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## Rahul Gandhi must apologise: Amit Shah on abuse to PM, his mother at Bihar Rally

**Amit Shah condemned Congress leaders for allegedly using derogatory words against PM Modi and his late mother during a Bihar rally, calling it the "greatest fall in politics."**

**New Delhi.(Agency)**  
Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday condemned the alleged use of derogatory words against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his mother during an INDIA bloc event in Bihar.

Referring to the incident, Shah said, "I want to urge Rahul Gandhi that if he has even a little bit of shame left, he must apologise to Modi ji, to his late mother, and to the people of this country. May God give wisdom to everyone."

He further said, "What happened two days ago has pained everyone. Modi ji's mother lived a life in a poor household, raised her children with values, and

enabled her son to become a leader of trust. To use abusive words for such a life is something the people of India can never tolerate. There can be no greater fall in political life than this, and I strongly condemn it."

"Congress leaders have committed the most condemnable act by using derogatory words against PM Modi's mother during their Ghospaithiya Bachao Yatra. I condemn it. Every Congress leader has spoken derogatory words against PM Modi," Shah said.

Shah escalated his attack, saying the Congress is responsible for spreading a "culture of hatred" in politics. "The more the Congress abuses, the more



BJP wins," he remarked. He also accused Rahul Gandhi of misleading people in Bihar through what he called the 'Ghospaithiya Bachao Yatra'.

Meanwhile, Rahul Gandhi has posted on X, "Truth and non-violence prevail, untruth and violence cannot stand before them. Beat and break, as much as you want to beat and break, we will continue to protect the truth and the constitution. Satyameva Jayate."

A controversy erupted in poll-bound Bihar after abusive language was used against Prime Minister

Narendra Modi and his late mother by some Congress workers during Rahul Gandhi's Voter Adhikar Yatra. The BJP filed an FIR at Kotwali Police Station in Patna over the alleged remark and demanded an apology from the Congress MP. A video of the incident, which happened in Darbhanga, has gone viral. The video shows Congress workers using derogatory language against PM Modi from the dais, which carried posters of Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi, and Tejashwi Yadav. It was the same spot from where Gandhi, his sister and

Congress general secretary Priyanka Vadra, and RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav left for Muzaffarpur on motorcycles. Several other leaders have also condemned abusive remarks at the Congress' rally on PM Modi, including Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar. "The use of indecent language against PM Narendra Modi Ji and his late mother from the Congress and RJD platforms during the Voter Adhikar Yatra in Darbhanga is extremely unbecoming, and I condemn it," wrote the CM in a post on X on Friday.

## Widowers' army: Congress leader slams RSS over Mohan Bhagwat's 3-child push

**New Delhi.(Agency)**  
Responding to Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat's call for Indians to have three children, Uttar Pradesh Congress chief Ajay Rai raked up controversy by calling the organisation a "widowers' army."

Rai questioned how the RSS could advise on family matters when many of its members are unmarried.

The RSS chief on Thursday said he was in favour of Indian parents having three children, asserting that it was necessary to stabilise the population and prevent a decline.

Addressing a press conference to mark 100 years of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), Bhagwat said that the country's popula-

tion has a fertility rate of 2.1 and it was important to ensure the population was under control.

"India's policy on population suggests 2.1 children, which is fine as an



average. But you can never have 0.1 of a child. In maths, 2.1 becomes 2, but when it comes to births, after two, it has to be three. This is what doctors have told me," he said.

He stressed that communities with a fertility rate of 2.1 will slowly go extinct and that a birth rate of over 3 should be maintained. Marrying at the right age and having three children ensures that both the parents and children are healthy," he said.

He underlined that a population boom can be a boon, but at the same time, it can be a burden as well.

Referring to India's population policy, the RSS chief had added, "Our country's population policy was framed in 1998 or 2002, and it clearly mentioned that no community's population should drop below 2.1. Since one cannot have fractional children, we need at least three children per family, as per population science."

## Kiran Shaw says Bengaluru has best talent but worst infra, DK Shivakumar responds

**New Delhi.(Agency)**  
Bengaluru-based biotechnology company, Biocon founder Kiran Mazumdar Shaw, has said the city has the "best talent and the best weather but the worst infrastructure", stressing that if Bengaluru fixed issues related to garbage, debris and roads, it could be among the best cities in the world.

In a post on X, she noted that the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) had a "great opportunity" to address these concerns and called for collective will to achieve it.

**DK SHIVAKUMAR REACTS**  
Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK

Shivakumar responded to her on X, agreeing with her concerns. "Agree with you, @kiranshaw



Bengaluru has always had the talent, the weather, and the spirit. What it lacked was political will. That's exactly what we are fixing now," he said.

He added that challenges ranging from garbage to roads, debris to planning were being tack-

led with "purpose and urgency". He described Bengaluru as a city that had always represented innovation, opportunity and unmatched spirit, and assured that infrastructure and governance would now serve as a catalyst for growth. "With the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA), we now have a unique opportunity to transform this vision into reality, and we will deliver," Shivakumar wrote. Calling upon citizens, government, businesses and civil society, he added: "This is the time to come together and shape a new chapter for Namma Bengaluru. The future is ours to build - together!"

## "Come Make In India, Make For The World": PM Modi's Pitch In Japan

**Tokyo.(Agency)**  
Speaking at the India-Japan Joint Economic Forum in Tokyo today, Prime Minister Narendra issued an invitation: "Come make in India, make for the world."

PM Modi arrived in the Japanese capital today on a two-day visit during which he will hold summit talks with his counterpart Shigeru Ishiba.

"Japan has been a key partner for India from semiconductors to start-ups. Japanese companies have invested over \$40 billion in India," PM Modi said.

Japan-based media platform Nikkei Asia has reported that Japan will invest 10 trillion Yen (\$68 billion) to boost bilateral business with India over the next decade. The focus



is on multiple sectors, including artificial intelligence, semiconductors,

environment and medicine. "80 per cent of companies want to expand in India. 75 per cent are already in profit in India. In India, capital does not just grow; it multiplies. In the last 11 years, India has seen unprecedented transformation -- political stability, economic stability, and transparency in policy. India is the world's fastest-growing major economy

and will be the third-biggest economy soon," PM Modi said.

PM Modi will also visit Tokyo's Electron Factory and Tohoku Shinkansen plant in Sendai where bullet train coaches are built. PM Modi and Mr Ishiba, who will accompany him, are expected to take forward the issue of Tokyo's participation in India's bullet train project.

## No objection: JDS differs from ally BJP on Banu Mushtaq's Mysuru Dasara invite



**New Delhi.(Agency)**

The Janata Dal (Secular) has taken a different stance from its NDA ally BJP over the Karnataka government's decision to invite Booker Prize-winning author Banu Mushtaq to inaugurate the Mysuru Dasara festival. Union Minister and JD(S) leader HD Kumaraswamy said he had no objection to the invitation. He noted that the state government had planned to give Mushtaq "a big message and responsibility" in leading the goddess Chamundeshwari procession and made clear that he supported the move.

His comments mark a contrast with the BJP, which has already voiced objections to the invitation. Mysuru BJP MP Yaduveer Wadiyar questioned Mushtaq's past remarks about the Kannada language, the state flag, and her views on the goddess Chamundeshwari. Union Minister Shobha Karandlaje also hit out at the Congress, calling the decision an "insult to Hindu sentiments." In a post on X, Karandlaje wrote that Mysuru Dasara is a sacred festival of Goddess Chamundeshwari, rooted in faith and tradition, and not a "cultural show." She accused the Congress of turning it into appeasement politics, saying: "Asking someone with no faith in our Devi to offer the first prayers is a direct insult to the Goddess and to every devotee."

Former Mysuru MP and BJP leader Prathap Simha also raised objections. He clarified that his opposition was not because Mushtaq is a Muslim, acknowledging her contributions to literature. But he questioned her connection to the rituals: "Does Banu Mushtaq believe in Goddess Chamundi? Has she ever followed our customs? This is not a government programme, it is a ritual expressing unwavering faith in the Goddess. Is she the right person for this?" The Congress government, for its part, stood firm, saying the Dasara festival was cultural and not to be viewed through the lens of caste or religion.

## BJP mocks Siddaramaiah over Bihar rally after 1991 poll fraud claim against Congress

**Karnataka .(Agency)**  
Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, ahead of his participation in the 'Voter Adhikar Yatra' rally in Bihar to protest against the electoral roll exercise, invoked irony when he recalled how he had once accused the Congress of electoral malpractice in the very election he lost to the party in 1991.

Speaking at a felicitation event on Thursday, Siddaramaiah said, "I contested parliamentary elections in 1991, I lost that elections. Let's keep that I lost the elections by malpractice. I filed a case through Advocate Ravi Varma. He is the one who drafted and fought the case without taking a penny."



In the 1991 elections, Siddaramaiah had contested on a Janata Dal (Secular) ticket against Basavaraj Patil Anwari of the Congress. Patil defeated him by a margin of 11,197 votes. Siddaramaiah later alleged malpractice in the polls and challenged the people's mandate in court. BJP IT cell head Amit

Malviya responded sharply, calling the Chief Minister's presence at the 'Voter Adhikar Yatra' a contradiction. "The irony is so thick you could cut it with a knife. Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah is in Bihar for a 'Vote Adhikar' rally—marching with the same Congress he once accused of electoral fraud

in the 1991 Koppal Lok Sabha polls against Basavaraj Patil Anwari," he said. "Back then, he cried 'vote chori' because he lost on ballot papers. Today, Rahul Gandhi, the political dynast, is crying wolf about 'electoral fraud' only because the people of India have decisively thrown the Congress out of power through the democratic process and the unhackable EVMs. This isn't about democracy; it is about a family business that has lost its relevance. The 'Vote Adhikar' rally is a masterclass in hypocrisy and a pathetic attempt to delegitimise the very democratic process that has shown them their true place," Malviya added.

## Priyanka Gandhi writes to Nitin Gadkari on Thamarassery Pass mudslide, seeks action

**New Delhi.(Agency)**  
Wayanad MP Priyanka Gandhi has written to Union Road Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari urging immediate action to restore traffic through the Thamarassery Pass in Kerala after a major mudslide blocked the route.

Calling the ghat road "the only refuge of the people," Priyanka Gandhi said it must be made traffic-ready without delay. "The disruption is causing great hardship to the people of Wayanad, who depend on Kozhikode district even for health purposes," she wrote in her letter.

She asked the Centre to

send "an expert committee immediately to study the

Priyanka Gandhi reminded that in a high-



measures required to prevent mudslides on the Thamarassery Pass road." The MP also pressed for preparations of an alternative route "that can be used in such emergencies as soon as possible."

level meeting convened by Rahul Gandhi in November 2023, officials were asked to fast-track the Poozhithodu-Pandjarathar road, the Churam bypass, the Puthupaddi-Muthanga four-lane project, and

address the sharp bends that cause constant travel difficulties

at Thamarassery. Meanwhile, the district administration has decided to permit small vehicles to use the pass only when it is not raining, while heavy vehicles will remain barred until further notice. The incident occurred on Tuesday evening when huge rocks and soil fell onto the road near the Lakkidi viewpoint.

Passengers commuting on the stretch narrowly escaped, and traffic came to a standstill as hundreds of vehicles were stranded.

Firefighters and equipment from Kalpetta were deployed to the spot.

## Punjab ministers discuss Sweden, Goa cruise trips during flood inspection

**Chandigarh.(Agency)**  
Three Punjab ministers landed in controversy after a video emerged showing them reminiscing about foreign cruises and beach trips while on a flood damage survey in Tarn Taran district of the border state. The opposition Congress seized on the footage, accusing the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government of insensitivity at a time when thousands are reeling from floods.

The clip, streamed live on minister Laljit Singh Bhullar's Facebook handle,

quickly went viral, drawing nearly 90,000 views and a flood of angry comments.

Congress Leader of the Opposition, Pratap Singh Bajwa, lashed out at the Bhagwant Mann government, writing on X, "Flood-hit families in Punjab beg for a glass of drinking water, but AAP ministers found time to relive their 'golden memories' of luxury cruises in Sweden & Goa. What a relief tour!"

**HEAVY RAIN BATTERS PUNJAB**

Punjab is grappling with its worst floods since



showed Bhullar, Harbhajan Singh, and Barinder Kumar Goyal sitting on a boat in life jackets during their inspection. Unaware the conversation was being broadcast, Harbhajan Singh could be heard recalling a cruise in Sweden and a holiday in Goa. Minutes later, a more formal video followed on the same account, with ministers urging people to follow government directions and move to safer areas. All three ministers had been deputed as flood relief in-charges of Punjab's border districts. But the offhand remarks

1988, as the Sutlej, Beas and Ravi rivers, along with several rivulets, have overflowed and inundated vast stretches of farmland and villages. The flooding followed days of heavy rainfall in the rivers' catchment areas in Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir.

The worst-hit villages lie across Pathankot, Gurdaspur, Fazilka, Kapurthala, Tarn Taran, Ferozepur, Hoshiarpur and Amritsar. Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann has directed district administrations to step up relief and rescue operations.



## Faridabad RWA asks resident to pay 'Rs 1.3 lakh fine' for feeding strays

**Gurgaon. (Agency)**

Gurgaon: The RWA of a housing society in Greater Faridabad has fined a dog lover Rs 1.3 lakh over the past three years for feeding strays in unauthorised areas. Divya Nair, a private firm employee known among residents of Princess Park in Sector 86 for her compassion towards stray animals, has been feeding dogs within the society since 2022.

According to RWA officials, the fine was levied after Nair repeatedly fed dogs in parks, the basketball court, parking lots, and other public spaces despite the society designating a specific feeding zone in the market area. The RWA alleged her actions had created a mess on the campus and raised safety concerns for other residents.

A senior police official clarified that RWAs do not have the authority to levy fines on residents. "No, they can't. We can initiate action against them only if the woman lodges a complaint," the official added.

The Princess Park dispute unfolded against the backdrop of recent Supreme Court rulings on the issue of stray dogs. Responding to concerns over rising dog bite incidents and rabies cases in Delhi-NCR, the apex court modified earlier orders that called for strays to be moved to shelter homes. The latest ruling allowed authorities to release strays after sterilisation, but clarified that aggressive or rabid dogs must be kept in shelters. Most importantly, the court banned



the feeding of stray dogs in public spaces and instructed authorities to set up dedicated feeding areas. The tussle between the RWA and Nair escalated when she took to social media platform X, alleging that she was assaulted for feeding dogs and her family faced threats from local police. She also claimed that all dog feeding had been banned in the society's premises since the revised Supreme Court order last week, and lady bouncers had been deployed by the RWA to enforce the rule. Nair expressed concern that nearly 40 stray dogs in the area were now starving because of such restrictions. RWA vice-president Ranmeet Chahal insisted that the society's measures were intended at protecting residents — especially children and the elderly — from potential harm.

"The woman has repeatedly defied society rules. Despite multiple warnings, she continues to feed dogs in areas that cause inconvenience and safety concerns for residents. Some 8 to 10 dog bite cases are being reported from this society

every month. More than 100 residents have been bitten so far," he said. The RWA has now decided to pursue legal action

against Nair to recover the outstanding fine. "If the penalty is not paid, we will pursue action against her under the Society Act through the registrar and courts. Essential services may also be restricted. Additionally,

she may not be able to sell her flat," Chahal said. He also recalled a previous incident in which Nair allegedly bit a security guard and a resident during a similar dispute over feeding strays two years ago, further fuelling tension within the community.

According to Chahal, municipal authorities had already approved plans to establish designated feeding points within the society, aligning with broader legal guidelines. But Nair, the RWA claimed, has refused to comply, continuing to feed dogs at her discretion.

Efforts by RWA officials to reach out to Nair for talks have allegedly been unsuccessful. Officials said she initially cited unavailability, and later stopped responding to calls and messages altogether.

## Leachate spills into Aravalis from landfill, pollutes aquifers: Plea

**Gurgaon. (Agency)**

Environmentalists wrote to Haryana Human Rights Commission (HHRC) on Thursday, alleging that MCG is discharging lakhs of litres of toxic leachate from the Bandhwari landfill into the surrounding Aravali forests, waterholes, and villages, in "contempt" of National Green Tribunal (NGT) orders. According to the complaint, incessant rains created multiple pools of leachate around the landfill site and a massive "leachate lake" spanning 2.5-3 acres in an abandoned mining pit behind the landfill. The pit, the letter states, is dangerously close to underground aquifers, raising the risk of large-scale



groundwater contamination in the area. In the letter, which is addressed to the HHRC chairman, the chief secretary of Haryana, the deputy commissioner, and Haryana State Pollution Control Board (HSPCB), the activists described the crisis as an ongoing "ecocide/genocide" that has continued for nearly eight years, contaminating

groundwater and soil across the fragile ecosystem. They further alleged that the landfill had expanded over the years, with leachate streams now reaching homes on the outskirts of Bandhwari village. Around 50,000 residents of at least five nearby villages are believed to be exposed to contaminated drinking water as a result, they said. The letter also criticised HSPCB for being a "mute spectator" and relying on monetary challans against MCG, which, it argued, neither deterred repeated violations nor compensated affected communities. The activists pointed out that even after the HHRC chairman's visit to the site in May 2023, "no results" followed.

