

## At Modi-Ishiba meet, pact on Moon exploration, supply chains for chips and rare earths

**Without naming China, both PMs flag freedom of navigation in East China Sea, South China Sea**

**New Delhi.(Agency)** Among the key outcomes of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Japan visit was an agreement between the space agencies of both countries for an exploration of the Moon's polar region under the forthcoming Chandrayaan-5 mission.

The two countries also launched an Economic Security Initiative "to promote supply chain resilience" in sectors such as semiconductors, clean energy, telecom, pharmaceuticals, critical minerals as well as new and emerging technologies, as per the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

The two PMs expressed serious concern over the situation in the East China Sea and the South China Sea, and without naming

JAXA will launch the

China, "reiterated their strong opposition to any unilateral actions that endanger the safety as well as freedom of navigation and overflight, and attempt to change the status quo by force or coercion," as per the MEA statement.

On the "implementing arrangement" between the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA), Modi said in a joint press statement with Japanese PM Shigeru Ishiba: "We welcome the collaboration between ISRO and JAXA for the Chandrayaan-5 mission. Our active participation has gone beyond the limits of the earth and will become a symbol of mankind's progress in space."

JAXA will launch the



Moon mission onboard its H3-24L launch vehicle, carrying the ISRO-made lunar lander, which, in turn, will carry the Japan-made lunar rover.

They also launched the India-Japan Small and Medium Enterprises Forum to strengthen collaboration between Indian and Japanese SMEs, "which are the engines of our respective economies", as per the MEA. After the 15th India-Japan Annual Summit, the two PMs made a series of announcements focusing on three areas: bolstering defence and security cooperation, reinforcing eco-

nomic partnership and deepening people-to-people exchanges.

Important documents in key sectors, including clean energy, critical minerals, digital partnership, space, science and technology and diplomatic training, were also signed.

Both countries will conduct more bilateral exercises between their armed forces, and work on collaboration between special units, besides cooperating in areas such as counter terrorism, peacekeeping operations and cyber defence. Modi and Ishiba also agreed upon an action

plan for India-Japan Human Resource Exchange and Cooperation, which lays out a roadmap for talent mobility and deepening people-to-people ties through exchanges of more than 500,000 personnel in five years, including 50,000 skilled personnel and potential talents from India to Japan.

As part of the India-Japan Economic Security Initiative, the foreign ministries of both countries have been tasked with accelerating policy exchanges on economic security. While condemning North Korea's "continued pursuit of nuclear weapons in violation of multiple UNSC", both Modi and Ishiba "unequivocally and strongly condemned terrorism and violent extremism in all its forms and manifestations, including cross-border terrorism".

The two leaders called for concerted actions against all UN-listed terrorist groups and entities. Prime Minister Ishiba also noted "with concern" the Pahalgam.

## Akhilesh Yadav Joins Congress' 'Voter Adhikar Yatra' In Bihar's Saran

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

Samajwadi Party president and former Uttar Pradesh chief minister Akhilesh Yadav on Saturday joined the Congress' 'Voter Adhikar Yatra' in Bihar's Saran district. In a post on X, senior Congress leader KC Venugopal said Yadav is a "steadfast ally" in the party's fight against the BJP's alleged attempt to destroy the country's democracy.

"This morning, former UP CM Akhilesh Yadav joined the Voter Adhikar Yatra in Saran. Welcomed him to this historic movement to protect democracy. He has been a steadfast ally in our fight against the BJP's destruction of our democracy, and a strong voice for the poor

and underprivileged in UP and across the country," Venugopal said on the social media platform.

He also shared photographs of Yadav meeting



Rahul Gandhi, the leader of the opposition in the Lok Sabha, and RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav.

Rohini Acharya, the daughter of RJD supremo Lalu Prasad, was also present there.

## Lok Sabha Speaker Flags Decline In House Debates, Calls For Stronger Role Of Committees

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla has expressed deep concern over the diminishing quality of parliamentary debates and the shrinking number of sittings in both Parliament and state legislatures, warning that the credibility of democratic institutions hinges on meaningful discussion, decorum, and dialogue.

Speaking at the National Conference of Chairpersons of Committees on the Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Bhubaneswar, Mr Birla underscored the indispensable role of parliamentary panels in ensuring accountability and urged legislators

to rise above partisan divides in the larger national interest. This year's conference was historic, being



held outside New Delhi for the first time, and saw the participation of nearly 120 delegates from across states, union territories, and Parliament. With the theme, "Role of Parliamentary and Legislative Committees on Welfare, Development and Empowerment of SCs and STs," the event sought to

## Latest scheme in poll-bound Bihar: 1 woman from 'every household' to get financial help to start employment venture

**Bihar.(Agency)**

The Bihar cabinet on Friday approved the Mukhyamantri Mahila Rozgar Yojana which aims to provide financial support to "one woman from every household" across Bihar to start an income-generating activity of her choice.

The employment scheme, sanctioned by the Rural Development Department, will provide women an initial instalment of Rs 10,000 to start the venture and looks to boost self-employment and strengthen household incomes. "Following a six-month evaluation of the women's respective ven-

only contributing to Bihar's progress through their hard work but are also strengthening their families' economic condition," he wrote.

The CM said that applications from interested women would be invited soon, with fund transfers to bank accounts scheduled to begin in September. He said the Rural Development Department will provide women an initial instalment of Rs 10,000 to start the venture and looks to boost self-employment and strengthen household incomes. "Following a six-month evaluation of the women's respective ven-



tures, additional aid of up to Rs 2 lakh may be extended based on requirements and performance," Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar said in a social media post announcing the decision.

"Since forming the government in November 2005, we have undertaken large-scale work for women's empowerment. Several important steps have been taken to make women strong and self-reliant.

Now, women are not

## BRS's KTR detained, walks out of police vehicle, reaches Telangana Secretariat

**Hyderabad.(Agency)** Tensions flared on Saturday as BRS Working President KT Rama Rao (KTR) and other party legislators, who had marched to the Agriculture Commission to submit a representation regarding Telangana's fertiliser shortage, were detained by police after submitting their petition. In a dramatic turn of events, KTR stepped down from the detention

The BRS has been pressuring the Revanth Reddy government, accusing it of mishandling fertiliser supply and pushing farmers into distress. In a symbolic "Urea Protest," BRS members raised empty fertiliser bags, highlighting farmers' plight. KTR slammed the



vehicle and made his way to the Telangana Secretariat, intensifying the political showdown with the ruling Congress.

Congress, saying such

shortages were unthinkable under a decade of BRS rule. "Why must farmers

stand in endless queues, leaving behind footwear and Aadhaar cards just to hold their place? This is Congress's failure in managing agriculture," he said.

