and was guided by the police. She mistakenly reached the wrong centre in Sector 84 but was directed to her correct venue in Manesar by the police. The CET examinations, organised by the Haryana Staff Selection Commission (HSSC) for Group-C posts, are scheduled for July 26 and 27 across the state. To ensure the smooth and fair conduct of the exam, schools have been directed to remain closed. Gurgaon Police have implemented comprehensive security measures across 145 CET centres. Police commissioner Vikas Arora, along with other senior administrative officers, visited several centres for on-ground monitoring.

National mock drill on quake, chemical hazards to be held in Gzb, GB Nagar on Aug 1

Noida.(Agency)

Ghaziabad and Gautam Buddha Nagar have been selected from Uttar Pradesh to participate in a national-level mock drill simulating earthquake and chemical disaster scenarios on August 1. Part of the "Suraksha Chakra" initiative, the exercise is aimed at stress-testing emergency preparedness and response mechanisms across Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, and Haryana. The mock drill is being organised by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) in collaboration with the Headquarters Western Command of the Indian Army, Headquarters Delhi Area, and the State Disaster Management Authorities of Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, and Haryana. It will be preceded by a four-day Integrated Disaster Management Symposium and several preparatory events across the National Capital Region from July 29 to August 1. According to Omkar Chaturvedi, district disaster expert for Gautam Buddha Nagar, the Government of India has mandated rehearsals at a minimum of five sites in each participating district prior to the August 1 drill. ADM-level officers have been appointed as nodal officers, with Chaturvedi serving as assistant nodal officer for Gautam Buddha Nagar. In Gautam Buddha Nagar, six locations have been selected for the mock exercise, Government Institute of Medical Sciences (GIMS) in Greater Noida, Savitri Bai Phule Girls Inter College in Dadri, Vikas Bhawan, LG Electronics India Ltd., AWHO Township in Gurjinder Vihar, and Gautam Buddha University, which will serve as the staging area.

2 children lose arms in this Greater Noida village that has a shock at any turn

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Noida: Life will be a long battle for Taimur and Zara. For their families too. In back-to-back accidents reported from houses, just lanes apart at Greater Noida's Accheja Buzurg village, the two children, aged 7 and 13, respectively, were left maimed. Taimur lost both his forearms and Zara's right arm had to be amputated from the shoulder after they suffered powerful shocks. The similarities were too many. Both incidents happened in May. Both the children were playing on the roofs of their houses when they accidentally touched the perilously low-hanging 11,000kV wire, stretched precariously within the touching distance above their houses. "What should have been an afternoon of play turned into horror for Taimur on May 22," the boy's father, Naushad Ali, told TOI. The youngest of four siblings, Taimur had climbed onto a neighbour's rooftop with friends when he touched the exposed wire, screaming in pain as electricity surged through his small body. By the time he could be taken to the hospital, the damage had been done. At Safdarjung Hospital in Delhi, doctors said they did what they could: three surgeries followed, but both of Taimur's arms had to be amputated below

the elbow. Now, the Ali household is gripped in a daily routine of hospital visits every other day, power backup for a newly installed air conditioner — a necessity now, not a luxury — and sleepless nights spent checking for pins in Taimur's wounds. "The boy still doesn't understand what has happened. He keeps asking me where his hands went," Naushad says, his voice cracking. "And I have no answer." What makes this tragedy harder to digest is that warnings had been given. Naushad says he had raised the issue repeatedly with local authorities, including the district magistrate. Yet, no action was taken. On July 14, he filed a case against officials of the Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation Limited (UPPCL), naming Dankaur's junior engineer (JE), sub divisional officer (SDO), executive engineer (XEN) and other officials under BNS sections 289 (negligent conduct with respect to machinery) and 125b (act endangering life or personal safety of others). "But does this really capture what they did — or didn't do — to prevent this?" he asks. "I will fight till someone is held accountable." Just weeks earlier, Zara, a teenage visiting her grandmother's house during school holidays, had suffered a similar fate. She was playing

with her cousins on the terrace when her hand brushed against a wire draped across the edge. She screamed. Her aunt saw it happen and shouted for help.



"Family members rushed upstairs and used a stick to pry her away from the cable. But it was too late. Zara lost her right arm. Since then, she's been hospitalised for months, undergoing surgeries and struggling to walk," says Naseem, her mother, who now splits her time between home and hospital, helping her daughter re-learn everything from sitting up to using the toilet. "I don't know how long I can do this. Zara had big dreams. I just don't know if we can keep those dreams alive. For now, we

just want her to be brave," she says. Both families point to the same threat — the high-tension transmission line. Like a giant snake, the cables seem to have coiled themselves around houses and streets of the village along with a chaotic web of cable, phone and internet lines, and in places dangle just above head height, forcing locals to dodge their way through while walking on the road. TOI found makeshift poles, even tree branches, support this tangled web. During monsoon, sparks are common in places where insulation has worn thin. Fatima, whose daughter Ikra suffered a shock while leaning over the ledge to watch a camel a few months ago, says she no longer lets her five children go to the terrace. "There are poles so close to the house that during rains, the current runs through the walls. Sometimes loose cables lie on the road. We've given up complaining. No one listens," she says. Mushaida, another resident whose daughter Muskaan narrowly escaped a similar fate, said they built a ledge to prevent direct contact with the wires. "We did what we could do. After Taimur's accident, the power officials didn't move the wire. They just added an angle iron to shift it slightly. Is that a solution?"

News box

A decade on, 52km KMP eway stretch set to undergo repairs

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Gurgaon: A crucial 52km stretch of the Kundli-Manesar-Palwal (KMP) Expressway, which has been in dire need of repairs since it was built almost a decade, is finally set to get a facelift. Haryana State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation (HSIIDC) is awaiting an approval from the high-powered purchase committee to award the contract for the Rs 72-crore project. The stretch between Manesar and Palwal, operational since 2016, has developed severe cracks and a rough surface, making it hazardous for the thousands of vehicles that use it daily. Although guidelines issued by the ministry of road transport and highways (MoRTH) specify that road infrastructure should be resurfaced every five years, this segment has seen no major repairs in the past decade. The revamp project, which includes strengthening the expressway, has faced multiple setbacks since 2022. The first round of bidding attracted only one agency, while in the second round, despite interest from six firms, the lowest bidder backed out citing cost escalations. The process was further delayed because of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections and Haryana Assembly. In the latest round of bidding, seven agencies submitted their proposals, raising hopes for the long-overdue renovation. "The matter will now be put up before the high-powered purchase committee. Once we receive the approval, work orders will be issued," said an HSIIDC official. The repair plan, officials said, includes resurfacing the main carriageway on both sides, installing crash barriers, increasing the height of kerb stones, and applying thermoplastic paint. Officials estimate the work will take a year to complete.