## 6 lanes, footpaths: Makeover for Dwarka e-way link to NH8 soon

**Gurgaon. (Agency)**

GMDA is set to move forward with its plan to upgrade the key master road connecting Dwarka Expressway and Kherki Daula on NH8. The revamp of the 2.8km stretch covering sectors 83, 84, and 36A is estimated to cost Rs 24.5 crore. According to GMDA, the project has received administrative approval, with the detailed project report (DPR) in place and tendering documents under preparation. The stretch will be developed into a six-lane carriageway with a 14m wide main road, a 10m central verge, and a 40m wide greenbelt along with a footpath, officials said. Streetlights will be installed, a rotary at the junction of sectors 83 and 84 will be constructed, and road safety infrastructure including solar studs, cat eyes, and markings will be put up, officials said. "The commute of residents of sectors 81 to 86 and adjoining areas will become smoother after the revamp. Once the work is completed, the road will be safer for both pedestrians and other commuters," a senior GMDA official said. Originally built by HSVP in 2010-11, the stretch was part of the Dwarka Expressway project. However, after the alignment of the expressway was altered in 2017, it was excluded from the network. The left-out portion of the road deteriorated soon after and it was only in March last year, ahead of the inauguration of the Gurgaon portion of the

Dwarka Expressway, the GMDA carried out patchwork repairs to make it motorable. However, potholes resurfaced on the stretch within months. According to commuters, revamp is necessary to equip the road to handle growing traffic load from condominiums and commercial projects in the area. Puran Singh, former RWA president of Coralwood, said "The road is in a pathetic state. We have sought its revamp for years, but authorities have carried out only patch repairs. We see frequent road accident on this stretch." Rohit Malik, resident of Sector 84, said, "The road revamp is much needed. I will, however, be more beneficial for commuters if there is direct connectivity between NH8 and Dwarka Expressway. Without this, the upgraded link road will not serve its full purpose." Meanwhile, GMDA officials said while plans to directly connect the master road to NH8 were not on the horizon, it could be considered in the future. Residents and RWAs of new sectors have long demanded that the toll plaza be shifted from Kherki Daula, arguing that it not only chokes traffic but also creates a financial burden for daily commuters. Heading to their demand, NHAI announced that it had identified Pachgaon as the new site for the plaza. However, opposition by locals forced the authority.

## Argument over dog attack spirals out of control, residents come to blows in Gurgaon condo

**Gurgaon. (Agency)**

As the Supreme Court's recent ruling on stray dogs aims to balance public safety with animal welfare — banning feeding in unauthorised places and mandating that only aggressive or rabid dogs be sheltered — tension in urban neighbourhoods is growing with multiple incidents of run-ins among residents. This was evident at Climate Tower society in Sector 56 on Tuesday night, when a dispute over a stray dog's behaviour escalated into violence, leaving one resident injured and a community divided. The incident occurred around 9pm, when Anil Sharma — an interior designer — was returning home after a long day at work. According to residents, Sharma was chased and nearly bitten by a stray dog that has been living within the society premises for over a year. In an

attempt to defend himself, Sharma first tried to shoo the dog away with his lunch box. When this failed, he picked up a stick and began striking the animal. At this point, Atul Agarwal — an MNC staffer known in the community for feeding strays — intervened to stop Sharma from injuring the dog. What began as a verbal confrontation quickly spiralled out of control. Residents said Sharma, angered by the intervention, thrashed Agarwal, resulting in injuries to his hand and head. The altercation intensified when members of Sharma's family joined in, escalating the situation as onlookers gathered. Despite the escalating commotion, the society's guards allegedly did not intervene, leaving the residents to manage the chaos themselves. Police were called to the society to quell the tension. The cops recorded the

statements of both parties and arranged for Agarwal to be taken to a nearby hospital for the treatment of his injuries. Till late on Thursday evening, an FIR was yet to be registered, but police confirmed that an investigation had been initiated. The incident has reignited a longstanding tension within the society over the presence of stray dogs. Many residents — frustrated by what they perceived as inadequate action from the management — voiced concerns about safety. "Despite paying high maintenance fees, we still have at least six stray dogs inside the premises. Whenever we try to have them removed, dog lovers start arguing and create a scene," said one resident, reflecting the deep divide within the community. The clash is not an isolated event in the city in recent times. Just weeks earlier, a Siberian

Husky attacked a woman during her morning walk on Golf Course Road despite being on a leash, sparking outrage over pet ownership. In another incident in May, a cab driver in Sector 29 suffered grievous injuries after being bitten by a Pitbull, resulting in an FIR against the dog's owner. Underlying these incidents is a worrying trend. The city recorded 10,067 dog bite cases in 2024 alone, nearly doubling the 5,200 incidents registered the previous year.

This translates to almost 27 reported bites a day, a surge experts attribute to insufficient sterilisation and management of stray dog population. Amid the growing anxiety, the Climate Tower RWA maintained it was acting within the law. "We are proceeding strictly in keeping with the Supreme Court's order. We have nothing further to add at this stage," said.

## Governor visiting, students asked to fill up potholes at a govt school's entrance in Gurgaon



**Gurgaon. (Agency)**

A planned visit by Haryana's newly appointed Governor Ashim Kumar Ghosh to Gurgaon on Thursday sent school managements scrambling to look picture perfect overnight for the "VIP" guest. In Alipur-Ghamroj, students of the Sanskriti Model Primary School — among the two institutes to be toured by

the Governor — students were allegedly engaged not just to deck up the school ground but also fill potholes on the approach road with soil.

"Our children are here to study, not to clean roads or decorate classrooms for a VIP," said one parent. Another parent added, "The school doesn't even have enough sanitation staff for daily cleaning, but for

the Governor's visit, they turned our kids into labourers. But the principal of the school denied the allegation and said students were not asked to participate in any preparation or manual work. "All preparations were carried out by staff and local volunteers, the principal said. Gurgaon district education office (DEO) did not respond to repeated requests for comment till Thursday evening. A visit to the school on Thursday morning showed a muddy path at the school's entrance demarcated with bricks on both sides. Just a few metres beyond it was a patch of muck, which parents said — was a pothole until the day before. Prof. Ghosh was visiting Gurgaon for the first time after he was appointed the state's Governor last month. "As chancellor of state universities, my attention is not limited to higher education. Strengthening primary education is equally critical," Prof. Ghosh said.

## 'Mishap was waiting to happen': Scooterist falls into Ghaziabad drain; rescued

**Noida. (Agency)**

GHAZIABAD: A scooterist had a narrow escape after he fell through a gaping culvert hole into a drain outside Gaur Gravity Mall in Indirapuram and was pulled out by guards before the muck sucked him in. The accident, which happened Sunday morning and became known on Thursday after CCTV footage of the fall emerged, was one waiting to happen, locals said. Drain covers on both sides of Kala Patthar Road, where the mall is located, were removed or broken to clean up drains before monsoon but not put back in place all these months, leaving the busy area prone to such mishaps. The mall management accused the corporation of negligence for not getting the drains covered. GMC, meanwhile, accused mall staffers of removing a barricade put around the culvert hole. A 52-second clip, circulating on social media, shows the scooterist sinking into the gaping 5-foot-wide hole as the rider tumbles into the chest-deep wastewater. Moments later, he emerges, visibly shaking, waving for help. Two children, who witness the fall, rushes to the mall to raise an alarm. Security guards arrive with a bamboo ladder borrowed from a nearby construction site and pulls the

man out to safety. His scooter was retrieved later with the help of a crane. Rajendra, a guard at the mall, said the incident took place around 8.30 am on Aug. 25. "The children came running, shouting that a man had fallen into the drain. We found him struggling in the water. When he finally climbed out, he was



covered in filth, reeking, and had injuries on his neck and back. I remember his first words: 'I am coming straight from hell' (Narq se nikal kar aa raha hoon)," he said. While the identity of the victim remains unclear, Puneet Kumar, who oversees mall maintenance, said the injured man managed to call a crane driver to retrieve his vehicle. "The entire incident was recorded on CCTV. We helped him as much as possible. Fortunately, his injuries were not life-threatening," Kumar said. The accident has renewed

residents' concerns over uncovered drains along the Kala Patthar stretch. In July, TOI had highlighted that the stretch, from NH-9 to Aditya Mall, has at least 22 open drains, some nearly six feet wide. "Such an incident was bound to happen," VK Bhatnagar, a resident of Gaur Green City, located 1km from the spot, said. "This is not mere apathy but criminal negligence by GMC. The man was lucky he didn't drown." Another resident, Nirmalendu Mishra, said the video has left residents horrified. "Our children take this road daily to go to school. The drain is at least 12 feet deep. Imagine if it had been a child instead of an adult," he said. Local councillor Preeti Jain echoed residents' anger. "I have repeatedly written to GMC since the start of the monsoon to cover these drains, but nothing has been done. Their excuses about roadside vendors are unacceptable," she said. Caught in the middle of the storm, GMC shifted blame to the mall management. A corporation official claimed the drain cover had been removed in late July to allow cleaning with an earthmover. "We barricaded the pit after the work, but the mall removed it. We have now put up barricades around the pit again.

## Wait ends, Haryana govt clears plan to expand demolition waste plant in Basai

**Gurgaon. (Agency)**

Gurgaon: In a major relief for the city, the state govt has approved the long-pending proposal to enhance the capacity of the Basai construction and demolition (C&D) waste plant from 300 metric tonnes per day (TPD) to 1,200 TPD. MCG has been waiting for over a year for the clearance, highlighting bureaucratic delays even as the city continued to drown under rubble.

According to MCG estimates, the city generates nearly 1,500-2,000 tonnes of C&D waste daily — far beyond the plant's current capacity.

"We are also going to increase the radius from 15 km to 30 km for the collection of C&D waste by the firm operating the plant for a year. All the unclaimed waste will be dumped at the Basai plant, where it will be processed.

A C&D waste management policy is also underway. It will also be ensured that the by-products will also be utilised," MCG commissioner Pradeep Dahiya confirmed the development to TOI. "The case will be placed for ex-post facto approval before the cabinet's sub-committee that is headed by the CM."

## This 'puzzle' in Noida Sector 63 could solve office hub's parking woes

**Noida. (Agency)**

Noida Authority is planning to build its first automated puzzle parking in Sector 63, which could help solve the puzzles of the city's parking issues. The four-level facility, with a capacity of 100 vehicles (25 per floor), will cost around Rs 16.5 crore. Unlike hydraulic systems, puzzle parking uses a sensor-based mechanism to automatically shift vehicles between floors in 3-6 minutes, offering faster, safer, and more space-efficient parking. The Authority will construct the project, while a private firm will manage operations through RFP. The space is being designed by Orionn Architects. As the name suggests, the facility will work like a moving puzzle. When a car arrives, it will be parked on a movable stand at the ground level. Sensors will then guide the stand up to the desired floor, automatically shifting other stands to optimise space. Each car can be retrieved independently, unlike traditional stack parking, with the entire process taking just a few minutes. General manager SP Singh said the facility is designed to ease parking woes in places where space is limited with poor parking conditions. "The detailed project report



(DPR) has been sent to IIT for expert vetting. Once approved, a tender will be floated for construction," he added.

Officials said this system significantly increases the parking capacity, fitting two to five times more cars into a limited space by stacking them vertically and moving them horizontally. This efficient design can be installed in various locations like basements, empty plots, or next to buildings, and can be scaled for both small (10-20 cars) and large (100+) projects.

The system is also cost-effective as construction is cheaper and faster because it requires less excavation and uses pre-built steel structures. It's considered more sustainable.

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# Following political tumult, Samoa votes in election that will decide fate of its first woman leader

**WELLINGTON. (Agency)**

Samoa went to the polls Friday in a critical election that could decide the future of the Pacific Island nation's first woman leader, who called the vote after her government collapsed in May.Counting was scheduled to begin next Monday and run until Friday, Sept. 5, before any results are announced.The knife-edge election follows months of political tumult and the outcome could set a fresh direction for Samoa's geopolitical engagement in the contested South Pacific Ocean.

A failed vote prompted the snap electionSamoa's next national election was due in April 2026 but Prime Minister Fiamē Naomi Mata'afa's abrupt admission that her minority government couldn't continue prompted the early poll. Fiamē's dissolution of Parliament came when her budget was rejected during a swift vote in the capital, Apia.

Political havoc had roiled for months. Fiamē's sacking in January of one of her Cabinet ministers, who faced a raft of criminal charges, prompted the ousted minister to in turn expel Fiamē from her FAST political party.The move provoked two votes of no confidence for the leader, which she narrowly survived before stumbling at the budget vote.3 candidatesare



vying to be leaderSamoa's parliament has 51 seats, with 187 candidates standing in this poll. Each hopeful must hold a chiefly title in their home region and complete mandatory service in their community to be eligible for the vote.The law requires that 10% of legislators are women, rare for a region that has some of the world's lowest rates for women in office. The mechanism to reach that threshold, in case not enough women are voted in, is complex and has previously produced a disputed result.

There were six political parties represented in Friday's vote and the prime minister is usually the leader of the party with the largest number of lawmakers in office. Three parties with the most candidates are vying to lead the country in Friday's vote.One is led by Fiamē, who has since May

formed a new group, the Samoa Uniting Party. One of her

challengers is Tuila'epa Sa'ilele Malielegaoi, the leader of the Human Rights Protection Party, who was prime minister for 22 years before Fiamē took office in 2021.The third contender is La'aulialemalietoa Leuatea Polata'i'vao Schmidt, the lawmaker sacked by Fiamē in January and who now leads her former FAST party. He's still fighting the charges he faced, which include harassment using electronic means, defamation and attempting to pervert the course of justice.He denies the allegations.The campaign was dominated by the cost of living

All major parties have centered their election campaigns on the strain caused by inflation, particularly the affordability of food. Attention also centered on the severe electricity shortages that have led to blackouts and economic slowdown in Samoa this year.

Fiamē's opponents, both charismatic and experienced politicians, have promoted populist initiatives, including universal payments to every Samoan and free hospital care, although critics said they have not explained how they would fund the measures.

## UN food agency chief says women and children are 'starving' in Gaza and pressed Netanyahu on aid

**TEL AVIV.(Agency)**

The head of the U.N. food agency said Thursday that it was "very evident" during her visit to Gaza this week that there isn't enough food in the Palestinian territory and that she spoke with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu about the urgent need for more aid.The world's leading authority on food crises said last week the Gaza Strip's largest city is gripped by famine, and that it was likely to spread across the territory without a ceasefire and an end to restrictions on humanitarian aid.Cindy

McCain, the World Food Program's executive director, told The Associated Press that starvation was underway in Gaza."I personally met mothers and children who were starving in Gaza," she said. "It is real and it is happening now,"Netanyahu, she said, was "obviously very concerned that people aren't getting enough food." In the past, he has denied that there is famine in Gaza and said the claims about starvation are a propaganda campaign launched by Hamas."We agreed that we must immediately redouble our

efforts to get more humanitarian aid in. Access and security for our convoys is critical," McCain said.Pressure on Israel

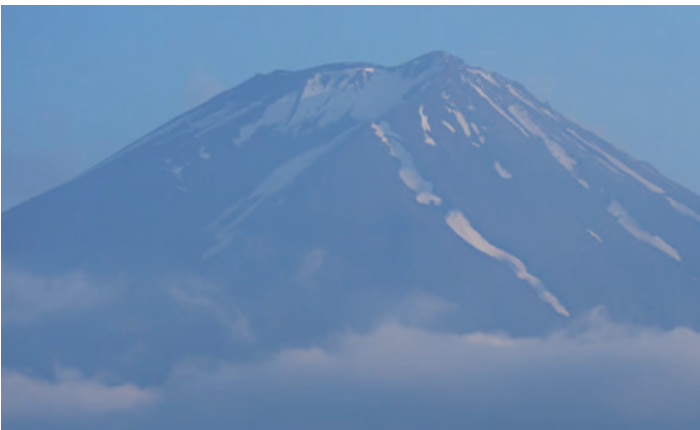
The famine declaration has increased international pressure on Israel. Israel now says it plans to seize Gaza City and other Hamas strongholds, and there have been no public signs of progress on recent efforts for a ceasefire.Israel rejects the declaration — issued by the authority on food crises known as the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, or IPC — and .

# An AI simulation of a Mount Fuji eruption is being used to prepare Tokyo for the worst

**WORLD. (Agency)**

TOKYO: Mount Fuji hasn't erupted since 1707. But for Volcanic Disaster Preparedness Day, Japanese officials have released computer- and AI-generated videos showing a simulation of a potential violent eruption of the active volcano.

The videos, released this week, are meant to prepare the 37 million residents in the greater Tokyo metropolitan area for potential disasters.The Tokyo Metropolitan Government's video warns an eruption could strike "at any moment, without warning," depicting volcanic ash shrouding central Tokyo, about 100 kilometers (60 miles) away, within hours, paralyzing transportation, disrupting food and power, and causing long-term respiratory problems.The video ends with the message: "We need to arm ourselves with facts and prepare for disaster in our daily lives." It shows a



family's pantry stocked with canned food and a first-aid kit.