The BRS isn't just protesting; it's laying down a gauntlet for the upcoming legislative assembly session. KTR has challenged the government to hold a session of at least 15 days, promising that his party is prepared to debate any

topic, from agricultural distress to the massive Kaleshwaram project. "We are ready to face any topic in the house and will provide proper answers to

everything," he stated, daring the Congress to prove its mettle. KTR's criticism went beyond fertilisers, alleging that over 600 farmers have taken their own lives due to the crisis. He accused the government of manipulating

## CM Rekha Gupta Interacts with Athletes, Pledges to Make Delhi the Sports Capital

**The Sikh Times  
Simmi Kaur Babbar**

New Delhi, 30 August 2025: Under the visionary leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Sri Narendra Modi and the effective leadership of Hon'ble CM Smt Rekha Gupta, Hon'ble Minister for Environment Manjinder Singh Sirsa has directed the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) to commence an immediate feasibility study for setting up two state-of-the-art biomedical-waste (BMW) treatment plants in the National Capital Territory. Additionally, the Minister requested the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) to present a formal proposal rationalising BMW service charges for non-bedded clinics, after officials apprised him that current tariffs do not reflect their minimal waste volumes.

He also assured to apprise the Hon'ble health minister Dr Pankaj Kumar Singh of the need and the facts.

"Biomedical-waste piles pose a great threat to public health and air quality if left untreated. Our current two half-acre units cannot be expected to shoulder the entire city's 40 MT daily load," the Minister noted. Under the effective leadership of Hon'ble Chief Minister Smt Rekha Gupta and in line with Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji's vision of a Viksit Delhi, we are moving swiftly to plug this capacity gap with innovative, scalable solutions. The action came after rounds of review meetings in which officials confirmed that Delhi's over 3 crore population and its healthcare network already outstrip existing BMW capacity. Citing comparative data, Shri Sirsa observed that neighbouring Haryana, with a population of about 3.16 crore, operates 11 BMW plants, whereas Delhi has only two. We have inherited significant deficits, but this government is committed to microscopic, multi-tiered interventions," he said. "The forthcoming plants will not only raise throughput but will introduce modern, environment-friendly technology fully aligned with national emission norms. Shri Sirsa further assured that he will also request his colleague Hon'ble Health Minister Dr. Pankaj Kumar Singh to look into matter. Clinics generating minimal waste should not subsidise larger establishments. We will correct this without delay," Sirsa asserted.

In an address at the NDTV Defence Summit, Singh said the air defence shield will comprise both defensive and offensive

renowned sports icons, the Chief Minister shared her government's sports vision and outlined new policies. The event was also attended by Cabinet Minister Mr Ashish Sood, MLA Mr Rajkumar Bhatia, and other dignitaries.

Welcoming Delhi's young talents, the Chief Minister said that the city's and the nation's future rests in the hands of these youth who will bring honour to India in the years to come. She made special mention of international champions such as Ravi Dahiya, Sharad Kumar, Tejaswin Shankar, Narayan Thakur, Narendra Grewal and Pritam Rani, commanding their achievements. "The

triumph of an athlete on the global stage is not just an individual honour. It belongs to 1.4 billion Indians," she remarked. Acknowledging the leadership of Honourable Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, Mrs Rekha Gupta said that sports had, for the first time, received the recognition and constitutional backing long required. She

highlighted the recently enacted National Sports Governance Act 2025, which she described as the "Constitution of Sports", noting that it would ensure improved facilities, professional coaching, balanced nutrition and essential resources for athletes. The Chief Minister also contrasted her government's approach with that of the previous administration, which, she said, had neglected sports and failed to enhance rewards or infrastructure. "Our government has not only raised prize money and expanded facilities but has also ensured that athletes receive the respect and opportunities they deserve.

**Continued news page 2**

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## India can't afford to rely on foreign supplies in defence sector: Rajnath Singh

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

India's defence architecture should not be dependent on any uncertain "foreign interference", and it should be based on its own capabilities, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Saturday. He said the government plans to provide complete aerial security to all important installations across the country under the proposed Sudarshan Chakra air defence system within the next 10 years.

In an address at the

NDTV Defence Summit, Singh said the air defence shield will comprise both defensive and offensive

elements to deal with any enemy threats.

"As we saw during Operation Sindoora, the importance of air defence capability in today's wars has increased to a great extent. In such a scenario, the Sudarshan Chakra mission will certainly prove to be a game changer," he said. In his Independence Day speech, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the ambitious air defence project. The announcement came days after Pakistan Army Chief Field Marshal Asim Munir reportedly hinted at targeting Indian assets along the border in case of any future

geopolitics has also made it clear that external dependency in the field of defence is no longer an option. In the current situation, self-reliance is essential for both our economy and our security," he said. "Today, the defence sector is not only

the foundation of national security but has also become a pillar in strengthening our economy and securing its future," the defence minister said. "It is not just about the safety of people, the protection of land, or the defence of borders, but it is also becoming a responsible sector for the protection and security of our entire economy," he said. The defence minister, at the same time, said self-reliance and indigenisation should not be seen as "protectionism." "In the defence sector, self-reliance is not an issue of protectionism at all; rather, it is an issue of sovereignty."

Now, women are not

military confrontation between the two countries. Singh said the shifting

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Now, women are not

# Truck carrying 100kg cannabis from Odisha to Delhi seized, 3 held



**Gurgaon. (Agency)**

Noida: Three persons have been arrested for allegedly supplying over 100 kg of cannabis in a truck from Odisha to Delhi. The joint operation by Phase-II police, Crime Response Team, and SWAT-II led to the recovery of over 182 kg of weed worth more than Rs 40 lakh, said officials on Thursday. Central Noida DCP Shakti Mohan Avasthy stated that the arrests were made following intelligence inputs about the weed consignment being moved into the city.

Acting on the tip-off, cops

intercepted a truck near Nimmvi Vihar Pusta in Kulesara and detained three suspects. A search of the vehicle led to the recovery of several gunny bags containing cannabis. The accused were identified as Ajay Kumar of Meerut, Neeraj Vats from Dandahera and Himanshu Jatav from Badarpur village in Bijnor. "Ajay has a criminal history with four cases lodged against him, including liquor smuggling. Neeraj too faces two cases in Noida and Lucknow, while this is the first case against Himanshu," DCP Avasthy said. Cops found that

the accused sourced marijuana from Odisha, concealed it in small packets inside gunny bags, and transported it along with other goods in trucks to avoid suspicion. Once in NCR, they would unload the consignments at safe hideouts before supplying them to local peddlers. During questioning, the accused admitted they were working with two other associates identified as Sonu, alias Mohammad Sadab, and another person known as JP. Efforts are on to trace and arrest them," a police officer said.