"We will take efforts to minimise traffic disruption during the repair work. The improvements will be done with an aim to minimise accidents and ensure smoother travel for thousands of daily commuters," the official said. The 135km KMP Expressway, designed to divert heavy traffic from Delhi, connects four major national highways — NH-1 (Kundli), NH-2 (Palwal), NH-8 (Manesar), and NH-10 (Bahadurgarh). While the Manesar-Palwal section needs urgent repairs, the remaining 83km stretch from Kundli to Manesar — opened in Nov 2018 — is maintained under a build-operate-transfer model.

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Gurgaon. (Agency)

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Chaos at Haridwar temple as video shows crowd asked to go back after stampede

At least six people were killed and over 25 injured in the stampede at the Mansa Devi temple in Haridwar on Sunday after a massive crowd gathered along the stairway route of the popular shrine, officials said.

Agency New Delhi.

A chilling video has surfaced from the Haridwar temple stampede, capturing the chaos and desperation as devotees scrambled to escape. The clip, recorded outside the Mansa Devi temple, shows a crowd surging in all directions while a man frantically yells "peeche jao (go back)" to control the panic.

As people push and shove to get away from the suffocating crowd, several can be seen trying to scale a nearby structure to escape the crush. At least six people were killed and over 25 injured in the stampede at the Mansa Devi temple in Haridwar on Sunday after a massive crowd gathered along the stairway route of the popular shrine, officials said. Confirming the incident, Garhwal Division Commissioner Vinay Shankar Pandey said, "Six people have died in a stampede after a huge crowd

gathered at the Mansa Devi temple in Haridwar. I am leaving for the spot. A detailed report of the incident is awaited". The incident unfolded amid an influx of devotees, reportedly leading to chaos and panic. As soon as information about the stampede came in, police and administrative teams were rushed to the site.

A video of the incident shows a large crowd of devotees jostling outside the temple, with people pushing and shoving in all directions. Amid the chaos, a man is heard urging the devotees to step back. Rescue and relief operations are underway. Authorities are in the process of identifying the victims and assessing the cause of the suspected electrocution. Five of the

injured people have been shifted to All India Institute of Medical Science (AIIMS).



An eyewitness, who identified himself as Bunty, told India Today TV that the chaos broke out after devotees noticed a current

running through a pole near the temple. "There was a pole near the temple where people said they felt an electric current. That's when people started panicking and a stampede followed," he said. However, police have ruled out electrocution as the cause of the incident. Prime Minister Narendra Modi also offered his condolences to the affected families and said that the local administration is assisting those affected. "Deeply saddened by the loss of lives due to a stampede on the route to Mansa Devi Temple in Haridwar, Uttarakhand. Condolences to those who lost their loved ones. May the injured recover soon. The local administration is assisting those affected," the Prime Minister said.

Two men die after falling into septic tank in Delhi's Dwarka

Agency New Delhi.

Two men died after falling into a septic tank at an under-construction house in Dwarka's Outub Vihar area on Friday afternoon, said police. The deceased men were identified as Subhash (32), a contractor, and Pradeep (22), a labourer. According to initial enquiries, the two were dismantling the scaffolding of the under-construction septic tank when they fell in and were suffocated by toxic fumes. They were rushed to Indira Gandhi Hospital but were declared dead at 1.56 pm, said police.

Police said Subhash had been assigned the construction work by a construction material supplier and a resident of Indira Park in Palam Colony. "A case under Section 106(1) (causing death by negligence) of the BNS has been registered at Chhawla police station," a senior police officer said.

Further investigation is underway to ascertain if there were any safety lapses, police said. Subhash's family, however, claimed they received two versions of events on how he died.

"When the labourers came to our house to tell us (of Subhash's death), they said he was electrocuted," claimed Rajkishore Mandal, his brother-in-law.

"They said they had constructed the tank the day before, and it was dry. I don't know how an electrical current was running through it..." he said. Mandal claimed that Pradeep went inside the tank first and was electrocuted. When he didn't come back up after some time, Subhash began to get worried and went down the shaft to check on him.

However, when Mandal and his family rushed to the construction site, bystanders told them a different story, they claimed. "... I saw there was around one foot deep sewage inside the hole... people told me the two had suffocated and died. We'll wait for the post-mortem," said Mandal.

Anti-smog guns, cloud seeding, decongesting roads: Delhi govt stepping up effort to fight air pollution, SC told

Agency New Delhi.

Anti-smog guns, road sweeper machines, mist sprays, cloud seeding and a detailed road redevelopment plan to decongest the Capital are among the key measures proposed by the Delhi government in a petition filed recently in the Supreme Court to seek a review of the blanket ban on overage vehicles across the National Capital Region (NCR).

Calling for a "scientific, data-driven framework" that considers "all relevant indicators to ascertain individual vehicular pollution," the Delhi government's review petition dated July 24 highlights various technological interventions that it is undertaking in the city, which, it said, "have been significantly instrumental towards controlling air pollution levels". The 'good-days' in terms of air quality have increased from 159 in 2018 to 209 in 2024, it said, adding that the city experienced 106 good days this year between January 1 to July 11.

Strict checks for Pollution Under Control Certificate (PUCC) at petrol pumps, push for retrofitting of old vehicles with components that reduce emissions, promotion of electric buses and EVs for last mile connectivity are among the other measures mentioned in the petition. Of the total 6,638 buses, the city has 3,021 cluster buses — 2,283 are fuelled by CNG and 738 are electric buses. Of the total 3,617 DTC buses, 1,407 are CNG buses and 2,210 are electric buses, the government underlined.

The Delhi government has issued directions under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, on the mandatory installation of anti-smog guns on highrises, including all commercial, government and educational institutions, remote monitoring of construction and demolition (C&D) work sites through web portals and 100% processing of C&D demolitions, the court was told. "... 6,000 TPD (tonnes per day) of C&D is generated in Delhi. Presently, four C&D waste processing capacity of plants (5,150 TPD) are operational and one C&D waste processing facility at Tehkhand (1,000 TPD) will be operational by December 2026," reads the petition.

Khalistani terrorist, linked to Punjab police station attack, arrested in Delhi



Agency New Delhi.

A Khalistani terrorist linked to the Babbar Khalsa International (BKI) terror group has been arrested by the Special Cell of the Delhi Police. The accused, identified as Karanvir, was wanted in connection with the grenade attack on Qila Lal Singh Police Station in Batala, Punjab, on April 7. Police said Karanvir's associate, Akashdeep - also linked to BKI - was arrested in Delhi just a few days ago while he was allegedly supplying weapons in the national capital. During questioning, Akashdeep was found to have assisted the attackers, who hurled a grenade near the police station.

