

Fadnavis did what Balasaheb couldn't: Raj Thackeray on reunion with Uddhav

The rare reunion of the Thackeray cousins came after the Devendra Fadnavis government rolled back its decision to make Hindi mandatory as a third language in primary schools.

Uddhav Thackeray, Raj share stage after 20 years of estrangement
Raj says they will not tolerate the imposition of Hindi
Uddhav hints at political alliance ahead of municipal elections

Agency Mumbai.
Sharing the stage with his cousin, Uddhav Thackeray, after 20 years of political estrangement, Raj Thackeray mounted a fierce attack on Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, saying he managed to do what "even Bal Thackeray could not".

The rare reunion of the Thackeray cousins, spurred by their opposition to the controversial three-language formula, had forced the Fadnavis government to roll back its decision to make Hindi mandatory as a third language in primary schools.

Addressing the 'Awaj Marathi Cha' (voice of Marathi) victory rally, Raj said, "Maharashtra is bigger than any politics and fighting. Today, after 20 years, Uddhav and I have come together. What Balasaheb could not do, Devendra Fadnavis did it... The work of bringing both of us together."

'HAVE COME TOGETHER TO STAY TOGETHER'

Uddhav Thackeray also played along, saying they would come together for the Mumbai civic body, including the Brihanmumbai



Municipal Corporation (BMC), polls. "We have come together to stay together," Uddhav said. The announcement is crucial against the backdrop of their recent electoral performance. In the 2024 Maharashtra Assembly elections, the Shiv Sena (UBT) won 20 seats while the MNS failed to win any. The venue in Worli drew thousands of Marathi enthusiasts and was teeming with supporters of both parties - a never-seen-before spectacle that could create ripples in Maharashtra's shifting political landscape.

The Thackeray cousins, who have been vocal about espousing the cause of Marathi language and identity, last shared a stage in

2005. Raj Thackeray quit the Shiv Sena that year and launched the MNS in 2006.

'L K ADVANI STUDIED IN MISSIONARY SCHOOL'

In a hard-hitting speech targeting the BJP, Raj said the decision on the three-language formula was a precursor to the plan of separating Mumbai from Maharashtra. "I don't have anything against Hindi, no language is bad. They started with the experiment of imposing Hindi on us. If we would not have opposed it, they would have gone to separate Mumbai from Maharashtra," the MNS supremo thundered. He also said that BJP stalwart LK Advani studied at a missionary school, but no one raised any doubts about his Hindutva.

"They say that our children have learnt in English medium schools. Fadnavis studied in an English-medium school and became the Maharashtra Chief Minister. My father, Shrikant Thackeray, and uncle, Balasaheb Thackeray, studied in an English-medium school. Can anyone raise a question about their love for Marathi? Tomorrow, I will learn Hebrew also. Will anyone raise a question about my pride in Marathi?" he said.

EPS says AIADMK big brother in BJP alliance, keeps doors open for Vijay

Previously too, Palaniswami had rejected allegations that the BJP would overpower the AIADMK in the alliance, saying no party, however big, could dominate it.



Chennai. AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami (EPS) clarified on Saturday that the Dravidian party was the big brother in its alliance with the BJP while keeping the door open for joining hands with Vijay's Tamilaga Vetti Kazhagam (TVK). "The AIADMK-BJP alliance has been formed. This alliance will be headed by AIADMK and the government will be formed by AIADMK," Palaniswami said.

The AIADMK supremo's assertion comes amid a feeling within the party that the BJP, which is aiming to gain a foothold in Tamil Nadu, was attempting to steal the narrative.

Previously too, Palaniswami had rejected allegations that the BJP would overpower the AIADMK in the alliance, saying no party, however big, could dominate it. AIADMK has ruled Tamil Nadu for over 30 years.

Palaniswami had also said that there would not be any coalition government in Tamil Nadu if the alliance won the 2026 Assembly polls, and the understanding was only for the election.

This despite Union Home Minister Amit Shah asserting that the BJP and AIADMK would together form the government. While Shah has said the chief ministerial candidate would be from the AIADMK, he did not name Palaniswami.

DOORS OPEN FOR VIJAY?

Meanwhile, Palaniswami announced that the AIADMK would launch a state-wide election tour from July 7 from Coimbatore. Without mentioning the BJP, EPS said all "alliance partners" were invited.

Like Telangana, Congress will form government at Centre too: Mallikarjun Kharge

Agency Tamil Nadu.

Telangana. Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Friday said that just like in Telangana, the party will come to power at the Centre too. He also launched a sharp attack on the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). Kharge accused them of undermining the secular fabric of the Constitution and lacking the political will to act on their promises regarding Pakistan. Addressing a public gathering, Kharge criticised Prime Minister Narendra Modi and questioned the government's failure to act decisively against Pakistan despite strong rhetoric. "They (BJP) said they would do this and that to Pakistan. Why didn't they? Who stopped you from waging war against Pakistan?" Kharge asked, adding, "Saying sorry is the only thing the BJP



and RSS know."

He contrasted PM Modi's leadership with that of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, saying she showed courage and resolve. "Unlike Modi, Indira Gandhi

was never afraid. Whoever came in the way, she declared that Bangladesh would be given independence - and she made it happen," Kharge said.

Reiterating the Congress party's ideological commitment to secularism and social justice, Kharge urged workers and supporters to take the 'Jai Bapu, Jai Bhim, Jai Samvidhan' campaign to every household. The campaign slogan refers to Mahatma Gandhi, Dr B.R. Ambedkar, and the Indian Constitution, aiming to unite people around the values of equality, justice, and constitutional democracy. Taking on the BJP over the issue of secularism, Kharge accused the party of wanting to erase the word from the Constitution. "They say the word secular is not in the Constitution.

Indraj Singh Conducts Inspection and Public Hearing in Bawana

The Sikh Times
New Delhi: 5 July 2025

Social Welfare Minister Shri Ravinder Indraj Singh visited the J.J. Colony in Bawana, located in North-West Delhi, on Saturday and held a public hearing.

During the public interaction, local residents



raised concerns and gave suggestions regarding the laying of new water pipelines, construction and repair of roads and drains, regular sanitation, and beautification of parks.

The Minister appealed for public cooperation in the fight against drug addiction. He emphasized that addiction not only deteriorates a person physically and

mentally but also weakens them socially. He said, "Addiction not only distances a person from their family but also leads to the loss of social respect. If someone wastes their hard-earned money on drugs, it directly affects their children's education and future."

Social welfare Minister stated that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, the Delhi Government is fully committed to making the state drug-free. Every possible effort is being made to root out the drug menace, with concrete steps being taken through inter-departmental coordination.

The Minister issued clear instructions to the officials of the concerned departments present at the site to ensure that basic amenities in Bawana Colony are provided at the earliest. He stressed the need to prioritize road repairs, regular cleaning, and access to clean drinking water.

Ravinder Indraj affirmed that the holistic development of all slums and colonies is a key priority of the government. With public cooperation, Delhi can truly become a developed city.

Over 260 Roads Closed, Extreme Heavy Rain Alert Continues In Himachal Pradesh

Agency Shimla.

More than 260 roads, including 176 in Mandi district, are blocked in Himachal Pradesh following heavy rains over the past few days, officials said on Saturday.

The local MeT office has issued a 'red' alert for very heavy to extremely heavy rainfall at isolated places in Kangra, Sirmaur and Mandi districts on Sunday. An 'orange' warning for heavy to very heavy rainfall at isolated places has been issued for Una, Bilaspur, Hamirpur, Chamba, Solan, Shimla and Kullu districts. Rainfall between 115.6 mm and 204.4 mm in a day is categorised as very heavy, while anything over 204.4 mm is considered extremely heavy. Heavy monsoon rains last year caused massive destruction in the state leaving more than 550 people dead.

The weather department has warned of possible landslides, flash floods, waterlogging, and damage to vulnerable structures, crops, and essential services. People have been advised to stay away from water bodies and avoid vulnerable areas.

According to the State Emergency Operation Centre (SEOC), the estimated losses so far are around Rs 541 crore.

36 injured after 4 buses carrying Amarnath pilgrims collide in J&K

Agency New Delhi.

Srinagar. Four buses carrying Amarnath Yatra pilgrims collided early Friday near Chanderkot on the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway, injuring 36 passengers. The accident occurred after one of the buses suffered a brake failure, triggering a chain collision.

According to officials, the accident took place around the Chanderkot Langer site when the last vehicle in the Pahalgam-bound convoy lost control and rammed into vehicles ahead, which were stationary at the time. The collision damaged four buses and caused injuries to a total of 36 yatris, although most injuries were described as minor.

The last vehicle of the Pahalgam convoy lost control and hit stranded vehicles at the Chanderkot Langer site, damaging four vehicles and causing minor injuries to 36 yatris. The District Administration, already present at the site, immediately shifted the injured to DH Ramban," Deputy Commissioner of Ramban said on X.

Rescue operations were launched promptly, with local administration and police rushing to the

site. The injured were transported to the District Hospital Ramban, where Deputy Commissioner Khan, DIG DKR Shridhar Patil, SSP Ramban Kulbir Singh, and ADC Varunjeet Singh Charak visited to oversee the treatment. The Chief Medical Officer (CMO) was directed to provide the best possible care to the injured.

Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh spoke to Ramban Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Alyas Khan, regarding the Amarnath pilgrims a c c i d e n t . "A 11 arrangements for the pilgrims are in place and are being constantly supervised by the administration," he said on X. After receiving medical

attention, the affected yatris were shifted to other vehicles to continue their onward journey, Deputy Commissioner's X post confirmed. The annual Amarnath Yatra began on July 3 with the first batches of pilgrims setting off from the twin base camps in Baltal and Nunwan towards the 3880-metre-high cave shrine in the south Kashmir Himalayas, which houses a naturally formed ice-lingam.



Kapil Mishra Chairs High-Level Meeting on Traffic Congestion at Khajuri Chowk

The Sikh Times

New Delhi | July 5, 2025

Delhi's Minister for Development, Kapil Mishra, today chaired a high-level meeting at the Delhi Secretariat to address the persistent traffic congestion at Khajuri Chowk, a key traffic junction in North-East Delhi. The meeting was convened in response to the growing traffic issues in the area and the daily inconvenience faced by commuters and the general public. Khajuri Chowk connects densely populated areas such as Wazirabad, Signature Bridge, Bhajpura, Shastri Park, and Karawal Nagar. The junction witnesses thousands of vehicles every day, often leading to long and disruptive traffic jams. These bottlenecks not only delay daily travel but also obstruct critical emergency services like ambulances and fire vehicles. Senior officials from major departments,

- Creating dedicated lanes for autos, buses, and private vehicles.
- Developing alternate routes and implementing a strategic traffic diversion plan.
- Promoting the use of metro and public transport to reduce dependency on private vehicles.

All the officials present in the meeting agreed that the traffic problem can be solved effectively not only through engineering solutions but also through better coordination, use of technology and awareness campaigns.

At the end of the meeting, Kapil Mishra directed all the departments to coordinate and solve the problem of the traffic jam within the stipulated time frame.

He also assured that the Delhi Government is fully committed to strengthening the traffic system and will take every necessary step in this direction.



including the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), Delhi Traffic Police, Public Works Department (PWD), and Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC), were present at the meeting. The primary objective was to develop a coordinated and practical action plan for easing congestion at this vital traffic node.

Opening the meeting, Kapil Mishra emphasised that "ensuring smooth traffic movement for Delhi's citizens is a top priority, and all relevant departments have to work in close coordination to implement effective solutions at Khajuri Chowk."

The following major points were discussed in the meeting:

- Deployment of additional traffic personnel to better manage vehicle flow.
- Exploring road widening options and assessing the feasibility of underpasses or flyovers.

Around Town: How Asha Jhaveri took Swati Snacks to new heights, and prepared it for a future without her

Swati Snacks began as a humble eatery in Tardeo in December 1962. Started by Minakshi Jhaveri. It offered just five items: pani puri, dahi batata puri, sev puri, ragda patties, and hand-churned sitaphal ice cream, all priced at four annas each.

Mumbai. (Agency)

Last month, Asha Jhaveri — the woman at the helm of Mumbai's famed destination for 'home-like' chaats and Gujarati specialities, Swati Snacks — breathed her last after a prolonged illness. "She initially had cancer, then heart conditions and all kinds of other complications that came with it, but Asha was a fairly unique person," said her brother Anand Zaveri over a Zoom call from Ahmedabad. "She was suffering from everything, and yet she went about life like an 18-year-old." He added that the family had received an outpouring of condolence messages, both in person and over text.

The humble beginning

Swati Snacks began as a humble eatery in Tardeo in December 1962. Started by Minakshi Jhaveri. It offered just five items: pani puri, dahi batata puri, sev puri, ragda patties, and hand-churned sitaphal ice cream, all priced at four annas each. "Our parents had separated, and we were living with our mother," shared Anand. "It was important for her to earn money for the family. We had Veeralal, a maharaj (cook) who worked at our house. He made very interesting chaat items — things people weren't making at home — and our friends and relatives loved them. My mother was quite outgoing, and someone

suggested, 'Why don't you start a little restaurant?'" And she did, with Rs 35,000 that her mother lent her, she purchased a 250-sq ft shop. The space was so small that all the preparation happened at home. At 4 pm, a taxi would arrive to carry the food to the eatery. "It was a very un-business-like business. A lot of

worry, I will support you."

Over the years, Asha expanded the menu to include Gujarati specials, including panki, a wafer-thin pancake made with fermented rice flour, cooked between banana leaves. Though met with initial resistance, it soon became a hit. Today, over 500 pankis are sold at the Tardeo outlet alone every Sunday. The menu also offers pizza, dosa and uttappam to cater to all generations. "We have three-four generations coming to our restaurant, we want them all to have something," added Anand.

The restaurant also grew in size, acquiring the neighbouring unit, expanding to 1,400 sq ft and doubling seating capacity to 80. It became a go-to for those wanting Mumbai street food in a hygienic setting, including Michelin-starred chefs visiting India. Reliance Industries' Chairman Mukesh Ambani wrote in Asha's book A Culinary Journey of Hope and Joy that three generations of his family "cannot live without eating a meal from Swati at least once a week". Over the past two decades, the brand was further polished — a sleek stainless steel makeover, signature bright yellow plates, and new locations: Law Garden (2003) and Ambli (2019) in Ahmedabad, managed by Anand and his son Shaan, and another 2,000-sq-ft outlet at Nariman Point in Mumbai.



restaurants say 'homemade food,' but ours really was."

When Minakshi Jhaveri passed away suddenly in 1979 due to a severe diabetes attack, Asha had to step in. "Neither of us knew anything about food or how to run a business, but there was no choice. Asha had to show up at the restaurant the very next day. It was our cook, Veeralal, who gave her the confidence. He told her, 'Don't

Meet the latest MNS leaders who are enforcing Marathi one slap at a time

Mumbai. (Agency)

Among the seven Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) supporters booked by police in Mira Bhayandar, Thane district, on the charges of assaulting a shopkeeper after demanding that he speak in Marathi, three are office-bearers or active members of the party.

Identified via video footage of the incident, which is part of the investigation, the three are members of the MNS Mira Bhayandar unit, led by its 'City Chief' Sandeep Rane. In addition to registering an FIR, the police Friday also initiated proceedings against the seven, requiring them to sign bonds promising not to engage in any criminal activity. Senior Inspector Rajendra Kambale of Kashimira Police Station said preventive notices have been served on the seven and investigation is on to verify the sequence of events.

The Mira Bhayandar incident follows several such incidents involving MNS workers. In December last year, some of its activists slapped a shopkeeper at Girgaon in south Mumbai, a day after he allegedly asked a woman to speak to him in Marwari instead of Marathi. No complaint was lodged in the incident. In March this year, MNS workers were accused of slapping an employee of a leading supermarket store in Mumbai for not speaking in Marathi. The following month, MNS chief Raj Thackeray said at a Gudi Padwa rally that Marathi should be made mandatory for all official purposes in the state, and said people should not hesitate to slap anyone who refuses to speak Marathi. The same month, police in Powai, Mumbai, booked three MNS members and a grocery app delivery agent for allegedly slapping a security guard of a Powai residential society for not speaking in Marathi. They also forced the guard to apologise, the police complaint stated. In June, MNS workers attacked an auto-rickshaw driver in Mumbai and forced him to apologise for allegedly using objectionable language against a Marathi-speaking passenger as well as Raj Thackeray.

The matters are in court.

Following the latest incident, Rane, the Mira Bhayandar MNS chief, said the shop owner was to blame as he started arguing with his party workers who were celebrating the withdrawal of the three-language policy order by the government, and insulted the Marathi language.

The so-called factionalism in Punjab Congress is more of a manufactured narrative, driven by sections of the media and amplified by vested interests.

Mumbai: Six arrested for driving 23-year-old e-commerce employee to suicide

Mumbai. (Agency)

THE MUMBAI police on Friday arrested six persons in connection with an abetment to suicide case where a 23-year-old Bhandup resident, working for a well-known e-commerce platform, committed suicide following alleged harassment by colleagues and friends whom he

brother Satyam (20) that the company blocked his ID if there were a large number of rejections. "If my brother did not do so, they would call him and repeatedly abuse him and mentally harass him," Satyam said in the statement. The two colleagues had also come to the deceased's residence under the influence of alcohol and demanded money from him that he was to deposit in the office. Similarly, Shivam's friend Omkar More whom Shivam owed Rs 30,000 had been calling and abusing him to return the money, Satyam said in the statement. More allegedly also sent three other persons Aniket Ghadi, Ganesh Nikalje and Gautam Dhekale to Shivam's residence to beat him up.

As per police, the deceased Shivam Tiwari committed suicide by hanging himself at his Bhandup residence on Wednesday night. His family members told the police that for the past two weeks, Shivam's colleagues Sunil Yadav and Chetan Gautam forced Shivam to reject the undelivered parcels of others using his ID. Shivam had told his younger

brother Satyam (20) that the company blocked his ID if there were a large number of rejections. "If my brother did not do so, they would call him and repeatedly abuse him and mentally harass him," Satyam said in the statement. The two colleagues had also come to the deceased's residence under the influence of alcohol and demanded money from him that he was to deposit in the office. Similarly, Shivam's friend Omkar More whom Shivam owed Rs 30,000 had been calling and abusing him to return the money, Satyam said in the statement. More allegedly also sent three other persons Aniket Ghadi, Ganesh Nikalje and Gautam Dhekale to Shivam's residence to beat him up.

The family said that owing to this harassment, Shivam had been under stress and eventually on Wednesday night when no one was at home, he committed suicide. Based on the brother's statement, the Bhandup police registered an abetment to suicide case.

An officer from Bhandup police said that soon after registration of the FIR, they arrested all the six persons.

Are there no competent contractors within Haryana capable of executing government work? Why, time and again, is preference being given to outsiders for such posts?" he asked.

INLD leader Abhay Singh Chautala said, "The BJP has openly robbed the rights of the youth of Haryana as outsiders are being appointed to lucrative positions." He added that this is not the first time the BJP government has brought in individuals from other states on deputation. In response, Haryana BJP spokesperson Sanjay Sharma

advised the opposition not to politicise routine administrative matters. "The opposition should not look for political angle in the administrative affairs," he said. While Rinku Yadav was unavailable for comment, a senior Haryana government officer clarified that the deputation was well within administrative norms. "In rules, there

is no bar on posting an official on deputation from one state to another. There is no need of even relaxation in rules.