Probe revealed the gang

relied on covert communication to avoid detection. "They used WhatsApp calls and code words to coordinate and even travelled via train on routes where security checks are minimal," the officer added. Police said

Ajay and his accomplices used to supply weed to smaller peddlers in Delhi-NCR at higher rates. The DCP, meanwhile, announced Rs 25,000 reward for the police team involved in the operation.

## Illegal kiosks, staircases razed, shops sealed at Vyapar Kendra in Gurgaon

**Gurgaon. (Agency)**

In two consecutive days of action, the enforcement authorities carried out massive demolition drives to clear encroachments and remove illegal colonies. On Friday, Vyapar Kendra market in Sushant Lok C-Block saw 20 encroaching shops sealed for extending into balconies, while 22 iron staircases obstructing passages and parking areas were also removed. Illegal extensions by two booths were demolished, a basement bookshop was sealed, and food counters and kiosks were cleared. "This market is a prime commercial hub, but years of unchecked encroachments have turned it into a nightmare for pedestrians and vehicle owners. We are determined

to restore its original plan," said district town planner (enforcement) Amit Madholia, who was supervising the drive. The action followed a similar drive on Aug 28, when teams backed by police razed two illegal colonies in Badshahpur — one colony spread across 3.5 acres in Darbarpur and another across 4.5 acres in Fazilpur Jharsa — demolishing boundary walls, DPCs, under-construction structures, sewer, and road networks. Madholia said unauthorised colonies not only violate planning norms but also burden civic services and create law and order problems. "Encroachments choke common spaces, and unauthorised colonies defraud citizens, and together they.

week."Officials must not remain confined to offices but conduct site visits to monitor ground realities and ensure accountability," Singh said. The meeting was attended by several officials including GMDA CEO Shyamal Mishra, MCG commissioner Pradeep Dahiya, Manesar commissioner Ayush Sinha, HSVP administrator Vaishali Singh,



MCG additional commissioners Yash Jaluka and Ravindra Yadav, along with officials from GMDA, MCG, HSVP and the town and country planning department among others. MCG commissioner Pradeep Dahiya apprised the minister about progress in garbage collection, removal of stray cattle, streetlight repairs, pruning of trees and C&D waste lifting. GMDA officials shared the progress on sewage treatment plants and drainage desilting. Singh directed departments to promote the reuse of treated water so that wastage can be minimised and resources conserved.

## As garbage mounts in Gurgaon, govt tries new approach with special safai officers

**Gurgaon. (Agency)**

As the city struggles to manage its garbage crisis, Haryana govt shuffled 20 IAS and HCS officers across the state, with changes mainly revolving around newly created posts of special officers (sanitation) in municipal corporations and mission director, Swachh Bharat (urban). According to the Aug 25 order issued by chief secretary Anurag Rastogi, most officers who were previously serving as CEOs of zila parishads and district rural development agencies (DRDAs) have been moved to sanitation-specific assignments. These ex-cadre posts, temporary for now, have been created, so that the state can focus on urban cleanliness and waste management. Sources told TOI on Friday that the bureaucratic reshuffle stems from discussions originally focused on creating sanitation-

specific posts for Gurgaon and Faridabad — the two NCR cities where civic bodies have long struggled with waste management, an overflowing landfill, and inadequate facilities to manage construction debris. The idea was subsequently applied across the state, they said. While 2016 HCS-cadre Pradeep Ahlawat was appointed the special officer (sanitation) for Manesar, the same position for Gurgaon is yet to be announced, according to the order. Ashvin Singh, a 2019 HCS-cadre officer, takes up the post in Faridabad; Pradeep Kumar (HCS-2016) in Panipat, and Anil Kumar Yadav in Yamunanagar.

Similarly, appointments to the position were made for Sonipat, Hisar, Karnal, Ambala, Kurukshetra and Rohtak, among other districts. "The idea initially was to appoint special officers for

sanitation in Gurgaon and Faridabad. However, when the latest orders came, it was implemented for other districts as well. It was discussed that these special sanitation officers will give their inputs to the municipal commissioner and additional commissioners. They will also be on the field to supervise and monitor sanitation operations," a senior bureaucrat involved in the discussions told TOI. The new posts have been carved out at a time when the govt has initiated an 11-week Haryana Shehar Swachhata campaign. According to the campaign, launched on Aug 24, corporations must send daily progress reports of sanitation programmes and operations to the state govt. On Friday, a special sanitation officer said he is yet to receive a brief on his roles and responsibilities. "But these posts were created when

Haryana launched a special sanitation campaign. We will work closely with the top brass of our respective corporations to provide inputs on sanitation, especially door-to-door waste collection, sweeping, bioremediation of waste, etc," he said. The bureaucratic shuffle comes weeks after govt deployed chief principal secretary to the CM, Rajesh Khullar, to Gurgaon for a week to draw up a plan for addressing the city's sanitation crisis, among other civic issues. Over the past year, Gurgaon has wrestled with cleaning up its streets and colonies. In 2024, it put up its worst show in central govt's Swachh Survekshan rankings, finishing 140th out of 446 Indian cities, the lowest it fell to since the exercise began in 2016. (The city improved its ranking to 41 out of 95 cities in this year's assessment.

### Front continued news

**CM Rekha Gupta**

Interacts with Athletes, Pledges to Make Delhi the Sports Capital

The Chief Minister also contrasted her government's approach with that of the previous administration, which, she said, had neglected sports and failed to enhance rewards or infrastructure.

"Our government has not only raised prize money and expanded facilities but has also ensured that athletes receive the respect and opportunities they deserve. Delhi's athletes are now excelling on both national and international platforms," said the Chief Minister. She added that outstanding performers at the Olympics, Asian Games, Commonwealth Games and National Games will receive multi-crore prizes along with honourable government employment.

Delhi's Minister for Urban Development and Education, Mr Ashish Sood, assured athletes that their concerns would always be addressed with priority.

"The government will provide every facility and support needed. Athletes have one responsibility to win medals and make Delhi proud. Both the Chief Minister's Office and my office stand fully committed to resolving your issues without delay," he said.