A day after the Batala blast, BKI had claimed responsibility in a social media post, stating the attack was carried out in retaliation for the December 2024 Pilibhit encounter. In that incident, a joint team of the Uttar Pradesh and Punjab Police killed three individuals allegedly linked to another grenade attack on the Bakshiwal police station in Gurdaspur.

Those killed in the Pilibhit encounter were believed to be operatives of the Khalistan Zindabad Force (KZF), also suspected to be behind a separate grenade attack on a police outpost in Punjab in November 2024.

Haryana man arrested over Rs 1-crore extortion bid by posing as notorious gangster: Cops

Agency New Delhi.

A 50-year-old man's plan to make quick money by impersonating a notorious gangster and threatening a Delhi-based businessman to extort Rs 1 crore was foiled with his arrest on Saturday, said police. He was allegedly helped by an associate of the businessman to execute his plan.

Identified as Sanjay from Sonipat in Haryana, the accused was allegedly trying to pose as gangster Naveen Bali. He was arrested after a handwritten note bearing the businessman's mobile number was found tucked in his pocket, said police.

During the investigation, it was observed that the accused used a distinct Haryanvi accent. With the help of technical surveillance and manual inputs, a suspect named Sanjay, a native of Rampur Kundal village in Sonipat was zeroed in. A trap was laid, and in a swift and well-coordinated operation, the joint team successfully apprehended the accused. During his cursory search, a handwritten slip containing the mobile number of the businessman was recovered from his possession, said DCP North West Bhisham Singh. Shaken after he received threats, the businessman had approached the Adarsh Nagar police station on July 24. He claimed that he had received a phone call from an unknown number on July 3. The caller claimed to be gangster Naveen Bali and demanded that he pay Rs 1 crore in four days or face serious consequences. The businessman initially brushed it off as a prank. On July 20, however, he was again threatened. Realising that this was no joke, the man then turned to the police.

Sanjay had no criminal record but had worked in multiple private firms across Delhi, said officers. Allegedly dissatisfied with his earnings and influenced by crime reports about extortion cases, involving gangsters, he decided to try his hand at extortion. He roped in a business associate of the complainant, who allegedly provided information to make the threats more credible. "Before he could cause any actual harm, the alert police team successfully foiled his plan and apprehended him. The accused has admitted to making extortion calls, including one to the businessman.

Indian woman lands in Dubai for job in beauty parlour, then a drug twist

Ameena's mother has made an urgent plea to the Ministry of External Affairs seeking immediate assistance to bring her daughter back safely.

Agency New Delhi.

A 24-year-old woman who travelled to Dubai for a job has been arrested and jailed after authorities found a bag in her possession containing illegal drugs. Ameena Begum, a resident of Konda Reddy Gudain in Hyderabad's Kishan Bagh, reportedly left for Dubai on May 18, 2025, after being offered a job at a beauty parlour by a local travel agent.

According to a letter written by Ameena's mother, Sultana Begum, to the Minister of External Affairs S Jaishankar, Ameena was arrested upon arrival at Dubai airport when authorities found drugs in a bag she was carrying.

Her mother claims Ameena was unaware of the bag's contents and was asked to hand it over to someone in Dubai. She said Ameena called the family from jail and insisted she is

to bring her daughter back safely. The family has reached out to the Indian Embassy in Abu Dhabi and the Indian Consulate in Dubai, seeking legal help and swift action to secure her release.

In the letter, the family have also expressed concern for Ameena's five-year-old son, Mohd Zeeshan, who has reportedly fallen ill after being separated from his mother. "He is crying too much for his mother and has fallen sick," Ameena's mother wrote in the letter.

The family believes Ameena may have been unknowingly used as a drug carrier and is demanding an investigation into the local agent who arranged the job offer.



YouTuber who dressed as priest in videos arrested over abusive content in UP

Agency New Delhi.

YouTuber Mohammed Aamir has been arrested for allegedly uploading abusive and misleading videos to his YouTube channel, which has over 5.83 million subscribers. The action was taken following a detailed investigation by the police and administration's social media monitoring team, which found that the content on Aamir's channel was filled with profanity, obscene language, and false information.

The arrest followed a complaint by a user named Aman Thakur, who raised the issue on social media platform X. In his post, Thakur tagged Moradabad Police and Uttar Pradesh Police, sharing a video that highlighted



Aamir's objectionable content and called for immediate action. Aamir runs the channel Top Real Team, where he and his team post videos that have drawn widespread criticism for promoting disharmony and spreading vulgarity. According to the police, the channel's popularity has grown due to

the frequent use of abusive and obscene language in its content. The police's social media team conducted a comprehensive analysis of the channel, concluding that Aamir was engaged in spreading malicious propaganda that could disrupt social harmony and law and order. The videos were described as factually incorrect, provocative, and harmful.

SP City Ranvijay Singh confirmed the arrest and stated, "The YouTuber named Aamir was uploading videos filled with abusive language and malicious propaganda. A case has been filed against him. Our social media team has thoroughly analysed the content, and action will be taken against everyone involved."

Jharkhand woman attacked with petrol ahead of wedding, suffers eye injuries

Agency New Delhi.

A girl was attacked with petrol by four unidentified individuals in Jharkhand's Ranchi on Saturday afternoon, according to the police. The incident took place in the afternoon, around 1 pm, at the victim's residence in Tendartola village, located under the jurisdiction of the Kanke police station. Police officials said that four individuals entered the house and poured petrol on the girl before fleeing the scene. The victim was immediately taken to Kashyap Memorial Hospital by her family members.

Initial reports suggested a possible acid attack but a medical examination confirmed that petrol was used. According to hospital staff, the girl sustained injuries to her eyes, with damage limited to the outer layer of the cornea. Doctors stated that the substance has been cleared and that full recovery is expected within a day or two.

Ranchi SSP and DIG Chandan Sinha, in a

phone conversation with Aaj Tak, India Today's sister website, confirmed that the attack involved petrol, not acid.

"She sustained an eye injury and was admitted to Kashyap Memorial Hospital. She has since been discharged following treatment," Sinha said.

He added that the injuries were not serious and that he is personally supervising the investigation. He assured that arrests would be made at the earliest.

Meanwhile, Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren directed the Ranchi police to investigate the matter and ensure the immediate arrest of the accused.