Such deputations keep taking place in finance and excise departments. But normally such deputations take place in case of senior officers appointed through the UPSC," the officer stated. He added that deputation for junior posts is generally rare, but can occur due to personal or family-related reasons. "For junior posts, it usually happens when one spouse is posted as a senior officer in another state. Later on, his spouse, normally working as a teacher, is posted in the same state where her husband is posted. In some cases, the officials are posted on deputation keeping in view unique family circumstances too, like education of the children or illness of a close family member," the officer added. He said that there is also a shortage of revenue officers in

'Irregularities, manipulations' in Pharmacy Council of India elections: CBI raids chief's residence in Ahmedabad

Ahmedabad. (Agency)

Three days after an FIR was filed against the Pharmacy Council of India (PCI) President Dr Montu Kumar Patel on June 30 over charges of irregularities and manipulations in elections of the Council, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Thursday raided his residence in Ahmedabad city. The FIR against Patel was filed on a complaint received from Amit Biswas, Under Secretary in the Health Ministry, in March 2023, and following a preliminary enquiry (PE) carried out by the CBI since May 2023. The FIR was filed by an Inspector of the CBI's Anti-Corruption Branch I, New Delhi. Dr Patel; Vinod Kumar Tiwari, who is part of the trust that runs the Rameshwar Prasad Satya Narayan Mahavidyalaya, Ayodhya; Santosh Kumar Jha, a middleman; and other unknown public servants and private persons were booked under Indian Penal Code Section 120-B read with 420, as well as Sections 7, 7A and 8 of the Prevention of Corruption Act. The PE focused on allegations of irregularities and manipulations in elections of PCI in 2022, co-opting of six members into the Executive Committee in violation of the Pharmacy Act, and grant of approval of pharmacy colleges.

According to the FIR, the enquiry allegedly revealed that after being elected as the President of the Pharmacy Council of India in the 114th meeting of central council held on April 6, 2022, Dr Patel appointed some of the members to key posts in the PCI. Besides, a number of other members were facilitated by him by way of their nomination as co-opted members, member of Executive committee or other

committees, including the Finance Committee. As many as 91 members were accommodated/nominated to some post or the other. The agenda for the 114th meeting was only for election of the President. However, going beyond the scope of the agenda, Dr Patel elected Dr (Ms) Nilimanka Das as a member of the EC and six others as co-opted members, thereby wresting control of the Executive Committee. Out of these six members, Dr Dharmendra Singh was later elected to the EC. Further, the said six co-opted members were given a blanket permission to be part of the EC for the whole year and also to



participate in the decision-making process for approval of colleges/institutes. In subsequent meetings of the Executive Council, all decisions were made without putting the item to vote.

Regarding approval to pharmacy colleges, the CBI FIR said that when the PE team visited Rameshwar Prasad Satya Narayan Mahavidyalaya, in UP's Ayodhya, it was found that it was in a dilapidated condition, without any faculty, infrastructure or students.

'Punjab deserves rule of law, not the rule by propaganda...': Punjab LoP Partap Singh Bajwa

Chandigarh. (Agency)

Marred by factionalism and bitter war words among its leaders in public, Congress in Punjab has several challenges ahead of the 2027 Assembly polls. However, Leader of Opposition Partap Singh Bajwa terms the factionalism as a "manufactured narrative" and claims no Congress leader has spoken in favour of former minister and Akali leader Bikram Singh Majithia who has been arrested in a disproportionate assets case.

Excerpts from an interview

Intense factionalism has once again reared its head in Punjab Congress and was visible in Ludhiana by-election. Questions are now being raised on the ability of Congress to win 2027 elections amidst bitter infighting. Your comments

The so-called factionalism in Punjab Congress is more of a manufactured narrative, driven by sections of the media and amplified by vested interests.

What we are witnessing is a deliberate attempt by the BJP, a party that survives by dividing people on the basis of religion, caste, language, and region. They have mastered the politics of polarisation across India, and now they are trying to inject that same poison into Punjab's political environment. AAP has become a willing partner in this deception. BJP and AAP are two sides of the same coin when it comes to exploiting people's emotions for political gains. Congress, on the other hand, stands united in its commitment to Punjab's peace, prosperity, and Punjabis. We will expose these



divisive forces, and I am confident that in 2027, the people will reject hate and confusion.

AAP has targeted Congress leadership for speaking in favour of Bikram Majithia in the recent Vigilance Bureau case. Every senior Congress leader had attacked Majithia in the past so how do you justify speaking in his favour?

Once again, a section of the media has chosen to amplify the false narrative

crafted by AAP's publicity machinery. No Congress leader has spoken in favour of Majithia or asked investigative agencies to shield anyone involved in the drug trade. Our stand has been consistent: whoever is guilty, irrespective of their party, position, or background, must face the full force of the law. But at the same time, agencies must function within the framework of the law, not under political pressure or for media spectacle. Let's also expose AAP's hypocrisy. They registered the FIR under provisions related to disproportionate assets — not under NDPS Act. This is classic "shoot and scoot" politics by AAP — make noise, defame people, and later quietly apologise, as their so-called 'Supreme Leader' has done many times before.

At medical college, counselling sessions to deal with Ahmedabad crash trauma

Cordoned off for investigation since the crash, students say lunchtime at the new mess is still an anxious affair due to the lives lost and the sound of planes flying overhead.

Ahmedabad (Agency)

Till 1.38 pm on June 12, aircraft spotting was one of the favourite pastimes of medical students of B J Medical College, located on the flight path, around a kilometre from Ahmedabad airport. Barely 10 minutes later that day, the world as generations of students knew it changed irrevocably.

At 1.38 pm on June 12, an Air India Boeing-787 Dreamliner carrying 242 people to London Gatwick Airport took off from the airport. Moments later, it started plummeting at a speed of over 400 feet per minute, its tail hitting the first-floor mess at the college's Atulyam hostel during lunchtime. Besides the 241 of 242 people on the plane who died, casualties in the mess included four medical students, two each were from first and

second-year MBBS, a mess worker, her toddler granddaughter and a doctor's wife. Cordoned off for investigation since the crash, students say lunchtime at the new mess is still an anxious affair due



to the lives lost and the sound of planes flying overhead. To help them process their trauma, the college has organised two voluntary mass counselling sessions — one each for its first and second-year students — this month. While a session was held for first-year students on July 1,

the second one was organised on July 3 for second-year students. Despite the new mess being located on the ground floor of Sopanam hostel 7-8, where first and second-year medical students are housed, barely 150 metres from the damaged site at Atulyam hostel, first-year student tells The Indian Express, "We are coping but mushkil hai (it is tough)." Medical students Manav Bhadu and Jayprakash Choudhary of Rajasthan, Rakesh Gobarhai Diyora of Gujarat and Aryan Rajput of Madhya Pradesh lost their lives in the Atulyam hostel mess on June 12. While the mass grief counselling sessions are for first- and second-year MBBS students alone, the on-campus Students Counselling Centre (SCC) is open to all, including MBBS, nursing and physiotherapy students.

Row over Bihar officer's posting in Haryana; opp raises questions

Rinku Yadav, a Circle Officer (Revenue) posted in Bihar's Barhara Anchal (Bhojpur), was deputed on June 19 as naib tehsildar in Dahina, Rewari, district for a year.

Chandigarh. (Agency)

The appointment of a revenue officer from Bihar as naib tehsildar in Haryana has triggered a political controversy with top opposition leaders raising questions on the move. Rinku Yadav, a Circle Officer (Revenue) posted in Bihar's Barhara Anchal (Bhojpur), was deputed on June 19 as naib tehsildar in Dahina, Rewari, district for a year. As the order, issued by Haryana's Additional Chief Secretary Sumita Misra, went viral on social media, it drew strong criticism from opposition parties on Friday.

Congress leader and former CM Bhupinder Singh Hooda Friday alleged the ruling BJP's inclination towards "outsiders" is severely compromising the rights and employment opportunities of the residents of Haryana. "In major state-level appointments, the BJP government has consistently preferred candidates from other states over local youth. Not only government jobs, but even state contracts are being awarded to



outsiders. The latest instance is the deputation appointment of a tehsildar from another state," said Hooda and asked whether Haryana's youth lack the qualifications to serve as tehsildars, lecturers or in other such posts.

"Are there no competent contractors within Haryana capable of executing government work? Why, time and again, is preference being given to outsiders for such posts?" he asked.

INLD leader Abhay Singh Chautala said, "The BJP has openly robbed the rights of the youth of Haryana as outsiders are being appointed to lucrative positions." He added that this is not the first time the BJP government has brought in individuals from other states on deputation. In response, Haryana BJP spokesperson Sanjay Sharma

is no bar on posting an official on deputation from one state to another. There is no need of even relaxation in rules.

Such deputations keep taking place in finance and excise departments. But normally such deputations take place in case of senior officers appointed through the UPSC," the officer stated. He added that deputation for junior posts is generally rare, but can occur due to personal or family-related reasons. "For junior posts, it usually happens when one spouse is posted as a senior officer in another state. Later on, his spouse, normally working as a teacher, is posted in the same state where her husband is posted. In some cases, the officials are posted on deputation keeping in view unique family circumstances too, like education of the children or illness of a close family member," the officer added. He said that there is also a shortage of revenue officers in

Haryana. "At present, only 58 tehsildars and 156 naib tehsildars are posted across the state's tehsils to manage various land-related transactions. However, the sanctioned strength is significantly higher — 96 for tehsildars and 219 for naib tehsildars," he added. Meanwhile, sources claimed that Rinku Yadav originally hailed from a village in Haryana's Mahendragarh, though he was selected as a civil servant in Bihar through the Bihar Public Service Commission a few years ago.

THE SIKH TIMES

Edited, Printed, Published
Owned by Simmi Babbar
N-31, Dr. Mukherjee Nagar
Delhi-110009
Printed by Qaumi Patrika Printing
Press, A-4/144, Tronica City
(Loni), Ghaziabad (Uttar Pradesh)
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RNI No. DELENG/2008/25465

Yogi govt to sponsor pilgrimages for Buddhist and Sikh devotees

The Sikh Times

Lucknow, July 5: In a move to fulfil the spiritual aspirations of Buddhist and Sikh devotees, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has announced two new pilgrimage schemes—'Baudha Teerth Darshan Yojana' and 'Panch Takht Yatra Yojana'. Chairing a high-level meeting on Saturday, the CM said it is the state's responsibility to help citizens visit sites of religious importance, as pilgrimages are key to spiritual upliftment and social harmony. Under these schemes, financial assistance will be provided to ensure easy access to sacred destinations. According to the Chief Minister's vision, the purpose of the Baudha Teerth Darshan Yojana is to help Hindu/Buddhist residents of Uttar Pradesh undertake pilgrimages to major Buddhist sites across the country. He directed that Buddhist monks be given priority in the selection of beneficiaries under this scheme. Similarly, the Panch Takht Yatra Scheme will benefit Sikh devotees. Under this scheme, Sikh devotees from Uttar Pradesh will be taken on a pilgrimage to the five sacred Takht Sahib sites of Sikhism. These sites include Shri Anandpur Sahib

(Punjab), Shri Akal Takht Sahib (Amritsar, Punjab), Shri Damdama Sahib (Talwandi Sabo, Punjab), Shri Takht Sachkhand Shri Hazur Sahib (Nanded, Maharashtra), and Shri

Both schemes will be operated in collaboration with IRCTC. The Chief Minister directed officials to implement the schemes with the highest focus on the convenience, safety, and



Harmandir Ji Sahib (Patna Sahib, Bihar). Under both proposed schemes, a minimum of Rs 10,000 per person will be provided as financial assistance. CM Yogi instructed that the application process for both schemes be fully online, with complete transparency in the selection process, giving priority to individuals from economically weaker sections.

religious sentiments of the devotees. He added that these initiatives would strengthen the state's inclusive development policy and the spirit of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas'. The schemes will give a new dimension to religious harmony and tourism in the state, and further embody the vision of 'Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat'.

DU offers 1,347 seats under ECA quota for 2025-26

The Sikh Times

New Delhi: From divinity and dance to digital media and debate, Delhi University (DU) is offering 1,347 seats under the Extra-Curricular Activities (ECA) quota for the 2025-26 academic session, catering to a wide range of student talents across 14 categories. The 14 ECA categories for which DU is admitting students this year are creative writing (English and Hindi), debate (English and Hindi), digital media (photography, filmmaking, animation), divinity, fine arts (sketching, painting, sculpture), music-vocal (Indian and Western),

music-instrumental (Indian and Western), dance (Indian classical, Indian folk, Western, choreography), theatre, quiz, National Cadet Corps (NCC), National Service Scheme (NSS) and yoga. Each category includes a range of sub-disciplines, allowing students to apply as per their specific interests and skills. All admissions under the ECA quota will be managed centrally through DU's online portal. "The trials, allocations and entire admission process, including for the divinity category, will be conducted through a centralised ECA committee and not by individual col-

leges," Professor Deepa Taneja, Convenor of DU's ECA Admissions Committee, said. According to the official ECA seat matrix, a total of 13 seats have been allocated under the divinity category this year, spread across four colleges: Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Khalsa College (four seats), Sri Guru Nanak Dev Khalsa College (two), Sri Guru Gobind Singh College of Commerce (four) and Mata Sundri College for Women (three). These colleges are maintained by the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee. Taneja further explained

that for the divinity category, candidates are evaluated on their proficiency in

form as per their proficiency. Judges may also ask them to present an addi-

primary performance area," she added. DU will publish detailed guidelines

a preferred institution for students from across the country, the professor stated. "Through ECA admissions, DU is committed to recognising and nurturing diverse student talents beyond academics. Under the leadership of Anoop Lather, Chairperson of the University Culture Council, DU has consistently earned laurels at national youth platforms such as the AIU Youth Festivals," Taneja said. ECA admissions will be based on a composite score, with 75 per cent weightage given to ECA performance (certificates and trials) and 25 per cent to the CUET score. Aspirants have been advised to prepare thoroughly for the trials and to fill out their course and college preferences wise-

ly, using the official seat matrix as a reference. Professor Gurmoinder Singh, principal of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Khalsa College, said that students selected under the divinity category play a central role in the cultural and spiritual life of the college. The university has urged students to regularly check the official admissions website for updates. "We choose students who are well-versed in Gurbani. They represent the college at cultural events and lead the college prayer during formal programs. We also appoint a contractual divinity teacher to train and mentor these students. Other interested students are also welcome to join and learn," he said

Penalty of Rs. 5,000 Imposed on Officer Found Guilty of Violating Right to Service Act

The Sikh Times

Chandigarh, July 2: The Haryana Right to Service Commission has imposed a symbolic penalty of Rs. 5,000 on the D.O.-cum-Senior Account Officer of the MSME Department. Sharing more details, a spokesperson of the Commission informed that the Commission took serious note of the delay in disbursement of financial assistance to an MSME unit in Faridabad and made strong remarks regarding the role of departmental officers, along with issuing necessary directions. Notably, the case was filed at the district office on December 24, 2024. However, prompt action was only taken after the Commission issued a notice on May 20, 2025, and the disbursement of funds was completed on May 30, 2025. The Commission clarified that the issue was not limited to disbursement

alone, but also involved the stages of approval, sanction, and distribution, all of which were to be completed within a total of 66 working days. Despite this, it took nearly five months to release a relatively small assistance amount of Rs. 2 lakh, which could be financially damaging to any MSME unit. The Commission identified blatant disregard of the Gazette notification, lack of proper training, and absence of clear directives at both headquarters and district levels. It declared the actions of the officers responsible for SGRA and FGRA duties as "illegal" for not adhering to the notification, and barred them from repeating such actions. The Commission also deemed the ambiguous remarks made by the officer serving as SGRA during appeal resolution as a legal violation and issued a warning in this regard. Furthermore, a show-cause notice has been

issued to the Joint Director of the MSME Department, Faridabad, while the D.O.-cum-Senior Account Officer has been fined Rs. 5,000. This amount will be deducted from his July salary and deposited into the state treasury. The Assistant at the headquarters has been let off with a warning this time and advised to be more vigilant in the future. Their name has also been recorded in the Commission's database for future monitoring. Additionally, the Commission has directed the Director General of MSME to conduct training-cum-awareness programs for officers at all district and headquarters levels, prepare a standard checklist, and submit a compliance report by July 30, 2025. The Commission also expressed its willingness to send a representative to conduct training on the Haryana Right to Service Act and the auto-appeal system.

Karnal: The geo-fencing-based attendance app introduced by the Health Department across the state is facing hiccups in its implementation. Doctors and health staff have already raised concerns and expressed resistance in downloading the app in their mobile phones, due to which it is not being implemented on ground to achieve the goal for which it was started. While the app has been officially mandated, its implementation remains partial. Without a consensus between staff and administration, enforcement may continue to face roadblocks. It is a GPS and facial recognition-enabled mobile application designed to mark the attendance of doctors and health staff. It ensures that health personnel are present during working hours. It has

been made mandatory recently for all government health staff, including doctors, NHM employees, nurses, lab technicians, and field workers posted at district civil hospitals, sub-divisional hospitals, CHCs, PHCs, and Ayushman Arogya Mandirs. Initially, the app was compulsory only for NHM employees; and it was started from Ambala district. The recent directives from the state headquarters have extended the requirement to all doctors and health workers. This change has triggered widespread opposition across the state. The primary objections revolve around privacy and data security. Doctors and health workers are concerned about potential misuse of their personal data and constant surveil-

lance. Many believe that it is disturbing and may lead to third-party tracking of their movements. Doctors under the banner of the Haryana Civil Medical Services Association (HCMSA) have raised the issue by submitting memorandums to civil surgeons at district headquarters. They met senior officials, including the DG Health, ACS Health, and Health Minister, urging the government to halt implementation until the staff's consent is taken. They argue that biometric attendance is already in place and is sufficient. Apart from HCMSA, associations representing nursing staff, lab assistants, NHM workers, and radiographers have also expressed dissatisfaction. They demand safeguards to protect personal data

and question the need for an additional layer of attendance verification when there is already a bio-metric attendance system in place. Government officials confirmed that the app is now mandatory for all staff and instructions about the same have been clearly issued. They admitted that the implementation is facing major resistance on the ground. Majority of doctors and staff members have not downloaded or used the app.