## Gazab to gayab: How a model street in Ghaziabad faded out



**Ghaziabad. (Agency)**

In Sept 2022, a 250-metre stretch of an almost abandoned street in Kaushambi was redecorated with a huge wall with panels made from recycled plastic. Open drains were covered using slabs of recycled plastic, and empty 20-litre water jars of Bisleri doubled up as planters for ornamental vegetation. There was a vertical garden made from two-litre water bottles and park benches made from recycled plastic. It was meant to be a piece of wonder and named 'Gazab Street'. Three years down the line, there is no trace of greenery, the drain is overflowing, painted murals have been replaced by crumbling plaster, and the wall just bears the name of Bisleri as a remnant of the past. The bright yellow-coloured name tag is missing, and no one can

imagine that there were lamp posts or benches made of recycled plastic. Rusted iron frames that once supported the hanging garden stand as a testimony to the project. When asked about the street, Habib Ahmed, a local shopkeeper said, "It has justified its name. Anything 'Gazab' has the element of surprise in it, and since the entire street seems to have vanished, there's nothing wrong with calling it Gazab." In 2022, the GMC collaborated with an NGO, the Indian Pollution Control Association (IPCA), and with the support of sponsors like Bisleri International Private Limited, Radisson Blu, Parle Agro, and Haldiram, converted the street, once filled with filth and garbage, into a recycled plastic hub. It was a part of the then municipal commissioner, Mahendra Singh Tawar's vision of making the city a role model

**Haryana minister Rao Narbir pushes for model sector, a blueprint for better civic infra in Gurgaon**

**Gurgaon. (Agency)**

Haryana industries and commerce minister Rao Narbir Singh on Friday directed officials to develop at least one model sector in the city. The identified sector should have upgraded civic amenities — proper roads, streetlights, sewage, drainage and parks — and should meet all benchmarks of a model area, "which can serve as an example" for other parts of the city, the minister, who was chairing a review meeting with senior officials, said.

While discussing key civic concerns such as sanitation, garbage management, drainage, stray cattle, construction and demolition (C&D) waste disposal and the condition of city roads, he said agencies must ensure greater coordination to resolve issues that "residents have repeatedly flagged". Pointing out that Sheetla Mata Road continues to face severe waterlogging during rains, the minister asked officials to conduct an immediate inspection and resolve the issue. "The tendering process for drainage cleaning works should be done at the earliest and the cleaning work completed before the next monsoon," he said. As for solid waste management and the stray cattle menace, he instructed MCG officials to regularly inspect gaushalas and submit detailed reports within a

## Underage visitors Gardens Galleria pubs under excise department's scanner



**Gurgaon. (Agency)**

The excise department plans to tighten checks on bars and pubs operating in the city after complaints of underage visitors being served alcohol. District excise officer (DEO) Subodh Kumar Srivastava held a meeting with bar owners and managers of the Gardens Galleria mall complex on Thursday, warning them of strict action in case of violations. The district has a total of 155 permanent bar licence holders, of which 31 are located in Gardens Galleria

mall, which is considered a party hub in Noida. At the meeting, the DEO directed owners to ensure that no person below 21 years of age is allowed to consume alcohol. This, he said, must be checked at the entrance itself, with mandatory signage displayed prominently.

"Any violation, whether that is underage drinking or malpractice in serving liquor, will attract strict action," Srivastava warned. The DEO told TOI that some bar owners had raised some 'practical

problems' in enforcing the age limit. "There are some families who come with adolescent children.

While the pub does not serve the young children, it is hard to monitor if they sneak a drink from the adults. However, the owners have been told to enforce the age limit strictly, and if during surprise checks it is found that people below the age of 21 years are consuming alcohol, legal action will be taken by the excise dept," said Srivastava.

The pub owners were told to ensure purity and transparency in serving drinks. "While complaints of bars replacing expensive liquor with cheaper brands surfaced last financial year and have lessened since, owners were reminded to ensure purity and transparency in serving drinks," the DEO added. The DEO said the malpractice of replacing the drinks, and hence the complaints have gone down as well.

## New York-based man's Gurgaon plot sold for Rs 10 crore through fake gift deed



**Gurgaon. (Agency)**

A Punjab resident and associates allegedly cheated a New York-based NRI by selling his plot in the city for Rs 10.7 crore after posing as his fictitious brother to transfer the land's ownership with a fake gift deed. Police said on Friday that the accused, Manish Kumar (45), worked at the office of an arthiya (commission agent or middleman in the agriculture sector) in Punjab's Ferozepur.

Kumar, along with his associates, allegedly forged documents to target Gaurav Narula, who has been living in the US since 1982 and was granted American citizenship in 1997. Police said Gaurav's father Hans Raj Narula transferred an 810sqm plot in Sushant Lok 1 to his name in 1991. According to the complaint filed by advocate Radhika Rai, Kumar's associates allegedly posed as Gaurav while the Punjab resident pretended to be the NRI's "brother" with forged identity documents. Gaurav, cops said, is the only son in the family, and has a sister who also lives abroad. The accused then got a fake gift deed, dated June 3, 2024,

showing that Gaurav was giving the plot to his "brother" Manish Kumar. The deed was fraudulently registered at the sub-registrar's office in Wazirabad, Gurgaon, the complaint said. A gift deed is used to voluntarily transfer ownership of a property without any monetary payment. It needs to be registered, and documents must clearly specify the details of the "donor" and the one who is getting the

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# Rain brings traffic to a grinding halt, leaves several city areas waterlogged

## The Sikh Times

New Delhi: Motorists wade through a waterlogged road on Vikas Marg near the Laxmi Nagar Metro station in New Delhi on Friday. Tribune Photo: Manas Ranjan Bhui Heavy rainfall on Friday morning brought the national capital to a grinding halt, with waterlogged roads and massive traffic jams disrupting the daily lives of commuters. Key stretches across the Capital witnessed bumper-to-bumper traffic, while visuals from several areas showed vehicles stranded in waist-deep water and pedestrians struggling to wade through flooded streets. Traffic was thrown out of gear on arterial roads, including Delhi-Noida-Direct (DND) flyway, Mathura Road, Vikas Marg, ITO, ISBT, Geeta Colony, Sarai Kale Khan, Pragati Maidan, Mehrauli-Badarpur Road, Akshardham, Rohtak Road, Peeragarhi, Delhi-Jaipur Highway, Madhuban Chowk, MB Road, MG Road, Daula Kuan and Rajaram Kohli Marg, according to Delhi Traffic Police officials. Long queues of vehicles from Badarpur to Ashram added to the woes of office-goers and school buses. Several commuters took to the social media to vent frustration, with some saying 10-minute commutes stretched to over half an hour. Harshita, a resident of Laxmi Nagar,

said: "It usually takes me 10 minutes to reach my office, but I have been stuck in the traffic for the past 30 minutes due to