The Tokyo government said in a statement that there are currently no signs of Fuji erupting.

"The simulation is designed to equip residents with accurate knowledge and preparedness measures they can take in case of an emergency," it explained.But the videos have caused anxiety and confusion

among some residents."Are there actually any signs of eruption?" said Shinichi Kariya, a 57-year-old hospital employee."Why are we now hearing things like '10 centimeters of ash could fall,' even in Tokyo? I'm wondering why this is happening all of a sudden."

Hiromi Ooki, who lives in Mishima City, which has prime views of Fuji, said she planned

to buy emergency supplies the next day. "Nature's power is so great that maybe it's better if it scares us a little," she said.Representatives of both the Tokyo Metropolitan Government and Japan's Cabinet Office Disaster Prevention Division said they had not received complaints from Tokyo residents about the videos.University of Tokyo professor and risk communication expert Naoya Sekiya said the government has for years modeled scenarios for volcanic eruptions and earthquakes, but added that does not mean Fji is about to erupt.

ance to the timing," Sekiya said.Japan is highly vulnerable to natural disasters because of its climate and topography and is known for its meticulous disaster planning which spans earthquakes, typhoons, floods, mudslides and volcanic eruptions.

# Trump's trade adviser targets India again over Russian oil imports

**WASHINGTON. (Agency)**

A day after controversially calling the Ukraine war "Modi's war," Trump's trade adviser Peter Navarro has launched a fresh tirade against India, accusing it of being a "money laundromat for the Kremlin."

n a series of social media posts, Navarro slammed India for buying discounted Russian crude, refining it, and exporting fuels globally, claiming the profits fuel Russia's war in Ukraine."India's Big Oil lobby has turned the world's largest democracy into a massive refining hub and oil money laundromat for the Kremlin," he wrote, accusing Indian refiners of partnering with Russian entities and exporting over 1 million barrels per day, more than half the volume of Russian crude imported.Navarro slammed India for maintaining high tariffs on U.S. exports while demanding sensitive military technology transfers



and defense manufacturing deals with American firms."That's strategic freeloading," he said.

"If India wants to be treated like a strategic partner, it needs to act like one."This latest escalation follows the Trump administration's imposition of 50 per cent tariffs on Indian goods.The trade adviser said the 50 per cent tariff '25 per cent for unfair trade and 25 per cent for national security' was a direct response.India has called the tariffs "unjustified and unreasonable," vowing to

protect its economic interests.Navarro also pointed to the growing trade imbalance, noting the U.S. runs a \$50 billion deficit with India. He alleged that U.S. dollars are being used to fund Russian oil purchases, indirectly financing Putin's war effort."They make a killing, and Ukrainians die," he said.Adding to the controversy, Navarro accompanied his posts with provocative visuals titled "India-Russia Blood Oil Trade," featuring images of Prime Minister Modi with President Putin, and Modi in a

## JD Vance says he's ready to be president If needed, but assures Trump is in 'incredible' health



**world. (Agency)**

U.S. Vice President JD Vance has said he is fully prepared to step into the role of President if a national emergency were to occur, but emphasised that President Donald Trump remains in strong health and high spirits.

In an interview with USA Today on Thursday, Vance praised Trump's vitality and work ethic, dismissing ongoing speculation about the president's health."The President is in incredible health and has tremendous energy," Vance said."Most of us working with him are younger, but he's often the last one to go to bed and the first to start making calls in the morning. He leads by example."Vance added, "God forbid a terrible tragedy occurs, but I feel confident in the experience I've gained over the last 200 days. It's been the best on-the-job

training anyone could ask for."

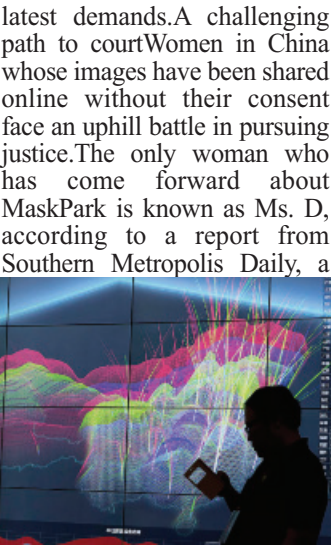
His comments come amid renewed scrutiny of Trump's health following the appearance of a visible bruise on his hand during a meeting with South Korean President Lee Jae Myung.The White House attributed the mark to "frequent, forceful handshakes" and noted that Trump, who takes aspirin daily, bruises more easily.White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt also said, "President Trump shakes more hands than any president in history," "He is committed to the American people and proves that daily."According to the President's physician, Dr. Sean Barbabella, Trump has been diagnosed with chronic venous insufficiency, a common and benign condition, particularly in individuals over 70.Earlier this month, Donald Trump had suggested that Vance is "most likely.

# Chinese victims of online sexual abuse face uphill battle in finding justice

**BANGKOK. (Agency)**

Telegram channel with hundreds of thousands of subscribers that offered revenge porn, hidden-camera videos and other non-consensual content of Chinese women has highlighted gaps in laws protecting victims of sexual abuse in China.The uproar over the online group comes after Chinese authorities have silenced public activism over women's rights in recent years, even sentencing some activists to prison for promoting #MeToo.

The Telegram channel called MaskPark, which offered pornographic content in Chinese, came to national attention in recent weeks and was quickly shut down by Telegram. But activists say alternate channels have already emerged, with only some being shut down.Now activists are calling for ways to help women whose images have been posted. They want police to go after the posters or channel administrators, or even Telegram. They also seek a targeted law to address non-consensual sexual online content, which they see as a form of sexual abuse.China's Ministry of Public Security and the State Council Information Office did not respond to a request for comment, and have not commented publicly on the



latest demands.A challenging path to courtWomen in China whose images have been shared online without their consent face an uphill battle in pursuing justice.The only woman who has come forward about MaskPark is known as Ms. D, according to a report from Southern Metropolis Daily, a state-backed news outlet in Guangdong province. She says she received a private message in May claiming photos and videos of her were on the channel.There, she found images of her being intimate with a Canadian citizen who was her boyfriend at the time, said Li Ling, an activist and researcher on gender-based violence who works with a team to assist women exposed on MaskPark. The AP could not reach Ms. D or other women independently.

When Ms. D reported the case to police, she found the images had been deleted. She consulted with lawyers but

found there is no law in China specifically addressing what had occurred, Li said.This means a lot of police officers do not know how to lodge a case," Li said.But there are other challenges. To file a lawsuit, even a civil one claiming damages, the alleged perpetrator's identifying information is needed, Li said.

It is impossible to tell who posted the images. Telegram is blocked in China, which allows only apps that cooperate with the government's censorship apparatus. Users can access Telegram via a virtual private network, which provides an encrypted connection. And Telegram doesn't verify the identity of users. It is unclear who ran MaskPark, and the AP could not contact them.

Telegram said in a statement to the AP it "completely removed the MaskPark channels" and that moderators continue to monitor the platform "and accept user reports — so that if such groups ever resurface, they are immediately removed once more."Telegram was founded by Pavel Durov. Last year, French authorities arrested Durov over charges that the platform was being used for criminal activity that included drug trafficking and child sex abuse material.

## Parents of students killed in Minneapolis church shooting share emotional pleas

**world. (Agency)**

The parents of the two schoolchildren fatally shot in a Minneapolis church spoke out for the first time on Thursday afternoon, with some imploring the shaken community to address the root causes of shootings that target schools.Fletcher Merkel, 8, and Harper Moyski, 10, were killed on Wednesday morning when a shooter opened fire at a Mass that hundreds of students at Annunciation Catholic School attended.

City officials increased to 15 the number of injured children, who are ages 6 to 15. Three parishioners in their 80s also were injured. Only one person — a child — was in critical condition.In a statement released Thursday, Moyski's parents described Harper as "a bright, joyful, and deeply loved 10-year-old" who was "adored" by her younger sister."As a family, we are shattered, and words cannot capture the depth of our pain," the statement read.

The 10-year-old's parents said that they were focused on healing in the wake of the shooting, but added that they hoped Harper's memory would fuel action that might prevent shootings going forward.No family should ever have to endure this kind

of pain," Harper's parents wrote. "We urge our leaders and communities to take meaningful steps to address gun violence and the mental health crisis in this country."Remembered by his life, not death

Fletcher Merkel's father, Jesse Merkel, tearfully read a statement on Thursday outside of the church where



his son was killed, saying the eight-year-old loved his family and friends and enjoyed fishing, cooking and playing any sport.

Because of the shooter's actions, Merkel said, "we will never be allowed to hold him, talk to him, play with him and watch him grow into the wonderful young man he was on the path to becoming."

"Please remember Fletcher for the person he was and not the act that ended his life," Merkel said.



# ‘Completely unintentional’: DEO gives clean chit to school for depicting burqa-clad girls as ‘terrorists’ at I-Day play

**Ahmedabad . (Agency)**  
The District Education Officer (DEO) has given a clean chit to Dr A P J Abdul Kalam Prathamik Shala number 51 in Kumbharwada area of Bhavnagar of Gujarat for allegedly depicting burqa-clad girls as terrorists in a play staged during the Independence Day celebrations on the school campus on August 15, based on a report submitted by Municipal School Board Administrative Officer stating that it was “completely unintentional” and “without any malicious intent to

hurt anyone’s religious sentiments or harm communal harmony.”



According to the factual report submitted by Bhavnagar Municipal School Board

Administrative Officer (AO) Munjal Badmaliya, the play

was conceptualised by students based on a similar work on YouTube. The attire of the characters in the play was also

decided by the students, the report, backed by statements from teachers and parents, said.

Following a representation received from a local social organisation ‘Bandharan Bachav Samiti Bhavnagar’ against the depiction of burqa-clad girls as ‘terrorists’ during Independence Day cultural programme at the municipal corporation school on August 15, Bhavnagar DEO Hitendrasinh D Padheriya had issued a notice, seeking a factual report from the administrative officer. In his

report submitted to the DEO on August 25, Bhavnagar Municipal School Board Administrative Officer (AO) Munjal Badmaliya said: “It has been found that in the cultural work “Operation Sindoor” presented on the occasion of Independence Day on August 15, 2025, in school number 51, the school principal, teachers and students did not present the work with any malicious intent to hurt anyone’s religious sentiments or harm communal harmony.

# Massive fire breaks out at scrap godown in Pune’s Jambhulwadi



**Pune . (Agency)**  
A major fire broke out at a scrap godown near the Katraj area of Pune city early on Friday, officials said, adding that it was brought under control after a three-hour firefighting operation. No casualties were reported in the incident.

The Pune Fire Brigade control room received a call about the blaze at the scrap godown in Jambhulwadi at around 2 am. Nine fire tenders and water tankers from different fire stations of Pune and the Pune Metropolitan Region Development Authority fire brigade were pressed into action.

After reaching the spot, the fire brigade teams led by senior Fire Officer Prabhakar Umratkar checked if anybody was stuck inside the godown. “Nobody was inside, but the fire had spread over a large area. We doused the flames and

brought the situation under control during the firefighting operation that went on till 5.15 am,” fireman Nilesh Patil said. “No casualties were reported in the incident. But the scrap material inside the godown was badly damaged due to fire. The exact cause

**The scrap material inside the godown in Pune’s Katraj area was badly damaged due to the fire, officials said.**

could not be ascertained,” he added. The massive flames and smoke emanating from the godown sparked panic in the area. A Pune city police team also visited the spot after receiving information about the fire. The police said an inquiry is being conducted to ascertain the cause of the incident.

# IITGN develops ‘maida-free’ millet-based premixes for brownies, muffins and dhokla

**Ahmedabad. (Agency)**  
Indian Institute of Technology Gandhinagar (IITGN) has developed millet-based premixes without any form of wheat for making baked food items such as muffins and brownies and steamed items like dhokla. It has also applied for FSSAI licence before its launch in the market through food start-up Planthro Private Limited at the Research Park of the institute.

preparation” and sorghum dhokla under “Millet-based premix for steamed-fermented products and a process for its preparation” are filed earlier this year by the Department of Chemistry (Jointly with Biological Sciences and Engineering department) at the IITGN. “Applications for the two patents have been filed in May this year. Usually, the first round of decision takes around 6-8 months, so we are expecting a decision on the application by the end of the year. Our premixes do not incorporate wheat or any other flour. The premix formulations have been



analysed for their biochemical performance via standard digestibility assays that test the release of sugars upon breakdown of the products in presence of digestive enzymes. Also, in vitro protein digestibility of the premix

formulations is like that of the native millet flour. The premix formulations retain the antioxidant performance of the native millet flour used in each case,” Prof Bhaskar Datta from the Department of Chemistry, IITGN, told The Indian Express. Recalling the interest the institute developed in the area which, he said, is something unusual for the IITs, Prof Datta explained, “Barely 2-3 IITs have food processing or food science departments. Our research group at IIT Gandhinagar has been dabbling in various aspects of food biochemistry over the past

several years. The team while working on the artificial meat or plant-based meat got drawn towards millet-based products that further led to developing milled-based premixes.” “Much of this work has an analytical focus and we have been interested in identifying and mitigating food hazards such as acrylamide in fried foods, and novel detection methods for herbicides and pesticides in raw fruits and vegetables. Our immersion in this line of work and engagement with the broader community of food scientists spurred an interest in processed foods,” he added.

# Floods inundate paddy on 2.90 lakh acres; over 400 villages marooned in Punjab

**Chandigarh . (Agency)**  
Floodwaters have devastated large swathes of Punjab, submerging around 2.9 lakh acres of farmland across more than 400 villages in over half a dozen districts. Officials said that most of the inundated land was under paddy cultivation, raising fears of massive crop losses at a time when harvesting is just weeks away. According to official figures, over 400 villages are under floodwater, including nearly 46 in Sultanpur Lodhi subdivision of Kapurthala district. While 6,000 people still live in about 16 of these villages, 30 villages, though uninhabited, are intensively farmed and now lie under water. Apart from Kapurthala, the flood has affected 23, 150, 100, 50 ,65 and 15 villages in Pathankot, Gurdaspur, Amritsar, Tarn Taran Ferozepur,



and Fazilka districts, respectively. As the villages are located along Ravi and Beas rivers, which are flowing above danger levels. Director of Punjab Agriculture Department Jaswant Singh said that the

situation remains grim. “At present, nearly 2.90 lakh acres of farmland are under floodwater. Water levels are up to 5 feet in some areas. If the water recedes soon, there is still some hope, as the paddy crop can withstand water stress to an

extent,” he said, adding that the water has receded from around 24,000 acres and now we will inspect the condition of the crop on these farm lands. In Kapurthala district alone, 480 people have been rescued so far, but many continue to stay inside their waterlogged homes, unwilling to leave behind belongings and livestock. Authorities are providing boats and relief material to the stranded families, even as rescue operations continue. Agricultural experts warn that if stagnant water is not cleared quickly, the paddy crop may begin to rot, leading to heavy losses for farmers who were already reeling under financial stress. The state government is yet to release an official assessment of crop damage, but early estimates suggest the economic impact could be severe across the flood-hit districts.

# Pune Metro ridership surge continues, 2.13 lakh passengers per day in August

**According to Maha Metro, one of the reasons for the surge in ridership in Pune Metro is the increase in peak-hour frequency to 6 minutes from 7 minutes.**



**Pune . (Agency)**  
Continuing the trend recorded over the past two months, the Pune Metro also recorded a significant boost in ridership in August. An average of 2,13,390 rides per day were recorded in the month on both the Purple and Aqua lines combined, according to the Pune Metro website as of Wednesday. This is a notable increase from the numbers recorded in July (1,92,204) and

June (1,74,702). As reported by The Indian Express, the Pune Metro had already seen a significant increase in average daily rides in July, as compared to the average daily rides of the previous 10 months. From September 2024 to June 2025, the Metro recorded 1,54,652 average daily rides, which jumped to 1,74,702 in June and to 1,92,204 in July. The Metro has seen a further boost from August 1 to August 27 with 2,13,390 average daily rides, even before the Ganesh festival. Hemant Sonawane, Executive Director

(Administration & Public Relations) at Maha Metro, the implementing agency of all Metro projects in Maharashtra, attributed a few different reasons to this increase, including the increase in peak-hour frequency to six minutes from the earlier seven minutes. An increase in frequency means that more trains run in the same amount of time, facilitating a greater number of passengers to travel during the peak hours. He said that promotion of schemes like the student card has also helped increase ridership numbers.