ELECTRICAL GENERAL WORK IN KATHIAR DIVISION

E-Tender Notice No.: EL_GEN_27-25-26. Dated: 03-07-2025. E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following work: Tender No. EL_GEN_27-25-26. Name of Work: Electrical General work in connection with "Proposal for construction of Road over Bridge in lieu of Level Crossing No. NC-5 (Manned) at Km 7/9-8/0 between station Rangapani-New Jaipaliguri in New Jaipaliguri-Alubari Section." Tender value: ₹ 1,69,64,081.76/-; Earnest Money: ₹ 24,800/-; Date & time of closing of tender: 03-07-2025, and opening at 15:30 hrs. on 28-07-2025. For complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available upto 15:00 hrs. on 28-07-2025 in the website www.ireps.gov.in

Sr. DEE /TRD, Kathiawar
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
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First monsoon showers expose MC ill-preparedness in Chandigarh, Mohali

The Sikh Times

Chandigarh: Even as the monsoon arrival on Saturday brought much-needed relief from the sweltering heat, it exposed the ill-preparedness of the civic bodies. Most parts of Chandigarh and Mohali were inundated due to clogged drains and blocked road gullies. The city recorded 34 mm rainfall, which was the second-heaviest in the region after 39 mm rainfall logged in Yamunanagar. The overnight rain led to a considerable dip in the minimum temperature in UT—the third-lowest in the region. The UT and Mohali also witnessed moderate to heavy rain, accompanied by thunderstorm, in the evening, leaving the low-lying areas

inundated. Meanwhile, The Tribune Chowk, which is one of the busiest junctions in the city, along with several other rotaries, was severely waterlogged. There was traffic chaos at the rotaries and the connecting roads. A portion of the road leading to Kishangarh near the Chandigarh Golf Range caved in following the downpour. During the rain, which was accompanied by moderate winds and thunderstorm, several trees and poles were uprooted in Chandigarh and Mohali, damaging vehicles and public property. This also exposed the lackadaisical approach on the part of the civic authorities, which failed to prune the old and overgrown trees before the

monsoon. If this was not enough, unscheduled power cuts compounded the residents' problems. In Mohali, the residents of most areas, especially Sector 69, 80 and their adjoining sectors, remained without power supply since midnight. The supply was restored after remaining suspended for almost 12 hours around noon. The Punjab State Power Corporation Limited (PSPCL) officials attributed the major power disruption to the damage caused to the supply lines by uprooted trees and poles. The evening downpour once again plunged most parts of Mohali into darkness. The power supply, which was suspended around 8 pm, was not restored when the reports

last came in. Chandigarh's 23.8°C Celsius night temperature remained the third-lowest minimum temperature in the region after Yamunanagar and Panchkula, which recorded the lowest and second-lowest of 20.9°C and 23.1°C, respectively. While the city's minimum temperature dipped by 5.4 degrees during the past 24 hours, which was 2.8 degrees departure from the normal, Mohali recorded 24.6°C on Friday night. The weathermen have predicted a generally cloudy sky with thunderstorms and rain in the tricity region over the next five days. Bathinda in Punjab and Sirsa as well as Bhiwani in Haryana recorded the highest minimum temperature of 31.1 and 30.2°C, respectively, on Saturday, the IMD said, while confirming light to moderate

hottest place in the region on Saturday as well with the maximum of 40.4°C, which was the highest in the region. Bathinda logged the maximum of 39.6°C to stay the hottest town in Punjab today. Mohali in Punjab and Yamunanagar in Haryana experienced the least warm night in the region on Friday with the lowest minimum temperature of 24.6 and 20.9°C, respectively. "As compared to yesterday, there was a fall of 0.7 degree and 1.3 degree in the average maximum temperature, with the mercury remaining near normal and below normal by 3.1 degrees in Punjab and Haryana, respectively, on Saturday," the IMD said, while confirming light to moderate

and heavy rainfall coupled with gusty winds and thunderstorm at isolated places in Punjab and Haryana. The detailed tender notice is available on Northern Railway web site i.e. www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in and tender document is available on www.ireps.gov.in. Above tender document will be available for submission of offer on IREPS web site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in from 16.07.2025 to 30.07.2025. All other terms and conditions in respect of above tenders are given in tender document. The detailed tender notice also can be seen on the Notice Board of the above office.

No. 341-D CEE/C/NDL/2025-26 Dated: 05.07.2025

2028/2025

CM Dhami Plants Paddy in Khatima, Pays Tribute to Farmers' Hard Work

The Sikh Times

Dehradun, July 5: In the Nagra Terai region of Khatima, Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami on Saturday planted paddy in his own field, paying heartfelt tribute to the hard work, dedication, and sacrifice of farmers. He said that stepping into the fields brought back memories of earlier days. The Chief Minister emphasized that farmers are not only the backbone of our economy but also the carriers of our culture and traditions. On this occasion, the Chief Minister also offered prayers to the deities—Bhoomiya (the god of land), Indra (the god of rain), and Megh (the god of clouds)—through Uttarakhand's rich cultural folk tradition, "Hudkiya Baul." This cultural

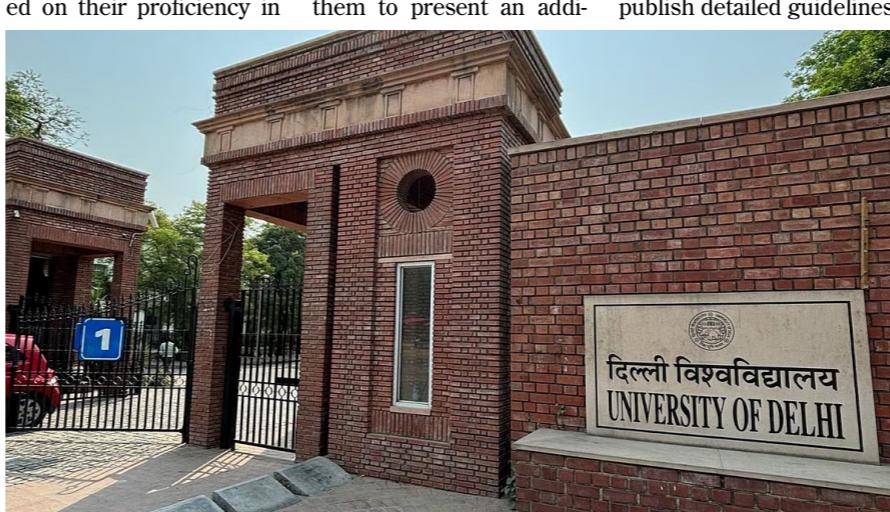
connection and emotional participation towards honoring



Uttarakhand's rural culture, recognizing the importance of farmers, and preserving traditional folk arts.

Wanted gangster held after encounter in Sonepat

Sonepat: The Special Unit for Anti-Gangster (SUAG) of Sector-27 police nabbed a notorious wanted gangster, Ravi alias Lamba, after a brief encounter in the Kharkhoda area of Sonepat district in the early hours of Friday morning. The accused has been identified as Ravi alias Lamba, a resident of Barona village in Kharkhoda. He sustained a bullet injury to his leg during the encounter. The police admitted the accused to the civil hospital, from where he was referred to Bhagat Phool Singh Medical College for Women at Khanpur for further treatment. According to police records, Ravi has an extensive criminal history, with over a dozen cases registered against him, including murder, attempted murder, dacoity, robbery, extortion and other heinous crimes, in various police stations across Delhi and Haryana. A combined reward of Rs 45,000 had been announced for his arrest. Acting on a tip-off, Inspector Ajay Dhanik, In-charge of SUAG, along with two police teams, laid a trap on the service road near Kharkhoda bypass on NH-334B close to the Barona village turn. During the operation, information was received that a suspect had breached a police naka and was heading in their direction. The police tried to intercept him, but he veered onto a kachha road and fell. He tried to flee and fired two rounds at the police.



'shabdat kirtan paath', with judges drawn from the Sikh community. "Candidates must bring their instruments and per-

form as per their proficiency. Judges may also ask them to present an addi-

ditional composition of their choice. Students are allowed one accompanist, either a vocalist or instrumentalist, based on their

for each ECA category, including divinity, on its admissions website ahead of the trial dates. Delhi University continues to be

a preferred institution for students from across the country, the professor stated. "Through ECA admissions, DU is committed to recognising and nurturing diverse student talents beyond academics. Under the leadership of Anoop Lather, Chairperson of the University Culture Council, DU has consistently earned laurels at national youth platforms such as the AIU Youth Festivals," Taneja said. ECA admissions will be based on a composite score, with 75 per cent weightage given to ECA performance (certificates and trials) and 25 per cent to the CUET score. Aspirants have been advised to prepare thoroughly for the trials and to fill out their course and college preferences wise-

ly, using the official seat matrix as a reference. Professor Gurmoinder Singh, principal of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Khalsa College, said that students selected under the divinity category play a central role in the cultural and spiritual life of the college. The university has urged students to regularly check the official admissions website for updates. "We choose students who are well-versed in Gurbani. They represent the college at cultural events and lead the college prayer during formal programs. We also appoint a contractual divinity teacher to train and mentor these students. Other interested students are also welcome to join and learn," he said

Haryana health employees oppose geo-fencing attendance app over privacy concerns

TENDER NOTICE

The Dy. Chief Electrical Engineer/Const./Northern Railway, 4th Floor, DRM Office, New Delhi-110001 invites e-tender under single Packet System for the noted work:-
1. Name of work and location : "Design, supply, erection, testing & commissioning & modification of 25 KV OHE in connection with widening of platform 1 & 2 (CYZ) and platform 3.4 & 5 (DLI End) slewling of track and provision of two stabling line with RPC-4 facility at GZB station.
2. Completion period of the work : 12 (Twelve Months)
3. Approx. Cost of work : Rs.2,07,94,410.46
4. Earnest Money amount (to be deposited Online) : Rs.2,54,000
5. Date & Time for submission of E-tender : Tenders may be uploaded 16:00 hrs on 05.07.2025 on IREPS website i.e., www.ireps.gov.in. The bidders can participate in the e-tender, the tender will be opened at 15:00 hrs on 30.07.2025.
For complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available upto 15:00 hrs. on 28-07-2025 in the website www.ireps.gov.in
Sr. DEE /TRD, Kathiawar
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Serving Customers With A Smile

NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE

The Dy. Chief Electrical Engineer/Const./Northern Railway, 4th Floor, DRM Office, New Delhi-110001 invites e-tender under single Packet System for the noted work:-
1. Name of work and location : "Design, supply, erection, testing & commissioning & modification of 25 KV OHE in connection with widening of platform 1 & 2 (CYZ) and platform 3.4 & 5 (DLI End) slewling of track and provision of two stabling line with RPC-4 facility at GZB station.
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6. Detailed Tender Notice & Tender Document : The detailed tender notice is available on Northern Railway web site i.e., www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in and tender document is available on www.ireps.gov.in. Above tender document will be available for submission of offer on IREPS web site i.e., www.ireps.gov.in from 16.07.2025 to 30.07.2025. All other terms and conditions in respect of above tenders are given in tender document. The detailed tender notice also can be seen on the Notice Board of the above office.
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8. Date of opening of tenders : 30.07.2025.
9. Time of opening of tenders : 15:00 hrs on 30.07.2025.
10. Date of declaration of result : 31.07

NEWS BOX

Hamas Says Ready To Start Gaza Ceasefire Talks "Immediately"**World. (Agency)**

Hamas on Friday said it was ready to start talks "immediately" on a proposal for a ceasefire in Gaza, where the civil defence agency said Israel's ongoing offensive killed more than 50 people.

The announcement came after it held consultations with other Palestinian factions and before a visit on Monday by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to Washington, where President Donald Trump is pushing for an end to the war, now in its 21st month. "The movement is ready to engage immediately and seriously in a cycle of negotiations on the mechanism to put in place" the terms of a draft US-backed truce proposal received from mediators, the militant group said in a statement.

Hamas ally Islamic Jihad said it supported ceasefire talks, but demanded "guarantees" that Israel "will not resume its aggression" once hostages held in Gaza are freed. The conflict in Gaza began with Hamas's unpreceded attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, which sparked a massive Israeli offensive aimed at destroying Hamas and bringing home all the hostages seized by militants. Two previous ceasefires brokered by Qatar, Egypt and the United States have seen temporary halts in fighting, coupled with the return of Israeli hostages in exchange for Palestinian prisoners. Netanyahu earlier on Friday vowed to bring home all the hostages held in Gaza, after coming under massive domestic pressure over their fate. "I feel a deep commitment, first and foremost, to ensure the return of all our abductees, all of them," he said.

Pakistan Plays Denial Card Again On Masood Azhar, Hafiz Saeed; Asks India To Give Proof**World. (Agency)**

Pakistan, often called a safe haven for terrorists, has once again shown its true colours by trying to provide a safe harbour to wanted terrorists like Masood Azhar and Hafiz Saeed. Pakistan has now claimed that Azhar doesn't live in the country, while Saeed is not a free man. Pakistani politician Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, who was criticised for his 'blood will flow in the Indus river' remark, has now made bizarre claims in an interview with Al Jazeera. Bhutto has claimed that Pakistan does not know the location of Jaish-e-Mohammed chief Masood Azhar. He said that Islamabad would be happy to arrest Azhar if India provides Pakistan with information about him. Notably, Bhutto is a part of the ruling coalition in Pakistan. Reacting to a question about a New York Times report claiming Saeed is free, Bhutto not only termed the report inaccurate, but also said, "That's factually not correct that Hafiz Saeed is a free man. He is in the custody of the Pakistani state. As far as Masood Azhar is concerned, we have been unable to arrest him or identify him. Given his past within the Afghan jihad context, it is our belief that he is in Afghanistan."

Who Is Masood Azhar?

Masood Azhar remains one of the most notorious figures on India's list of wanted terrorists. His name is linked to some of the most devastating terror attacks the country has faced—including the 2001 Parliament attack, the 2008 Mumbai attacks, the 2016 Pathankot airbase assault, and the deadly Pulwama attack in 2019. In 2019, the United Nations officially designated him as a global terrorist. Azhar's release in 1999, following the hijacking of Indian Airlines flight IC-814 to Kandahar, was a moment of deep national trauma. India agreed to release him in exchange for the safe return of the hostages onboard the plane. For years, India has urged Pakistan to take action and hand over Azhar, along with Lashkar-e-Taiba chief Hafiz Saeed. Despite concrete evidence of their presence and activities within its borders, Pakistan has consistently denied their involvement, often claiming ignorance.

'Chinese blessing scam': Two arrested in Australia for scamming elderly Asian women; rob them of cash, jewellery**World. (Agency)**

Two people were arrested in Australia in connection with a "Chinese blessing scam" that defrauded a 77-year-old woman in Sydney out of cash and jewellery worth 130,000 Australian dollars (about \$85,000 USD). These arrests come amid a broader investigation into a wave of similar scams, which have been reported globally for the past 25 years in countries including the US, UK, Canada and New Zealand. A 63-year-old woman was arrested at Sydney International Airport on Thursday following an in-depth investigation by Strike Force Sentinel, a special unit formed in April to investigate the scam.

The following day, her alleged accomplice, also 63, was taken into custody at Brisbane Airport as he attempted to board a flight to China. Authorities say he is likely to face charges soon.

These scams commonly target elderly Asian women. Victims are typically led to someone posing as a spiritual healer, who instructs them to place their money and valuables into a bag. They are then told not to open the bag for several weeks or even months. When they finally do, they find the contents missing.

"It's a robbery by stealth. These offenders swarm these vulnerable victims, usually Asian, older females. They swarm like a pack of hyenas," reported CNN quoting New South Wales police detective superintendent Guy Magee. Strike force sentinel has received around 80 reports involving the alleged theft of 3 million Australian dollars (\$2 million USD). Police believe about 50 people are involved in the scam network, with 25 identified by name and 11 arrest warrants issued so far.

'Very unhappy with Putin': Trump floats sanctions after Russia's largest attack on Ukraine

The US president said he and Putin talked about sanctions "a lot," adding, "He understands that it may be coming."

KYIV. (Agency)

US President Donald Trump said Russia just wanted to "keep killing people" and hinted at sanctions after Moscow launched its largest ever drone and missile attack on Ukraine in the three-year-old war. Trump said Friday he was "very unhappy" about his telephone call with Russian leader Vladimir Putin, saying: "He wants to go all the way, just keep killing people, it's no good." The US president said he and Putin talked about sanctions "a lot," adding, "He understands that it may be coming." Hours-long Russian bombardments sent Ukrainians scurrying for shelters across the country and came after the call between Trump and Putin, which ended without a

breakthrough. AFP journalists in Kyiv heard drones buzzing over the capital and explosions ringing out throughout the night as Ukrainian air defence systems fended off the attack. Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky also spoke to Trump Friday and said they agreed to work on bolstering Kyiv's defences. "We spoke about opportunities in air defence and agreed that we will work together to strengthen protection of our skies," Zelensky said on social media after the call. Tymur, a Kyiv resident who said he had experienced previous Russian attacks, told AFP that the assault in the early hours of Friday felt different from others. Nothing like this happened. "Nothing like this attack had ever happened before. There have never been so many explosions," he said. The Kremlin said Friday it was "preferable" to achieve the goals of its invasion through political and diplomatic means. "But as long as that is not possible, we are continuing the special operation," spokesman Dmitry Peskov said, referring to Russia's invasion. At least three people were



wounded in Russian drone and artillery strikes on several parts of Eastern Ukraine overnight Friday to Saturday, regional governor Sergiy Lysak said on Telegram. Zelensky said Friday air alerts began echoing out across the country as the Trump-Putin call was getting underway.

He urged the United States in particular to increase pressure on Moscow, which on Friday announced fresh territorial gains on the front line with the capture of a village in the Donetsk region. Poland said its embassy building in Kyiv had been damaged in the attack but that staff were unharmed. In Kyiv, one person was pulled from the rubble after the strikes, which also wounded at least 26 people, emergency services said. The

'Summit with a cautious tone': BRICS nations to denounce Trump tariffs**RIO DE JANEIRO. (Agency)**

BRICS leaders meeting in Rio de Janeiro from Sunday are expected to decry Donald Trump's hardline trade policies, but are struggling to bridge divides over crises roiling the Middle East. Emerging nations representing about half the world's population and 40 percent of global economic output are set to unite over what they see as unfair US import tariffs, according to sources familiar with summit negotiations. Since coming to office in January, Trump has threatened allies and rivals alike with a slew of punitive tariffs. His latest salvo comes in the form of letters due to be sent starting Friday informing trading partners of new tariff rates expected next week on July 9. Diplomats from 11 emerging nations, including Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, have been busy drafting a statement condemning the economic uncertainty.

Since coming to office in January, Trump has threatened allies and rivals alike with a slew of punitive tariffs. His latest salvo comes in the form of letters due to be sent starting Friday informing trading partners of new tariff rates expected next week on July 9. Diplomats from 11 emerging nations, including Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, have been busy drafting a statement condemning the economic uncertainty.

Texas families plead for information on more than 20 girls missing from summer camp after floods**KERRVILLE. (Agency)**

Texas parents frantically posted photos of their young daughters on social media with pleas for information as more than 20 campers from an all-girls summer camp were unaccounted for Friday after floods tore through the state's south-central region overnight. At least 13 people were dead Friday and dozens missing after months worth of heavy rain fell in a matter of hours on Texas Hill Country, Kerr County Sheriff Larry Leitha said. The flood-prone region is dotted with century-old summer camps that draw thousands of kids annually from across the Lone Star State. Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick said about 23 girls attending Camp Mystic, a Christian camp along the Guadalupe River in Hunt, Texas, were unaccounted for Friday afternoon. Search teams were working to conduct helicopter and boat rescues in the fast-moving floodwaters. "I'm asking the people of Texas, do some serious praying this afternoon — on-your-knees kind of praying — that we find these young girls," Patrick said.