In a post on X, he also asked officials to provide appropriate medical care to the victim and keep him informed of developments. "Investigate the matter and ensure the immediate arrest of the accused, then inform accordingly. Also,

provide better medical facilities to the daughter and inform accordingly. Minister Irfan Ansari ji, please take note," the Chief Minister wrote, tagging the Ranchi Police, Deputy Commissioner



and Health Minister Irfan Ansari. Health Minister Irfan Ansari later in another post on X confirmed that he had spoken with the district administration and that the girl had been discharged and was in stable condition. He stated that

initial findings confirmed the use of petrol and directed officials to conduct a thorough investigation and ensure prompt arrests. "According to my conversation with the doctors, the initial investigation has not confirmed an acid attack. I have directed the administration to thoroughly investigate the case and ensure the immediate arrest of the culprits. Ensuring justice for the daughter is our priority," Ansari wrote in response to the Chief Minister's post.

BJP Jharkhand President Babul Marandi also issued a statement calling the incident serious and urged the state government to take appropriate legal action against those responsible.

Police said an investigation is ongoing and all possible angles, including personal motives, are being examined as the girl was soon to be married.

NEWS BOX

Viktor Gyokeres eager to repay early support from Arsenal fanbase after move

New Delhi. (Agency)

Viktor Gyokeres said that he is eager to repay the early support from the Arsenal fans after completing the move to the club. Gyokeres made the official switch from Sporting to the Gunners on Saturday, July 26, signing a reported five-year deal, worth up to 73 million euros. Even before he arrived at the club, Gyokeres was persuaded by the Gunners fans to join the club via social media posts and compilation videos. The Swedish striker, while talking to the club's website, said that he felt Arsenal was the right club for him, and he felt they were one of the strong sides when he faced them last time around. Gyokeres said he was also delighted with the love from the fans and is eager to see them in stadiums.

"I just felt that it was the right club for me," he revealed. "What I heard from Mikel and Andrea when I was speaking with them, and just what I've seen in the past years, how they've been playing football. When I was



playing against Arsenal last season, I could really feel it was a very strong team and very difficult to play against." "That made me choose Arsenal, and of course all the history the club has and the massive fanbase. It's been amazing to see all the support that they have already given me before I even arrived. That's what it's all about. It's going to be very nice to see them in the stadiums as well."

"I always want to score."

After a few unsuccessful years in England, Gyokeres made a name for himself at Sporting, where he scored 97 goals in 102 appearances. The Swedish frontman said he aims to always score and he is ready to embrace the same role with Arsenal.

"I always want to score," he said. "To be a part of this club and to score in this kit and with this badge in front of all the supporters, I can't wait. It will be an amazing feeling."

"I started here [in England], it feels like a long time ago. I think I've improved a lot since then. Now I want to prove myself for real and perform together with the team," said Gyokeres.

Cameron Green, Josh Inglis help Australia take 4-0 lead in T20 series against West Indies

BASSETERRE. (Agency)

Half-centuries to Cameron Green and Josh Inglis led Australia to a three-wicket win over West Indies and extended its lead to 4-0 in a five-match Twenty20 international series on Saturday. Australia chased down West Indies score of 205-9 in the final over without too much trouble with Green top scoring with an unbeaten 55, his third fifty of the series, while Inglis set the tone early with a sprightly 51.

It's the seventh time West Indies have failed to defend a score in excess of 200 in Twenty20 internationals, the most of any ICC member nation. Sherfane Rutherford made 31 off 15 balls to top score for the hosts, who also had handy contributions from the middle order — Rovman Powell (28), Romario Shepherd (28) and Jason Holder (26) after being asked again to bat first at Warner Park.



Shai Hope, who made a brilliant unbeaten 102 on Friday — to become the second male West Indian player after Chris Gayle to score a century in each format — could only manage 10 this game before chipping a catch to a diving Glenn Maxwell off Xavier Bartlett. Aaron Hardie, playing this game for the rested Tim David was the pick of Australia's bowlers with an economical 2-24 off four overs, including Roston Chase for a first ball duck and later Powell to interrupt the hosts' progress.

Adam Zampa (3-54) took three wickets, while Bartlett (2-39) and Sean Abbott (2-61) picked up two wickets each. Artificial Intelligence uses Artificial Intelligence to predict Australia's reply started shakily with captain Mitch Marsh out in the first over for Jedidah Blaize's first T20 international wicket.

A 66-run stand between Josh Inglis and Glenn Maxwell helped recover Australia and put them ahead of the game. Inglis scored his second half-century of the series off 28 balls.

Speaking at a Professional Golf Tour of India

England Test captain Ben Stokes might have done a rare double of 7000 runs and 200 wickets, but he is not the best all-rounder of all time, said former India captain Kapil Dev. Speaking at a Professional Golf Tour of India

poor outing with the ball in Manchester meant that the hosts romped to a total of 669 runs at Old Trafford. Shubman Gill's captaincy was questioned by many fans, who

hit big shots at will.

Nitin Lands in Legal Trouble

Meanwhile, the all-rounder has got himself into legal trouble with his former player agency Square The One. Nitish Reddy's former agent has filed a petition against him, seeking over Rs 5 crore in unpaid dues.

India Today had reported earlier that the relationship between Nitish Reddy and his former player management agency, Square The One, broke down during the Border-Gavaskar Trophy 2024-25. The player subsequently signed with the manager of another India cricketer who was also part of that tour.

Player management agency, Square The One Private Limited, has filed a petition under Section 11(6) of the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, alleging breach of the management agreement and non-payment of dues. The case is expected to be heard in the Delhi High Court on July 28.

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Mcap of 6 of top-10 valued firms declines by Rs 2.22 trillion; Reliance key laggard

New Delhi. (Agency)

The combined market valuation of 6 of the top-10 most valued firms diminished by Rs 2.22 lakh crore last week, with Reliance Industries taking the biggest hit, in-line with a bearish trend in equities. Last week, the BSE benchmark gauge declined by 294.64 points or 0.36 per cent.

"Markets ended lower for the fourth straight week as caution prevailed amid mixed cues. The market's direction was initially influenced by earnings announcements, with the banking sector showing strength due to positive results from HDFC Bank and ICICI Bank. However, a dip in stocks like Reliance capped the recovery. "Furthermore, foreign fund outflows and uncertainty over trade deals ahead of the August 1 deadline kept volatility high," Ajit Mishra – SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said. From the top-10 pack, Reliance Industries, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Infosys, Bajaj Finance, Hindustan Unilever and Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) suffered a combined erosion of Rs 2,22,193.17 crore from their market valuation. HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank and State Bank of India made gains in their valuation.