# Govt approves Rs 20,787 crore for land acquisition for 802 km Nagpur—Goa Shakti Peeth Expressway

**Mumbai. (Agency)**  
The Maharashtra government on Thursday approved the land acquisition and alignment for the Nagpur—Goa Shakti Peeth Expressway, a high-speed corridor stretching 802.59 km across 12 districts, 39 talukas and 370 villages, linking Pavnar in Wardha district to Patra Devi in Sindhudurg district. The government granted an approval of Rs ₹20,787 crore for land acquisition. The expressway will connect major Shakti Peeths—including Tuljapur, Kolhapur, Mahur, and 18 other religious sites—while reducing travel time between Nagpur and Goa from 18–21 hours to around 8 hours. In a Government Resolution (GR) issued on Thursday by the PWD department, administrative approval was granted for ₹20,787 crore—₹12,000 crore principal and ₹8,787 crore interest—for land acquisition. The Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation (MSRDC) will implement the project, with the state covering any revenue shortfall to ensure timely repayment of the HUDCO loan. As per the GR, the alignment from Pavnar to

Sangli has been approved as of February 7, 2024, while the Kolhapur segment—covering Shirol, Karveer, Hatkanangale, Kagal, Bhudargad, and Ajra



talukas—has been cancelled as per Sections 3 and 15(2) of the Maharashtra Highway Act, 1955. The MSRDC has been tasked to explore alternative alignment and submit proposals. “The final alignment for Kolhapur will be decided after consultations with the CM Devendra Fadnavis, Dy CMs, local ministers, and elected representatives,” the GR states. Officials said that once detailed proposals, financial planning, draft tenders and concession agreements are

approved, the tender process will follow standard MSRDC procedures. The project had been halted in June 2024 by the previous government led by then CM Eknath Shinde, following protests from farmers and political opposition, particularly in Kolhapur. Of the 8,419 hectares required, nearly 8,100 hectares belong to individual farmers, raising concerns over large-scale land acquisition. The opposition, especially Congress and NCP-SP gained traction in Kolhapur and surrounding sugar belt districts, prompting the government to put the project in abeyance last year. With this GR, however, the project has been revived.

# ‘Won’t back down even if I’m shot’: Manoj Jarange Patil begins hunger strike at Azad Maidan, thousands reach Mumbai

**Mumbai . (Agency)**  
Maratha reservation activist Manoj Jarange Patil began an indefinite hunger strike at Azad Maidan in Mumbai Friday morning, reiterating his demand for quota benefits for the Maratha community and vowing not to withdraw the agitation until their demands are met.

Even as Jarange Patil launched his latest protest, groups of Maratha activists blocked the road opposite Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT) and the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) headquarters, disrupting traffic in the busy area. The road blockade added to the city’s traffic woes during peak hours, despite the activist’s repeated appeals to supporters to maintain peace and not inconvenience Mumbaiers. The protest comes amid fresh rules notified by the police on August 26 under the Public Meetings, Agitations and Processions Rules, 2025, which prohibit protests after 6 pm and cap participation at 5,000 people. However, according to the Social Service unit of the Mumbai police, nearly 40,000 people are expected to take part in the rally, far exceeding the permitted limit and in violation of the notification. Jarange



Patil, however, insisted that the authorities should grant permission for the agitation to continue until the demands are fulfilled. “We have come to Mumbai because the government did not cooperate with us. The authority to grant permission lies with the government, and we have requested them to allow us. If not the government, then the courts will give us permission,” he said on reaching the protest venue. The activist declared that he was prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice for the Maratha cause. “I will die, but won’t back down this time. We will not leave Mumbai until our demands are met,” he asserted. Addressing thousands of supporters, Jarange Patil repeatedly appealed for restraint and discipline during the protest. “Cooperate with the

police. Do not trouble Mumbaiers. Don’t do anything that would bring disrepute to the community. Do not pelt stones or set anything on fire. Remain peaceful,” he urged. “I should not be hearing any news of misbehaviour from you. I don’t want to hear that Mumbaiers have been troubled or are unhappy with us,” he added. He further instructed community members to stay in Vashi at night and gather at Azad Maidan only in the morning, while also encouraging those who had travelled from distant villages to return after the day’s protest. “Now that I have begun my fast, you do not need to worry. Those who wish to return to their villages may do so in the evening — you don’t have to remain here. I am here now, and

**According to the Mumbai police, nearly 40,000 people are expected to take part in the protest rally seeking Maratha quota reservation, far exceeding the permitted limit.**

I will not back out until the Marathas get reservations,” he said. “Even if the government shoots me down or puts me in jail, I will not withdraw until our demands are met,” Jarange Patil said, adding, “I won’t get ‘managed’ till the last breath of my life.” He also made a direct appeal to Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. “Fadnavis saheb, this is your opportunity to win the hearts of the Marathas... We have only one demand and that is reservation,” Pail said. The Maratha community, which comprises over 30 per cent of Maharashtra’s population, has been demanding reservation in education and government jobs for several years.



EDITORIAL

Shifting geopolitical imperatives between necessity and trust

US President Donald Trump issued a blunt warning on Tuesday: “It will not be a world war, but it will be an economic war.” Though directed at Russia, the message reverberated around the world. The era of economic neutrality is ending. Nations caught between competing powers face growing pressure to pick a side. India, delicately balancing ties with Washington, Moscow and Beijing, stands at a crucial strategic crossroads.

As US economic and geopolitical demands intensify, a critical question arises: if relations with Washington deteriorate, can China replace the US as India’s primary strategic business partner? The answer is not straightforward. While trust between India and China remains limited, necessity often overrides hesitation in international relations. India’s trade with China is vast—covering electronics, chemicals, machinery, and more. This relationship is pragmatic, not based on shared values or strategic alignment. Despite the ongoing border disputes, China’s roles as the world’s manufacturing hub and India’s immediate neighbour make it an indispensable economic partner India cannot easily ignore.

Meanwhile, the India-US partnership—grounded in defence ties, technology cooperation, and shared democratic values—is showing signs of immense strain. Built over 25 years as a counterweight to China’s rise, this relationship



now risks unravelling. Ironically, as Washington demands greater alignment from New Delhi, particularly on issues like Russia and global security, it increasingly risks pushing India away. Rather than solidifying India’s position within a US-led coalition, Washington’s shifting priorities risk nudging New Delhi closer to Beijing’s orbit. The subtle retreat from actively supporting India as a strategic counterweight creates a vacuum Beijing is ready to fill.

China cannot fully replace the US in innovation, strategic trust, or access to advanced markets. However, Chinese capital, which is often politically conditioned, and its vast manufacturing ecosystem remain hard to ignore. India’s biggest hurdle is urgent domestic reform, modernising infrastructure, cutting through winding bureaucratic processes, and building a competitive manufacturing sector. Without strategic leverage in globally critical sectors, India risks losing ground in any trade war. Meanwhile, Trump’s economic war doctrine should end all ambiguity—India must act decisively, balancing pragmatism with principle. China may be far from an ideal partner, but necessity can outweigh trust. Meanwhile, the US, by not fully backing India as a counterweight, risks quietly ceding regional influence.

Time to revisit Special Intensive Revision

The SC appears to back the ECI with one hand and help the elector with the other, apparently easing the burden of proof the poll panel has unduly cast on the voters. The two SC orders essentially ask the ECI to do what it was always known for -- be transparent and ease compliance by accepting a document that is easily available. With the SC slated to hear the case on September 8, it is hard to say at this stage where this exercise is headed, but it is time to dispassionately look at its purpose and evaluate the process followed by the ECI to achieve that purpose. Fair ends must be achieved by fair means. Attributing motives to the ECI other than what it publicly stated would lead to greater contumely; examining the procedure employed would be more instructive. THIS has been a year of good monsoon with no noticeable sandstorms save the dust raised by the Election Commission of India (ECI) winnowing the electoral rolls of Bihar through an unprecedented process named the Special Intensive Revision (SIR). The dust turned into a virtual storm because the state elections are to follow. Political parties and civil society organisations have raised the spectre of mass disenfranchisement and dragged the ECI to the Supreme Court (SC). Sixty days after the launch of the SIR and several hearings by the SC, the dust hasn’t settled.

Meanwhile, the SC passed two interim orders interpreted by the petitioners as vindication of their stand and by the ECI as an endorsement of its proclaimed intent and indubitable authority to carry on with the exercise. The petitioners claim partial victory; the ECI is equally determined to demonstrate its triumph. It is like an uphill run in which the runners feel rehydrated by an energy-boosting drink along the way. No one questions the unjustified gradient of the forced climb. Both parties seem to be panting as they attempt to prove their

point. The ECI has already announced that all states must go through the rigorous SIR exercise next year. In some states, the preliminary work might have begun. Can some lessons be learnt from the

those who didn’t submit the enumeration forms as no house-to-house survey or field investigation was stipulated? Did it consult any authorised record or was this based on hearsay? If the enumeration

personnel and parliamentarians. The ECI should not choose for them; they should be free to make their choice based on their democratic inclinations. A migrant worker might lead a

officers of cases not recommended by BLOs and the stage of the scrutiny should be clearly stated. This, too, was unclear in Bihar. It is puzzling why the ECI didn’t disclose the number of enumeration forms out of the 7.24 crore received till July 25 without the prescribed documents. Why is it that thereafter the ECI stopped disclosing the number of electors submitting documents daily? While adhering to the letter and spirit of Article 326 of the Constitution regarding eligibility, the ECI needn’t explicitly dabble in determining citizenship, something that it has avoided in the past but which it unnecessarily emphasised in its June 24 order.

The SIR has so far not removed any significant number on account of non-citizenship, a valid ground for ineligibility.

Those not included in the draft electoral for having “permanently shifted” cannot be termed “ineligible” as per Article 326. They are ‘ineligible’ to be included in the rolls of the polling station that they were earlier in without their ‘citizenship’ being questioned. Therefore, separating the pre-2003 and post-2003 electors on the basis of “presumed citizenship” was fallacious and created an avoidable storm over the ECI’s motives, exposing it to the accusation of overreach. A comprehensive exercise of this nature cannot be abrupt in its timing, aggressive in its procedure and ambitious in its scope.

The SIR shouldn’t be perceived as a surprise raid of an enforcement agency that leaves people scampering to save their voting right. It is a civilised, rule-based act of removing aberrations, discrepancies and irregularities that might have crept into the system. It should not be difficult for an august body such as the EC to convince people of the common purpose and seek their cooperation in weeding out those ineligible.



ongoing SIR? Can the SC and the ECI cobble together an acceptable framework that achieves the purpose of purification without causing confusion and inconvenience to the electorate in securing their constitutional right? Can Bihar be the pilot to pave a smoother path for the rest of the country? The right framework can be evolved if the right questions are raised regarding the procedure employed in the current revision as stipulated in the ECI’s June 24 order, including the unanswered questions pertaining to the exercise thus far. Why is the ECI order on the intensive revision of Bihar electoral rolls in 2003 not in the public domain for people to assess the change in procedure and its rationale?

How did the EC verify death/permanent migration of

forms are prefilled based on existing ECI data, leaving no scope for the elector to correct an error, would the ECI not inherit the errors and leave the rolls unpurified to that extent?

The poll panel would understandably be under pressure to show the efficiency of its exercise, but if all that it succeeds in doing is de-duplication and removing dead electors, where was the need to subject every elector to a stress test? In removing those who have supposedly ‘migrated’ but are keen on voting in the place where they belong, is the ECI not restricting their choice of participating in the political process of the place of their preference? After all, NRIs have the right to vote at the place of their claimed origin even if they ordinarily reside elsewhere, and so do defence

peripatetic existence and feel that he belongs where he has his land, family or moorings. The compassionate approach that the ECI has hitherto followed must imbue its zeal for correctness.

The ECI has a reputation of being sound on protocols, managing the most arduous exercise through elaborate and meticulous standard operating procedures, which it drills down to its machinery through repeated training. That its instructions lacked clarity in the Bihar SIR is surprising.

For example, it should spell out in detail the basis on which booth-level officers (BLOs) are expected to make their recommendations on the enumeration forms submitted by the electors, which was not clearly specified in Bihar. Similarly, the criterion for scrutiny by the supervisory

A tweak to make finance commission recommendation fairer



Finance commission recommendations are, technically, a zero-sum game, where a tweak in the criteria cannot be carried out to benefit all the states—a gain for some states is a loss for others. So, finance commissions always have a very tight rope to walk. Until the 7th Finance Commission (FC), only two criteria for devolution were used—population and state contribution towards income tax collection, with 80-90 percent, and 10-20 percent weights, respectively. The 8th FC breaks this tradition and introduces multiple equity criteria, with per capita income distance getting more weight, and remaining a dominant criterion for the past eight commissions. Population and income distance constitute nearly 70 percent of the weights, and most of the remaining 30 percent is distributed across fixed geographic criteria like area and forest cover, with little weight assigned to efficiency. We must wait to see whether the 16th FC paves a new direction by drastically changing the criteria by

giving more weight to efficiency parameters, or follows the same path as their predecessors by slightly modifying the weightage, or reintroduces some of the past criteria so that there is no drastic change in inter se shares. With a maximum weight, the income distance criterion becomes the most contentious one for the progressive states with higher per-capita incomes, as they get a lesser share in the devolution. With no incentive for performance, the states with low per-capita income lack the urge to move up the ladder.

The basic idea was to make the playing field more level by compensating poorer states to move up in ranks; but the data suggests otherwise. Over the past four decades, there has been no change in the ranks of the states. Successive FCs calculated the income distance by considering the latest available three-year data on each state’s per capita gross state domestic product (GSDP), and an average is calculated to smoothen the variation.

The income distance for a particular state is the difference between its per-capita GSDP from the highest per-capita GSDP state. If the state with the highest average is a small one, the next comparable state’s average is considered. This distance, multiplied by the state’s population, was used to calculate the share. Since the states’ ranks on this average remains the same, this method is skewed towards favouring those at the bottom with a higher share and limiting the share for those at the top. A simple readjustment to this criterion can benefit states fairly and push them to improve their per-capita GSDPs. Consider the per-capita GSDP for all states reported by the last FC, and similarly, calculate the average per-capita GSDP for all states for the latest three-year period. The growth rate between these two averages is the minimum expected growth of the average per-capita GSDP.

We can derive the expected per capita GSDP for each state from this growth rate, and the income distance

for each state is calculated as the difference between this expected per capita GSDP, and the highest expected per capita GSDP of a comparable state. This distance multiplied by the state’s population can be used to derive the share for each state.

The computed expected level for each state should be kept as the base for calculating the income distance by the successive FCs.

To explain this, let’s take the average per-capita GSDP of the states considered by the 14th and 15th FCs. The average has grown by 94.8 percent, from ‘64,290 to ‘1,25,246, between the two commissions. So, by benchmarking the minimum expected growth at this level for all states, the expected average per capita GSDP level can be derived. Since the compensation to bridge this income distance has been given by the 14FC, it is anticipated that the states will grow at the expected level for the 15FC period. So, calculating income distance with actual data will always favour the states that are not coping well with growth.

Deriving income distance based on this expected level solves two problems. First, it does not punish the states that grow above the expected level; instead, it pushes the states growing below the expected level to pay the price for the gap they miss.

Second, since this expected level would be set as a base to calculate the expected level of average per-capita GSDP of each state in the next commission’s period,

it pushes the states that are above the level to maintain the same speed; but pushes those below the level to grow faster than what is needed to maintain the expected level. With this readjustment, the share of the income distance criterion across states may not change drastically. The difference between the actual and readjusted shares stands at around 5.6 percent for the 15FC period, indicating that only 5.6 percent of the share has been redistributed between the performing and emerging states. But it provides a stable criterion with a predictable target for the states to turn their wheel of performance towards the future.

The two Indias facing America for decades

We live in two Indias. They are starkly juxtaposed against each other in situations such as the ongoing tariffs challenge from the US. Of the two, one India is adept at making a case that this country will fall behind unless it recognises that Donald Trump is not unreasonable in his demand for balanced trade. This India argues that the Narendra Modi government ought to use Trump’s threat of higher tariffs—at least his initial demands—as an opportunity to usher in the next wave of economic reforms. This India also views Trump’s tariff imposition as a chance to raise this country’s competitiveness in industrial production and other business activities. The other India is more rooted in the realities of this country, sensitive to the conditions of ordinary Indians. It does not have the tools at its command to make a case that Trump’s actions and behaviour are symptoms of a deep-rooted malaise. So far at least, Prime Minister Modi has not called the spade in Washington a spade. Lula da Silva, President of Brazil, also facing high tariffs, has said Trump was elected “not to be the emperor of the world”. Modi is still hoping for a trade deal and has been advised by his trusted aides not to escalate matters with the volatile and unpredictable White House. Hidden behind these symptoms is Trump’s chronic disease, which India must not overlook. At the root of what Trump is seeking is a haughty and imperial imposition on sovereign nations.

This disease is not limited to tariffs. He wants to make Canada the 51st US state, take over the Panama Canal and get Denmark to surrender its autonomous island of Greenland to the US. What if Trump demands one day that in the interest of permanent peace in South Asia, Jammu and Kashmir should be placed under Washington’s trusteeship? Until 1994, when the United Nations Trusteeship Council was wound up, many territories from Tanganyika in Africa to Nauru in Oceania were administered by major powers as they moved step-by-step towards self-government or independence. It is not inconceivable that in Trump’s view, Jammu and Kashmir fits this bill. After all, he wants to ethnically cleanse Gaza Strip and develop it into a riviera of the Arab world. As India begins its life under the highest tariffs imposed by the Trump administration, those who are in favour of surrendering to Washington are painting a dismal picture ahead. This India foresees sectors of industry primarily sustained by the American market collapsing, high unemployment in information technology business and a slowdown—if not an end—to business process outsourcing to Bengaluru or Hyderabad. They insist that the loss of the US market for Indian goods and services cannot be compensated for in the foreseeable future. There is a sense of déjà vu in this. When India tested nuclear weapons in 1998, triggering automatic sanctions under America’s penal ‘Glenn Amendment’ non-proliferation legislation, one India similarly predicted unimaginable disaster for this country.