Dozens of families shared in local Facebook groups that they received devastating phone calls from safety officials informing them that their daughters had not yet been located and downed trees. Some were waiting to hear if their children could be evacuated by helicopter. Nine rescue teams, 14 helicopters and 12 drones were being used in the search, Patrick said. Camp Mystic said in an email to parents that if they have not been contacted directly, their child is accounted for. Safety officials said there were roughly 750 campers at an elementary school in nearby Ingram

that was being used as a reunification center, more than a hundred people milled around a courtyard with hopes of seeing their loved one step out of buses dropping off those who had been evacuated. One young girl wearing a Camp Mystic T-shirt stood in a puddle in her white socks, sobbing in her mother's arms as she rubbed her hands together and watched the buses arrive. Many families hoped to see loved ones who had been at campgrounds and mobile home parks in the area. Camp Mystic sits on a strip known as "flash flood alley," said Austin Dickson, CEO of the Community Foundation of the Texas Hill Country, a charitable endowment that is collecting donations to help nonprofits responding to the disaster. "When it rains, water doesn't soak into the soil," Dickson said. "It rushes down the hill." Decades prior, floodwaters engulfed a bus of teenage campers from another Christian camp along the Guadalupe River during devastating summer storms in 1987.

Is Manga's July 5 Earthquake Prediction Going To Come True What We Know**World. (Agency)**

A manga novel has predicted that a megaequake will hit Japan today, July 5. The 2021 reprint of 'The Future I Saw' by Ryo Tatsuki, a retired manga artist who is also known as the "New Baba Vanga," warns that a "huge" tsunami will wash over countries in the Pacific Ocean. This prediction has triggered widespread panic and has sparked concerns from some superstitious tourists about travelling to Japan. Last month, Tatsuki tried to dampen the speculation, saying in a statement issued by her publisher that she was "not a prophet" and that the megaequake may not happen. But she fell short of entirely withdrawing her statement, per Time Magazine. Seismologists insist that earthquake predictions are scientifically impossible. However, fans believe Tatsuki because she seemingly predicted the devastating Tohoku earthquake and tsunami in 2011, which claimed the lives of nearly 20,000 people and caused the

Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant disaster. What has manga predicted? Online buzz originated from a 2021 manga called "The Future I Saw" by Ryo Tatsuki. According to the prediction, a crack will emerge under the seabed between Japan and the Philippines, triggering a tsunami three times larger than the one in 2011. While the book contains no scientific backing, some have interpreted it as a prediction of a catastrophic event that will occur today, July 5. Social media videos and posts spreading the rumour have gained widespread traction, especially in East Asia (Hong Kong, Taiwan, China, South Korea). Tatsuki, dubbed Japan's "Baba Vanga," rose to prominence after she seemingly predicted the 9.0-magnitude earthquake which struck Japan's northern Tohoku region in 2011. According to the South China Morning Post, the manga's cover included the words "massive disaster in March 2011", leading some to believe that



she foresaw the event over a decade beforehand. Fans also claim Tatsuki predicted the unexpected deaths of Princess Diana and musician Freddie Mercury, as well as the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, a swarm of over 1,000 earthquakes near Japan's Tokara Islands and a volcanic eruption on Mount Shinmoe in Kyushu have also reignited fears, as they coincide with the manga's predicted timeline. Though seismologists dismiss any link, the timing has amplified public concern. Will the "megaquake"

prophecy come true? Japan is one of the most earthquake-prone countries in the world. However, scientists have said scientifically-based earthquake prediction is "impossible". But as the manga prediction continues to generate buzz online, seismologists dismissed the likelihood of the "prediction" coming to pass. "At the moment, it is still impossible to predict an earthquake with specific timing, location or its magnitude," the Japan Meteorological Agency said, calling any such prediction "a hoax" and "disinformation," per SCMP. Tatsuki herself appeared to have dampened the speculation, saying in a statement that she was "not a prophet". She urged readers not to be "overly swayed" by her dreams and "act appropriately based on expert opinions". The Japanese government has also warned about the earthquake speculation, saying that it was "regrettable that people are being affected by."

Trump signs 'Big Beautiful Bill' at the White House July 4 picnic**WASHINGTON. (Agency)**

President Donald Trump signed his package of tax breaks and spending cuts into law Friday in front of Fourth of July picnickers after his cajoling produced almost unanimous Republican support in Congress for the domestic priority that could cement his second-term legacy. Flanked by Republican legislators and members of his Cabinet, Trump signed the multitrillion-dollar legislation at a desk on the White House driveway, then banged down a gavel gifted to him by House Speaker Mike Johnson that was used during the bill's final passage Thursday.

Against odds that at times seemed improbable, Trump achieved his goal of celebrating a historic — and divisive — legislative victory in time for the nation's birthday, which also was his self-imposed deadline for Congress to send the legislation to his desk. Fighter jets and stealth bombers streaked through the sky over the annual White House Fourth of July picnic. "America's winning, winning, winning like never before," Trump said, noting last month's bombing campaign against Iran's nuclear program, which he said the flyover was meant to honor. "Promises made, promises kept, and we've kept them." The White House was hung with red, white and blue bunting for the Independence Day festivities. The U.S. Marine Band played patriotic marches — and, in a typical Trumpian touch, tunes by 1980s pop icons Chaka Khan and Huey Lewis. There were three separate flyovers.

Trump spoke for a relatively brief 22 minutes before signing the bill, but was clearly energized as the legislation's passage topped a recent winning streak for his administration. That included the Iran campaign and a series of U.S. Supreme Court rulings he's fought for. The budget legislation is the president's highest-profile win yet. It includes key campaign pledges like no tax on tips or Social Security income. Trump, who spent an unusual amount of time thanking individual Republican lawmakers who shepherded the measure through Congress, contended "our country is going to be a rocket ship, economically," because of the legislation. Big cuts to Medicaid and food stamps

Critics assailed the package as a giveaway to the rich that will rob millions more lower-income people of their health insurance, food assistance and financial stability. "Today, Donald Trump signed into law the worst job-killing bill in American history. It will rip health care from 17 million workers to pay for massive tax giveaways to the wealthy and big corporations, amounting to the country's largest money grab from the working class to the ultra-rich," AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler said in a statement. "Every member of Congress who voted for this devastating bill picked the pockets of working people to hand billionaires a \$5 trillion gift." The legislation extends Trump's 2017 multitrillion-dollar tax cuts and cuts Medicaid and food stamps by \$1.2 trillion. It provides for a massive increase in immigration enforcement. Congress' nonpartisan scorekeeper projects that nearly 12 million more people will lose health insurance under the law.

Head constable arrested for 'kidnapping, raping' Dalit teen at gunpoint in UP



Lucknow. (Agency)

Police on Friday arrested a head constable for allegedly kidnapping and raping a Dalit girl at gunpoint when she was on her way to school in Uttar Pradesh's Fatehgarh.

The accused, Vinay Chauhan, posted at a local police station, was caught by locals while allegedly pushing the victim out of a car near her home after the alleged assault.

Additional Superintendent of Police Sanjay Kumar (ASP) said Chauhan has been suspended and a departmental inquiry was initiated against him. The accused was produced in a court and sent to judicial custody. According to the police, preliminary investigation revealed that Chauhan was in contact with the survivor over the phone. The victim refused a medical examination, and in her statement to the magistrate, appeared to support the accused.

As per the police, the girl's father filed a complaint stating that on July 2, his daughter left home for school. A short distance away, the accused allegedly stopped her, forcibly pulled her into his car, and assaulted her. When she objected and raised an alarm, the man driving the car allegedly pointed a gun at her and issued threats.

On being informed about the kidnapping, the complainant said he, along with his son and others, began searching for the girl. Later, they saw the accused pushing the girl out of the car. On seeing them, the driver tried to flee, but they blocked the vehicle with a motorcycle. Realising the situation was turning serious, the driver managed to escape leaving the car behind. The public caught Vinay and took him to the police station.

Based on the father's complaint, an FIR was registered against Vinay and his unidentified associate under various sections, including gang-rape, kidnapping, and criminal intimidation. Charges under the SC/ST Act have also been invoked against the accused.

BBMP to restore dug-up roads, asks civic agencies to deposit money

ABENGALURU. (Agency)

Bengaluru Ditched, the two-week-long campaign by TNIE in these columns has finally jolted Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) into reading the riot act to civic agencies such as Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB), Bangalore Electricity Supply Company (BESCOM).

The BBMP has now decided that the road restoration work will be carried out only by its team. The BBMP would also demand the agencies which want to carry out various civic/development works to deposit money in advance to carry out restoration work.



Chief Engineer, BBMP Projects Department, M Lokesh said that it will ensure road restoration work as sinking of roads and bad patches resurface following repair works by other civic agencies.

"The roads fixed by such agencies get spoiled and the BBMP gets a bad name, hence, before giving a 'No Objection Certificate' from BBMP, the municipality has put a condition to collect deposit money as, palike only will fix the roads," said Lokesh. A senior BWSSB official said it is carrying out works like replacing old sewer lines

Mathura: HC rejects plea to refer 'Shahi Idgah' as 'disputed structure'

Allowing the present application amounts to "pre-determination" at an early stage in the suit that the Shahi Idgah Masjid is not a mosque, the court said

Lucknow. (Agency)

The Allahabad High Court on Thursday dismissed a petition that sought to replace the term "Shahi Idgah Masjid" with "disputed structure" in all future court proceedings in the ongoing cases related to the Krishna Janmabhoomi-Shahi Idgah dispute.

The plea filed with prayer to direct the stenographer concerned to use the word "disputed structure" in place of "Shahi Idgah Mosque" in all further proceedings of the original suit and other related cases was supported with the affidavit of advocate Mahendra Pratap Singh who is plaintiff number 5. The prayer was opposed by the Muslim side, the court noted.

"A bare perusal of the pleading of the parties in the suit reveals that there is dispute between the parties with regard to the site where Shahi Masjid Idgah is existing. Parties have claimed their respective title over suit property. Therefore, it may be termed as property in dispute 15. In pleadings of the parties also, the structure in question is referred as Shahi Masjid Idgah and at this stage where hearing of the suits is yet to commence and even issues have not been framed, it is neither desirable nor expedient to issue any direction to stenographer, as prayed by the applicants, to refer Shahi Masjid Idgah in judgments and orders as 'disputed



structure,'" stated the bench of Justice Ram Manohar Narayan Mishra, in its order. "There is no dispute with regard to identity of property in suit, therefore, the prayer made in the application A-44 cannot be granted at this stage. The Court in its direction may refer to the property in dispute by appropriate words in further proceedings. 16. The application A- 44 is dismissed with above observations," the bench added. The court also said the applicant (plaintiff number 5) had submitted that the Shahi Idgah mosque was constructed

on the exact site historically recognised as the original birthplace of Lord Krishna, one of the most revered deities in Hinduism.

The defendants, on the other hand, maintained that there is no provision that allows the plaintiff to dictate a stenographer of the court to refer Shahi Masjid Idgah as a "disputed property", especially when such words are an attempt to retract from admission made by him and could also amount to an adverse inference against the defence in the suit.

The application has been filed with an intent to abuse the process of law, they alleged, adding that the mosque has existed for over 400 years, a fact which has been sought to be undermined by the petition. Allowing the present application amounts to "pre-determination" at an early stage in the suit that the Shahi Idgah Masjid is not a mosque, the court said.

It is also cited the defendant's contention that the plaintiff is trying to introduce a new case "through backdoor" to negate the admitted fact that Shahi Masjid Idgah is a mosque. Even the existence of the mosque is admitted by plaintiff number 5 in his affidavit and at this stage he will not be permitted to convert the existing mosque into a "disputed structure" for an ulterior motive, it added.

BMC commissioner faces locals' ire after flooding

BHUBANESWAR. (Agency)

Municipal commissioner Rajesh Prabhakar Patil on Friday faced fuming residents of Badagada who alleged gross civic negligence after filthy drain water entered their homes following heavy spells of rains in the last 12 hours.

The municipal commissioner was visiting the area as the flooding and water-logging, caused by a clogged discharge passage left a number of houses in the area inundated for hours, damaging property and increasing the risk of a health crisis.

The residents, who voiced their frustration before the municipal commissioner, were seen seeking an immediate solution to the matter after their houses were flooded twice in a span of 12 hours on Thursday night. One of the residents even alleged that the area has turned into a picnic spot for the BMC authorities. "They come here in the name of inspection, click pictures, and return. There is hardly anything real being done to address our plight," he alleged.

The flooding which occurred twice, following intense spell of rains on Thursday evening and early Friday morning, allegedly due to the burial of an existing siphon, left about 40 to 50 houses inundated, displacing multiple families.

The flooding left household articles damaged, cars flooded while residents were sent seeking shelter in safer places. While some residents went to upper floors of their homes, others took refuge in the residences of their neighbours. Some were even forced to shift to hotels.

"My 92-year-old grandmother had to sit on a teapot placed atop the bed as the water level inside the house rose to nearly five feet. I, along with my parents and brother, also stayed on the first floor of a neighbour's house all night," said Sonali Suman, one of the residents.

Though the water level receded after BMC cut open two embankments of Daya West canal, the incident has left the residents in panic and misery.

Sonali said most of their clothes are now ruined, while household appliances like refrigerators and washing machine were damaged. "A thick layer of mud and filth covers the floors. We apprehend health hazards," she said.

Bereft of cover, people face the elements at Redhills bus stand

CHENNAI. (Agency)

The decision to hurriedly relocate the Redhills MTC bus stand to a vacant ground near a garbage dumping site opposite Puzhal lake along GNT Road to make way for the construction of a new bus stand, is inconveniencing hundreds of commuters. Commuters, many carrying luggage, are forced to stand in the scorching heat and rain due to the absence of shelters.

Apart from a stench emanating from the nearby garbage site and no markings for platforms or bus bays, commuters are forced to stand in the vacant land enduring clouds of dust stirred up by buses entering and exiting the bus stand. The site lacks concrete flooring, which is essential for pedestrian movement and smooth operation of bus transportation.

Residents of Naravarikuppam also questioned why the bus stand had to be hastily shifted without any amenities arranged at the new site. MTC officials said they would write to the Tiruvallur district administration to provide basic amenities at the earliest.

The Naravarikuppam town panchayat, which was maintaining the Redhills bus stand, cleared a portion of the garbage dumping site



buses operate across 36 routes from Redhills, connecting areas such as Tiruvallur, Periyapalayam, Gummidiyopandi, Puzhal, Grand Line and Arumandhai.

"Why was the existing bus stand hurriedly shut down without ensuring any facility at the temporary site? It looks like the work was rushed just to benefit the contractor and others involved," said a local resident R Karnan (name changed), who also pointed out that the construction of the new bus stand could take 15 to 20 months to complete.

Congress, AAP MLAs protest at Surat DGVCL office over delay in appointment of electrical assistants

Surat. (Agency)

Congress and AAP MLAs, including Anant Patel and Chaitar Vasava, jointly protested at a 'Halla Bol' event against the Dakshin Gujarat Vij Company Limited (DGCL) for allegedly not appointing candidates from the merit list it released in January for the post of electrical assistant in six districts in South Gujarat.

The joint protest, notably, comes a day after AAP's national convenor Arvind Kejriwal, who was in Gujarat on Thursday, stated that his party's coalition with the Congress existed until the last Lok Sabha elections, and there is none at present.

AAP MLA from Dediapada seat in Narmada district, Vasava, and Congress MLA from Vansda seat in Navsari district, Patel, participated in the protest with Surat Congress president Vipul Udhawala,



had their names on the merit list.

The DGCL officer said that for now, applicants from Navsari who had made it to the merit list, will be appointed through outsourcing and later, when there are

vacancies, they will be given the first chance. Their work experience with the DGCL will be considered when they apply for jobs later. Applicants from other districts in South Gujarat will be considered in the coming months.

Sources in the DGCL said that a large number of applicants had appeared in the written and practical exams conducted at Surat head office of the DGCL at Kapodara on January 19.

Over 1,800 applicants cleared both exams, and their names were on the merit list released in January-end. These youths have not received satisfactory answers from the

DGVCL head office in Surat when they enquired about their appointment letters.

Talking to The Indian Express, DGCL Chief Engineer Surati said, "In January, we conducted both theoretical and practical exams for the post of electrical assistant, and over 1,800 candidates made it to the merit list. We obtained the details of candidates from the ITI, which are spread across six districts. This is a general practice that we follow, keeping in mind the vacancies, so that we can place such candidates. We informed both leaders that we will, for now, request outsourcing agencies to hire 35 candidates from Navsari district, and the process will be the same for the other districts in coming months. Their work experience will be taken into consideration when there are vacancies for electrical assistants later."

Amazon, the river of burning dreams

"I went on the river for money, I sold my rotten shack / For a rusty tanker leaking oil, and the burning sun was on my back / Travelled up the ragin' river, I watched the jungle burn... I'm ridin' on a river of dreams / Amazon, is it heaven or hell?"—Amazon (River of Dreams), a 1993 song by jazz guitarist Artie Traum emblematic of the iconic river basin's dire straits three decades later

Climate impact on the Amazon rainforest and the issue of fossil fuels brought together the heads of Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Suriname and Venezuela—eight members of Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO)—after 14 years in August 2023 at Belem, Brazil. Home to more than 1.5 million indigenous people representing over 385 ethnic groups and a verdantly diverse biome, the enigmatic Amazonia seeks inclusive social support, besides an environmental look.

Holding a fifth of all newly-identified global oil reserves, the region is currently witness to a frenzy as oil majors and nouveau rentiers capitalise on the opportunity. However, the well-documented history of "experimental exploration" in the Amazon basin reflects failed projects and environmental delinquency. Recurrent mechanical failures, sabotage, corrosion and natural disasters on ageing and "strategically misplaced" pipelines have resulted in thousands of oil spills over the last 50 years. River pollution and destruction of planet's largest rainforest remains a politically sensitive issue for Latin American oil producers, as they rely on exports to usher social and economic welfare.

With rampant hydrocarbon contamination of numerous waterways and Amazon tributaries, infrastructural compatibility and logistics management is essential for ethical production practices. The catastrophic March 2025 spill in coastal Esmeraldas from a ruptured trans-Ecuadorian pipeline, the worst in 30 years, is such a tragedy. The historic referendum of August 2023 precluded exploration in the country's Yasuni National Park, a Unesco Biosphere Reserve. Ceasing further operations in the area, Petroecuador was directed to "revive the ecosystems and dismantle any infrastructure within a year". However, 'stranded assets' and debris continue to besmirch the pristine environs. The Orinoco river belt in central and eastern Venezuela saw its first oil well in 1936. With the discovery of extra heavy crude and 20 percent of the world's proven reserves, major exploration was initiated in the area that extended further south around the Amazon rainforest.