The valuation of Reliance Industries tumbled Rs 1,14,687.7 crore to Rs 18,83,855.52 crore, the most among the top-10 firms. Infosys faced an erosion of Rs 29,474.56 crore to Rs 6,29,621.56 crore from its market capitalisation (mcap). The valuation of LIC tanked Rs 23,086.24 crore to Rs 5,60,742.67 crore and that of TCS dropped by Rs 20,080.39 crore to Rs 11,34,035.26 crore. The mcap of Bajaj Finance declined by Rs 17,524.3 crore to Rs 5,67,768.53 crore and that of Hindustan Unilever fell by Rs 17,339.98 crore to Rs 5,67,449.79 crore.

However, the market valuation of HDFC Bank jumped Rs 37,161.53 crore to Rs 15,38,078.95 crore. ICICI Bank added Rs 35,814.41 crore taking its valuation to Rs 10,53,823.14 crore. The mcap of Bharti Airtel climbed Rs 20,841.2 crore to Rs 11,04,839.93 crore and that of State Bank of India went up by Rs 9,685.34 crore to Rs 7,44,449.31 crore.

Maintaining sustained growth top priority of government, says Nirmala Sitharaman

New Delhi. (Agency)

Maintaining sustained growth is the top priority amid global uncertainties, and an incremental rise in public capital expenditure is one of the drivers for economic development, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Saturday. The statement assumes significance as the Indian economy grew by 6.5 per cent in FY25. This growth was the slowest in four years, and compares to a 9.2 per cent expansion in the previous 2023-24 fiscal. The Economic Survey has projected the GDP growth for FY26 between 6.3 per cent and 6.8 per cent, while the RBI lowered its growth forecast from an earlier level of 6.7 per cent to 6.5 per cent for the ongoing financial year. Speaking at a book release event here, Sitharaman said, "To maintain the growth is the topmost priority. Growth is the topmost, and therefore, it will have an overlap with how you create jobs..." Keeping India relevant amid global challenges and being there in a leadership position, and moving forward along with other countries are other priority areas, she said, adding that the priority would also be to redefine the voice of the Global South. Finding resources for meeting many domestic economic aspirations within fiscal constraints is another priority, she said while releasing the book titled 'A World in Flux: India's Economic Priorities'. She further said the incremental rise in public capital expenditure is one of the primary drivers of sustained economic growth.

"Public investments have kept pace. It has been Prime Minister Narendra Modi's clear instruction that we have to have capital expenditure grow and grow significantly. I confidently believe that it is one of the primary drivers of sustained economic growth," she said. The other focus area of the government is to push growth through a friendly and attractive FDI policy to be able to get more and more investments happening in India.

Dam gamble on Siang: China moves ahead with its mega project - Will India's response face local resistance

New Delhi. (Agency)

Tractors slowly climbed a muddy hillside in Begging village of Arunachal Pradesh's Siang district, carrying drilling rigs and equipment for a sensitive pre-feasibility study on May 21. The goal was to assess the possibility of building a massive dam across the Siang River, called the Brahmaputra in Assam and Yarlung Zangbo in China. But on the opposite bank, in Parong, anger was already building. The local Adi community, opposed to the dam, had been staging protests. Authorities tried to keep operations quiet, planning to start work in Begging and later ferry equipment across the river.

However, within a week, resistance intensified. Protesters marched to Begging, cut off its only link to the outside world, a hanging bridge — and damaged the drilling machines, bringing the survey to a halt, ET reported. Despite growing unrest, law enforcement remained restrained, avoiding confrontation in the sensitive border area. The authorities, cautious of escalation, suspended operations temporarily.

After Prada 'appropriation', Maharashtra to certify authentic Kolhapuri chappals with QR code

The GI-tagged handmade flat leather sandals, known for their intricate craftsmanship and cultural heritage, now carry an added layer of protection and authenticity in the form of QR codes.

New Delhi. (Agency)

The humble Kolhapuri chappal, one of India's most iconic traditional crafts, is enjoying renewed prominence not only in domestic fashion circles but also in international markets, amid Italian brand Prada being accused of appropriating the footwear. The GI-tagged handmade flat leather sandals, known for their intricate craftsmanship and cultural heritage, now

carry an added layer of protection and authenticity in the form of QR codes, thanks to recent technological and legal innovations. The move aims to check counterfeiting and highlight the identity of the artisan behind each product, boost consumer trust and strengthen the market position of the traditional craftsmen, officials from the government-run Leather Industries Development Corporation of Maharashtra (LIDCOM) said. Recently, artisans cried foul after footwear similar to the Kolhapuri chappals featured in Italian luxury fashion brand Prada's new collection, alleging violation of the GI (Geographical Indication) rights. Following the row, Prada had acknowledged the sandals showcased in their men's 2026 fashion show were "inspired" by traditional Indian handcrafted footwear. The brand, however, clarified in a reply to the Maharashtra Chamber of Commerce that the showcased sandals are still at the design stage and not yet confirmed for commercial production. A team of experts

from Prada visited Kolhapur earlier this month to interact with artisans and assess the local footwear manufacturing process.



Dating back to the 12th century, the footwear has been primarily crafted in Maharashtra's Kolhapur, Sangli and Solapur districts. Its distinctive design, made using naturally tanned leather and handwoven straps, has been preserved through generations of artisans.

A major boost came in the early 20th century when visionary ruler Chhatrapati Shahi Maharaj promoted it as a symbol of self-reliance and Swadeshi pride. He encouraged the use of these chappals,

helping elevate the rural craft into a respected cottage industry. What was once a humble, coarse village slipper, soon became a symbol of swadeshi identity under the royal patronage. To safeguard this cultural legacy and ensure fair recognition for artisans, the Maharashtra and Karnataka governments jointly secured the GI tag in 2019. Under international trade rules such as the TRIPS agreement, this GI status legally reserves the rights to manufacture and market Kolhapuri chappals to artisans from specific districts in both the states. The certification defines the product as handmade, using traditional techniques and natural leather, with open-toe construction, prohibiting the use of synthetic materials or mechanised processes. Going a step further, the LIDCOM has introduced QR-coded certification for each pair of chappals, the corporation said in a statement. This digital initiative aims to tackle counterfeiting and highlight the identity of the artisan or self-help group behind.

India's Forex Reserves Drop By \$1.18 Bn To \$695.49 Bn, Third Consecutive Weekly Decline

The Gold reserves, another major component of the forex, again witnessed an impressive recovery from last week's decline, increasing by USD 150 million to USD 84.499 billion, following the previous week's fall of USD 498 million.