# From ‘maal’, ‘sauda’ to party, delivery and packet: Haryana IPS officer’s tips to watch street slang and be a good detective

**Haryana Narcotics Control Bureau chief O P Singh said lack of actionable information meant that only nine cases were registered after they received over 900 complaints pertaining to drug trafficking this year.**

**Chandigarh . (Agency)**  
Senior Haryana Police officer O P Singh, who heads the state Narcotics Control Bureau (HSNCB), took to social media Thursday and gave elaborate tips on how to help the police nab drug traffickers while indicating that though their helplines receive numerous tip-offs, they often do not lead to arrests due to a lack of actionable information.

Taking to X, the IPS officer wrote, “Let me tell you how you can become a sharp detective capable of helping catch drug traffickers from their hideouts. To do this, you’ll need to pay attention to a few important things.”

“People involved with drugs often use certain keywords or code words in their conversations. For example, ‘maal’ (stuff), ‘party’, ‘packet’, ‘delivery’, ‘sauda’ (deal), etc. Learn to recognise these words and understand where and how they are being used. If you hear something like this, become alert immediately,” Singh wrote.

Saying that a “good detective” pays attention to every detail, he added, “If there’s a place in your

neighbourhood or nearby area where the movement of people has suddenly increased, or strange vehicles frequently



stop, keep an eye on it. If someone meets people late at night or early in the morning without any clear reason, that could also be a cause for suspicion.”

Advising people to gather actionable information, Singh said, “If you sense something suspicious, don’t inform the police immediately. First,

gather full and reliable information – such as people’s names, the times they come and go, vehicle numbers, and where



they meet. This information can be very useful to the police.”

Singh said that once they have gathered solid information, it must be reported to the right authorities. “You can contact the police, the Haryana State Narcotic Control Bureau helpline at 90508-91508, the MANAS portal, or the National Anti-Narcotics

Helpline at 1933. Remember, your identity will be kept completely confidential.”

Citing reasons for taking to social media, he said, “Between January and August 2025, only 3 cases were registered from the 313 complaints received via the MANAS portal and the National Anti-Narcotics Helpline (1933). Similarly, out of 620 complaints received on

the Haryana State Narcotic Control Bureau helpline (90508-91508), only six cases were registered. The complaints lacked actionable information that could lead to the arrest of drug dealers. However, during the same period, through technical analysis and informants, we registered 2,026 cases and sent 3,372 drug traffickers to jail”.

## Telangana High Court questions nod to blasting in Jubilee Hills

**HYDERABAD.** The Telangana High Court on Thursday took suo motu cognizance of reports on continuous blasting for rock removal in Jubilee Hills, which residents said was causing severe inconvenience.

The case came up before a bench of Chief Justice Aparesk Kumar Singh and Justice GM Mohiuddin after Justice Nagesh Bheemappa drew attention to complaints from Nyaya Vihar, Bharani Layout and around Ramanaidu Studios, where over 10 blasts were reportedly taking place daily.

During the hearing, Additional Advocate General (AAG) Md Imran Khan sought two weeks to file a counter on behalf of the State. He said blasting permissions were limited to 10 am-4 pm and promised a detailed affidavit on whether nighttime activity had occurred after March 31, 2025.

Senior advocate P Srinagaram, for DSR Prime Spaces, said blasting was already completed with required approvals, backed by a PCB affidavit. The bench questioned the authority of the police commissioner to issue permissions.

## Doctors in Bengaluru warn of weak memory in kids due to smartphone use

**BENGALURU. (Agency)**  
Once thought to be an illness of ageing, dementia now has a twin in the digital age. Doctors in the city are pointing to “digital dementia” in children, a condition where the brain’s natural ability to build and retain memory is weakening because of constant smartphone use. Experts note that many children are finding it difficult to stay patient or concentrate on tasks for long, as hours of watching fast-paced content on phones are shortening their attention span. Alongside this, doctors, teachers and parents are observing gaps in recall with children struggling to remember sequences in a story, retain what they study beyond a short period, or connect lessons from one day to the next and even their parent’s phone numbers.

Dr Ravi Kumar CP, Consultant, Paediatric Neurology at Aster CMI Hospital pointed out that among

children, Digital Dementia is showing up as forgetfulness, poor concentration in school, difficulty retaining information, slower thinking, and even social withdrawal. “Constant notifications, fast-paced videos, and quick information access train the brain to seek instant gratification rather than deep focus, which further worsens attention and memory. In cities like Bengaluru, where tech exposure is high and digital learning has become common after the pandemic, these patterns are being observed more clearly,” Dr Kumar said.

Dr Manoj Kumar Sharma, Professor of Clinical Psychology and Director of the Service for Healthy Use of Technology (SHUT) clinic, explained that children today are being introduced to smartphones at such an early age that their brains are not getting enough opportunity to naturally develop memory skills.

## Bengaluru has best talent, weather, but worst infrastructure: Biocon chief

Following her reactions, the DCM, along with a delegation comprising civic officials and urban experts, visited Shaw at her residence and sought suggestions to fix the city and its image.

**BENGALURU. (Agency)**  
“Namma Bengaluru has the best talent and the best weather but the worst infrastructure; if we fix garbage debris and roads, we can be among the best cities in the world. GBA has a great opportunity to do this. Let’s use collective will to do this,” Biotechnology major Biocon chief Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw posted on X, drawing the city administration’s attention to pressing issues of the city’s worsening infrastructure.



Her note on X on Thursday about Bengaluru’s pristine weather, pointed out that at the same time the city is struggling with the issues of garbage and bad roads. She tagged DCM DK Shivakumar and BBMP Chief Commissioner Maheshwar Rao. It appears that when some BJP leaders lashed out at the Congress government and its GBA concept of ‘splitting the civic body for ‘better administration’, the government has now found support from the Biocon chief. Responding to Shaw quickly, Shivakumar, who also the Bengaluru Development Minister, wrote, “Agree with you, @kiranshaw aware, Bengaluru has always

had the talent, the weather, and the spirit. What it lacked was political will. That’s exactly what we are fixing now.”

“From garbage to roads, from debris to planning -- every challenge is being addressed with purpose and urgency. Namma Bengaluru has always stood for innovation, opportunity, and unmatched spirit, and as our city grows and pushes boundaries, my commitment is to ensure our infrastructure and governance act as a catalyst for growth. With Greater Bengaluru Authority, we now have a unique opportunity to transform this vision into reality, and we will deliver,” he added.

## Passenger held with live bullets at Hyderabad airport



**HYDERABAD . (Agency)**  
Security officials at RGIA, Shamshabad, intercepted a 32-year-old Punjab resident after eight live bullets were found in his checked-in baggage on Thursday. The passenger, identified as Sukhdeep Singh, was scheduled to travel from Hyderabad to Amritsar via Delhi.

Upon screening, security personnel detected four rounds of 0.2 mm, two rounds of 0.7 mm, one round of 7.52 mm, and one round of 7.62 mm. Police said Singh could not produce any valid Arms or Ammunition License.

During questioning, he admitted that the bullets had remained in his possession since a prior incident in Punjab in 2023 and claimed he was carrying them unknowingly. The statement is being verified.

The passenger was handed over to RGI Airport Police Station. A case has been registered.

## Punjab Minister Harbhajan Singh recalls cruise trip memories while touring flooded villages, draws LoP’s ire

**Ahmedabad. (Agency)**  
Describing the visit by three Punjab ministers to flood-hit areas a “relief tour”, Leader of Opposition (LoP) Partap Singh Bajwa has slammed the trio for discussing their experiences onboard cruise ships in Sweden and Goa while making a round in the state in a motorboat.

The LoP made his comments on a video clip shared on X in which three ministers — Birender Goyal, Laljit Singh Bhullar and Harbhajan Singh — are travelling in a motorboat taking stock of the villages marooned in floor waters in Amritsar district.

In the short clip, shared by Bhullar on his Facebook page on Wednesday, Harbhajan Singh is heard commenting on a cruise he undertook onboard a ship in Sweden which had all the amenities under one roof including hotel etc. Goyal responded that Goa also has a similar experience. Bhullar was seen sitting silent in this exchange.

Responding to this clip, Bajwa criticised the ministers saying, “Flood-hit families in Punjab beg for a glass of drinking water, but @AAPPunjab Ministers @barinder\_goyal, @Laljitbhallar & @AAPHarbhajan found time to relive their ‘golden memories’ of luxury cruises in Sweden &

## Railways Approves 37 Stoppages of Different Trains over Northeast Frontier Railway

**The Sikh Times**

Maligaon, 29th August: To enhance passenger convenience and fulfil long-standing demands, Ministry of Railways has approved 37 stoppages under the Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) for various express and passenger trains at important stations. In Dima Hasao district, stoppage has been given to the Agartala – Anand Vihar Agartala Tejas Rajdhani Express at New Haflong station and Rangiya – Silchar – Rangiya Express at New Harangajao station. In addition Kokrajhar station will now have a stop for the Dibrugarh – Lalagarh – Dibrugarh Express and Senchoa Junction for Tambaram – Silghat Town – Tambaram Express and Alipurduar – Silghat Town – Alipurduar Express.



Among other key locations in Assam are Goalpara Town station, which will now have stoppages for trains such as the Kolkata – Silghat Town – Kolkata Express and the Ranchi – Kamakhya – Ranchi Express and Sorbhog station which has been approved for halts of the Delhi – Kamakhya – Delhi Express and the Tambaram – New Tinsukia – Tambaram Express. Basugaon station has also been included for the Sealdah – Sabroom – Sealdah Express, while Agomoni station has received approval for the Alipurduar – Silghat Town – Alipurduar Express, whereas in the Barak Valley region, stoppages have been approved at Kayasthagram for Agartala – Silchar – Agartala Express and Katakhal Junction for Guwahati – Silchar – Guwahati Express. Apart from Assam, approvals have also been granted for several stations in West Bengal. At Azamnagar Road, stoppages for trains including the Sealdah – Alipurduar – Sealdah Express, Sealdah – Sabroom – Sealdah Express and the Sealdah – Silchar – Sealdah Express have been confirmed. Similarly, stations such as Kumedpur, Sudhani, Taibapur and Telta have been approved for halts for the Katihar – Siliguri Town – Katihar Express and other long-distance services. Old Malda and Rautara have also been included for DEMU and express services, enhancing local and regional connectivity.

## Residents meet mayor with alternative for waste to energy plant in Kodungaiyur

**CHENNAI . (Agency)**

The federation of North Chennai residents’ welfare association, who have been opposing the waste to energy (WtE) plant in Kodungaiyur, met mayor R Priya on Thursday with an alternative suggestion for waste management in the city. The residents submitted a plan with a goal to ensure resource recovery by putting an end to waste disposal in incinerators and landfills.

With 68% of the average municipal waste produced in Chennai a day being biodegradable, they proposed to manage waste with home/apartment level composting and biogas as the first step, with 20 centralised compressed biogas plants, each having 100 tonne capacity to handle wet waste. The document was authored by

Chythenyen Devika Kulasekaran, Centre for Financial Accountability (CFA), Vishvaja Sambath, CFA and Chennai Climate Action Group (CCAG), among others.

The residents said that since the contract period of the waste to energy plant is 25 years, it makes waste reduction and minimisation goals impossible during the period. It is also an economic burden to the civic body by having one of the highest installation and operation costs of any waste management system, the residents said, along with being electricity-intensive.

“None of the existing 21 WtE plants in India, including Hyderabad and Delhi, comply with the emission parameters of Central Pollution Control Board,” the proposal said.

Chiding Mann, Bajwa urged

## Two killed as doctor driving car ‘suffers seizure’ & rams bike in Chennai

**Patiala . (Agency)**  
The Ghaggar River crossed the danger mark at Bhankarpur in Punjab’s Mohali Friday morning following heavy



rainfall in its catchment area and the opening of floodgates at Sukhna Lake, prompting authorities to put villages in Patiala and Mohali districts under high alert.

The water level at Bhankarpur, a key monitoring point in Mohali district, rose from 9 feet to 11.5 feet between 3.30 am and 7 am. Although it later stabilised at 11 feet, it remains above the danger mark of 10 feet, triggering high alert in downstream areas. “The river can absorb water beyond the

danger mark if the rise is gradual, but this spike was too sudden. The effect will be felt in the villages along Ghaggar in Ghanaur, Rajpura, and Samana



areas of Patiala in the next few hours,” Pratham Gambhir, executive engineer, Drainage Department, Patiala, told.

Following this, the Patiala district administration has issued advisories for villages along the Ghaggar in the Ghanaur, Rajpura, and Samana sub-divisions to remain cautious. Residents have been urged to stay away from the river. As per the advisory issued by Avikesh Gupta, Rajpura Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM), residents of Untsar,

Nanhery, Sanjarpur, Lachhru, Kamalpur, Rampur, Saunta, Maru, and Chamru, along with nearby areas, have been asked to remain alert. For information or assistance, people can contact the flood control room at 01762-224132.

Similarly, Dudhan Sadhan SDM Kirpalveer Singh advised residents of Bhasma, Jalakhkheri, and Raju Kheri to stay vigilant, while Patiala SDM Harjot Kaur Mavi has appealed to residents of Hadhana, Pur, and Sirkapra and surrounding villages to exercise caution. Officials said that the sudden rise was a matter of concern as it occurred within a few hours.

Control rooms opened The district administration has also urged people to report any rise in water levels immediately to the control room numbers 0175-2350550 and 2358550 and avoid spreading rumours. Punjab is already grappling with floods in over 10 districts due to heavy inflows and the release of water from Bhakra, Pong, and Ranjit Sagar dams.

With Ghaggar in spate and Sukhna floodgates opened, the situation is being closely monitored in Chandigarh, Mohali, Patiala, and Sangrur. The last major flooding of the Ghaggar was reported in 2023 in these very regions.

Goa. What a relief tour!”.

Harbhajan Singh did not respond to a phone call or text message seeking his comments.

In response to the severe flooding in Punjab, triggered by heavy monsoon rains, Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann has deployed ministers across the state to oversee rescue, evacuation, relief distribution, and on-ground operations in

dividing affected areas into sectors for efficient relief delivery. Meanwhile, Bajwa also targeted Mann on X by sharing a post where residents of the CMs native village, Satouj, were seen protesting against the police for not allowing them to create a path to drain water by digging across a road.

Chiding Mann, Bajwa urged



affected districts.

Specific assignments have been given to key ministers in flood-hit areas such as Sangrur, Mansa, Tarn Taran, Sri Goindwal Sahib, Ajnala, Kapurthala, Pathankot, and Sultanpur Lodhi. Apart from Harbhajan Singh, Goyal and Bhullar, ministers Harpal Singh Cheema, Gurmeet Singh Khuddian, Lal Chand Katarachak, and Hardeep Singh Mundian are assigned to various districts to ensure direct outreach and coordination,

him to hear the plight of flood affected people in his own village. “Maharaja Satouj, @BhagwantMann ji, now that you’ve returned after eating idli dosa from Chennai (Tamil Nadu)... you can’t even manage Punjab, it would be good if you just take care of your ancestral village itself! After watching this video, it seems like your state is sinking and the throne is shaking. Upon reaching your village Satouj, do listen to the people’s cries,” he said in the post on X.



# ‘Yellow Line crawling’: Delhi Metro riders fume as morning commute turns chaotic

**Officials said services were being gradually normalised and efforts were underway to restore smooth operations on the affected section.**

**New Delhi. (Agency)**  
The Delhi Metro’s Yellow Line was hit by major delays on Friday morning after a sudden snag disrupted peak-hour services, leaving hundreds of commuters stranded and frustrated.  
The Line, which runs from Samayapur Badli to Millennium City Centre Gurugram stations, connects major areas such as key South Delhi locations of Hauz Khas, INA, AIIMS, Central Secretariat, and Delhi University, among others.  
“Service Update: Delay in train services between Vishwavidyalaya and Central Secretariat stations. Normal service on all other lines,” the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) said in a social media post early Friday morning. The slowdown and delay in services



are due to a signalling issue, according to DMRC officials. They said services were being gradually normalised and efforts were underway to restore smooth operations on the affected section.  
Delhi Metro commuters, meanwhile, took to social media to complain about crowding on Metro stations and train delays. They also complained that services on other lines, as well as other sections of the Yellow Line, were disrupted.  
“Yellow Line metro is crawling from Badli to Vishwavidyalaya as well. We are getting late...,” a passenger posted on X.  
Another said: “What’s wrong with Yellow Line Metro

Gurgaon like this.”  
Some commuters were also dismayed at the service disruptions, considering the metro fare hike that took place this week.  
“Metro delay was on the red line, also train arrived after 15 minutes and on yellow line train is running at a speed of 5 kmph. It took 30 minutes to reach Rajeev chowk from Kashmere gate. METRO have increased the fare but services are not upgraded (sic),” said a commuter.  
After a gap of eight years, the DMRC on Monday had revised fares. The hike ranges between Re 1 and Rs 5 per passenger, depending on the Metro line and distance.  
Labelled ‘minimal’, the revision has been made because the “financial condition of the corporation was in considerable strain,” officials had said.  
Before Monday, the fare ranged between Rs 10 and Rs 60. After the increase, the Metro fare ranges from Rs 11 to Rs 64. Fares on the Airport Express Line have gone up by up to Rs 5.  
The revision also applies to Sundays and national holidays.  
The Delhi Metro, one of the Capital’s most preferred modes of public transportation, sees an average daily ridership of approximately 65 lakh passengers.