Frequent spills and infrastructural mismanagement by a callous PDVSA, the state oil company, accelerated the pace of deforestation and ecological catastrophe across the region. Similarly, scores of oil spills due to corrosion and faulty maintenance of Petroperu's Norperuano pipeline resulted in pollution of Maranon river, Peru's second largest and a mainstem source of Amazon river from the Andes. Colombia, among the top five oil producers in South America, shares tales of "oil misdemeanours". The Rio Putumayo, an Amazon tributary flowing through Colombian forests before entering Ecuador, is sacred to the Siona and Inga indigenous communities with spiritual and cultural significance. Exploration since the 1940s and sabotages by armed rebels has sullied the river belt. While emphasising "ending deforestation in the Amazon is fundamental" in 2023, Colombian President Gustavo Petro halted approval of new extractive contracts. He suggested the creation of an 'Amazon NATO' to defend the region "with weapons", as a joint initiative of members.

THE recent killing of social media influencer Kanchan Kumari, who was better known as Kamal Kaur Bhabhi, has received widespread media attention. An investigation is in progress, even as the police have stated that it is a case of moral policing. The crime was allegedly committed by Amritpal Singh Mehron, a Nihang Sikh, and his accomplices. It is claimed that the victim was misrepresenting herself by using the middle name associated with Sikh women — 'Kaur' — while allegedly posting content considered vulgar or immoral. This tragic incident has triggered a wide spectrum of reactions within the Sikh community and reignited deeper debates around identity, morality and justice. This article does not seek to pass judgment on any individual or group. Rather, it invites reflection on how Sikhs, as a community, can honour the legacy of the Khalsa and uphold justice in today's India. The Gurus combined spiritual courage with moral restraint. In this moment of reckoning, the greater strength may lie not in action, but in waiting — in knowing when the sword must stay sheathed. The Nihangs are a historic Sikh warrior order, renowned for martial skill, spiritual discipline and fearless devotion. As part of the original Sikh military tradition, they serve as guardians of the Panth. Living by a strict Rehat (code of conduct) that emphasises Naam Abhyasa (meditation), Gurmukh knowledge and spiritual living, they are easily recognised by their blue bana, tall turbans and traditional weapons. They preserve the legacy of Shastar Vidya — the Sikh martial art. In recent years, several incidents involving violence by Nihangs in enforcing religious or moral values have raised public concern. While such actions may not stem from malice, they raise serious questions about bypassing the rule of law. Taking the law into one's own hands — even with sincere intent — is a criminal act in India.

As a result, many Nihangs now find themselves in jail, awaiting trial — when they might otherwise have been contributing meaningfully to society. Every Sikh, including Nihangs, can serve the Panth more effectively by embodying the Khalsa ideals of discipline, courage and restraint — outside the confines of prison. Sikh warriors must remain vigilant against injustice — but the form of action must evolve. Restraint, knowing not only how to use a weapon but when not to, is more vital than ever. In today's world, the most powerful weapon is not the Kirpan alone, but the law. The enforcement of religious or moral values must follow legal processes — approached with the same reverence and discipline that the Kirpan symbolises. Upholding justice through lawful means is not a compromise of Sikh values; it is their modern embodiment. A return to the legacy of the Gurus reveals how the law, when rightly used, reflects Sikh ideals. Guru Nanak challenged tyranny and orthodoxy through dialogue, poetry and truth — not violence.

Guru Arjan Dev was tortured by Emperor Jahangir for

The sword must shun moral policing, uphold justice

The murder of social media influencer Kanchan Kumari has reignited deeper debates around identity, morality and justice



refusing to alter the Adi Granth. Despite immense suffering, he did not retaliate. His martyrdom was a spiritual and legal stand — the kind of religious freedom now enshrined in Article 25 of the Constitution.

Guru Teg Bahadur gave his life defending the rights of others to practise their faith. He wielded not a sword, but moral courage — a legacy echoed in civil resistance today. Guru Gobind Singh, who established the Khalsa in 1699, upheld justice not only through arms but also through compassion. When Bhai Kanhaiya offered water to wounded soldiers on both sides of the battlefield, the Guru praised his actions and gave him balm — recognising seva over enmity. Even after losing his father and all four sons, Guru Gobind Singh wrote Zafarnama to Aurangzeb — a letter not of rage but moral rebuke. "When all other means have failed, it is just to take up the sword," he wrote. But in today's India, all means have not failed. We have courts, lawyers and constitutional protections. Until every legal avenue has been pursued, the sword must wait. In a democracy, justice must not be pursued through vigilante means but through legal and civic channels. A powerful way to defend the Panth is by working with lawyers, judges and public officials to file FIRs, report hate speech and pursue legal action against sacrilege and vulgar content — already recognised under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023. Writ petitions can also help protect Sikh civil liberties. Beyond legal advocacy, Nihangs and Sikh volunteers can support law enforcement, lead efforts for community security or engage in relief work. A compelling example is Khalsa Aid, which has provided humanitarian support during

natural disasters, the Covid-19 pandemic and global conflicts. Their work — from oxygen supply to food kits — is a modern expression of seva. It shows how Sikh values can thrive through lawful, organised compassion. Such roles preserve the martial and service-oriented legacy of the Khalsa while reinforcing the Sikh image as protectors — not through force, but through resilience and compassion. This is not dilution — it is redirection. A way to become defenders, not judges; enforcers of peace, not executioners. In a time when actions are easily politicised, this model of service can both protect the Nihang legacy and strengthen the Sikh identity. The Sikh Gurus teach us that Sikhism is not only about resistance, but about righteous resistance — guided by wisdom, compassion and discipline. From Guru Nanak's spiritual defiance to Guru Gobind Singh's creation of the Khalsa, our tradition shows that true strength lies not in arms alone, but in moral character. Guru Gobind Singh proclaimed, "Shastar mere peeran ki rakhwali" — the sword is the protector of my robe of honour. For him, the Kirpan was a symbol of dignity and responsibility, not aggression. In today's India, the law can become our modern-day Kirpan — if we learn to wield it with integrity. Through the courts, civic discourse and public service, our warriors can rise again — not to destroy, but to uplift. This is not weakness; it is strength with grace. This is the Khalsa in its modern form — fearless, yet lawful; devout, yet disciplined. Let the sword remain sheathed until every legal path has been taken. Let us hold the Constitution with the same reverence as the Kirpan. In doing so, we do not betray our heritage — we fulfil it.

Sigachi Industries blast: Ensure workers' safety with strict compliance

It's not that we do not have laws to protect workers—in fact, we have enough of them. The problem is in effective implementation and in turning a blind eye to safety standards in the push to improve the ease of doing business

One death is a tragedy, a million a statistic — so goes the cynical saying. This is especially true in the case of industrial accidents in the country. From the Bhopal gas leak to the blast at Sigachi Industries in Telangana, thousands have lost lives over decades and many more maimed for life. Yet, after a flurry of knee-jerk reactions, the Centre, the states and the companies go back to business as usual rather than seriously introspecting and finding a permanent solution to ensure workers' safety.

The Sigachi blast crashed a building and resulted in the death of 38 workers. At the end of Thursday, 10 others were missing. Yes, compensation has been announced and panels formed to investigate the cause of the accident; but the void left among the shattered families can never be filled. As per official data, close to 500 industrial mishaps of different magnitudes have occurred over the last five years in Hyderabad, a pharma hub. But in several other states, too, such accidents are just waiting to happen. Neighbouring Andhra Pradesh has seen several tragedies



including the LG Polymers gas leak, as has Tamil Nadu in its fireworks factories. Between 2017 and 2020, on an average, three people died every day in factory accidents, according to the Union labour ministry's Directorate General Factory Advice Service and Labour Institutes.

The National Disaster Management Authority has counted 130 chemical accidents over the past decade. Reports suggest over 3,000 died in such incidents between 2018 and 2020. Mind you, these statistics do not include the informal sector and even the micro, small and medium enterprises.

Artificial Intelligence uses Artificial Intelligence uses It's not that we do not have laws to protect workers—in fact, we have enough of them. The Centre brought in the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code in 2020. The problem is in effective implementation and in turning a blind eye to safety standards in the push to improve the ease of doing business. Also, several ministries are involved in ensuring compliance, causing confusion. The alarming regularity of accidents not only costs precious lives, but also deals a blow to the manufacturing sector. It is high time governments got their act together to strictly enforce norms, and make an example of managements that flout them and the errant officials who give such managements a free pass.

A decade of Digital India now a people's movement, central to self-reliance

When the intent is right, innovation empowers the less empowered. When the approach is inclusive, technology changes the lives of those on the margins.

Ten, we embarked on a bold journey into uncharted territory with great conviction. While decades were spent doubting the ability of Indians to use technology, we changed that approach and trusted their ability to use technology. While decades were spent thinking that using technology would deepen the gap between the haves and the have-nots, we changed this mindset and used technology to eliminate the gap. When the intent is right, innovation empowers the less empowered. When the approach is inclusive, technology changes the lives of those on the margins. This belief laid the foundation for Digital India: a mission to democratise access, build an inclusive digital infrastructure, and provide opportunities for all. In 2014, internet penetration was limited, digital literacy was low, and online access to government services was scarce. Many doubted whether a country as vast and diverse as India could truly go digital. Today, that question has been answered not just in data and dashboards, but in the lives of 140 crore Indians. From how we govern, to how we learn, transact, and build, Digital India is everywhere.

Bridging the Digital Divide

In 2014, India had around 25 crore internet connections. Today, that number has grown to over 97 crores. Over 42 lakh kilometres of Optical Fibre Cable, equivalent to 11 times the distance between Earth and the Moon, now connects even the most remote villages. India's 5G rollout is among the fastest in the world, with 4.81 lakh base stations installed in just two years. High-speed internet now

reaches urban hubs and forward military posts alike, including Galwan, Siachen, and Ladakh. Artificial Intelligence uses Artificial Intelligence uses India Stack, our digital backbone, has enabled platforms like UPI, which now handles 100+ billion transactions a year. Around half of all real-time digital transactions happen in India.

Through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT), over Rs 44 lakh crore has been transferred directly to citizens, cutting out intermediaries and saving Rs 3.48 lakh crore in leakages. Schemes like SVAMITVA have issued over 2.4 crore property cards and mapped 6.47 lakh villages, thereby ending years of land-related uncertainty.

Democratising Opportunity for All

India's digital economy is empowering MSMEs and small entrepreneurs like never before.

ONDC (Open Network for Digital Commerce) is a revolutionary platform which opens a new window of opportunities by providing a seamless connection with a huge market of buyers and sellers. GeM (Government e-Marketplace) enables ordinary people to sell goods and services to all arms of the Government. It not only empowers them with a vast market but also saves money for the Government. Imagine this: You apply for a Mudra loan online. Your creditworthiness is assessed through an account aggregator framework. You get your loan and start your venture. You register on GeM, supply to schools and hospitals, and then

scale up via ONDC. ONDC recently crossed 200 million transactions, with the last 100 million in just six months. From Banarasi weavers to bamboo artisans in Nagaland, sellers are now reaching customers nationwide, without go-betweens or digital monopolies. GeM has also crossed Rs 1 lakh crore GMV in 50 days, with 22 lakh sellers, including more than 1.8 lakh women-led MSMEs,



fulfilling orders worth Rs 46,000 crore. Digital Public Infrastructure: India's Global Offering India's Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) from Aadhaar, CoWIN, DigiLocker, and FASTag to PM-WANI and One Nation One Subscription is now being studied and adopted globally. CoWIN enabled the world's largest vaccination drive, issuing 220 crore QR-verifiable certificates. DigiLocker, with 54 crore users, securely and seamlessly hosts over 775 crore documents.

Through our G20 Presidency, India launched the Global DPI Repository and a \$25 million Social Impact Fund, helping nations across Africa and South Asia adopt inclusive digital ecosystems.

Startup Power Meets Aatmanirbhar Bharat India now ranks among the top 3 startup ecosystems in the world, with over 1.8 lakh startups. But this is more than a startup movement; it is a tech renaissance. India is doing extremely well in terms of AI skill penetration and AI talent concentration among our youth. Through the \$1.2 billion India AI Mission, India has enabled access to 34,000 GPUs at globally unmatched prices of under \$1 per GPU hour, making India not just the most affordable internet economy but also the most affordable computer destination. India has championed humanity-first AI. The New Delhi Declaration on AI promotes innovation with responsibility. We are establishing AI Centres of Excellence across the country.

The Road Ahead

The next decade will be even more transformative. We are moving from digital governance to global digital leadership, from India-first to India-for-the-world. Digital India has not remained a mere government program; it has become a people's movement. It is central to building an Aatmanirbhar Bharat and making India a trusted innovation partner to the world.

To all innovators, entrepreneurs, and dreamers: the world is looking at India for the next digital breakthrough.

3 who conned lawyer of Rs 3 crore in 'digital arrest' fraud nabbed

Noida. Three men have been arrested in connection with a cyber fraud of Rs 3.2 crore after a woman was put under digital arrest last month. The scammers had made the woman — a lawyer — believe she was implicated in serious crimes such as gambling, blackmail and illegal purchase of weapons. The trio has been identified as Dupender Singh, Vinay Samaniya and Mandeep Singh. Additional deputy commissioner of police (cyber) Manisha Singh said on Friday while Dupender and Vinay were nabbed from Delhi, Mandeep was apprehended from Noida. "We are trying to crack down on the trail. Rs 17 lakh has been frozen so far," Singh said.

During interrogation, Dupender alias Ginni, who has an apparel business in Delhi, said he gave the access of his bank account for the money transfer co-accused Vinay. He used to receive 15% of the amount. Thus

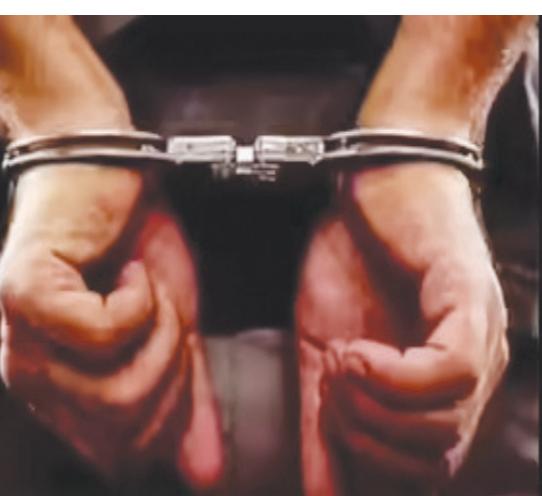
Gurgaon stunt videos on tractors near Cyber Hub spark probe; cops suspect AI-generated clips; no number plates, loud music, zero traffic

GURGAON. Two videos of unidentified persons performing stunts on city roads on two tractors near Cyber Hub have been making rounds on social media for the past two days, leaving even the police puzzled. The tractor occupants can be seen speeding near the Golf Course road without any check by the police. Surprisingly, the videos show minimal traffic on a road that typically experiences heavy congestion. Moreover, the tractors were seen without the number plates, with 'Shera' and 'Sniper' mentioned on the number plates. While both videos have



gone viral, showing tractors equipped with heavy speakers playing loud music, police are now suspecting that the videos are AI-generated. ASI Sandeep, a police spokesperson, stated, "We found the videos on the internet and have started our investigation, but these are seemingly AI-generated videos." An ACP rank officer added that authorities are reviewing CCTV footage from the area before taking appropriate legal action. Several people have been charged with acts like rash driving, performing stunts on busy roads, and endangering lives in the past. On July 16, DLF 1 police registered a case against unidentified persons after a video of a Lamborghini performing stunts on Golf Course Road went viral. An FIR was lodged under BNS Sections 125 (endangering life), 281 (rash driving), and 57 (abettment of offences by the public or by more than ten persons). Authorities included Section 57 because multiple vehicles were seen trailing the Lamborghini while recording the stunt, suggesting coordinated participation.

Rs 93 lakh was transferred to his bank account. "Vinay told police he shared Dupinder's bank account with other associates on a 25% commission. "Mandeep said he took Rs 50,000 from one of his accomplices to get the fraud amount transferred to his bank account and gave the access of his bank account to him. Rs 71 lakh related to the case was transferred to the account of Mandeep," the ADCP said. The woman had filed the complaint with the cyber police station on June 30. On June 10, she received a call on her landline. The caller introduced himself as an employee of an investigation agency and informed the woman that her Aadhaar card and bank account were used in illegal smuggling of weapons, blackmailing and gambling. He also told the woman she might have to go



to jail as the matter was serious. When she called the phone number provided by the scammers for a NoC, they repeated the accusations. The fraudsters called her

repeatedly until June 24 on WhatsApp. The video call appeared to be from a person in a police uniform, with the background resembling a real police station. During these "interrogations," the woman's bank account details were recorded. She was asked to break her FD and in five RTGS transactions, she transferred Rs 3.2 crore to the scammers. They also promised that after investigation, the entire amount would be returned to the original account.

Based on the statements, police had filed a case under sections 308(2) (extortion), 318(4) (cheating), and 319(2) (cheating by personation) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and section 66D of the IT Act.

Nigerian held with MDMA drugs in Gurgaon Sector 44, case filed

Gurgaon. A 27-year-old Nigerian was arrested with MDMA drugs on Friday. James Sadjou from Anambra was arrested near a hotel in Sector 44 with Methylendioxymethamphetamine weighing 25 gm. Police said that Sadjou arrived in India 10 months ago on a medical visa and has been distributing drugs since then. A case was registered against him under the NDPS Act at Sushant Lok police station. A senior police officer said, "The accused reached Gurgaon from Delhi to supply the contraband to his customers, but he was nabbed by the Crime Branch of Sector 39 police following a tip-off. Over 10 gm MDMA is considered commercial and we recovered 25 gm of the drug. Most of the Nigerians come on business visas but indulge in illegal activities here".

According to the police, the accused does not have any past criminal record.

In the past two months, Gurgaon police have detained over 15 Nigerians for supplying drugs to corporate houses and party venues across the NCR. Most of these individuals overstayed as their visas

expired. Recently, the arrest of eight drug peddlers, including six Nigerian nationals, had led police to a multinational gang that exploited the dark web's anonymity to orchestrate a multi-crore cocaine business across NCR. The gang, which included a Nepalese national and a woman from Mizoram as well, operated from the shadows of a "workshop" in Delhi's Chhattarpur area for three years before being busted by Gurgaon cops on June 16. The gang, police said, not just used the dark web to reach out to potential customers, but also conducted transactions using digital currencies like Bitcoin that left no digital footprint. In another case, Gurgaon police arrested a Nigerian national with 11.98 gram MDMA. The accused was identified as Nwafor Donatus Azor of Enugu State, Nigeria.

He was booked by Sector 57 police under NDPS Act. He had come to India on a tourist visa in 2023 which expired in 2024. In April, police arrested a woman near Paras Buildtech Sector 54 with narcotics. She was identified as Praise Osibe (28), a Nigerian national currently residing at

Lohia Apartments in Delhi. 13.8 grams of illegal MDMA were recovered from the accused, and a case was registered under sections of the NDPS Act at Sector 53 police station. The accused woman came to India in 2011. She received the narcotics for supply from another Nigerian individual in Delhi.

Police also arrested another Nigerian national involved in supplying illegal drugs to Osibe in April, at Sikanderpur Ghosi Pahadi Road. He was identified as Elamaru Edubuisi Pascal, Nigerian national currently residing in Delhi. Police interrogation revealed that he came to India on a business visa in 2011. A senior police officer said that the Nigerians are operating a huge nexus of drugs across the NCR. "A very few of those who come to India do genuine work or studies. The govt wants the police to identify the foreign nationals, those who have overstayed and deport them back. Once they are caught in crimes here, they get to stay for years here due to legal proceedings and thus they continue their drug business," the officer said.