Kailash and Kidwai Nagar. In Laxmi Nagar's Preet Vihar area, water seeped into shops. Aman, a local, said: "Just the dis-

Delhi's Surgery Block disrupted movement. The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) had forecast thunderstorms with rain through the day. As per the department, the day is expected to be humid, with relative humidity recorded at 92 per cent at 8:30 am. In the past 24 hours, Safdarjung received 13.4 mm rainfall, Palam 6.2 mm, Lodhi Road 9.8 mm, Ridge 1.8 mm and Aya Nagar the highest at 29.3 mm. The minimum temperature was 26.2 degree Celsius, while the maximum is expected to touch 34 degree Celsius. The chaos extended to Delhi Metro where services on a section of the Yellow Line — from Vishwavidyalaya to Central Secretariat — were disrupted during peak morning hours. Commuters complained that the travel time between Vishwavidyalaya and GTB Nagar stretched to nearly 50 minutes, a journey that usually takes only a few minutes. In a statement, the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) said trains had to be regulated due to a signalling issue between New Delhi and Patel Chowk stations from 7:25 am to around noon. Trains operated at a restricted speed of 25 kmph between Kashmere Gate and Patel Chowk, leading to bunching across the line. The Delhi Traffic Police said teams were deployed at key choke points to manage congestion.

"Due to rain and waterlogging in some pockets, traffic movement was slow. Our personnel have been deployed to streamline the situation and assist commuters," an officer said. The heavy rainfall, which left several parts of the city waterlogged, triggered a sharp political blame game. Delhi Congress chief Devender Yadav accused the BJP government in the Capital of failing to desilt storm water drains and repair broken roads. "Frequent rains have turned life unbearable for people in JJ clusters, resettlement colonies, and villages. Roads are waterlogged everywhere, exposing the false claims of the Rekha Gupta government," he said. The AAP also hit out at the BJP, sharing videos of flooded roads from Patparganj, Sangam Vihar, Laxmi Nagar, AIIMS, Geeta Colony, Sanjay Lake, South Delhi and MB Road. One clip showed a resident swimming through a waterlogged stretch in Patparganj. Taking a swipe at the BJP, AAP said the party should sell off its "four engines" and "buy four boats instead so that Delhiites can at least navigate the mess." AAP Delhi state president Saurabh Bharadwaj quipped, "Look at the condition of Sanjay Lake after the rains — the surrounding areas have turned into a lake. Ever since the BJP came to power, the number of lakes in Delhi has only increased."



heavy rain." Severe waterlogging was also reported from Panchkuan Marg, Shastri Bhawan, RK Puram, Moti Bagh, Mehrauli-Road, Nehru Place, East of

distance from the Metro to my PG left my jeans and shoes soaked." Visuals from West Vinod Nagar showed roads submerged waist-deep, while flooding outside AIIMS

## ED raids 'illegal' call centre operatives in NCR who duped US nationals of Rs 130 crore

New Delhi: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Saturday said it has conducted searches against some persons based in the NCR, who allegedly duped US nationals through an "illegal" call centre to the tune of about Rs 130 crore. "The accused persons live in luxury houses allegedly purchased using illegally earned money through a cyber-scam. They also acquired numerous assets valued at more than Rs 100 crore from the proceeds of crime," the federal probe agency said in a statement. The money laundering case stems from a CBI FIR that said the accused, in a criminal conspiracy with each other, operated illegal call centres in Delhi and adjoining areas with the intent of targeting mainly US nationals and subjecting them to a "tech fraud" between November 2022 and April 2024. The accused — Arjun Gulati, Divyansh Goel and Abhinav Kalra — ran an "illegal" call centre in Noida and Gurugram to target US citizens in the guise of providing them technical support, ED said in the statement. The accused gained "unauthorised" access to the victims' bank accounts and transferred funds to multiple foreign shores before routing them to their Indian accounts through web of transactions involving more than 200 accounts, the agency said. "The accused cheated the victims to the tune of USD 15 million between November 2022 and April 2024," it claimed. Thirty bank accounts of the accused have been frozen while eight luxury cars and some costly watches have been seized during the searches, ED said.

## Temple sewadaar killed after quarrel in Kalkaji; one arrested

New Delhi: A 35-year-old sewadaar in southeast Delhi's Kalkaji Temple has been allegedly beaten to death following a quarrel with some people, and one of them has been nabbed, police said on Saturday. According to officials, a call was made to the police control room about the row at the temple around 9.30 pm on Friday. Police said the argument ensued after the accused, who were visiting the temple, demanded 'chunniprasad' — a combination of sacred headscarf and religious offering of food — from the sewadaar, Yogendra Singh, a native of Hardoi in Uttar Pradesh. The altercation turned violent as the group dealt fist blows to Singh and beat him up with sticks, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Southeast) Hemant Tiwari said. Singh, who had been serving at the Kalkaji Temple for the past 14 to 15 years, was rushed to the AIIMS Trauma Centre, where he succumbed to injuries during treatment, an officer said. A case under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) Sections 103(1) (murder) and 3(5) (joint liability) has been registered at Kalkaji police station, the officer said. "One of the accused, identified as Atul Pandey (30), a resident of Dakshinpuri, was caught on the spot by the locals and handed over to the police," he added. Police said efforts are underway to identify and nab the remaining accused.

New Delhi: The National Zoological Park in New Delhi will remain closed to visitors from August 30 after two painted storks in its water bird aviary tested positive for H5N1 avian influenza. "Samples from two dead birds were sent for screening of avian influenza to the National Institute for High Security Animal Diseases (NIHSAD), Bhopal, on August 27. The results received on August 28 confirmed the presence of H5N1 avian influenza," said zoo director Dr Sanjeev Kumar. H5N1 is a highly pathogenic strain of

avian influenza virus, which is listed by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as a significant zoonotic disease with pandemic potential. The authorities clarified that there will be no culling of birds inside the zoo. "Wild/endangered/precious captive birds confirmed as non-infected may be exempted from culling. Visitor entry needs to be stopped forthwith," the Central Zoo Authority (CZA) guidelines say. This marks the third recorded avian influenza outbreak at the Delhi Zoo, which has pre-

viously dealt with avian influenza outbreaks in and Containment of Avian Influenza (revised-2021)

2016 and 2021. The zoo authorities said immediate action was initiated in line with the Action Plan for Preparedness, Control issued by the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying. Intensive surveillance, strict bio-security proto-

cols and preventive measures for the safety of animals, birds and staff have also been implemented. The authorities clarified that there will be no culling of birds inside the zoo. "Culling is not done in the wild, and surveillance is limited to the affected enclosures," a senior zoo official said. According to the CZA guidelines, "As soon as the disease is confirmed as H5 or H7 avian influenza, control actions to be initiated are the same as for domestic poultry." In addition to sampling of birds, environmental samples like water, soil, etc, are to be collected and sent for testing, the guidelines say. According to the CZA, "Sampling has to be repeated every 15 days at least four 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". The temporary closure is being enforced as a precaution to protect public health and to strengthen bio-safe-ty protocols, the zoo director said. The zoo will remain shut until further orders.