New Delhi. (Agency)

India's foreign exchange reserves fell by USD 1.18 billion to USD 695.49 billion for the week ending July 18, marking the third straight week of decline, according to the official data released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). In the previous reporting week, the country's foreign exchange reserves fell by USD 3.06 billion to USD 696.67 billion. In the week ending July 18, foreign currency assets, the major constituent of the forex reserves, fell by USD 1.201 billion to USD 587.609 billion, possibly becoming the primary reason for the decline in the forex reserves. The Gold reserves, another major component of the forex, again witnessed an impressive recovery from last week's decline, increasing by USD 150 million to USD 84.499 billion, following the previous week's fall of USD 498 million. India's Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) with the global financial body, the International

Monetary Fund (IMF), witnessed another dip of USD 119 million, reaching USD 18,683 billion. Central banks worldwide are increasingly accumulating safe-haven gold in their



cumulative decline of USD 71 billion in 2022. In 2024, the reserves rose by a little over USD 20 billion, touching an all-time high of USD 704,885 billion at the end of September 2024.

India's foreign exchange reserves (Forex) are sufficient to meet 11 months of the country's imports and about 96 per cent of external debt, said Governor Sanjay Malhotra while announcing the outcome of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) decisions.

Foreign exchange reserves, or FX reserves, are assets held by a nation's central bank or monetary authority, primarily in reserve currencies such as the US Dollar, with smaller portions in the Euro, Japanese Yen, and Pound Sterling. The RBI often intervenes by managing liquidity, including selling dollars, to prevent steep Rupee depreciation. The RBI strategically buys dollars when the Rupee is strong and sells when it weakens.

ITR Alert! Fix AIS Errors Easily With These I-T department Guidelines Before Filing Your Return

New Delhi. (Agency)

New Delhi: Filing your ITR? You're not alone if you've run into errors, especially those linked to the Annual Information Statement (AIS). It's one of the most common issues taxpayers face every year. However, The Income Tax Department has shared simple steps to help you fix these problems. AIS, or Annual Information Statement, is an extended version of Form 26AS. It gives a complete picture of your financial activity including things like bank interest, dividends, stock market trades, mutual fund investments, and property transactions. This information is important while filing your ITR, and any mismatch in the

details can lead to tax notices from the Income Tax Department. The Income Tax Department advises all taxpayers to double-check their AIS before filing ITR for AY 2025-26 to keep things smooth. If you find any errors or mismatches, don't worry — there's now an easy way to fix them. The AIS is divided into two main sections to help you understand your financial details better:

- Part A – General Information: This section includes your basic details like PAN, masked Aadhaar number, name, date of birth or incorporation (for businesses), mobile number, email ID, and your address.

- Part B – TDS/TCS Information: Here, you'll find all details related to tax

deducted or collected at source. It shows the type of transaction, a short description, and the amount involved. Step-by-Step Guide to Fix AIS Errors

- If you spot any mistakes in your AIS, don't worry — the Income Tax Department has a simple process to fix them: Start by reviewing your AIS and give feedback on any transaction that seems incorrect. - Find the specific transaction, click on "Optional" or "Add Feedback," and share the correct details.

- The department will then verify your feedback with the source — like your bank, mutual fund company, etc.

- Based on this verification, your AIS will be updated to show whether the correction was accepted or rejected.

No Plan To Levy GST On UPI Transactions Exceeding Rs 2,000: Centre

New Delhi. (Agency)

New Delhi: The government has reiterated that there is no plan to levy goods and services tax (GST) on unified payments interface (UPI)-based transactions exceeding Rs 2,000. Pankaj Chaudhary, Minister of State of Finance, said in the Rajya Sabha that "there is no recommendation of levying GST on UPI transactions of over Rs 2,000 from the GST Council". Answering a question about whether the government is considering a proposal to levy GST on UPI transactions of over Rs 2,000, the minister told the House that GST rates and exemptions are decided on the basis of recommendations of the GST Council. The reply came after traders in Karnataka received GST demand notices based on UPI transaction data. Minister for Food, Public Distribution and



Consumer Affairs, Pralhad Joshi, also said last week that the GST notices issued to small-scale traders in Karnataka are the doing of the state government, and not from the Central government. Responding to Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar's claim that the state has no role in issuing tax notices, Joshi called the statement "utterly ridiculous." It is Karnataka's commercial tax officials who issued the GST notices to small traders. And yet, the state government is now misleading the public by pretending it has no involvement. This is nothing but an attempt to shirk responsibility," Joshi said. "If the GST notices had been issued by the central government, then traders in several other states would have received them. But that hasn't happened anywhere else. Why are these notices being sent only in Karnataka?" Joshi questioned. He clarified that under GST, there are two components – CGST (Central GST) under the central government and SGST (State GST) under state governments. The notices to small traders in Karnataka were issued by the state's Commercial Tax Department.

Joint home loan or personal loan What's smarter for young couples buying property

New Delhi. (Agency)

For many young couples, buying that first home is both a big dream and a huge responsibility. With property prices rising every year, most people simply can't pay the full amount upfront. That's where loans step in. But should you go for a joint home loan or just take a personal loan to bridge the gap? Both are options, but they work very differently, and picking the wrong one could pinch your pocket more than you realise.

WHY A JOINT HOME LOAN OFTEN WINS

A joint home loan is often the wiser choice for couples looking to buy a house together. By taking the loan jointly, both partners' incomes are combined, which means you can qualify for a bigger loan and, in many cases, a better home. Sanjeev Arora, Director 360 Realtors, puts it simply: "To begin with, comparing a home loan and a personal loan is like comparing apples to oranges. Personal loans usually carry

almost double the interest rate. When it comes to a joint home loan, it's certainly better than taking it individually."

He adds, "By merging incomes, it increases loan eligibility, enabling you to substantially increase your budget."

Backing this, Sahil Agarwal, CEO, Nimbus Realty, says, "For young couples planning to buy a home together, a joint home loan often makes a lot more sense than turning to a personal loan. The interest rates are lower, tenures are longer, and there are tax perks that both partners can avail." Joint home loans usually have lower interest rates than personal loans. Home loan rates in India today hover around 8–9% per year, while personal loans can easily touch 16% or more.

LONGER REPAYMENT, EASIER EMIS

Another huge plus of joint home loans is the repayment period. Home loans can stretch up to 20–30 years, which keeps the monthly EMI affordable. Personal loans, in contrast, usually need to be

paid off within 1–5 years, making the monthly instalments much steeper.

Arora explains, "EMIs are comparatively inexpensive with home loans because they have longer payback terms of up to

30 years. Personal loans, on the other hand, have shorter terms, which means that monthly payments are higher and the total interest load is larger."

DOUBLE TAX SAVINGS

Joint home loans bring in another big win, tax benefits. Both partners can claim tax deductions of up to Rs 1.5 lakh each on the principal repayment under Section

80C, and up to Rs 2 lakh each on interest under Section 24(b). This can add up to handsome savings every year.

"Both co-applicants are eligible to claim deductions... which maximises the family's total tax savings," Arora mentions.