Centre to allocate Rs 1L cr to revamp cities, says Manohar Lal Khattar

Gurgaon. Cities in India will be redeveloped through the Centre's Urban Challenge Fund, under which Rs 1 lakh crore will be allocated. The funds will be utilised to improve the infrastructure of the cities, Union minister for power, housing and urban affairs Manohar Lal Khattar said on Friday. The minister also underlined the need for making urban local bodies self-reliant. He said that while these bodies receive a fixed amount of funding from the central and state govt, achieving true self-reliance must go hand-in-hand with "ensuring transparency and accountability in their functioning". Khattar, who was addressing the concluding session of the two-day National ULB Conference in Manesar, said the best practices from leading cities around the world are being adopted to improve urban living conditions. Citing data, he said the urbanisation in India that was at 20% in 1970 has risen to 36% today and is projected to reach 50% by 2047. "A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

was recently signed with Spain to facilitate the exchange of successful urban development models between the two countries," the Union minister said.



Khattar said over the years villages grew into towns and cities, "but they still have narrow roads" and the sewerage and drainage system is either missing or is insufficient. Hence, "the funds will be utilised with the help of the state govt to

redevelop these urban centres."

The minister said urbanisation in India is accelerating rapidly. In response, both govt and municipal bodies must increase their pace of action. He stressed the need for proper workforce training and the efficient use of time and resources to meet future challenges. The Union minister said urban development must go hand in hand with environmental protection.

"While pursuing progressive initiatives, it is essential to keep environmental sustainability at the forefront," said Khattar. The minister stressed the need to improve traffic systems and simultaneously plan for e-mobility solutions. He said while metro rail services began in India in 2002 — much later than in the US where metros have existed for over 150 years — India has made remarkable progress. Today, metro networks span 1,000 kilometres across 21 cities, which is comparable to the extent of metro systems in the US. He said there are plans to expand this network.

Take them back, women's panel chief tells kin of Noida old age home's inmates

Noida. The state women's commission has asked relatives of inmates at Anand Niketan Vridh Seva Ashram in Sector 55 to take the elderly residents back home after they were found living in deplorable conditions. The old age home came under the scanner of authorities last week after a video that surfaced on social media showed an elderly inmate with her hands tied.

"Children who have left their parents at the old age home despite having their own houses and families will have to take their parents back and take care of them," said Babita Chauhan, president of the state women's commission, after an inspection on Friday. After the video surfaced last week, commission member Meenakshi Bharala conducted a surprise inspection of the facility and found elderly inmates living in unsanitary conditions and facing mistreatment from staff. Notably, no doctor or qualified medical professional was available on call, despite several inmates suffering from physical and mental ailments.

"It's disheartening to see that the old age home had started with a noble cause but is not following that now. That children will enjoy their life and leave their parents in such deplorable conditions is



not acceptable. This is a shameful act," Chauhan said. A day after the inspection last week, immediate relatives of most of Anand Niketan's 40 inmates turned up at the facility and signed forms to give consent that their parents could continue living there. There was no display of anger about living standards at the home and how the health of inmates was being neglected. Three elderly inmates of Anand Niketan were shifted to a govt

facility in Dankaur. But this alternative arrangement raised fresh concerns as well. Of the three, only one stayed back. One was taken back to Anand Niketan by their niece, while the woman seen in the video with her hands tied was taken home by her Noida-based family.

The city magistrate, who had inspected facilities at Anand Niketan last Sunday, had submitted a report to district magistrate Manish Kumar Verma, confirming that conditions at the old age home were indeed unsatisfactory. This prompted the DM to promise action against authorities at the home.

"This is a very sensitive matter. Any action will be taken based on a proper investigation," Chauhan said. DM Verma, however, said that the state govt would take the final call on the fate of Anand Niketan. "There are several elderly inmates whose children stay abroad. So, there is no one to take care of them, forcing them to live at the old age home. We have sent a detailed report to the state govt. Whatever they decide will be followed," he added. BR Arora, the old age home's managing trustee, said the children were welcome to take their parents with them. "We've already informed the families of the elderly residents that if anyone wants to take them back, they're free to do so. We held a meeting with them a few days ago, when they gave a written consent to keep their parents here. I have been managing this facility since 1996 and have never received any such complaint. This is the first time that such allegations are being levelled," he added.

News box

Warehouse gutted in fire in Gurgaon, flames doused in 5 hours

Gurgaon. A fire broke out in the early hours of Thursday at a warehouse in Bhora Kalan village near Chainpura. Upon receiving information about the incident, fire tenders from Pataudi, Manesar, Sector 29 and Farrukhnagar rushed to the spot. No injuries were reported. However, cotton material was destroyed. The warehouse, spanning 3,000 square metres, is owned by Chetna Enterprises. According to fire officials, a fire call was received at Manesar fire station at 12.20am. "A total of 10 fire engines were immediately deployed, and after approximately five hours of intense efforts, the blaze was brought under control. The situation is now stable, and a further investigation into the cause of the fire is underway," fire officer Lalit Kumar said.

1 held for cheating a Faridabad resident of Rs 1L in fake money laundering case

Faridabad. Police arrested a man from UP on Thursday for duping a Faridabad resident of Rs 1.13 lakh by posing as a Mumbai cop and threatening him with a fake money laundering case. The accused, Chetan Kumar of Shanti Niketan, Bulandshahr, was arrested by the Ballabgarh cyber police team from Sector 113 in Noida, following a complaint filed by the victim, a resident of Sector 2.

According to police, the incident occurred on September 30, 2024, when the victim received a call from an individual claiming to be a Mumbai police officer. The caller alleged that the complainant was involved in a money laundering case and would be arrested. The accused instructed the victim to transfer all funds from his account for the RBI investigation. He assured the victim that the money would be returned upon exoneration. The complainant subsequently transferred Rs 1,13,999 to the account provided by the fraudsters, stated SI Yashpal. Initially, the victim transferred the money, but upon being asked to transfer more, he realised the fraud and lodged a complaint, leading to the registration of a case and subsequent arrest.

During interrogation, it was revealed that the accused had similarly defrauded multiple individuals. The accused was produced before the court on Friday and remanded to one-day police custody. In a similar case, police last month arrested the ninth accused, Vijay Kumar Amrit of Gujarat, in a Rs 2.23 crore fraud where a Sector 29 resident was duped by callers impersonating Mumbai Crime Branch officers. The gang convinced the victim to transfer funds for "investigation" and later claimed illegal money was found in his account.

Women key drivers of development in urban local bodies

Gurgaon. The two-day national conference of urban local bodies (ULBs), held in Manesar, concluded with a formal resolution to enhance the impact of these institutions on national development. Participants highlighted that the core objective of ULBs is to bring about positive change in the urban service delivery framework. The pivotal role of women as key drivers of development within ULBs was also discussed.

It was noted that MP has implemented 50% reservation for women in urban local governance. Remarkably, currently, 60 to 65% of women are represented in ULBs there, demonstrating their strong participation and leadership. Similarly, in Haryana, women are actively contributing to urban development by taking on leadership roles in municipal bodies. Similarly, in Haryana, women are contributing to urban development by taking leadership roles in municipal bodies. The discussion highlighted how ULBs can become a mass movement by integrating development initiatives with public participation. Greater community involvement in planning was emphasized.



as key to sustainable and inclusive growth. Representatives from the Nagpur Municipal Corporation also shared their experiences, stating that ULBs are working as engines of inclusive growth while upholding their constitutional rights.

Haryana Governor Bandaru Dattatraya urged ULB leaders nationwide to adopt a 'Waste to Wealth' approach using advanced waste management technologies. He said such initiatives would not only provide a fresh impetus to the Swachhata Abhiyan but also significantly enhance the economic resources of ULBs. He said the govt is committed to providing ample employment opportunities for youth, and urged ULBs to prioritize skill development initiatives in their respective areas to further enhance job prospects. He also stressed learning from cities excelling in various sectors and adopting their best practices.

Madhya Pradesh urban development and housing minister Kailash Vijayvargiya emphasized transforming public participation into a mass movement. He recalled a time when the Indore municipal corporation faced a severe shortage of funds, and the public donated cement worth Rs 80 crore, which enabled the construction of roads worth approximately Rs 300 crore, an exemplary model of public participation. He also highlighted Indore's green initiative—planting 12.4 lakh saplings in a day, all surviving after a year, showcasing successful community impact.

'Open defiance of courts': Lawyer who fought for a decade to get old vehicles banned on Delhi govt's U-turn

Agency New Delhi.

In 2014, Delhi-based lawyer Vardhaman Kaushik moved the National Green Tribunal (NGT) over the Capital's choking air pollution crisis. A decade and orders from the NGT and Supreme Court later, a no-fuel ban on end-of-life petrol and diesel vehicles has barely lasted three days.

On Thursday, in a letter to the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) — the overarching statutory body for matters concerning air pollution — Delhi Environment Minister Manjinder Singh Sisra had said that it would not be feasible to enforce the ban "at this juncture", and "immediate implementation... may be premature and potentially counter-productive". The ban came into effect on July 1. The Delhi government's move has drawn sharp criticism from several quarters. According to Kaushik, the "poor implementation" of the ban order is "an open defiance of courts". "The (Supreme Court) judgment (on vehicle ban) had

come in long ago, in 2018... and it has not been executed," Kaushik told The Indian Express. "The fuel ban was only a way to implement the court's directions. The hue and cry over this now doesn't make sense." "This is not a new rule. These rules for end-of-life vehicles have been there for a long time. The judgment is not being taken seriously," Kaushik said, adding that only a few vehicles have been impounded over the



Kaushik dismissed the argument that the ban unfairly targets the middle class. "People who can afford cars and sit in air-conditioned rooms are cribbing at not being able to sell their car at good rates... Their opinion should not matter," he said. "The larger population that cannot afford cars bears the brunt of air pollution." He insisted that emissions, not the age of the vehicles, should be the focus. However, he underscored that age remains a legitimate

proxy. "Even if an age cap is put aside as suggested by the Environment Minister, the fact remains that a (Bharat Standard) BS III or a BS IV vehicle will always be far more polluting than a BS VI vehicle. The government needs to take a call at this juncture."

In April 2015, acting on Kaushik's plea, the NGT had laid the legal foundation for phasing out old vehicles from the Capital's roads. In 2018, the Supreme Court banned diesel vehicles older than 10 years and

petrol vehicles older than 15 years in Delhi.

The legal backing for the ban was reinforced by the 2018 SC order, which had upheld the NGT order. "The Transport Departments of NCR will immediately announce that all diesel vehicles more than 10 years old and petrol vehicles more than 15 years old shall not ply in NCR in terms of the order of the National Green Tribunal...," the order had said. It also mandated the impounding of violators and directed that lists of such vehicles be published on the websites of the Central Pollution Control Board and respective transport departments. Following the CAQM's April order on enforcing a fuel ban, a phased rollout was planned, first in Delhi from July 1, then expanded to the districts of Faridabad, Gurgaon, Ghaziabad, Gautam Buddha Nagar, and Sonipat in November. The plan was to expand the ban to the rest of the NCR from April 1, 2026.

'Loopholes in policy... faulty systems': Delhi's petrol dealers flag gaps in fuel ban rollout for old vehicles



Agency New Delhi.

A day after the Delhi government asked the Centre's Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) to put the fuel ban on end-of-life vehicles "on hold with immediate effect", sources in the CAQM said a decision would be taken in this regard only if required. In a letter to the CAQM on Thursday, Delhi Environment Minister Manjinder Singh Sisra cited "operational and infrastructural challenges" in the way of implementing the ban. While the CAQM is yet to issue a statement, a source in the CAQM told The, "We've received the letter. Only if required, a decision would be taken in due course of time."

On the ground, fuel stations, meanwhile, have already stopped enforcing the ban, which came into force on July 1. "Kya bolta hai pata nahi... samajh nahi aata (Don't know what it says... we don't understand)," an attendant told his employer at Ashok Place fuel station, located on Bhai Vir Singh Marg. The man was referring to the audio alerts triggered by the Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) system — core to the enforcement of the ban — which raises an alarm once any petrol vehicle older than 15 years and diesel vehicle older than 10 years passes through its scanners.

At the fuel station, owner Aditya Chugh, also an executive member of the Delhi Petrol Dealers Association (DPDA), said that the first two vehicles impounded at his pump on July 1 were not prompted by ANPR detection at all. "Officials recognised vehicles based on the bike models. The ANPR system was not used to detect them," he said. The cameras, he added, had been installed only two to three months ago.

Delhi HC slams Jal Board over water contamination in colonies

Agency New Delhi.

The Delhi High Court on Friday came down heavily on the Delhi Jal Board for supplying contaminated drinking water laced with sewage in parts of east Delhi, questioning how authorities could justify forcing citizens to consume such dangerously polluted water.

A bench led by Chief Justice D K Upadhyaya and Justice Anish Dayal expressed dismay while hearing a public interest litigation that alleged residents of Yojana Vihar, Anand Vihar, Jagriti Enclave, and nearby localities were receiving severely contaminated water through their household taps.

The plea, filed by advocate Dhruv Gupta, flagged health concerns over the supply of what was described as "highly contaminated potable water mixed with sewage".

Pulling up the DJB for its inaction, the bench questioned whether the agency would have done anything had the matter not reached the court. It remarked that authorities appeared to be expecting citizens to consume water essentially mixed with sewage, highlighting the unacceptable nature of the situation.

Earlier this week, on July 2, the court had instructed the DJB to carry out an on-ground inspection of the affected areas. In response, the water utility submitted a status report confirming that the water pipelines in Yojana Vihar were extremely old and in a deteriorated condition, necessitating urgent replacement. The report also acknowledged that many household connections, including those at the petitioner's residence, had severely damaged pipelines.

Kanwar Yatra 2025: Ghaziabad police issues traffic advisory; diversions, road closures from July 11

Agency New Delhi.

The Ghaziabad traffic police on Friday issued an advisory for commuters ahead of the Kanwar Yatra pilgrimage, with diversions and road closures set to come into effect from July 11. Officials said in the traffic advisory that heavy vehicles will be banned on certain routes from July 11 to 24, 2025 in Ghaziabad. Light vehicles will face some restrictions from July 17, and blockages will be implemented on Delhi-Meerut Road and Delhi-Meerut Expressway during the Kanwar Yatra.

According to the notice, heavy vehicles like trucks, buses, trolleys and tractors won't be allowed on certain routes from July 11, 10 pm to make sure that the pilgrims have safe access to the yatra routes.

The following roads will remain closed for heavy vehicles on the specified dates — Pipeline Road (Muradnagar —

Tila Morh), Delhi-Meerut Road & Expressway (DME) main carriageways, Kadrabad-Delhi-Ghaziabad border stretch (42.5 km), and NH-34 (formerly NH-58) and Gangnahar Patri Kanwar Road blocked at specific points.



Meanwhile, the entire Delhi-Meerut Expressway (Kashi Toll Plaza to UP Gate, 56km) will remain closed for all vehicles until at least July 23 (Sawan Shivratri).

Further, heavy vehicles will be diverted onto NH-9 via UP Gate — Dasna —

Eastern Peripheral Expressway (EPE) — to reach Hapur/Meerut once diversions come into effect. All routes will also be accessible via Delhi-Meerut Expressway auxiliary lanes before full closures take effect.

Additional instructions include —

- No entry for heavy vehicles from Loni Border, Gaur Green, Khoda, Kalapathar, Sector 62, Chhajrasari, Kanwani on NH-9 to Indirapuram
- Vehicles from Baghpat — Delhi to be rerouted via Tronica City — Sonia Vihar
- Hapur/Bulandshahr — Ghaziabad — Dasna Bridge diversions will remain into effect for the specified dates.

The Kanwar Yatra, an annual pilgrimage undertaken during the Hindu month of Shravan, draws thousands of devotees every year, who participate in the religious event by travelling on foot. Their routes include roads with heavy traffic, which is why restrictions on vehicular movement have also been restricted at night.

2 key members of Himanshu Bhau gang arrested following gunfire exchange in Delhi

Agency New Delhi.

The Special Cell of the Delhi Police apprehended two key members of the notorious Himanshu Bhau gang early on Saturday following a brief but intense exchange of fire in the Narela Industrial Area in Outer North Delhi, officers said. A pistol, a revolver, four live cartridges, and a stolen motorcycle were recovered from the accused.

The accused, identified as Mohit Vashisht, 24, and Bhumit Malik, 21, residents of Rohtak in Haryana, were riding a stolen motorcycle when the police attempted to intercept them. According to officers, instead of surrendering, the duo allegedly opened fire at the police team. The officers allegedly fired back in self-defence, resulting in both suspects sustaining gunshot wounds to their



legs. They were immediately taken to a hospital for treatment and are now under custody, the police added. The two were wanted in connection with the murder of one Anil. The killing was allegedly carried out on the instructions of Himanshu Bhau as part of an ongoing feud linked to the 2022 murder of Rohit alias Bajrang and his uncle by Anil's nephew Ankit. Vashisht and Malik were booked for Anil's murder under sections 103(1)

(murder) and 3(5) (common intent) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, along with sections 25 and 27 of the Arms Act, registered on June 1 at Shivaji Colony police station in Rohtak.

Records indicate that Malik has six previous criminal cases against him, while Vashisht has seven. Further investigation is currently underway to trace other gang members and uncover the full extent of their criminal network. On Friday, the police arrested two men who are alleged henchmen of the Kapil Sangwan alias Nandu gang following another exchange of gunfire in the outer parts of Delhi. The men were held in connection with the murder of Deepak Thakran, 30, who was the nephew of rival gangster Manjeet Mahal.

'How do we earn a living?': On strike, Karkardooma Court lawyers oppose shifting of digital courts

In a May 30 notification, the Delhi High Court had cited 'optimal utilisation' of infrastructure and resources to justify the shift of digital cheque bounce courts to the Rouse Avenue court complex.

Agency New Delhi.

Protesting the decision to shift the judges of 34 digital NI Act (Negotiable Instruments Act) courtrooms that hear cheque bounce cases from six court complexes in Delhi to the Rouse Avenue court complex, lawyers at the Karkardooma Court complex decided to abstain from work for a fifth day straight on Friday. The lawyers have been on a hunger strike for the last two days. "First, our labour courts were shifted, now our cheque bounce courts have been shifted... we are not fancy lawyers. How do we earn a living?" advocate VK Singh, president of the Shahdara Bar Association (SBA), told The Indian Express.

"All the lawyers in our courts are people residing in the Trans Yamuna (areas). Some of us barely get Rs 20-30,000 for an entire case. Many of us are dependent on cheque bounce cases. Is this justice at your doorstep? Things were running

smoothly... but now we are all anxious," Singh said.

Of the 34 courtrooms, nine are from Dwarka, seven from Tis Hazari, six from Saket, five from Karkardooma Court, four from Rohini, and three from Patiala House Court. While the judges of the respective courtrooms will be shifted to Rouse Avenue Court, the court staff (readers, ahlams and stenographers) will continue to operate from their respective districts.