## 3 drown as car plunges into drain in Faridabad

Gurugram: Three men drowned after their car veered off the road and plunged into the Gauchi drain near the fish market in Faridabad late on Thursday night. The victims were returning from a Ganesh Chaturthi pandal in Sector 11. The police said the accident occurred around 10.40 pm when the car travelling from the fish market towards Sanjay Colony, lost control and fell into the drain. Local residents, who witnessed the incident, raised an alarm and rushed to the scene. A police team arrived promptly and, with the help of locals, began a rescue operation. After an hour of efforts using ropes and other tools, the three occupants were pulled from the water. Chest compressions and pumping were attempted en route to Badshah Khan Hospital, but doctors pronounced all three dead on arrival. Their bodies were later sent for postmortem. The deceased were identified as Pawan Maurya, 32, a resident of Sanjay Colony; Gaurav Rawat, 33, from Jawahar Colony; and Amit Jha, 31, of Atal Chowk in Sanjay Enclave. According to the car's registration certificate, the vehicle was registered in the name of Amit Jha, who worked for a private company in Sector 58, Faridabad. He was the sole breadwinner of his family and is survived by four sisters, one of whom is married.

## 3 missing minor girls rescued, reunited with kin

New Delhi: The Anti-Human Trafficking Unit of the Delhi Police Crime Branch rescued three missing minor girls from different parts of the Capital and reunited them with their families, officials said on Friday. According to the police, a 17-year-old girl was reported missing from Samaypur Badli in North Delhi on August 15. A case in this regard was registered on August 16. The police said the girl left home after being scolded for her social media activity. In another case, a 15-year-old girl was reported missing from North Delhi's Swaroop Nagar on July 1. The police traced her to GT Karnal Road the same day. Enquiry revealed that she was employed at a jewellery factory and left home after an argument with her mother. In the third case, a 14-year-old girl was reported missing from Ranholi in West Delhi on August 8. A case under Section 137(2) of the BNS was registered the same day. Based on surveillance inputs, the Anti-Human Trafficking Unit team traced her to Baprola Village, Vikas Nagar. The police said she had travelled to Jalandhar, Punjab, before being located in Delhi. All three girls were handed over to investigating officers of their respective police stations for further legal action, the police said.

## Yamuna water level nears danger mark in Delhi

New Delhi: The water level in Yamuna river rose to 205.22 metres at the Old Railway Bridge in Delhi by 9 am on Saturday, nearing the danger mark of 205.33 metres, an official said. According to the official, the situation is being closely monitored and all the agencies concerned were asked to take precautionary measures to handle a flood-like situation, as the water level is predicted to rise further. "The river is rising mostly due to high volumes of water being released from the Wazirabad and Hathnikund barrages every hour," an official from the central flood room said. According to the flood control department, the Hathnikund barrage is releasing around 46,968 cusecs of water and Wazirabad is releasing 44,970 cusecs of water every hour. The Old Railway Bridge serves as a key observation point for tracking the river's flow and potential flood risks. The warning mark for the city is 204.50 metres, while the danger mark is 205.33 metres, and evacuation of people starts at 206 metres.

# In Yamuna floodplains, displacement fear lingers

New Delhi: When water almost reached the charpai (cot) on which Rajkumari was asleep, she woke up to find nothing but water all around. Rajkumari, her husband Jai Singh and their two daughters live in Yamuna Khadar, a low-lying stretch of the Yamuna floodplains. Like many families in the area, they survive in makeshift jhuggis, cultivating vegetables or working occasionally as labourers in government-run plantations. At the Mayur Vihar relief camp, anxiety deepened as heavy rain pounded Delhi through the morning on Friday. "We carried whatever we could on this rickshaw and rushed in knee-deep water to the relief camps on the main road," Rajkumari recalled. With the Yamuna swelling once again after heavy rains, hundreds of families, who moved to Delhi decades ago in search of work, are once more facing the familiar fear of displacement. Some have shifted to government-built shelters, while others prefer to remain close to their homes despite the risk of inundation. Rukmani and her sister-in-law Neha Devi moved to a shelter on the main road 10 days ago. Their jhuggi sits dangerously close to the river's edge. "Last year, all our belongings, including our children's certificates, got submerged. This time we are being more careful,"

Neha said. But not everyone feels secure in these shelters. Some families have returned to their jhuggis, fearing theft at the relief camps. "Thieves steal

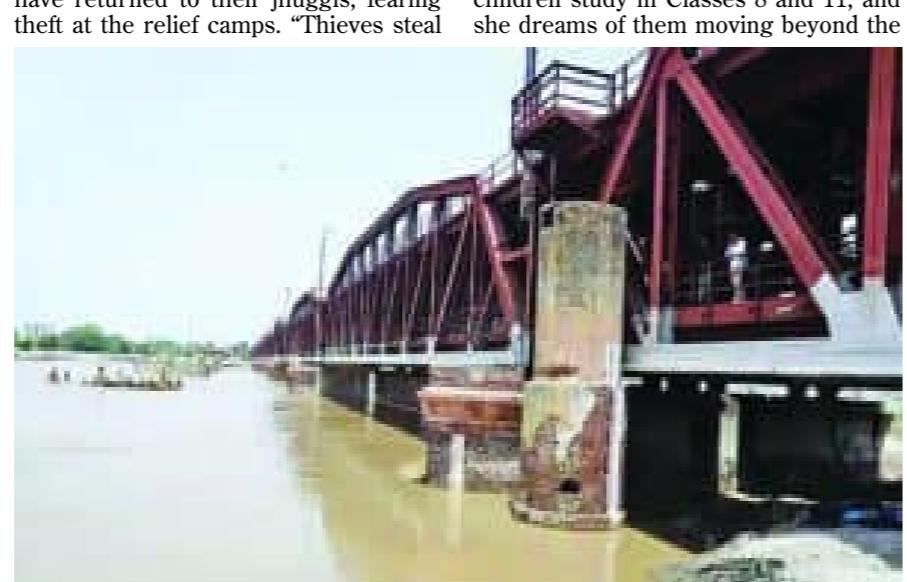
brings snakes, insects and mosquitoes. Every day is a struggle," she said. Her children study in Classes 8 and 11, and she dreams of them moving beyond the

"Sometimes it feels like we are living in the snakes' jungle. They come into our homes because we are in their place," Kiran said with a weary smile. The problem is not just about shelter. At the relief camp in East Delhi's Trilokpuri, 25-year-old trainee pharmacist Saurabh has been attending to a steady flow of patients.