WHEN A PERSONAL LOAN MIGHT HELP

While a home loan is better for buying a house, a personal loan does have its place. "When purchasing land or property that isn't qualified for a home loan, including unapproved plots or properties that are the subject of a legal battle, a personal loan might make more sense," says Arora. He adds, "When rapid, collateral-free payments are required, it can also be used to cover registration fees, pay token amounts, or fill short-term liquidity shortfalls."

So, a personal loan can be a helpful short-term fix, but not a replacement for a proper home loan.





Disha Patani's Glamorous Mini Dress Photoshoot Sets Internet Ablaze

Disha Patani has decided to turn up the heat in the breezy weather of Mumbai as she posted fresh pictures in a glamorous mini dress. The actress' pictures are already setting the internet on fire. Taking to her Instagram, Disha posted a fresh series of pictures from a recent photo shoot in a white mini dress, and we can't keep calm. The actress' outfit featured a deep plunging neckline with a halter neck that had golden rings on it. To further enhance her look, she tied her hair up in a loose bun, with strands of hair framing her face stunningly. The actress opted for smart sneakers to elevate her appearance. Aware of her beauty, she let go of multiple accessories and wore small studs and stylish, expensive shades.

In one of the pictures shot in front of a stunning background, Disha flaunted the backless detailing of the mini dress. These striking pictures have caused a major meltdown on



the internet, with fans flooding the comment section with reactions to her sensual look. On the work front, Disha Patani will soon be seen with Shahid Kapoor in Vishal Bhardwaj's next. Disha will have a special dance number in the film. Recently, reacting to speculations, the director confirmed the actress' appearance in the film—but there's a catch. Instead of just an item number, she will be seen doing a cameo. Taking to Instagram, Vishal shared a monochrome behind-the-scenes picture with Disha from the sets of his next film. Sharing the snapshot, he wrote in the caption, "Excited to have the stunning Disha Patani join us for a dazzling cameo specially written for her, opposite Shahid Kapoor." According to Pinkvilla, Disha will have two dance numbers in the film with Shahid. "Both songs have the moves and the beats that Shahid's songs are known to have," a source said. "They have entirely distinct appeals, but the wide mass appeal that comes standard with every Shahid song is common to both numbers. And with Shahid and Disha collaborating for the first time, fans are in for a visual treat—they're adding significant flair and intensity to both songs."

The yet-to-be-titled film is reportedly based on the life of gangster Hussain Ustara and also stars Nana Patekar and Randeep Hooda in pivotal roles.

Uorfi Javed's 'No Filter' Lips Are Shining Bright With Just A 'Plumper'

Uorfi Javed showcased her natural beauty after facing a mishap with the reversal of her lip fillers. The 27-year-old actress, who never shies from attempting innovative and bold concepts, be it about her fashion, style or personal life, yet again proved the zero relevance of fillers or filters. In a video, she highlighted her 'no filter' look, leaving many fashion enthusiasts amazed.

Uorfi Javed's Natural Beauty

Taking to her Instagram stories, Uorfi Javed posted a video giving a close look at her face. The clip was captured during one of her recent outings, which appeared to be related to her work. Dressed in a black, round-neck, loose-fitted dress, the actress looked stunning as always. But what left us enchanted was her natural beauty.

As she posed for a close selfie, we can see how a dollop of blush added a fresh charm to her face, which she complemented with a nude foundation base, no eye makeup and glossy lips. Uorfi left the tresses open, which maximised her beauty. Confirming the same, she wrote below the video, "No filler or filter but a lip plumper!"

Uorfi Javed Faced a Swelling in the Face After Undergoing Lip Fillers Reversal

The video came just days after the actress suffered from a mishap while undergoing lip fillers reversal. Although the actress demonstrated her strength in handling the pain from the treatment, her face was seen to be completely swollen the next day. She

shared a video featuring her then-face's condition with a hilarious note in Hindi that read, "My boyfriend told me that I talk about everything. True tho?"

Before this, she posted a video, writing, "No this is not a filter, I decided to get my fillers dissolved as they were every misplaced. I will get them again but naturally. I'm not saying no to fillers at all. Dissolving is painful. Also it's very very important you go to a Good doctor for fillers, all these doctors

with fancy clinics know nothing. Finally I found @dr.rickson, trust me he's the best #notsponsored." In the clip, she was seen undergoing the treatment in which a syringe was inserted into her lips and pulling back the chemicals from it.

Uorfi Javed's Professional

The actress is known for her roles in multiple soap operas, Bade Bhaiyya Ki Dulhania, Chandra Nandini, Meri Durga, Saat Phero Ki Hera Pherie, Bepannaah, Jiji Maa, Daayan, Yeh Rishtey Kya Kehlata Hai, and Kasautii Zindagi Kay, among others. But she rose to fame after appearing on Voot's reality show Bigg Boss OTT in 2021. Later, she was also seen in the film Love Sex Aur Dhokha 2 and many reality shows.



Front



Varun Dhawan Says Wife Natasha 'Does Everything' For Baby Lara: 'I'm Just Enjoying Playing With Her'



Varun Dhawan has opened up about his fatherhood journey. In a recent chat with ETimes, Varun Dhawan said that after a child is born, mothers initially do everything and fathers step in later and become useful. Varun Dhawan said that he is still learning how to be a good father to his daughter, Lara Dhawan. Varun said, "I'm still figuring it out. Like how responsible I have to be, or how much of a kid I can still be or can be... I think men tend to go through this. Right now, Natasha is doing everything, and I have to give her credit. The woman does practically everything initially, and the man then comes in and becomes useful."

"I'm just enjoying playing with her. Being a dad is a lot of fun right now, and every day I'm trying to be a better dad... I don't think I'm there yet. I do watch TV at a really low volume now, else my wife will throw me out of the house," he added.

Varun and Natasha welcomed their first child together, baby girl Lara, in June 2024. Speaking to The Hollywood Reporter, the actor spoke about embracing parenthood. He said, "I think when any individual, any man, becomes a parent, for the mother it is a different experience; I feel she becomes a tigress; that moment only something happens."

He added, "But, as a man, I'd say that when we become parents, for some reason, you feel protection towards your daughter."

I am sure you feel for sons also but towards the daughter... If anyone causes even so much (little) harm to her, I'd kill them. I am dead serious when I say that. Literally, I'd kill them."

On the work front, Varun Dhawan was last seen in Baby John. He will be next seen in Sunny Sanskari Ki Tulsi Kumari, Bhediya 2, and Border 2.