## 8-year-old girl travelling in e-rickshaw crushed to death as it overturns in Northeast Delhi

**New Delhi. (Agency)**  
An eight-year-old girl was crushed to death in Northeast Delhi’s Maujpur after the e-rickshaw she was travelling in overturned on Wednesday morning. Police were informed about the incident from Guru Tegh Bahadur Hospital, where the girl was declared brought dead by doctors. In his statement to the police, the girl’s father has alleged that the incident took

place when his wife was dropping their daughter off to school in Shahdara.  
The driver was allegedly driving rashly and took a sharp turn near Maujpur Chowk when the vehicle overturned, crushing the girl underneath it, said police. “She was immediately taken to GTB Hospital by her mother, where the doctors declared her as brought dead,” said a senior officer. The e-rickshaw driver is

## Delhi loses a food entrepreneur, culinary artist



**New Delhi. (Agency)**  
Her pioneering role in Delhi’s culinary landscape, her quiet contributions to cinema and memories of her warmth, resilience, and generosity were recollected as friends, family, and admirers gathered to celebrate the life of Utpala Mukherjee (née Hazarika) at the India Habitat Centre (IHC) on Thursday.  
Mukherjee passed away on August 19 during a visit to Assam. She was 70.  
A prayer service was held at Sai Baba Mandir in Mayur Vihar on Thursday morning, which was followed by a memorial gathering and dinner at the IHC.  
Born on June 17 1955, Mukherjee studied history at North Eastern Hill University (NEHU) and Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU). After a stint in sales and later in government service during the 1980s, she turned to food entrepreneurship. In the mid-1990s, she launched Haowin, a Chinese eatery in Mayur Vihar that quickly became popular. She went on to manage Haveli, a North Indian restaurant; Howrah Junction, a Bengali restaurant; Mosaic, a pan-Indian restaurant and Baankaahi at Assam Bhawan. She also co-established Spice Route in Windsor, UK.  
Mukherjee ran a thriving catering business from her home, preparing meals for gatherings, clients, and cultural events across the Capital. “She was one of the pioneers in bringing Assamese food to a wider audience in the city,” recalled filmmaker Utpal Borpujari.  
“Long before food pop-ups and Humayunpur’s restaurants, her menus gave many Delhiites their first taste of Assam,” he remembered.  
Her seniors and friends at JN U remembered her as “spirited” and “graceful”. Abhilasha Kumari, one of her friends from her JNU days, recalled, “She was a lovely, beautiful girl — almost angelic. Later, she became a culinary artist, bringing together dishes from across Assam and presenting them with pride.

## Delhi zoo shut after bird flu outbreak, safety measures stepped up

**The outbreak was confirmed following the deaths of painted storks and black-necked ibises, said officials**



Kumar confirmed the closure. Further details are awaited.  
Routine samples from the dead birds were sent to the ICAR-National Institute of High Security Animal Diseases in Bhopal. “The report, received on Thursday night, confirmed the presence of avian influenza,” a source in the zoo said. Officials added that the next 21 days will be critical in containing the spread of the virus. This marks the third recorded avian influenza outbreak at the Delhi Zoo, with previous incidents reported in 2016 and 2021. Sources said that all captive and migratory

birds are being closely monitored, and strict segregation protocol is in place to prevent further deaths.  
Tiger and lion cubs will also be under special observation, as previous reports indicate that tiger deaths have occurred in large zoos due to avian flu, a senior official noted.  
Recently, the zoo had witnessed five Royal Bengal tiger cub deaths out of a litter of six due to infection and weakness. The Central Zoo Authority has laid out general precautions for visitors as well as zookeeping staff in such situations. Among the specific

biosecurity measures that need to be taken include testing of captive birds, segregation of birds, and disinfection of premises. “As soon as the disease is confirmed as H5 or H7 Avian Influenza, the control actions to be initiated are the same as for domestic poultry,” the CZA has said. It added, “However, wild/endangered/precious captive birds confirmed as non-infected may be exempted from culling. Visitor entry needs to be stopped forthwith.”  
In addition to sampling of birds, environmental samples like water, soil, etc, are to be collected and sent for testing, as per the guidelines. According to CZA, “Sampling has to be repeated every 15 days for at least 4 times; if consecutive two samplings from the last positive result are found negative, then the opening of the zoo for the public may be considered by the competent authority.”

## In Delhi, Cabinet likely to hear draft note seeking PWD’s engineering cadre next week

**New Delhi. (Agency)**  
Eyeing its own engineering cadre, the Delhi Public Works Department (PWD) has submitted a draft note before the Cabinet seeking its approval, officials said on Thursday. The note is likely to be put up before the Cabinet in its Tuesday meeting.  
The Indian Express had reported in July that in a major administrative reform, the Delhi government is planning to create its engineering cadre under the PWD. At present, the Central Public Works Department (CPWD) deputed engineers to the PWD to carry out works and can also decide on the postings and transfers of the engineers.  
Officials said that at present, barring PWD, other civic agencies that manage roads – like DDA, NDMC and MCD – have their own dedicated engineering wings.  
A senior PWD official said that before the draft note was sent to the Cabinet, it was shared with Finance, Planning and Law departments for comments.  
According to an internal document, the draft note seeks to “create a new cadre in the PWD engineering wing and to initiate the process of forming the new cadre...”

“A committee of experts and retired senior officials would also be constituted to study and recommend a roadmap for operationalising the wing,” said a senior PWD official.  
Officials said the draft note also seeks to “authorise PWD to take any consequential and necessary steps to achieve the objective of creating of the new cadre in a phase wise manner with the approval of the competent authority.”  
Officials said that once the Cabinet approves the draft note, the PWD will initiate the recruitment process, ensuring that each level – from junior to chief engineer – is staffed by officers exclusively under Delhi PWD’s control.  
“This is a turning point not just for Delhi PWD, but for the entire city. When engineers are accountable only to the people of Delhi, their performance and commitment automatically rise. We are building a stronger, cleaner, and faster Delhi, and we need our own team to do it,” PWD Minister Parvesh Sahib Singh had said in July.  
According to officials, till now, PWD has relied upon engineers, executive engineers, superintending engineers, and junior engineers deputed from the CPWD.

## Delhi residents could live 8.2 years longer if air pollution curbed: Chicago University Report

**New Delhi. (Agency)**  
Residents of Delhi could live 8.2 years longer on average if particulate concentrations were reduced to meet the World Health Organization’s (WHO) guideline, according to a report.  
The Air Quality Life Index, developed by the University of Chicago, states that the AQLI is a pollution index that converts particulate matter levels into “perhaps the most important metric that exists, namely, their impact on life expectancy.”  
According to the report, India is among the most polluted countries in the world, and ranks second out of 252 countries, “potentially losing a total of 4.9B years”.  
It stated that air pollution is the number one cause of death in the country. “Particulate air pollution (PM2.5) shortens the average life expectancy by 3.5 years in India, relative to what it would be if the World Health Organisation (WHO) guideline of 5µg/m³ were met”.  
“In India’s capital, the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi, an average resident could live 8.2 years longer if particulate concentrations were brought down to meet the WHO guideline. This is the highest potential gain in life expectancy

across all regions globally,” the report said.  
“The biggest increase in particulate pollution occurred in NCT of Delhi, with pollution concentrations increasing by



**According to the Air Quality Life Index, India is among the most polluted countries in the world, and ranks second out of 252 countries, “potentially losing a total of 4.9B years”.**

56.90 percent from 1998 – 2023,” it added. The report noted that in 2023, particulate concentration in India stood at 41 µg/m³, which is more than eight times the WHO guideline, and slightly higher than the country’s national ambient PM2.5 standard of 40 µg/m³.

## Delhi Police bust sex racket, rescue 4 women, 1 minor girl from ‘brothel’



**New Delhi. (Agency)**  
The Delhi Police on Thursday night busted a sex racket and rescued four women and a minor girl during a raid inside a house in the outer North Delhi’s Swaroop Nagar.  
The raid was conducted based on a tip-off from an NGO that women and girls are being forced into sex work at the alleged brothel run by individuals identified as Devesh Yadav, Arjun Kumar, Sajid, Akhilesh, and Rajnish — who were present at the house. Sajid, Akhilesh, and Rajnish were identified as “customers”, according to an officer.  
During questioning, three women allegedly said that they had been hired by the accused to provide sexual services.  
The five rescued victims include a 35-year-old woman from Samaypur Badli, a 50-year-old from Swaroop Nagar, a 25-year-old from Shahbad Dairy, a 52-year-old woman,

## ‘Unauthorised absence’ during probation: Services of JNU faculty member terminated

**New Delhi. (Agency)**  
A faculty member at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) has been terminated for what the university administration described as “unauthorised absence” during his probation period. The decision taken by the university’s Executive Council on August 26 has drawn sharp criticism from the JNU Teachers’ Association (JNUTA), which called the termination “illegal and barbaric”.  
Rohan Vekatesh Halapeti Choudhari, an assistant professor on probation at the Centre for Political Studies, had joined JNU last April. He allegedly officially availed two days of personal leave on May 16 and 17, last year.  
However, he only returned to work on July 8, after 51 days, which also included vacations that could be availed by JNU faculty members. During this period, he had only informed the JNU chairperson over the phone about extending his leave.  
In an email written on July 5, 2024, Choudhari allegedly admitted to misreading the academic calendar and cited a family emergency for his prolonged absence. “It was a serious oversight compounded by my limited familiarity with the university’s procedures,” he wrote, adding that he was taking steps to prevent such errors. He also submitted medical documents relating to the illnesses of his son and father-in-law, but the same were not accepted by JNU authorities.  
On January 17, this year, Choudhari sought to adjust a part of his 51-day leave as Earned Leave. The JNU administration, however, directed that a showcase notice be issued to him. The notice was formally sent on August 1, and Choudhari’s reply was deemed unsatisfactory.  
After granting Choudhari a personal hearing on August 20, the committee concluded that he had violated leave and the Central Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, and recommended disciplinary action against him.  
JNUTA, meanwhile, has strongly opposed the decision, arguing that “no case ever existed for any kind of disciplinary action... let alone such a severe one as termination”.  
It alleged the move was driven by “the settling of a personal score” and described the process as “pockmarked with illegality after illegality, and outright falsities”.



# Noah Lyles and Julien Alfred shine with dominant wins at the Diamond League Final in Zurich

**New Delhi. (Agency)**  
Olympic champions Noah Lyles and Julien Alfred showcased their credentials with commanding victories at the Diamond League Final in



Zurich on Thursday, just two weeks before the World Championships in Tokyo. Lyles, the American sprint star, became the first track athlete to capture six Diamond League Final titles after edging

Botswana's Letsile Tebogo in a dramatic 200m showdown. The three-time world champion trailed off the bend but powered home to stop the clock at 19.74 seconds, a slender 0.02

gold, suggested the American has taken a more measured approach since that defeat. "You have to let the legs do the talking," Tebogo said. "I think now Lyles is humble. He wins

more than a month. The Olympic champion showed no sign of rust, finishing clear of Jamaica's Tia Clayton (10.84) and Britain's Dina Asher-Smith (10.94)."I'm moving past the

collection." Elsewhere, Germany's Julian Weber produced two throws in excess of 91 metres to win the men's javelin, finishing more than six metres clear of Olympic and world champion Neeraj Chopra.American Christian Coleman took the men's 100m in 9.97, pipping South Africa's Akani Simbine (9.98) and Jamaica's Ackeem Blake (9.99). "This victory feels amazing. Let's keep winning," Coleman said, with his sights set on Tokyo. Brittany Brown of the United States claimed the women's 200m in a season's best 22.13, with Asher-Smith (22.18) second and Marie-Jose Ta Lou-Smith (22.31) third. Norwegian Karsten Warholm delivered a meet record of 46.70 in the men's 400m hurdles, while Dutch star Femke Bol lowered the Zurich mark to 52.18 in the women's event.Dutch prospect Niels Laros produced a national record of 3:29.20 to win the men's 1500m, while Olympic champion Emmanuel Wanyonyi of Kenya edged Britain's Max Burgin and Canada's Marco Arop to secure the men's 800m.Athletes reached Zurich after competing in 14 Diamond League meetings, with the final winners receiving a diamond-shaped trophy and a \$50,000 prize.

## Sindhu reveals mantra for World Championships after stunning win: Not much to prove

**New Delhi. (Agency)**  
Two-time Olympic medalist P.V. Sindhu said she had nothing left to prove after producing one of her finest performances of the year, stunning world number two Wang Zhi Yi of China to storm into the quarter-finals of the World Championships on Thursday.The 2019 world champion admitted she had entered the tournament with a renewed sense of focus following a difficult spell marked by injuries and inconsistent results and revealed the mantra that helped her rediscover her rhythm on the big stage."There's not much to prove. I have already proved myself, but at the end of the day, last year and the beginning of this year were not great for me. There were lots of ups and downs, and injuries made it harder. I wanted to win, but things didn't go the way I planned. It wasn't just about the

World Championships, but also the training I had put in. After those early-round exits, my coach and I sat down and discussed what was going wrong. We started focusing and working on those areas," Sindhu said after her 21-19, 21-15 triumph that lasted 48 minutes.For Sindhu, the key lay in trusting her preparation and keeping her mind uncluttered. "My coach has always told me one thing - just play your game and give your best, irrespective of the result. That's what he keeps reminding me. Going into this World Championships, I had the same mindset: I just wanted to give my best, and that's all that really mattered to me," she said.While acknowledging Wang's blistering pace and deceptive half-smashes, the Indian was prepared for long rallies and tactical variations. "I had prepared well, but I have to admit she was better today. It



was important to stay sharp because she can pull off surprising shots at any time." Ranked 15th in the world, Sindhu made a bright start in the opening game, racing to an 11-6 lead at the mid-game interval with a flurry of sharp smashes and neat winners at the net. Though Wang fought back to level at 19-19, the Indian held her nerve to close out the game before maintaining her dominance in the second. A 57-shot rally briefly tested her resolve, but Sindhu regained

control with decisive attacking play to seal the match. The win also extended her strong record against Chinese shuttlers at the Worlds, having previously defeated Wang Yihan, Wang Shixian, Li Xuerui, Sun Yu and Chen Yufei in earlier editions. Later in the day, India's top doubles pairing of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty staged a superb fightback to beat China's Liang Wei Kang and Wang Chang 19-21, 21-15, 21-17, registering their first win against the pair after four successive defeats. Sindhu, meanwhile, will now face world number nine Putri Kusuma Wardani of Indonesia in the quarter-finals, where victory would secure her a record-equaling sixth World Championships medal. The Indonesian had beaten her in straight games at the Sudirman Cup earlier this year, though the Indian prevailed in their Asian Games clash in 2022.

## Messi's emotional farewell: Argentina star to play last home World Cup qualifier

**BUENOS AIRES, Argentina. (Agency)**  
: Lionel Messi has not yet announced when he plans to retire, but he knows that next week's match against Venezuela could be his last one playing at home in a World Cup qualifier with Argentina's national team. "It's going to be a very, very special match for me because it's the last qualifying match," the 38-year-old Messi said Wednesday night after Inter Miami progressed to the Leagues Cup final by beating Orlando City. Argentina, with a spot already secured in next year's World Cup, will host Venezuela next Thursday at the



Monumental Stadium in Buenos Aires for the penultimate round of South American qualifiers. Its last match will be at Ecuador on Sept. 9.Messi has hinted that he will retire from the national team after next year's World Cup, where Argentina is going to defend the

title they won in Qatar 2022.The qualifiers for the 2030 World Cup will begin in 2027, when the soccer star will be 40 years old."I don't know if there will be friendlies or more matches after (Venezuela), but it is a very special match, so my family will be there with me: my wife, my children, my parents, my siblings," Messi said. "We're going to live it like that. I don't know what will happen next."Following Messi's statements, CONMEBOL, South American soccer's governing body, wrote on social media that "the last dance is coming," with a picture of Messi in an Argentina shirt.

## US Open: Tsitsipas' father warned for coaching from sidelines during 2nd round clash



**New Delhi. (Agency)**  
Stefanos Tsitsipas' father, Apostolos Tsitsipas, was warned for coaching his son from the sidelines during his second-round fixture of the US Open 2025 against Daniel Altmaier. Tsitsipas got knocked out of the tournament after losing to Altmaier in a five-set clash.The 26th seed looked well on course to emerge victorious in the fixture, which lasted over four hours, as he won back-to-back second and third sets.