"Every day around 12-15 people come with fever, infections and cough-related symptoms. Four or five of them are usually children," he said, adding that the cramped and damp conditions make people more vulnerable to illness. Many residents complained of thefts inside the shelters. "Locals have stolen several bulbs from here. People are even afraid to stay in shelters because their belongings keep disappearing," said a volunteer at the food distribution counter. Many families worry they will once again be uprooted once the Yamuna's water recedes. "When the flood came last year, we were shifted. When it receded, jhuggis were broken," said Anil, a daily-wage worker at the camp. "This time too, we fear the same." Still, residents say they have little choice but to endure. "Our homes may be under water, but our lives are here. We will rebuild again, just like we did last year and the year before that..." he added.

our food, cylinders and bulbs. Who will protect us there?" said Imarti, a migrant from Lucknow who has lived in Delhi for over 20 years. Imarti, who sells plants with her husband, now lives with her sister-in-law Kiran under a flyover bridge after their hut was flooded. "The water

life she has endured. "Two generations have lived here. Now the third should get a chance to do something different," she said. For families like hers, daily life is a delicate balancing act — between keeping their belongings safe, avoiding disease and braving the rains.



# In Boko Haram's birthplace, USAID's collapse threatens school run for victims of extremism

**Maiduguri.**(Agency) Israel Peter was 6 years old when Boko Haram Islamic extremists attacked his village in northeastern Nigeria and his family fled. Eight years later, he still hasn't returned to school.



Nigerian children. Its sudden withdrawal has created a critical

void that must be urgently addressed," said Crystal Ikanini-Musa, a former Africa regional advocacy manager for the Malala Fund, which focuses on education. The Borno state commissioner, Lawan Clark, asserted to the AP that the impact of the U.S. funding retreat is not significant on education, as donors primarily focus on helping students learn within existing structures. But many families like Peter's can't afford them. Keeping children from Boko Haram recruiters

Despite having the highest number of out-of-school children in the world — over 10 million, according to UNICEF — Nigeria's government funds education at between 4% and 7% of its federal budget. That's short of the 15% to 20% global benchmark recommended by UNESCO. The impact of the under-funding is far worse in the northeast, where conflict has ruined key infrastructure and families are preoccupied with survival. The Future Prowess Islamic Foundation school was founded in Borno state in 2007, two years before the fighting began, initially providing education to orphans.

## US should not deny Palestinians access to upcoming UN summit, says French Foreign Minister Barrot

**Copenhagen.**(Agency) French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot said Saturday there should be no restrictions on access to next month's UN General Assembly, after the United States said it would deny visas to members of the Palestinian Authority.

"A UN General Assembly meeting... should not be subject to any restrictions on access," Barrot said at a meeting of EU foreign ministers in Denmark. A string of ministers in Copenhagen echoed France's call for the United States to allow access to the Palestinian delegation. The extraordinary step by Washington comes as France is leading a push to recognize the Palestinian state at the gathering of world leaders in New York. The move further aligns US President Donald

Trump's administration with Israel's government, which is waging a war in Gaza. The Palestinian Authority called for the United States to reverse its decision, which it said "stands in clear contradiction to international law and the UN Headquarters Agreement". Palestinian Authority president Mahmud Abbas, a veteran 89-year-old leader who once had cordial relations with Washington, had planned to attend the UN meeting. Under an agreement as host of the United Nations in New York, the United States is not supposed.

## Trump administration plans to remove nearly 700 unaccompanied migrant children, says senator

**Washington.**(Agency) The Trump administration is planning to remove nearly 700 Guatemalan children who had come to the US without their parents, according to a letter sent Friday by Sen. Ron Wyden of Oregon, and the Central American country said it was ready to take them in. The removals would violate the Office of Refugee Resettlement's "child welfare mandate and this country's long-established obligation to these children," Wyden told Angie Salazar, acting director of the office within the Department of Health and Human Services that is responsible for migrant children who arrive in the US alone.

"This move threatens to separate children from their families, lawyers, and support systems, to thrust them back into the very conditions they are seeking refuge from, and to disappear vulnerable children beyond the reach of American law and oversight," the Democratic senator wrote, asking for the deportation plans to be terminated. It is another step in the Trump administration's sweeping immigration enforcement efforts, which include plans to surge officers to Chicago for an immigration crackdown, ramping up deportations and ending protections for people who have had permission to live and work in the United States.

Guatemala says it's ready to take in the children.

Guatemala

Foreign Affairs Minister Carlos Martínez said Friday that the government has told the US it is willing to receive hundreds of Guatemalan minors who arrived unaccompanied to the United States and are being held in US facilities. Guatemala is particularly concerned about minors who could age out of the facilities for children and be sent to adult detention centers, he said. The exact number of children to be returned remains in flux, but they are currently discussing a little over 600. He

said no date has been set yet for their return. That would be almost double what Guatemala previously agreed to. The head of the country's immigration service said last month that the government was looking to repatriate 341 unaccompanied minors who were being held in US facilities. "The idea is to bring them back before they reach 18 years old so that they are not taken to an adult detention center," Guatemala Immigration Institute Director Danilo Rivera said at the time. He said it would be done at Guatemala's expense and would be a form of voluntary return.

The plan was announced by President Bernardo Arévalo, who said then that the government had a moral and legal obligation to advocate for the children. His comments came days after US Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem visited Guatemala.

## Social Security whistleblower who claims DOGE mishandled Americans' sensitive data resigns from post



**Washington.**(Agency)

A Social Security official who has filed a whistleblower complaint alleging the Department of Government Efficiency officials mishandled Americans' sensitive information says he's resigning his post because of actions taken against him since making his complaint. Charles Borges, the agency's chief data officer, alleged that more than 300 million Americans' Social Security data was put at risk by DOGE officials who uploaded sensitive information to a cloud account not subject to oversight. His whistleblower disclosure was submitted to the special counsel's office on Tuesday.

In a letter to SSA Commissioner Frank Bisignano, Borges claimed that

since filing his whistleblower complaint, the agency's actions make his duties "impossible to perform legally and ethically" and have caused him "physical, mental and emotional distress."