Zeenat Aman Returns To Instagram After 'Woefully Serious' Time At Home



Zeenat Aman made her way back to Instagram after being noticeably absent for a few weeks. In a post shared on Friday, the iconic star opened up about the reason behind her silence. Zeenat revealed that it had been "a woefully serious month" for her and her family, which kept her away from the platform and from sharing updates with her followers. Despite the serious tone of recent weeks, Zeenat Aman chose to return to social media with warmth, wit and a dose of humour. She explained that she had come across several memes online, many of which were based on her own film career and image, featuring iconic actors like Dev Anand and Prem Chopra. These lighthearted creations, she said, helped her shake off the gloom and reconnect with the brighter side of life.

In her heartfelt note, she wrote, "It has been a woefully serious month in the Aman-Khan household, which should explain my long silence here." While she chose not to reveal the specifics of the situation, she made it clear that it had been an emotionally challenging period for her personally.

Zeenat Aman Shares Personal Memes To Lighten the Mood

She posted a series of memes and shared, "Now I am not in the frame of mind to divulge all, but I am in the mood to dust off the cobwebs and embrace the lighter side of life." Emphasising the cultural relevance of humour on the internet today, she continued, "Memes are the internet's love language right? So here's a gift from me to you—a handful of tongue-in-cheek memes, conceptualised from my lived experience! Enjoy, and tell me which one you find the most relatable."

Fans and Industry Friends Applaud Zeenat Aman's Humour and Strength

Zeenat's post quickly received a wave of support and admiration from fans and fellow celebrities. Many appreciated not only her humour but also the courage it took to laugh at herself in the midst of personal difficulties. The post reminded many why Zeenat Aman continues to be one of Bollywood's most cherished personalities.

Actor Celina Jaitly responded with admiration, saying, "Loved them all... The last one... King Arthur is probably on his way... with all the knights of the round table bearing flowers to shower upon you." Filmmaker Tanuja Chandra also joined in, commenting, "The one with Mr Prem Chopra is amazing. And sorry to hear of your troubles... may they lessen and pass soon."

Fans were equally touched by her post, with one writing, "Zeenat ma'am. You're hilarious. What's inspiring is that you started off as things were not going so well these days in your household, and then you still share memes, laughing at yourself. Only very great souls can do that." Another user added, "How can you keep being more iconic by the day?"

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- In the face-to-face contact between the interviewer & interviewee, it is possible to record more than only verbal responses; which are often superficial.

Tips for a Personal Interview



Personal

Interview is the foremost tool to judge the abilities of a person. In the face-to-face contact between the interviewer & interviewee, it is possible to record more than only verbal responses; which are often superficial. When human beings communicate directly with each other, much more information is communicated. The nature of words used, facial expressions & body language- together contribute in judging a person. According to Meha Bhargava, an Image Management professional, you must keep the following in mind while going for an interview.

Do the Research

Extensively research not just about the profile you are interviewed for, but the

company profile, their achievements, their story of success, their products & services, their target market etc.. All this will make you confident enough to answer every question diligently.

Look sharp

Being smartly and elegantly dressed not only makes you feel good but also has a strong impact on the interviewer. Like the mantra 'The way you dress, defines the way you think, act and how others react'

Listen carefully

Giving full attention to not only what is said but also to what is not said will make

you know about what they have in store for you. Sometimes important things are left unsaid between the lines, make sure you catch up to every bit.

Show enthusiasm with body language

A firm handshake, smile, eye contact and positive responses ensure that the interviewer feels confident in you and your abilities to be hired. What you feel reflects by your body language. Even if you are nervous, don't let it show. Sit in a correct, firm and comfortable posture avoid fidgeting with

you r legs, or hands. This distracts the interviewer and gives an impression of a feeble personality.

Answer only what is asked

Do listen carefully what you are being asked, if you don't understand confirm it again and while answering do not deviate from one thing to another. Straightforward

and to the point answers are only what they love to hear.

Ask questions

Don't be blank at the end of the interview, ask questions, be it on your profile, about the company, pay working hours etc. No questions give an impression of disinterest in the company and the job. But make sure your questions are appropriate.

Skill vs degree

What works for you?

In India, we place too much emphasis on what is often just a piece of paper, instead of the knowledge or skills one should acquire to earn it. If a student is looking for higher education, a degree is the normal study route. There are numerous careers and fields of work that require advanced knowledge and skills training.

However, all students may not and sometimes cannot take advanced courses and prefer to develop skills that do not necessarily require the rigour of a degree curriculum. In other words, every person with skills may not receive a degree. Similarly, there are many graduates who have theoretical knowledge but no practical



experience. A number of jobs and careers require various skills - for example, in the computer and IT sector. So, without worrying if it is a degree or not, many students can study a course that would help them find work. The government's skill development programme is

attempting to change students' attitude towards skills that can earn them jobs. However, there needs to be greater synergy between prospective employers and the skills training centre so that students are well-placed with salaries that can attract other youngsters. Also, often, employers ask for a degree irrespective of how adequately trained such a candidate may be. Therefore, students prefer to pursue a degree without a job in sight, rather than skill themselves through training that can better provide a job. The solution is to analyse what a student is made for - a degree or a skill-based programme - and which one would work best for him/her.

Usha Albuquerque, Career Counsellor, Delhi

College prepares you

When students decide on a career path, it is essential for them to understand the importance of a degree and how it contributes to their future. A degree programme makes a student's 'generalised' approach more focused. At the college level, applicants pick a stream and then study a specific field such as engineering, medicine, commerce, science, humanities, law, architecture, etc. The student learns about things ranging from the finer points of a particular discipline to communication and people skills. Students must opt for a degree course since it trains them to understand - through guest lectures, industry visits, etc - how industry functions. They, thus, know what employers expect. They develop a world view of the field they would work in, explore it in-depth and be ready to face challenges in their professional lives.



Why you need a 'disconnected' break

Taking your laptop along on your upcoming holiday? Do a rethink, for you might be committing a huge mistake, which might actually add more stress than you imagines. Experts warn how one should not cart along work and stay rooted to any social networking sites and microblogs, while on a getaway. The 'digital detox break' is being considered as the ideal 'me time'. The idea has taken root so much so that packages are being tailor-made to force stressed folk to wean away from all their gadgets. Here's how it benefits you:

"What we're doing here is providing evidence that how people relate to God matters for their commitment and satisfaction at work," Kent noted.

You see the world differently

You might throw fleeting glances to what's going around you if you're stuck to your smartphone screen. But being away from it allows you to view the world minus distraction.

It builds better interpersonal relations

How many people actually remember a good old-fashioned conversation? With no gadget around you can communicate face-to-face better.

You become less aggressive

Being answerable to someone on the opposite end means that you are having to answer to a demand all the time, which causes a sense of hostility and repressed anger in you. Take away such feeling by simply unplugging.