However, Altmaier scripted a remarkable comeback by winning the last two sets to seal the match 7-6(5), 1-6, 4-6, 6-3, 7-5.During the intense on-court battle, a controversial moment grabbed attention as Apostolos Tsitsipas was warned for coaching Stefanos from the sidelines. Apostolos was shouting out verbal instructions to his son from the opposite end of the court, which, as per the guidelines, is an offence. It also marked the first warning registered on court, since coaching was

## Asia Cup 2025: India likely to play without jersey sponsor in continental tournament, say sources

**New Delhi. (Agency)**  
India are likely to play without any jersey sponsor during the Asia Cup 2025, sources have confirmed to India Today. The BCCI is planning to rope in a sponsor till the ODI World Cup 2027 and not just the continental tournament, which is expected to take a longer time and the Asia Cup is set to begin from September 9.After the recently passed Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act, Dream 11 ended its association with the BCCI as the Indian cricket team's title sponsor. A BCCI emergency Apex council meeting was held on Thursday, August 28, chaired by Rajeev Shukla as interim president of BCCI.

During the meeting, there were discussions about finding a new sponsor, and the BCCI is still hopeful of completing the task. But since there is not enough time to advertise and complete the process, it is going to be tough for them to find one just before the Asia Cup.Earlier, BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia confirmed that the deal with Dream11 has ended and the board is putting the process in motion to get new title sponsor for various national teams.Our stand is very clear. With government regulations in place, the BCCI cannot continue its sponsorship relationship with Dream11 or

any such other gaming company. Under the new restrictions, there is no scope and we are facing a roadblock



with Dream11," Saikia told PTI. Dream11 and My11Circle together contribute approximately Rs 1,000 crore to the BCCI through title sponsorships of the Indian cricket team and the Indian Premier League. Dream11, in particular, signed a contract worth USD 44 million (Rs 358 crore) for the 2023-2026 cycle as Team India's title sponsor. However, the passage of the government bill-which clearly states that "no person shall offer any, aid, abet, induce, indulge, engage in offering online money gaming services nor shall involve in any advertisement which directly or indirectly promotes any person to play any online money game"-has dealt a major blow to the revenue streams of all major fantasy sports companies in India.

## Duleep Trophy: Shami fails to impress on first class return, leaks 100 runs in 23 overs

**New Delhi. (Agency)**  
India fast bowler Mohammed Shami had a forgettable return to first class cricket as he bowled an expensive spell in the quarterfinal of the Duleep Trophy 2025. Making his return to red-ball cricket after over nine months, Shami could only manage one wicket, playing for East Zone against North Zone. The right-arm speedster gave away 100 runs in 23 overs, leaking runs at an economy of 4.34 and dismissed Sahil Lotra. Apart from him, Manishi starred with the ball for the East Zone, scalping six wickets for 111 runs in 22.2 overs, while Siraj Sindhu Jaswal (2/44) also picked two wickets.Shami last played red-ball cricket during the previous Ranji Trophy, where he scalped seven wickets from two innings. His last appearance in Tests came during the World Test Championship (WTC)



final 2023. The 34-year-old was recently not picked for the five-match Test series against England due to fitness issues.Recently, Shami opened up on his snub from Tests and said that he will continue to work hard to make his way back into the side. "If someone has a problem, tell me. Do their lives somehow improve if I retire? Whose life have I become a rock in that you want me to retire?. The day I get bored, I will leave. You don't pick me, but I will keep working hard. You don't pick

me internationally, I will play domestically. I will keep playing somewhere or the other. Decisions about retirement come when you start feeling bored." That's not the case for me now," Shami said in an interview with News24. Shami last played for India in the ICC Champions Trophy 2025 and played a key role in their victorious campaign. He finished as the joint second-highest wicket-taker of the tournament with nine wickets from five matches.

## Chopra finishes second in Diamond League Finals, Weber wins maiden

**ZURICH . (Agency)**  
Two-time Olympic medallist javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra finished runner-up in the Diamond League Finals for the third time in a row as Julian Weber of Germany lifted his maiden trophy with two 90m-plus throws in a commanding show here on Thursday.Chopra was lying third till the fifth round following his opening throw of 84.35m before his final effort of 85.01m took him to the second spot, overtaking 2012 London Olympics gold winner Keshorn Walcott of Trinidad and Tobago who ended third with 84.95m.



Weber achieved a season world leading throw of 91.57m, his personal best, in his second attempt. He began with 91.37m effort, and after that it was a one-man show in the seven-

man field.None of Weber's rivals could even come near his mark, as his best effort of the day was over 6m more than that of Chopra.The German had a foul, 83.66m, 86.45m and

88.66m after his second throw.Clearly, Chopra was not at his best in the season's Diamond League grand finale. He had three legal throws out of the six attempts.Known for his consistency in producing 88m-plus throws, it was a rare instance of the 27-year-old Indian star just being able to touch the 85m mark.He was hoping to regain the trophy he had won in 2022, but ended up finishing second for the third time after 2023 and 2024.

Defending champion Anderson Peters of Grenada was fourth with 82.06m.

legalised. However, it wasn't the only contentious moment witnessed in the match, as after losing the fixture, Tsitsipas was seen exchanging words with Altmaier as the two players shook hands. The Greek player seemed upset with Altmaier for serving underarm during the fourth set and was heard pointing out the same. **US Open 2025 Updates** The confrontation didn't go down well with the packed crowd at the Grandstand court

as they booed Tsitsipas on his way out of the playing arena. Earlier, Altmaier was in no mood to surrender in front of Tsitsipas despite facing a match point in the fourth and fifth sets. The 26-year-old from Germany managed to fight off break points in four straight service games in the final set. Meanwhile, Altmaier will next lock horns with Alex de Minaur in round 3 clash, who progressed after losing against Shintaro Mochizuki in straight sets.



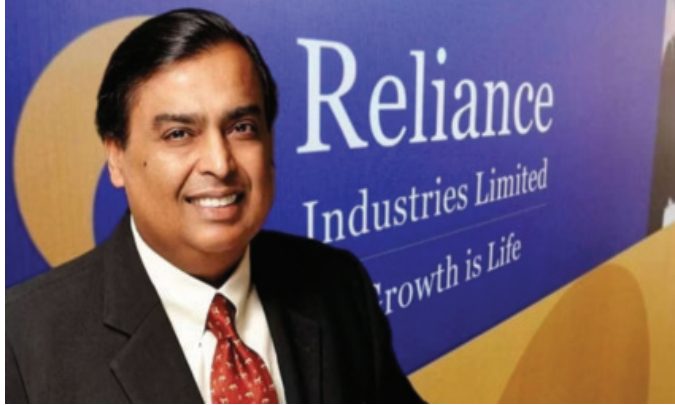
# Reliance AGM 2025: Will Mukesh Ambani announce Jio IPO

**Kolkata. (Agency)**  
Dalal Street will be keenly watching as billionaire Mukesh Ambani addresses shareholders at Reliance Industries’ (RIL) 48th Annual General Meeting (AGM).The main talking point will be information about the much-awaited initial public offerings (IPOs) of Jio Platforms and Reliance Retail finally get a timeline.Back in 2019, Ambani had told shareholders that Reliance would list both its telecom and retail arms within five years. Since then, no firm update has been shared, leaving investors waiting for clarity. The AGM has historically been a stage for big announcements, making today’s meeting one of the most closely tracked corporate events of the year."Market is quite attentive and all the analysts backing Reliance Industries would be taking chairman's speech as paramount importance. The stock has been in a consolidation phase and the main news is value unlocking. What we are seeing is the value unlocking from Jio and retail, these are the big announcements for Reliance Industries," said Kranthi Bathini, Equity Strategist at WealthMills Securities.

"The debt has been increased in the balance sheet in the recent past. So going ahead, how the capex cycle is going to

be and also the new age gigafactory, the growth trajectory for these new age businesses and alternative fuel, green energy, so these are the segments market is going to be looking forward to Reliance Industries AGM," he added.Bank of America Securities wrote in a note: “As the majority of strategic business announcements are made during AGM, many investors are expecting incremental updates on potential IPO timelines from AGM.”WHY JIO IPO IS IN LIMELIGHTFor years, Reliance’s telecom arm Jio Platforms has been a key growth driver. Citi values Jio at more than \$120 billion (Rs 10.4 lakh crore). Any IPO could be among the largest in India’s history.Market regulator Sebi has also recently proposed that companies with a post-IPO market value above Rs 5 lakh crore need to sell only 2.5% of their equity, down from the earlier 5%. Analysts say this could change the way large IPOs are structured.

A 5% public offer would amount to \$6 billion+ of share supply, which is fairly large for the Indian market to absorb, especially as 35% is reserved for retail investors,” Citi analysts Saurabh Handa and Prerna Goenka wrote. “A 2.5% public offer for Jio would



amount to \$3 billion+ of share supply, which we believe not only reduces the supply overhang at the time of the IPO but could also limit hold-company discount concerns for RIL.

“RIL shares have gained about 15% in 2025 so far, beating the Nifty index. Ahead of today’s AGM, shares ended Friday’s session 1% lower at Rs 1,409.3 on the BSE.Sachin Salgaonkar of BofA Securities said investor expectations were modest this year: “This year till date, basis our investor interactions & stock performance, we think that the investor expectations are modest, leaving some room to positively surprise.”He also pointed out that in the past four years, markets were often disappointed after the AGM, which led to a fall in share prices. Last year, the stock rose

2.9% before the AGM but fell 4.6% in the 10 days after.

**BROKERAGE VIEW**  
JPMorgan: Valuations still reasonableJPMorgan has an ‘Overweight’ rating on RIL. The brokerage said that even after a 17% rise in the stock so far in 2025, valuations remain “reasonable” compared to peers. It also noted that Reliance’s holding company discount compared with Bharti Airtel and DMart is still high at 25–30%.“Despite the headline increase in multiples, RIL appears relatively inexpensive to us,” JPMorgan said, pointing to stronger oil-to-chemicals margins, potential tariff hikes in telecom, and retail growth as possible triggers.

Jefferies: Focus on Jio and RetailJefferies has a ‘Buy’ rating on Reliance with a target price of Rs 1,670. It said Reliance’s annual report

showed improvements in free cash flow (FCF), lower year-on-year spending in Jio and Retail, and a rise in capitalised costs.“Annual Report shows rise in capitalized costs in Jio and Retail, flat consol capex with Jio and Retail lower y/y, FCF improvement driven by Jio and marginal rise in net debt,” the note said.Jefferies also pointed out that intangibles and capital work in progress now make up 49% of Retail’s fixed assets, up 440 basis points from last year. For Jio, the brokerage highlighted stronger cash flows and higher third-party revenues from Jio Platforms Ltd (JPL).

Key things to watch for at AGM 2025

Jio and Retail IPO timelines

The biggest question for shareholders is whether Mukesh Ambani will announce concrete timelines for the IPOs of Jio Platforms and Reliance Retail. Both businesses have scaled rapidly, and their listing is among the most awaited events in Indian markets.Green energy plans

Reliance has been investing in building an end-to-end clean energy ecosystem, including solar modules, batteries, and green hydrogen. Investors are looking for updates on commissioning dates of its giga-factories and new technologies such as perovskite solar cells.

# Sanjeev Sanyal hints at major overhaul in EPFO with 3.0 rollout

**MUMBAI . (Agency)**  
Economist Sanjeev Sanyal, member of the Prime Minister’s Economic Advisory Council, has hinted at major changes coming to the Employees’ Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO).

Writing on X, he said, “A big effort to de-clog EPFO is under way. No easy task. Look forward to feedback once this is launched and system stabilises.” His words point to the much-awaited EPFO 3.0 rollout, which is expected this year.A STEP TOWARDS FASTER AND EASIER ACCESSThe upgraded digital platform, EPFO 3.0, is being designed to make provident fund services quicker, more transparent, and easier for millions of members across India.The launch was originally scheduled for June 2025, but ongoing technical tests have delayed the rollout. While no fresh date has been announced, officials say it is on the way soon.

W I T H D R A W A L S THROUGH ATMS AND UPI

One of the biggest talking points around EPFO 3.0 is that members will be able to withdraw money directly from ATMs by linking their Aadhaar and bank accounts to their Universal Account Number (UAN).In addition, withdrawals

will also be possible through UPI. This is expected to make emergency access to funds simpler and reduce the need for lengthy paperwork.

**CORRECTIONS AND CLAIMS MADE SIMPLER**  
The new system promises to



remove much of the red tape that EPFO members face today. Updates or corrections will be possible online using OTP verification, doing away with office visits and long queues.Tracking the status of claims will also become easier under the upgraded system.

**QUICKER DEATH CLAIM SETTLEMENTS**  
Another important change is in the settlement of death claims. Under EPFO 3.0, nominees will not need to produce a guardian certificate in the case of minors.This is meant to help families of deceased members access financial support faster and with less hassle.

# Rupee under pressure amid tariff jitters; markets show tentative recovery

**New Delhi. (Agency)**  
CHENNAI: The Indian rupee remains under pressure against the US dollar, slipping again on the second day. The currency was trading around 87.76–87.80 per dollar in early deals on Friday. On Thursday, the rupee briefly snapped its five-day losing streak, closing at 87.62 per dollar, helped by a softer greenback and speculation of Reserve Bank of India (RBI) intervention.Persistent foreign outflows and importer demand weighed on the currency, mirroring broader weakness in Asian peers. In the past two trading sessions alone, FIIs have sold more than \$1 billion worth of equities.Traders expect the RBI to act as a stabilizing force and prevent sharp depreciation beyond the 88 mark. Technical indicators suggest near-term support for the rupee at 87.40–87.50, with



resistance at 88.25.

While the equity markets staged a mild recovery on Friday after sharp losses earlier in the week triggered by the US decision to impose steep new tariffs on Indian exports. The Sensex gained over 117 points at 80197 intraday , supported by heavyweight stocks such as HDFC Bank, ITC and Reliance Industries, while the Nifty closed above the 24,500 mark.

This rebound follows Thursday’s sell-off when

investor wealth worth nearly ₹4 lakh crore was wiped out, with fears that US tariffs could hurt key export sectors like textiles, gems, leather and shrimp. Nearly 55% of India’s annual merchandise exports to the US, worth about \$87 billion, are expected to face the new 50% tariff wall.

Analysts say that while Friday’s gains reflect bargain-hunting and some stability, the mood remains cautious. The government has indicated it will support exporters through diversification strategies, trade talks and possible financial assistance. However, foreign institutional investors (FIIs) have continued to pull out funds, adding to the market’s vulnerability.

**Key Drivers at Play**  
US tariffs have raised risk levels, pressuring both stocks and the rupee. Foreign portfolio outflows are weakening

domestic markets and currency stability.RBI support is helping contain volatility, though traders remain cautious.

Global dollar weakness is providing some relief as investors expect U.S. rate cuts.

Government measures to protect exporters could improve medium-term sentiment.

According to analysts the markets may remain volatile in the near term. Heavyweight stocks are offering support, but tariff-related uncertainty and global cues will continue to influence trends.

The rupee is likely to trade in a narrow band between 87.5 and 88 per dollar, with RBI intervention acting as a buffer.They believe that investors will closely watch India’s upcoming GDP numbers, US inflation data and any progress in trade talks with Washington for further direction.

**New Delhi. (Agency)**  
The Indian rupee hit a record low against the US dollar on Friday, dropping to 87.9650, weighed down by investor jitters over steep US tariffs on Indian goods. Washington recently imposed an additional 25% tariff, doubling India’s total duties to 50%, triggering a sharp market reaction.

But the currency story doesn’t end there. Against the offshore Chinese yuan, the rupee fell even further, touching 12.3307, marking a 1.2% decline for the week and 1.6% for the month. Over the past four months, the rupee has slumped nearly 6% versus the yuan.Economists say the contrasting US tariff treatment for India and China is behind the move. While Indian exports face a punishing 50% duty, Chinese goods are subject to a lower 30% tariff, with higher duties still paused. “The rupee’s



drop versus the yuan reflects the tariff gap, which directly affects sectors competing with China in US markets such as textiles, engineering goods, and chemicals,” Gaura Sen Gupta, economist at IDFC FIRST Bank, told news agency Reuters.A weaker rupee against the yuan could offer a partial cushion for exporters hit by US tariffs, making Indian products relatively cheaper compared to Chinese rivals. It could also help narrow India’s trade deficit with China.FX strategist Dhiraj

Nim of ANZ Bank told the news agency that the RBI is likely to welcome the rupee’s decline against the yuan since it doesn’t involve a significant depreciation against the dollar. “The RBI should anyway be welcoming a weaker rupee per se that it is relative to the yuan, all the better,” he said.While the rupee has lost over 1% against the yuan this week, it has weakened only 0.3% versus the dollar, staying above the psychologically key 88 per dollar level.

# Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman assures exporters of full support amid US tariff shock



**MUMBAI. (Agency)**  
Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday assured a delegation of the Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) that the government will stand firmly behind exporters reeling under steep US tariffs, pledging “comprehensive support” to safeguard their interests and protect jobs.Meeting the delegation led by FIEO president S C Ralhan, Sitharaman said the government is committed to addressing the concerns of the exporting community and will explore “every possible avenue” to mitigate the adverse impact of Washington’s recent tariff escalation on Indian

**Sitharaman said the government will explore “every possible avenue” to mitigate the adverse impact of Washington’s recent tariff escalation on Indian goods.**

goods.“The government stands shoulder-to-shoulder with exporters in this hour. Protecting workers’ livelihoods

is equally important, and industry leaders must reassure employees of job continuity even amidst global headwinds,” the Finance Minister told the delegation, according to an official release.Ralhan, along with FIEO vice-president Ravikant Kapur, director general & CEO Ajay Sahai, Farida Group director Israr Ahmed, and EEPCC chairman Pankaj Chadha, briefed Sitharaman on the immediate concerns of exporters, including loss of competitiveness, market access hurdles and the risk to employment generation.

The FIEO president said the minister’s reassurance had boosted confidence among exporters. “Her commitment that the government will stand shoulder-to-shoulder with exporters demonstrates the priority being accorded to safeguarding India’s trade interests and employment,” Ralhan said.

FIEO said it will work closely with the government to diversify export markets and strengthen India’s position in global trade, even as exporters brace for the impact of the 50% tariff on Indian goods imposed by the US earlier this week.

# Cash-rich but time-poor Why real wealth is about balance, explains CA

**New Delhi. (Agency)**  
In a world that often glorifies fat paycheques, luxury lifestyles and big job titles, CA Abhishek Walia believes this view is incomplete. For him, the true measure of wealth is not how much money you earn, but how much time you truly control.

He wrote on LinkedIn, “We celebrate people who are cash-rich. Big salaries. Bigger titles. Fancy lifestyles. But here’s the truth: a person earning Rs 2 lakh a month but working 16-hour days isn’t wealthier than someone earning Rs 1 lakh a month with evenings free to spend with family.

”He explains that while money can buy material



comforts, time brings something far more important, i.e., life itself. “Money buys things.

Time buys life,” he noted, highlighting how many people end up trading away precious hours in pursuit of higher incomes.Walia also pointed out

the hidden cost of being what he calls “cash-rich but time-poor.” He said, “When you’re cash-rich but time-poor, every purchase is just compensation. New phones to escape, vacations to recover, gadgets to distract.” In contrast, when people have time on their side,

even smaller earnings feel abundant, as they are spent on meaningful experiences.For him, true wealth is measured not by a salary slip but by how present one is in life. “True wealth isn’t about how much money you make. It’s about how much time you control. Because at the end, nobody remembers your salary slip. They remember whether you showed up,” Walia said.His words strike a chord in today’s fast-paced world, where long working hours and constant stress often leave little room for family, hobbies, or rest. Walia’s message is a reminder that while money is important, time is priceless, and finding the right balance is the real success.

# Sensex, Nifty open higher after two-day sell-off amid US tariff jitters

**New Delhi. (Agency)**  
Benchmark indices opened on a positive note on Friday, offering some relief to Dalal Street after two straight sessions of heavy losses triggered by U.S. tariffsAt 9:22 am, the S&P BSE Sensex rose 112 points to 80,193.25, while the NSE Nifty50 gained 45 points to 24,545.90. Broader markets also edged higher as volatility eased slightly.The uptick comes after a sharp 1,500-point Sensex

plunge over the last two sessions. The pressure was largely driven by concerns over U.S. President Donald Trump’s decision to impose an additional 25% tariff on Indian goods over Russian oil purchases—on top of an earlier 25% duty. Despite the punitive measures, Indian refiners are expected to increase Russian oil imports in September, dealers said.For August, foreign investors offloaded \$3.3 billion worth of

Indian shares, the biggest monthly outflow since February, dragging the Sensex down 1.4% and the Nifty 1.1% so far this month.Dr. VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services, noted that the recent selling came despite strong DII buying of 6,920 crore on Thursday, which outweighed FII selling of Rs 3,856 crore.“The negative sentiment triggered by the 50% Trump

tariff and high valuations in India has encouraged FIIs to build short positions,” he said, adding that September has historically seen sharp market moves.

“A quick decision on tariff policy could trigger a reversal and short covering. Longer term, India’s policy measures—fiscal stimulus through the Budget, monetary easing, and the upcoming GST rationalisation—should .



# Divya Khosla

## Spotted Performing Aarti On Ganesh Chaturthi 2025

One of the largest festivals of India, Ganeshotsav began on August 27. People across the country welcomed Ganapati Bappa, worshipped as the remover of obstacles and the god of wisdom, prosperity and good fortune. Bollywood actors also joined the celebration with joy and devotion. Among them was actress Divya Khosla, who performed puja rituals, chanted mantras and sang the Ganpati Aarti in front of Lord Ganesha. A video of the actress' Ganesh Chaturthi celebration has gone viral, offering fans a glimpse of her deeply devotional participation in the puja.

### Divya Khosla Sings Ganpati Aarti

During the celebration, Divya was seen singing the traditional Ganpati Aarti with sincerity and poise, while the priest performed the ritual. Her calm expressions and heartfelt reverence instantly caught the attention of the devotees and her fans. In the viral glimpses, Divya is dressed in a bright pink ethnic outfit adorned with delicate embroidery, radiating festive charm. She kept her look subtle yet graceful with minimal makeup, open hair and a small bindi on her forehead. With folded palms and eyes reflecting devotion, the actress embodied the spirit of Ganesh Chaturthi in its truest form. Fans showered love on her pictures and



videos as she got papped during the aarti.

### Divya Khosla's Upcoming Projects

Apart from the celebrations, Divya Khosla has an exciting year ahead with two major films on the horizon, Ek Chatur Naar and Jatadhara. Both films belong to two entirely different genres, further showcasing her versatility as an actress. In Ek Chatur Naar, she will be seen opposite Neil Nitin Mukesh. Directed by Umesh Shukla, the film promises an entertaining mix of suspense, comedy, and clever mind games. The recently released trailer has already created significant buzz for its suspense-driven narrative. The film also features a strong supporting cast including Chhaya Kadam, Sushant Singh, Rajnesh Duggal, Zakir Hussain, Yashpal Sharma, Heli Daruwala, Rose Sardana and Geeta Agarwal Sharma. Produced by Umesh Shukla, Ashish Wagh, and Zeeshan Ahmad under Merry Go Round Studios with T-Series presenting the project, Ek Chatur Naar is slated for a theatrical release on September 12.

# Mrunal Thakur

## Joins Rakul Preet, Jackky Bhagnani For Ganesh Chaturthi

The festive spirit of Ganesh Chaturthi lit up the city as several Bollywood celebrities gathered to celebrate the auspicious occasion. Actress Mrunal Thakur shared glimpses of the celebrations on social media, where she was seen in the company of actors Rakul Preet Singh, Jackky Bhagnani, Pragya Jaiswal, and others in the joyous festivities. In the Instagram picture, the



stars were dressed in colourful traditional attire, posing with folded hands against a beautifully adorned backdrop. The atmosphere reflected joy, devotion, and togetherness as the group welcomed Bappa with prayers and devotion. Rakul Preet Singh and Jackky Bhagnani hosted a star-studded Ganesh Chaturthi celebration at their home on Wednesday. The couple welcomed Lord Ganesha and their industry friends for a day of festivities.

### Mrunal Looked Ethereal

After her own Ganesh puja, Mrunal visited Rakul Preet Singh and Jackky Bhagnani's residence for the festivities. The actor looked ethereal in a custom Mayyur Girotra outfit as she posed for the paparazzi at the celebrations. The ensemble featured a short, silver zardozi-embroidered kurta paired with matching ankle-length pants and a chikankari dupatta. The highlight of her traditional look was a Maharashtrian-style nath (nose ring).

### Bappa's Home, Nothing Feels More Special Than This

Mrunal also shared some candid moments from the Ganesh Chaturthi festivities at her home. She welcomed Bappa at her home and said, "Nothing feels more special than this." She posted an array of photos and videos from the celebrations on Instagram. "Bappa's homeee, nothing feels more special than this. Every year when Bappa comes home, it feels like he brings a little extra light and peace with him. And um, sooo many modaks incoming hehe," the caption read. In one video, she welcomes Ganpati home, while another shows her posing with modaks. A third photograph depicted the prasad she consumed during the bhog time, while another featured her with friends and family.



## Sakshi Shivdasani, Anusha Dandekar Feud Explained: 'Predatory' Bullying, Slap Threats To Animal Abuse



Anusha Dandekar and Sakshi Shivdasani's feud has caught momentum after the actress responded to the influencer's claims. Anusha maintains that Sakshi has been lying about being mistreated on the show. Meanwhile, Sakshi holds her ground and claims that she has shared her experience with honesty. But what is this feud about? In 2019, Sakshi Shivdasani, then 20, participated in MTV Supermodel of the Year. She was eliminated from the show, and during her stint, her casual and calm persona made her stand out in the crowd. Years later, Sakshi opened up about her experience on the show and claimed that the producers and some judges had been rude towards her and the other contestants. More recently, Sakshi opened up about the illtreatment on her podcast, Moment of Silence. Sakshi said that the contestants were only allowed to sleep for four hours, and their food was portioned. She recalled how her words were twisted against her and how the judges hurled insults at the contestants. **Sakshi Claims Anusha Bullied Her On MTV Show** The judges on the show were Milind Soman, Malaika Arora, Ujjwala Raut, Anusha Dandekar and Masaba Gupta. Sakshi noted that her main grouse was with Anusha and Milind. She said that while Ujjwala and Masaba were occasionally rude, Malaika spoke to them properly. Sakshi said that there was a "power dynamic" which was made evident. Sakshi said, hinting at Anusha, "Women who were 10-15 years older than me coming and saying these things, I thought it was just bully behaviour... A certain host would come up to me off camera and make snide comments about my life..." She noted how there was no regard for the contestants' safety on set and said, "There was this task where we had to jump from one container to another. Again, you're harnessed, but some guy is manually controlling it. I don't trust people with my life like that. Anusha, without getting a go-ahead, was like, 'Jump off.' No one was holding it... she never coordinated with anyone."

## Bigg Boss 19: Not Awez Darbar, This Contestant Has Gauahar Khan's Support



The brand-new season of Bigg Boss 19, hosted by superstar Salman Khan, has already started delivering high-voltage drama, arguments and emotional confrontations. Streaming on JioHotstar and airing on Colors TV, the show has kept fans hooked from the very beginning. This season follows the theme Gharwalon Ki Sarkar, where housemates battle every week to form either the ruling party or the opposition. As contestants compete for power, tensions and verbal spats are becoming a regular sight inside the Bigg Boss house. Amid the intense clashes, veteran actress Kunickaa Sadanand found herself in the middle of heated exchanges with fellow housemates. Known for speaking her mind, her tone and expressions have often been misunderstood, leading to unnecessary confrontations. While many contestants continued to engage in arguments with her, an unexpected voice from outside the house came forward in her defence. Bigg Boss 7 winner Gauahar Khan took to her official X account to extend her support for Kunickaa. Urging housemates to show empathy, Gauahar expressed disappointment over how Kunickaa was being treated inside the house. She wrote, "Feel bad for #Kunickaaji, sab aake badtameezi karke chale jaate hain. She's of your mother's age, be kind .. I think everyone is misunderstanding her tone." **Gauahar Remains Silent on Awez Darbar and Nagma Mirajkar's Gameplay** Interestingly, while Gauahar spoke up for Kunickaa, she has remained tight-lipped about the performance of her brother-in-law, Awez Darbar and his girlfriend, Nagma Mirajkar, who are also contestants this season. **Who Is Kunickaa Sadanand?** For those unfamiliar with her, Kunickaa Sadanand is a seasoned Indian actress with a career spanning both films and television. She has acted in several hit Bollywood films, including Beta (1992), Khiladi (1992) and Gumraah (1993). Audiences also fondly remember her as Shanti, the close friend of Reema Lagoo's character in the family drama Hum Saath-Saath Hain (1999).





# Prepping yourself up for your second Trimester

So you've got past the first three months somehow and also dealt with the dreaded morning sickness.

While most women heave a sigh of relief because symptoms of nausea usually lessen after the first trimester, there are a new set of demands that will come your way once you enter your second trimester. Here's what to expect...

- As your morning sickness gets lesser and lesser, you will start wanting to eat more and more. Make sure that instead of piling your plate with junk food, you have healthy portions of fresh fruits and vegetables.
- You'll also feel less tired than you did in the

first three months. Use this time wisely and embark on an easy and regular fitness program. This is also the time when you can start planning your baby's nursery, slowly start buying things that you will need post delivery, etc.

- In the first three months, your baby grows slowly. However, in the second trimester, your baby begins to grow quite fast. Thanks to the Internet and the plethora of mobile apps, you can actually keep track of your baby's growth — you

can see how it changes and grows every week.

- As your baby grows, you will also experience backache — this is due to the extra weight that you're gaining as well as the fact that your baby is growing. Ensure that your bed has a hard mattress and the chairs you use have adequate back support. Try and sleep on your side and wear flat shoes.
- Many women also complain about pain in the gums and sometimes even bleeding gums. Use a soft bristled toothbrush, which won't cause you any pain.



## Organise your Mind to function better

Studies say that the human mind, put very simply, is like a filing cabinet — the brain stores information that it thinks is important and deletes things to make way for new memories. No wonder then, it is important to find ways to make your mind function more productively.



We all have a lot of things going on in our lives. And sometimes we may tend to forget doing some tasks or errands simply because our mind is crammed with so much info. A helpful trick here is to keep a diary for yourself. This will ensure that you remain on track and are better organised. Whether you use a diary for daily tasks, certain errands or shopping trips, it will keep you composed.

- Do you ever feel like you have too much inside you and it all needs to come out? Why not pour out your thoughts in a journal or blog? You needn't make your blog public if you want to keep your thoughts private. But the habit of regularly penning down your thoughts will help you unburden your mind and eventually make you perform better at everyday tasks.
- Are you irresponsible when it comes to your things? Are you often



misplacing or losing them? To make sure you organise your mind, you also need to organise your habits. Keep things in place instead of thinking you'll do it later. This way you won't get stressed when you're in a hurry and can't find your things.

- Don't put off tasks or errands. The more you delay them, the bigger they get. Instead, give yourself a reasonable deadline and try to stick to it as much as you can.
- Don't take on more than you can handle. Sometimes it is okay to say no to someone. Recognise your limits and don't feel ashamed of asking for help if you need it.

A new study has suggested that when it comes to exercise, if people keep their 'eyes on the prize,' it could help them get to their target faster. The new research suggested that while walking, staying focused on a specific target ahead can make the distance to it appear shorter and help people walk there faster, psychology researchers have found. Their study, which compared the technique to walking while looking around the environment naturally, offered a new strategy to improve the quality of exercise.

One of the study's co-authors said that people get less interested in exercise if physical activity seems daunting to them, which could happen when distances to be walked appear quite long.

These findings indicated that narrowly focusing visual attention on a specific target, like a building which is a few blocks ahead, rather than looking around your surroundings, makes that distance appear shorter, helps you walk faster and also makes exercising much easier.

The study focused on "attentional narrowing," which affects perceptions of space. The researchers hypothesized that narrowing attention on a finish line would lead to it appearing closer, increasing the walking speed and also reducing the feelings of physical exertion. The researchers conducted two experiments. In the first, adults visiting a park in the summer stood 12-feet away from an open cooler, which contained cold beverages and ice. The experimenter explained to the participants that they were to estimate the distance of the cooler from where they stood.

One set of adults were randomly assigned to a 'narrowed attention' condition in which they imagined that a spotlight was shining only on the cooler. They learned that to be

## Exercising is easier with 'eyes on the prize'



Keeping your "eyes on the prize" makes you motivated to exercise and helps you reach your target faster, a new study has suggested

effective at estimating distance, they should focus their attention on the cooler and avoid looking around the environment.

The second set of adults were assigned to the 'natural attention' condition and were instructed to allow their attention to move naturally and in whatever way they found to be most helpful for estimating distance. Subjects who focused their attention only on the cooler, perceived the cooler as closer than did those who were in the natural attention group.

In a second experiment, the researchers used this intervention to change perceptions of distance and improve the quality of exercise. Here, 73 participants walked 20-feet in a gymnasium while

wearing ankle weights that added 15% to their body weight, thus making the task more challenging than unfettered walking.

As in the first experiment, one set of participants received the narrowed attention instructions (they were asked to focus on a traffic cone marking a finish line) and the other set received the natural attention condition (they were told to glance at the cone as well as look at their surroundings). Each group then completed the walking test while being timed by the experimenters. The results confirmed the researchers' hypothesis that attentional narrowing changed perceptions of distance, speed of walking and perceived effort, said the study.

## Super benefits of ginger you did not know

Here are some benefits of ginger that will have you biting into it. Ginger is one condiment which not just spices up your food and gives it the punch; it also comes with a lot of health and beauty benefits. Here are some of them-

- Bite into a small piece of ginger before a meal and it will help increase your appetite.
- Ginger can get your digestive juices working.
- Ginger absorbs essential

nutrients in the body. If you are feeling nauseous, chew on to some ginger, preferably with a splash of honey.

- Bugged down with stomach cramps? Chew on to some ginger for relief.
- Suffering from pain in joints? Bite into ginger and feel the relief.
- Ginger tea is great for a soar throat and a blocked nose.
- Ginger also has aphrodisiac properties to spice up your life.