The rooms for the 34 judges have been allocated on the seventh floor of the Rouse Avenue court complex, which is situated near the ITO Metro station in Central Delhi.

Earlier, the coordination committee of all district court bar associations had decided to abstain from work. On June 7, however, they called off their strike after the Chief Justice of the Delhi High Court assured



them in a meeting that all digital courts would function strictly as digital platforms only and that all the remaining proceedings and judicial work would be conducted exclusively in the regular local courts.

In a May 30 notification, the Delhi High Court, which is behind the move, cited "optimal utilisation of available infrastructure and resources" and

"inadequate space" to justify the shift of digital cheque bounce courts. "The remaining arrangement, including support staff deployment and recording of evidence from the respective District Court Complexes, shall continue as per the previous directions/practice until adequate and permanent space is made available in the District Courts concerned to which these Digital NI Act Courts ultimately belong," the notification dated May 30 read. "However, these Courts shall continue to be under the administrative control /supervision/ jurisdiction of the districts concerned to which these courts belong. The readers, ahlams, and judicial records of these Digital NI Act Courts would also continue to function from their original districts so as to avoid any inconvenience to the litigants, lawyers, and stakeholders," the notification added.

Smart storage under Staircase

The space below the staircase can be utilised for storage or as a display area maximising space with smart ideas that are innovative and useful is what homemakers are looking for these days.

However, finding a solution that is utilitarian and attractive becomes an interesting challenge. Most furniture these days is modular, incorporating some storage facility to maximise utility. Beds and sofas come with storage. Wood chests, apart from being decorative, allow you to store trinkets. Study tables come with cubbyholes and shelves for added

storage. Another alternative to maximise storage that will not bring in new furniture is the creation of storage in an odd space in the home, such as the area below the staircase.

ALCOVE

Many home owners are efficiently utilising the space below the staircase and some of the space abutting the staircase to create an alcove. The area beneath the staircase is quite valuable when space is at a premium. There are many ideas on how to make the most of this otherwise lost space.

TV CABINET

We could all use some extra storage space and the space under the stairs could be ideal for a variety of storage needs. This space can be used for concealed storage or for housing a TV cabinet if

need be. Both are extremely practical and good options that are seen in most homes.

BUILT-IN SHELVES

If the staircase has a high intermediate landing, then the space below can be considered for shelving. Built-in storage with shelves and drawers that will take care of the

oddest cranny is the most basic way to utilise the space. For convenience, two cupboards can be built and the one with the highest point can be used to store unwieldy long coats or sports equipment such as golf clubs and cricket bats. All other knickknacks can be stored in the various drawers and shelves in the remaining space. This idea works well when the stairwell runs behind a door or if the staircase is in a small area.

NOOK TO RELAX IN

Having bookcases under the staircase are a good way to use space that would otherwise be wasted. Besides, you can also consider creating a niche activity space under the stairs. If your staircase faces the living room, you could have a music area or a bar. It can be a small home office, or even a small hobby or craft room. If your staircase is located close to the utility area, it could serve as a convenient location for a small laundry room. If your staircase runs down into the front hallway, the area beneath could house a shoe rack. If it goes up to the

bedroom, you could have a mini cabinet or a wardrobe under the stairs.

STORAGE FOR TOYS

It could also serve as an efficient toy storage area for your children. For a toy storage area, find baskets, plastic tubs or bins of different sizes and then design shelving of different heights and widths to accommodate them. Ensure that these storage spaces are both attractive and easy to access. It can be simply shelved out and left open, or covered as a screen, or covered as a complete cupboard.

KITCHEN CABINETRY

If the staircase is in the dining room, consider having a superior quality wine storage cabinet below the stairs. Neat wood racks meant for wine bottles along with a temperature control mechanism will occupy little space as opposed to making a separate wine cellar. Smart shutters with glass can let you have a good view of your wine collection.

Choosing the best kitchen

connected to the dining area; some may build a beautiful temple, some may have just a small shrine; some may like it centrally air conditioned, whereas others may decide how to place it manually.

WOMEN DECIDE

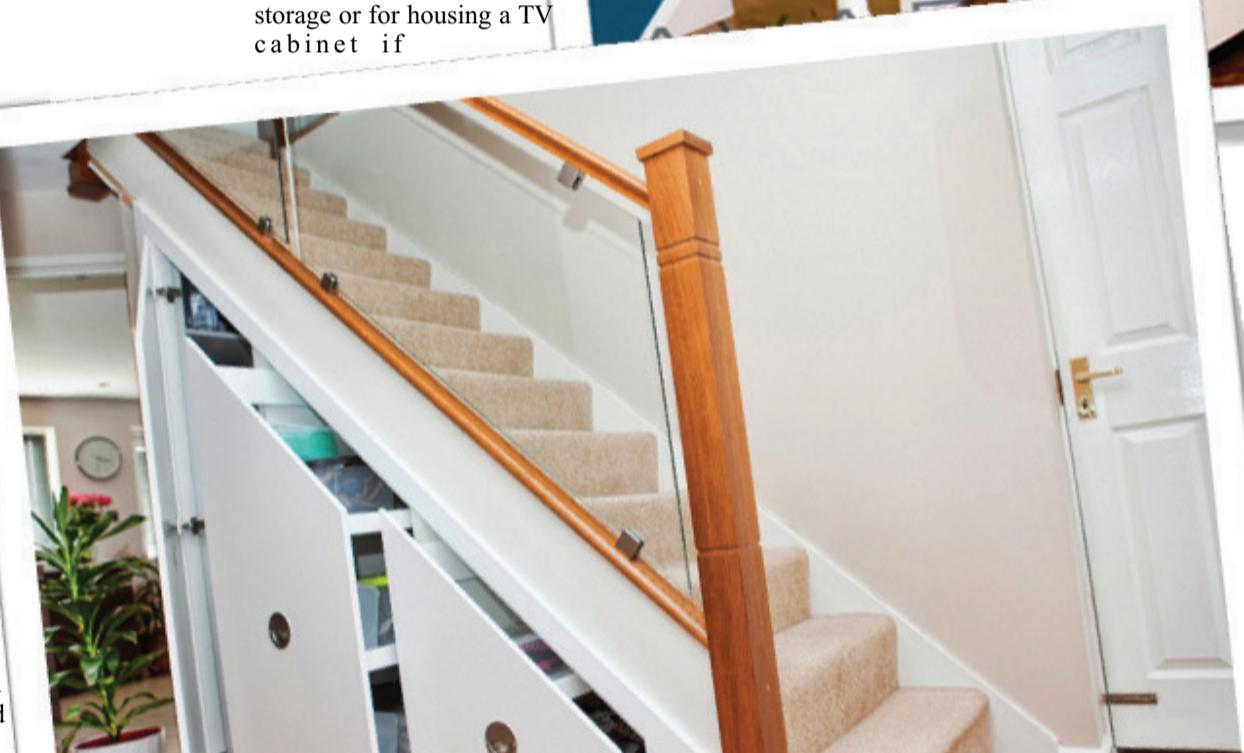
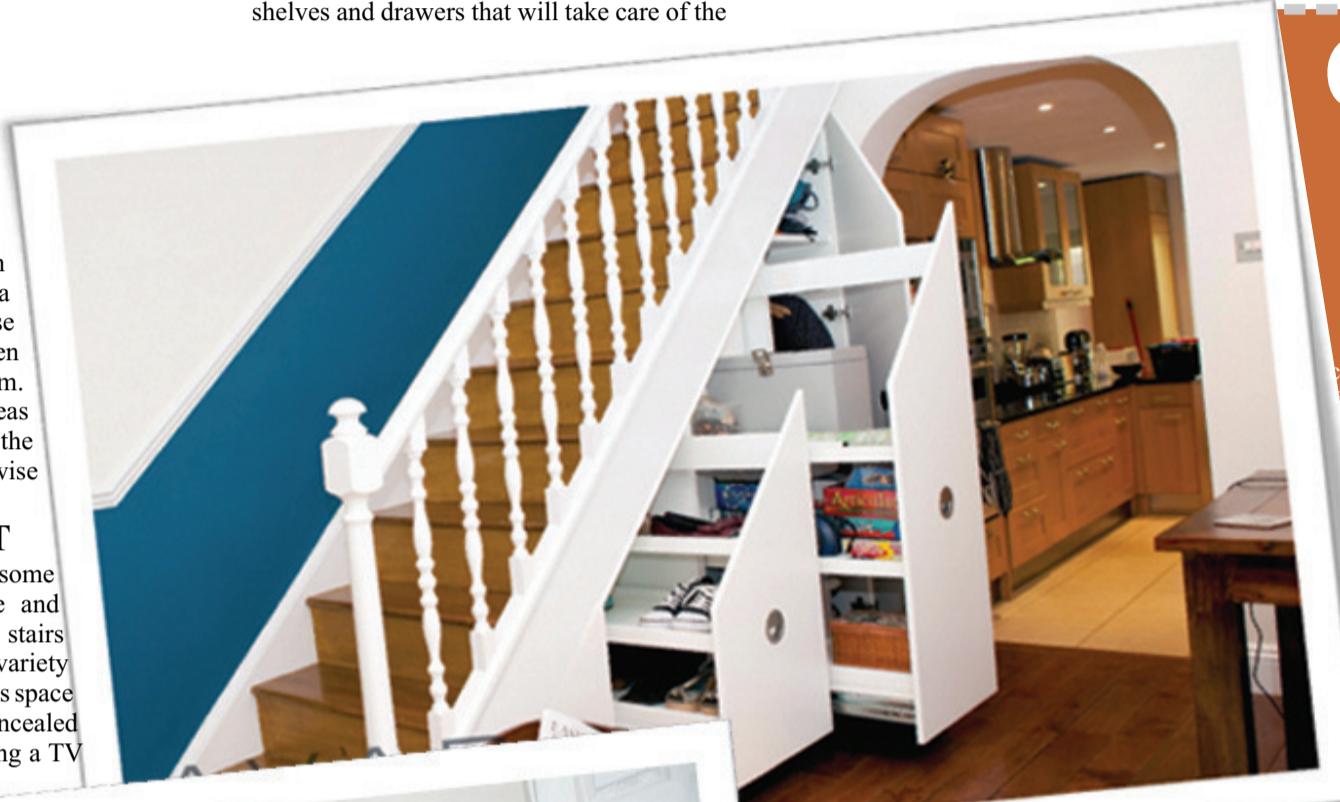
Gone are the times where everything was accepted. The women, today, customise their bedrooms, their verandah, and the kitchen. The kitchen truly is the heart of the home and social gatherings.

THE TEMPLE OF FOOD

Kitchen designs are of various types. The one wall style, which is generally opted in for service or studio apartments, offers to save as much space as possible. The galley style, which is a walk-through kitchen, is designed with two walls opposite to each other utilising every inch of space. The L-shaped kitchen, which is designed basically for medium-sized kitchens, offers as much as workspace as possible. Likewise, the horseshoe or the U-shaped kitchen has three walls and the island (platform) in a similar shape, so that more than one person can work comfortably in the kitchen at the same time.

Few housewives who either have redone and renovated their kitchen, or have designed it the way they want it in a newly-bought house, have many common and related ideologies of designing a kitchen as a bright and a well-lit space, have proper ventilation, lots of room for storage. Some of them had Indian conventional style of cooking.

Narendra Kaur Bagga, a housewife, says, "I have seen how trends change, but in my kitchen, I feel connected to the house, talking to my husband becomes easier while I cook and I can serve easily. Also, I can attend guests simultaneously, take a peek on what is going on the television, I do not have a door to my kitchen, it is open."



The present-day women choose their kitchens according to their own likes and conveniences, rather than picking what is trending in the market spaces. Interior design is the wishful thinking for a beautiful living.

People spend more than half of our lives indoors. It is said 'home is where heart is'. It definitely is a very true saying. Indoors refer to a house, which can be a bedroom, kitchen, flat, a studio apartment or a bungalow. The place where we stay is a major asset for us. It provides us security, a sound sleep, area to cook food, and most importantly, peace of mind.

PERCEPTION MATTERS

For every individual, the way of living is distinct, they may be living alone, in a nuclear family or a joint family. The more the number of people in the house, the more diversified is the way and need of living, some may want to apportion the drawing and living rooms, some may want to keep it as an elementary seating. Some may like their kitchens to be closed and walled well, some may like it open and

makes the product not only strong but also makes the product sturdy.

Latest Advances: Technology has come a long way over the last several years. Keeping updated with the latest advances is a great way to save space. Today we have table top ironing boards which are portable to carry even when you're on a vacation! It's light and compact and can be kept inside your suitcase as well. This type of ironing board helps you to re-iron you're already ironed clothes sitting anywhere in your home or even your hotel rooms. Balcony cloth dryers have also become a popular choice today among homemakers for its compact user friendly design that helps in drying your cloths outside/inside your

balcony with ease. To save space, use stackable appliances where possible. New designs for home appliances, such as washers, dryers and iron boards and take up less room in your home.

Avoid Clutter: Once all the initial arrangements in a house are made, it does become difficult after some time to accommodate more items with time. Hence sleek, elegant and compact home utility products are in more demand for their innovative design module. Look for pieces that are multi-functional or adjustable, such as a dining room table with expanding leaves or for two in-one sofa cum bed sets to avoid clutter inside the house.

How to maximize your Space at home

When there is no room to spare, maximizing the potential of every inch becomes critical. Ajit Chellapan, of Gimi, India, shares some tips...



Small spaces can be quite cozy, but squeezing-in is often challenging. When you're pressed for space, the "pile" can be your worst enemy. When there is no room to spare, maximizing the potential of every inch becomes critical. This is typically seen in a family setting where it is challenging to find space in a small house or an apartment thus being a major cause of concern. Due to this constraint a lot of things are usually

dropped. The only solution to save space is being 'Creative'.

Most Essential: Since storage space is at a premium in smaller homes, being creative is an important part which will help in designing the minimum space at your home. You can opt for minimalist concept as well. Minimalistic design is softer, more personal and easier to live with. Generally in a minimalist design, only the most essential

elements are taken into consideration for people whose main focus is the functioning of their home. Apart from that, the clean look of modern interiors make homeowners love this type of concept which is clutter free and stress free. Untapped accommodation space under the staircase, wall mounted cabinets, can also help in storing most of the items which helps in saving space. Using of compact home utility products also provides a perfect solution for making your homes look clutter and stress free.

Role of Technology: Innovation and technology plays a major role. Most of the products available in the market today are driven by innovation and backed with technology. For example, with the advent of Nitrogen technology (originated in Italy) uses Nitrogen that is blown into the pipes/handles of the product at a very low temperature (-20 degrees) during the injection phase to empty the closed cavities from the inside making them exceptionally resistance to bending and twisting making the products long lasting. This type of technology is used in products such as balcony cloth dryer, ironing boards etc. This



TRAI explores licensing framework for foreign M2M/IoT SIMs/eSIMs in India

New Delhi. (Agency)

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has released a consultation paper seeking stakeholder views on the use and sale of foreign telecom service providers' SIMs and eSIMs in India, specifically for integration into machine-to-machine (M2M) and Internet of Things (IoT) devices that are meant for export. The consultation paper explores whether a new service authorisation should be introduced under the Department of Telecommunications' (DoT) policy framework to allow the sale of foreign SIMs/eSIMs in India. The paper also seeks to identify any regulatory issues that may arise—such as those involving the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), Customs, or other authorities—with respect to the export of Indian telecom service providers' M2M SIMs/eSIMs, especially in scenarios involving import of such devices using Indian SIMs abroad. TRAI has invited inputs on various aspects of the proposed framework, including the terms and conditions for such a service, eligibility criteria, applicable fees, and the validity period for the use of these foreign SIMs/eSIMs in M2M and IoT applications. The response of TRAI came after certain Indian manufacturers who export IoT/M2M devices to international markets have requested that foreign SIMs be made available to them in India for integration into their products prior to export. This would enable the devices to operate on foreign networks immediately upon deployment abroad. In response, the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has received multiple requests seeking provisions under its No Objection Certificate (NOC) policy to permit the sale of foreign operators' SIMs/eSIMs in India for such specific use cases. The idea behind eSIMs (digital SIM cards built into devices) started in 2010. The GSMA, a global mobile industry group, introduced it as a flexible replacement for the physical SIM cards we put in our phones. At first, eSIMs were mainly for M2M (Machine-to-Machine) communication, which is when machines talk to each other. M2M technology itself is like giving devices their own brains to talk to each other and automate tasks. For these M2M and IoT (Internet of Things) devices, the SIM cards (both regular and eSIMs) are often built right into the device during manufacturing.

Govt. reduces toll charges by up to 50 percent on national highways with bridges, tunnels

New Delhi. (Agency)

The government has reduced the toll rates up to 50 per cent for the sections of National Highways that have structures like tunnels, bridges, flyovers or elevated stretches, a move which will lower travelling cost for motorists. User charges at fee plazas on National Highways are collected as per NH Fee Rules, 2008. The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has made amendment to 2008 rules and notified a new method or formula for calculating toll charges.

"The rate of fee for use of a section of national highway comprising of structure or structures shall be calculated by adding ten times the length of structure or structures to the length of the section of national highway excluding the length of structure or structures, or five times the total length of section of national highway, whichever is lesser," said the notification dated July 2, 2025. 'Structure' means an independent bridge, tunnel or flyover or elevated highway. To explain the new toll charges, the ministry has cited examples. In one of the examples, it said that if a section of a national highway has a total length of 40 kilometers, comprising of structure alone, the minimum length shall be computed: '10 x 40 (ten times length of structure) = 400 kilometers or five times the total length of section of a national highway = 5 x 40 = 200 kilometers'. "User fee shall be calculated on the lesser length i.e. for 200 kilometers" and not 400 kilometers. In this case the user charge is only on half (50 per cent) of the road length.

According to the extant rules, users pay ten times the regular toll for every kilometre of structure on national highways.

After Freezing Rs 4,843 Cr, SEBI Now Wants Look Deeper Into Jane Street

New Delhi. (Agency)

India's market regulator SEBI has frozen Rs 4,843 crore belonging to Jane Street, a big global trading firm, because it believes the company manipulated the Indian stock market to make illegal profits. SEBI's order stops Jane Street from buying or selling any more Indian stocks and blocks them from moving money out of their Indian accounts without permission. But SEBI's action might not stop here. According to reports, SEBI could dig even deeper into Jane Street's trading activity. The regulator is considering a wider investigation that could look at Jane Street's trades across different stock indices and exchanges, not just the ones already mentioned in the order. SEBI has also told stock exchanges to keep a close watch on any future trades by Jane Street, to make sure the same kind of trading doesn't happen again. Jane Street has 21 days to respond to SEBI's order and can ask for a hearing, but until SEBI says otherwise, all restrictions will stay in place. The company says it disagrees with SEBI's findings and plans to work with the regulator to clear things up. SEBI's investigation is likely to take time, especially given how complex and large the alleged violations are. The regulator has said that if, after a full investigation, it turns out Jane Street didn't actually manipulate the market, the frozen money will be returned and the company can go back to business. But for now, SEBI seems ready to look even more closely at Jane Street's market moves to protect the integrity of India's financial markets.

PNGRB simplifies gas tariff structure, unified reduces zones from three to two

This move is part of the recently approved amendments to the Natural Gas Pipeline Tariff Regulations, 2025

New Delhi. (Agency)

In a bid to accelerate natural gas adoption in the country, the Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) has simplified its tariff structure by reducing the number of unified tariff zones from three to two.

Previously, India's gas grid operated with three tariff zones based on distance from the gas source: Zone 1 (up to 300 km), Zone 2 (300 km to 1,200 km), and Zone 3 (beyond 1,200 km). While a uniform tariff was applied within each zone, successive

zones incurred higher tariffs to account for longer transportation distances. This move is part of the recently approved amendments to the Natural Gas Pipeline Tariff Regulations, 2025. Another amendment is the nationwide application of the Unified Zonal Tariff of Zone 1 to Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) and Piped Natural Gas (PNG) domestic segments, regardless of their distance from the gas source. This move is anticipated to make natural gas more affordable for millions of urban households and strengthen transport networks, thereby directly supporting the wider adoption of cleaner energy. As of December 2024, India boasts 7,395 CNG stations and 14 million PNG domestic connections, all poised to benefit significantly from this cost reduction. The PNGRB has introduced the PDR model to fund pipeline infrastructure expansion. Pipeline entities exceeding 75% utilization contribute 50% of their net-of-tax earnings to the PDR, which is reinvested into

infrastructure development. The remaining 50% is passed on to consumers through tariff adjustments. This performance-linked model creates a win-



win situation for pipeline entities and consumers, supporting sustainable infrastructure development and enhancing pipeline network capacity.

"To further stabilise tariffs and enhance supply efficiency, the PNGRB has

introduced an efficient fuel procurement mandate. Under this mandate, pipeline operators are now required to procure a minimum of 75% of their annual system-use gas through long-term contracts of at least three years. This measure is designed to mitigate procurement risks, lower transaction costs, and ultimately ensure more predictable and affordable tariffs for both consumers and investors," said Rajesh Kumar Mediratta, managing director & CEO, Indian Gas Exchange (IGX).

Manas Majumdar, Partner and Leader Oil & Gas - PwC India said that the updated unified pipeline tariff policy is a welcome move by PNGRB. "We expect it to help streamline gas consumption for both marketers and end-users, as the 2-zone tariff will help simplify the transportation tariff process. Further CGD companies will benefit with tariff zone1 being applicable to them nationwide and in general end-users will get more affordable gas access," said Majumdar.

Weekly review: Rupee holds steady in early July despite global headwinds

New Delhi. (Agency)

The Indian rupee remained relatively stable during the first week of July 2025, trading within a narrow range against the US dollar. Despite global economic headwinds and tariff uncertainties, the rupee managed to strengthen midweek before ending the week on a flat note.

Exchange rate highlights:

July 1 (Tuesday): The rupee opened around ₹85.70 and closed near ₹85.59, reflecting minor gains amid calm market conditions. July 2 (Wednesday): The rupee showed slight weakness, influenced by global concerns over potential U.S. tariff policies. It traded in the ₹85.52–₹85.77 range. July 3 (Thursday): The rupee appreciated to a one-month high, closing at ₹85.31. This gain was driven by foreign inflows and optimism surrounding a potential trade agreement between India and the US. July 4 (Friday): The currency remained

stable at around ₹85.62. Strong US jobs data supported the dollar, limiting further rupee gains. July 5 (Saturday): Markets were mostly flat with the rupee estimated to remain in the

₹85.90 for most of the week, showing resilience despite global volatility.

Tariff concerns and strong US employment figures affected the dollar's performance, indirectly impacting the rupee. A surge in foreign investor activity and dollar sales by banks helped the rupee gain midweek.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) maintained its support for the currency through measured interventions.

The analysts expect the rupee to remain in the ₹85–₹86 range in the near term. Market participants are watching for developments in US-India trade negotiations and upcoming US Federal Reserve comments. However, any major shift in foreign investment sentiment or global macroeconomic data could affect the rupee's direction next week, they warned.



₹85.60–₹85.65 band. Key influencing factors this week's rupee trend included range-bound trading, US trade and economic signals, capital inflows and the central bank's stable policies. The rupee moved between ₹85.30 and

Oxford India Forum 2025 celebrates India's rising influence and youthful ambition

Mumbai. (Agency)

The world's largest university-led conference focused on India concluded its second edition at the University of Oxford. The Oxford India Forum 2025 brought together a dynamic mix of business leaders, policymakers, entrepreneurs, academics and students to reflect on India's evolving global role and the path forward. Held at one of the world's oldest and most prestigious universities, the event moved beyond token celebration. It offered serious dialogue on how India can steer its demographic dividend, cultural wealth, and technological capability into long-term global leadership. If the 2024 edition laid the foundation, 2025 was about scale and substance, signalling that the India story is no longer a future bet but a present reality.

CHARTING INDIA'S TRAJECTORY: A GLOBAL CONVERSATION

Opening the forum, founder and chairperson Sidharth Sethi set the tone: "We are gathered at Oxford, a place that has shaped the world's thinkers, to talk about a country that is now shaping the world's future: India. The Forum is about capturing that momentum and driving meaningful dialogue and collaboration on what comes next."

The conference featured panels and keynotes covering everything from India's space programme and artificial intelligence to gender equity in healthcare and cultural soft power. Each session offered not only insights but also roadmaps for action, prompting discussions that were both introspective and forward-looking.

INDIA @100: A COMPASSIONATE SUPERPOWER

Veteran industrialist Ajay Piramal, Chairman of Piramal Group, opened the policy track with a powerful message: India's journey to becoming a developed nation must be rooted not only in economic indicators but in empathy, ethics and inclusion.

He urged India's leaders to embrace growth that uplifts those at the margins, reminding the audience that "what will define us is the compassion we have for those who have been left behind."

He called for systemic investment in education, healthcare and skilling, especially for India's vast young population, and highlighted the role of spiritual and emotional intelligence in policymaking. "It's not enough to be efficient. We must also be kind," Piramal concluded.

Indian Stock Markets End Week Lower Amid Trade Deal Concerns, Profit Booking

FMCG stocks also edged lower. Defence stocks, however, saw strong buying after the government cleared several high-value contracts.

Mumbai. (Agency)

The Indian equity markets closed lower for the week as investors turned cautious ahead of the crucial July 9 US-India trade deadline and the start of the corporate earnings season, experts said on Saturday. Both benchmark indices -- the Sensex and the Nifty -- slipped 0.7 per cent each on a weekly basis, as broader market sentiment remained clouded by global uncertainty and profit booking after the recent rally. The Nifty ended the week at 25,461, while the Sensex closed at 83,432.89. The indices had started the week with a strong breakout, but the momentum faded amid concerns over a possible delay in finalising trade agreements. However,



reports suggesting an interim deal between India and the US helped limit the downside in the latter half of the week. According to Ajit Mishra of Religare Broking Limited, the pullback was largely driven by investors booking profits following recent gains. The cautious tone was evident with the looming trade deadline. However, optimism around a potential agreement between India and the US acted as a cushion," he noted. India's

fiscal health remained strong, supported by a robust Rs 2.69 lakh crore dividend transfer from the RBI, which helped contain the fiscal deficit at just 0.8 per cent of the annual target. June GST collections also remained firm, rising 6.2 per cent year-on-year (YoY) to Rs 1.84 lakh crore. Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said, "The week saw some consolidation after sharp gains in previous sessions. Global cues remained

mixed, and investors preferred to stay on the sidelines ahead of the US tariff decision." "FIIs turned cautious due to high valuations, but support from DIIs kept the market from falling sharply," Nair mentioned. From a sectoral perspective, defensive sectors like IT and healthcare outperformed, supported by stock-specific action and stable demand.

Meanwhile, rate-sensitive sectors such as banking, auto, and realty witnessed pressure from profit booking. FMCG stocks, however, saw strong buying after the government cleared several high-value contracts. Technically, the market entered a consolidation phase. Bajaj Broking Research noted that the Nifty has formed a small bear candle with a higher high and low on the weekly chart, signalling consolidation amid stock specific action after the recent strong upward move. "Key support levels are seen around 25,150–25,200, coinciding with the 20-day exponential moving average, while resistance is expected near the 25,600–25,740 zone," according to Angel One. "A breakout above this range could trigger the next leg of the rally," the brokerage added.

Anita Hassanandani

Shares Cryptic Post About 'Signing Off' From Instagram: 'Irritated AF'

The actress Anita Hassanandani has left her fans concerned after she shared a cryptic post about taking a break from social media. On Friday evening, the *Yeh Hai Mohabbatein* star announced her decision to sign off from Instagram, revealing that she's feeling "irritated" without specifying the reason behind it. Taking to her official Instagram handle, Anita wrote, "Sorry guys! Signing off...It's been loud for too long...time to hear myself again." She also shared an Instagram story hinting at her current mood and wrote that she's "irritated AF."

Her post quickly sparked reactions from fans and followers. One user commented, "What happened can someone explain ?? Is everything okay !?" while another added, "Mental health is the only priority. Take care of yourself." Several others sent well wishes, expressing concern and urging her to take care.

The post comes at a time when Anita is rumoured to be returning to reality TV. According to reports, she is one of the contestants in the upcoming show *Goriya Chali Gaon*. The show is inspired by the Marathi hit *Jau Bai Gavat* and follows a unique format where 12 well-known women from the entertainment industry spend 10 weeks in a remote village, stripped of all urban luxuries.

As part of the show's concept, participants will live without their phones and modern comforts and engage in everyday rural chores like milking cows, cooking on traditional chulhas, and fetching water from wells. Sources close to the production reveal that Anita recently met with the show's makers, discussed the concept in depth, and officially came on board.

No stranger to reality television, Anita has previously been seen in shows like *Fear Factor: Khatron Ke Khiladi*, *Nach Baliye*, and *Jhalak Dikhhla Jaa*. While she hasn't confirmed her participation in *Goriya Chali Gaon*, her decision to step away from social media could be related to the show's strict format or a personal call for introspection before a challenging journey ahead.



Sheena Bajaj

Embraces The Highs And Lows Of A 'Roller Coaster' Pregnancy

Television actress Sheena Bajaj is entering one of the most beautiful chapters of her life—motherhood. Married to actor Rohit Purohit since 2019, Sheena is now counting down the days before the couple welcomes their first child. And while the journey has been anything but easy, the joy radiates through every moment they share. From the very beginning of her pregnancy, Sheena and Rohit have offered fans sweet glimpses into their life, be it baby bump posts, quiet moments at home, or emotional reflections. But behind the glowing photos is a very real journey filled with emotion, change, and sleepless nights.

In a recent conversation with The Times of India, the 'Vanshaj' actress opened up about the physical and emotional roller coaster she's navigating. "There have been quite a few changes in our lives lately—one of the biggest being the many sleepless nights we're experiencing. But despite that, the preparations are in full swing," she shared.

Sheena didn't shy away from talking about the harder days either, the restlessness, the discomfort, and the emotional upheaval that often comes uninvited during pregnancy. Yet, in the midst of it all, she finds immense comfort in her husband's constant support. "Rohit has been

padding me a lot," Sheena said. "Even though he's on set all day, he still takes care of me when he's home—massaging my swollen feet and hands, no matter how tired he is." She also revealed that Rohit speaks to the baby every single day, a ritual that she believes strengthens not only the baby's bond with the father but also deepens the connection between them as a couple. "That bonding is so important, not just for the baby but also for our peace and connection," she added.

Despite the exhaustion and unpredictability that come with this phase, Sheena describes it as the most fulfilling kind of preparation—a stage drenched in love, laughter, and quiet anticipation. "This pregnancy has been a roller coaster. But we're preparing with all our hearts," she reflected.



Sara Ali Khan Recalls Lying To Amrita Singh About Local Train Ride: 'Got Caught by A Journalist'



Sara Ali Khan has never shied away from expressing how close she is to her mother, veteran actor Amrita Singh. But like most teenagers, she too had her fair share of rebellious moments. In a recent appearance on BookMyShow Unscripted with RJ Sukriti, Sara opened up about one such incident when she lied to her mother—and got caught in a rather unexpected way. "The Metro... In Dino actor recalled sneaking a ride on a Mumbai local train without informing her mom. "I actually have. I lied to my mom about it though. This was years ago. She didn't know that I was on a local train, so I pretended I was at a neighbour's house," she said. What made things worse was how Amrita Singh found out—not from Sara, but from a journalist. "A journalist actually called her and told her that I am so proud of the way you have brought up your daughter. I have a photo of her on a local train, can I print it?" Sara recounted. Naturally, Amrita was furious—not because of the ride itself, but because she had kept it a secret. "She was really upset because I was young and there had just been an accident on the local train. She told me to be careful and just basically not lie about my location," Sara said, calling the memory "not fun."

Sara also opened up in a past interview with Hindustan Times about how negativity on social media affects her mother. "I can fully understand that this is some nameless, frustrated person. But maa toh maa hoti hai. That's the only thing that really gets to me. If I could block her social media, I wouldn't give a damn!"

"She reads and pretends there is nothing," Sara added. "It's like the elephant in the room we don't address. But, I know she has read something sad. She doesn't address it, but I can see it on her face. Mujhe acha nahi lagta."

Sara is currently basking in the release of *Metro... In Dino*, directed by Anurag Basu. The ensemble film features a powerhouse cast including Anupam Kher, Neena Gupta, Konkona Sen Sharma, Pankaj Tripathi, Aditya Roy Kapur, and others. The film hit theatres on July 4.

Uorfi Javed Surprised By Grand Welcome From Family After The Traitors Win



Uorfi Javed celebrated her win on The Traitors with her sisters Asfi, Urusa, and Dolly. Check out pictures and videos from the celebration!

Uorfi Javed emerged as the winner of *The Traitors*, along with Nikhita Luther. The two winners walked away with the prize money of Rs 70.05 lakh. Post her victory, Uorfi got a lovely surprise from her family members, that left her overjoyed! She celebrated her win with her sisters Asfi, Urusa, and Dolly, and their mother Zakiya Sultana at home. Her sisters showered her with flower petals as soon as she returned home, and Uorfi was pleasantly surprised by the warm welcome. Her family also decorated the house with balloons, and Uorfi cut a cake to mark her big win.

Uorfi's sister Asfi shared a series of photos and videos, giving a sneak-peek into Uorfi's surprise celebration with her family members after her win on *The Traitors*. The first video captures a touching moment as Uorfi is visibly surprised when her sisters shower her with flower petals upon her arrival. The celebration continues with a glimpse of a beautifully decorated cake, placed in front of a message spelled out with petals that reads 'Boss Lady.' Uorfi is then seen cutting the cake while her family cheers and congratulates her on her big win. The next few photos show Uorfi posing with her family members during the celebration. Check out the photos and videos below! Sharing the post, Asfi wrote, "She did it. She won *The Traitors*. No one deserves it more! The most hardworking, fearless, and resilient soul I know. So proud of you, Uorfi."

Uorfi, Nikita, Harsh Gujral, Sudhanshu Pandey, and Purav Jha were among the five finalists on *The Traitors*. The Amazon Prime Video show, which started with 20 celebrity contestants and influencers, ended with an intense finale where Uorfi and Nikita beat comedian Harsh Gujral to win the show.

Post her victory, Uorfi Javed shared a post, reflecting on her journey from losing in *Bigg Boss OTT*, to now winning *The Traitors*. "From losing big boss (being the first one to be eliminated) to winning the traitors. The journey wasn't easy, how many times I've cried, I've had so many breakdowns, wanted to give up, wanted to leave everything and run away. Being called names, getting death, rape threats, the online hate, the offline hate but I never stopped. May be the universe knew I needed this," she wrote.

NEWS BOX

Chelsea advances to Club World Cup semifinals with 2-1 win over Palmeiras**PHILADELPHIA. (Agency)**

Chelsea scored the go-ahead goal on Malo Gusto's 83rd-minute shot that went in after a pair of deflections, beating Palmeiras 2-1 on Friday night for a spot in the Club World Cup semifinals.

Cole Palmer put Chelsea ahead in the 16th minute but Estevão, an 18-year-old who will transfer to Chelsea this summer, tied the score against his future club with an angled shot in the 53rd. Gusto's shot following a short corner kick appeared to deflect off defender Agustín Giay and goalkeeper Weverton and sent the Chelsea portion of 65,782 fans into a frenzy. FIFA credited Weverton with an own goal. Chelsea won't travel far for its next



match, facing Fluminense on Tuesday at East Rutherford, New Jersey. Hércules came off the bench and scored in the 70th minute to lift Fluminense past Al Hilal 2-1 in Friday's earlier quarterfinal.

With Chelsea's win, three of the four semifinal teams will be from Europe, with one from Brazil. The 23-year-old Palmer scored his first goal in the Club World Cup, and showed why he's widely considered one of the top attacking midfielders. He took a pass from Trevoh Chalobah and slipped the ball inside the far post. Fans made it to Lincoln Financial Field on a holiday weekend that included a strike by nearly 10,000 city workers in Philadelphia, competition from an earlier Phillies game, and a concert and fireworks show near the Philadelphia Museum of Art. FIFA had slashed tickets to as low as \$11.15. FIFA president Gianni Infantino attended the game, the eighth of the tournament at the home of NFL Super Bowl champion Philadelphia Eagles.

There was a pregame pregame tribute for Liverpool player Diogo Jota and his brother, André Silva, who were found dead near Zamora in northwestern Spain after the Lamborghini they were driving crashed and burst into flames on an isolated stretch of highway.

I was hungry to get a hundred: Harry Brook**BIRMINGHAM. (Agency)**

BIRMINGHAM: England batter Harry Brook said he was fired up to score a century in the ongoing second Test against India here after being dismissed for a duck in the second innings of their five-wicket win in the first game at Leeds. With England struggling at 84 for 5 in reply to India's first innings total of 587 in the second Test here, Brook (158) and Jamie Smith (184) came to the hosts' rescue with a special 303-run partnership.

"I was off the back of a golden duck so I just wanted to get off the mark," he said after third day's play on Friday. Brooks had missed out on a hundred after being dismissed for 99 in the first innings of the opening Test. "I was definitely hungry to get a hundred today. Obviously with the situation of the game, we were behind the



eight-ball and to try to get the momentum to swing back in our favour, along with Smudge (Smith), was a good moment," he said. The second Test is still tilted towards India with the visitors reaching 64 for 1 in the second innings, an overall lead of 244 runs with two days of play remaining. Brook too admitted that India are in the driver's seat but said things can quickly change in a Test match. "Hopefully we've clawed ourselves back into the game. I just tried to bat as long as I could. If I hadn't got out we wouldn't be in this situation now, but we saw (at Headingley) last week how quickly it can change." India are in the driving seat but hopefully we can put pressure with early wickets and make them crumble," he said.

Brook praised the efforts of Indian bowlers. "The Indians bowled really well with it. They came wide on the crease, attacked the stumps, kept all three modes of dismissal in play, and they made it do just enough to be able to get them wickets at the end there.

"We didn't get it quite right tonight. Hopefully we can do that tomorrow morning. There's plenty of wickets to be had out there."

PHILADELPHIA. (Agency)

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