"After reporting internally to management and externally to regulators, serious data and security and integrity concerns impacting our citizens' most sensitive personal data, I have suffered exclusion, isolation, internal strife, and a culture of fear, creating a hostile work environment and making work conditions intolerable," Borges added.

The Project Government Accountability Office, which is representing him in his whistleblower case, posted Borges' resignation letter on its website Friday evening. Borges

declined to comment.

"He no longer felt that he could continue to work for the Social Security Administration in good conscience, given what he had witnessed," his attorney Andrea Meza said in a statement. She added that Borges would continue to work with the proper oversight bodies on the matter. In his whistleblower's complaint, Borges said the potentially sensitive information put at risk by DOGE's actions includes health diagnoses, income, banking information, familial relationships and personal biographic data."

Should bad actors gain access to this cloud environment, Americans may be susceptible to widespread identity theft, may lose vital healthcare and food benefits, and the government may be responsible for re-issuing every American a new Social Security Number at great cost," said the complaint. Borges had served as the Social Security Administration's chief data officer since January. The SSA declined to comment on Borges' resignation or allegations against the agency in his letter to colleagues.

## Trump withdraws Kamala Harris's Secret Service protection

**WASHINGTON.**(Agency)

US President Donald Trump has withdrawn former vice president Kamala Harris's Secret Service protection, officials said Friday, in what critics called a fresh act of revenge against his political rivals. The Republican's move

Secret Service for their professionalism, dedication, and unwavering commitment to safety," Kirsten Allen, a senior advisor to Harris, told AFP.

Democrats rallied behind Harris over the move, especially in California where she previously served as a senator. Los Angeles Mayor



Karen Bass said it was "another act of revenge following a long list of political retaliation" by Trump, according to a statement reported by US media. "This puts the former Vice President in danger and I look forward to working with the Governor to make sure Vice President Harris is safe in Los Angeles." Since taking office in January, Trump, 79, has taken similar measures against a long list of his perceived enemies and political opponents. Trump has withdrawn protection for former national security advisor John Bolton -- whose house was raided by FBI agents in a classified documents probe last week -- former secretary.

## Three killed in protest following death of motorcycle taxi driver hit by police vehicle in Indonesia's Makassar



fire has since been extinguished. Hundreds of people were seen in footage posted by local media cheering and clapping as fire engulfed the building with few security forces in sight. One man was heard shouting: "there are people upstairs!" In footage verified by AFP, smouldering debris was seen falling from the roof of the city council building surrounded by palm trees as charred cars flickered with flames. Images showed the South Sulawesi provincial council building ablaze overnight. Protesters had tried to knock down the gate and storm it. Makassar and South Sulawesi police did not immediately respond to AFP's requests for comments.

Prabowo test

In Jakarta, hundreds massed

outside the headquarters of the elite Mobile Brigade Corp (Brimob) paramilitary police

unit they blamed for motorcycle

gig driver Affan Kuniawan's

## EU top diplomat 'not optimistic' on sanctioning Israel over Gaza war

**Copenhagen.**(Agency)

EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas said Saturday she was "not optimistic" the bloc would take action against Israel over the war in Gaza due to splits between member states. Foreign ministers meeting in Denmark will discuss a proposal to suspend EU funding to Israeli start-ups as initial punishment for the situation in Gaza.

But the bloc has so far failed to garner the majority needed to take that step -- let alone move ahead with more forceful measures against Israel. "I'm not very optimistic, and today we are definitely not going to adopt decisions," Kallas told journalists at the start of the Denmark meeting.

"It sends a signal that we are divided." Splits within the European Union between countries backing Israel and those favouring the Palestinians have seen the 27-nation bloc often left hamstrung in the face of the dire humanitarian crisis in Gaza. A string of EU countries are pushing for more far-reaching punishment for Israel, but have been frustrated. Denmark's foreign minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen, whose country holds the EU's rotating presidency, insisted the bloc "must change words into



2023 attack on Israel resulted in the deaths of 1,219 people, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally based on Israeli figures. Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed at least 63,025 Palestinians, most of them civilians, according to figures from the health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza that the UN considers reliable.

# MSRDC initiates steps to make Maharashtra's Samruddhi Expressway a renewable energy-generating corridor

The Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation, which constructed the expressway, has prepared plans to mount hybrid energy systems -- including a mix of solar panels and wind turbines -- along the route.

**Mumbai. (Agency)**  
Hindu Hrudaysamrat  
Balasahab Thackeray  
Maharashtra Samruddhi  
Mahamarg, also known as the Samruddhi Expressway, will soon be utilised as a renewable energy corridor.

The 701-km corridor, one of Maharashtra's biggest infrastructure projects, will now serve as an energy source beyond being only a fast link between Mumbai and Nagpur.

The Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation (MSRDC), which constructed the expressway in four phases between December 2022 and June 2025, has now prepared plans to mount hybrid energy systems along the expressway route. These will be a mix of solar panels and wind turbines on available land along the embankments.

According to MSRDC, a special-purpose vehicle, Mahasamruddhi Renewable Energy Limited, has been formed to execute the project.

The project is planned to produce 150 to 200 MW of

solar power in the initial phase. The power generated will be utilised for meeting the expressway's own needs, such as lighting, tunnels, and interchanges," an officer told The Indian Express. The project was announced by authorities during the inauguration of the final stretch of the expressway in June and is now being executed.

Officers explained that the orientation of the corridor supports solar generation, as the left side when travelling from Nagpur to Mumbai consistently faces south. This maximises the sunlight exposure, an important parameter for greater power generation.

Besides solar panels, there is also a plan to use wind turbines. "Natural wind speed as well as the draft generated by speeding cars would be able to generate the conditions required in order to produce power," the officer said, adding that the method would enable beneficial use of otherwise vacant lots along the expressway.

The project will be built



through a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) under a Build, Own, Operate and Transfer (BOOT) scheme. Private builders will be invited to design, install, and run the facilities before finally handing them over to the government.

MSRDC has initiated the

process of hiring a renewable energy consultant. The appointed agency will develop a feasibility study, make detailed project reports, and monitor the implementation. The consultant will also be responsible for proposing construction techniques,

minimising costs, and advising on technologies to maximise output.

Officers feel the plan for renewable energy would make the Samruddhi Corridor a model for the integration of clean energy production with transport infrastructure.

## Workers spot signs of rodent infestation as civic body begins emergency repairs on 15th-century Mandvi gate in Vadodara

**Vadodara.** Rodent infestation could be among the reasons behind the deterioration of the 15th-century Mandvi gate, which has been showing signs of "column crushing" since April and a part of which gave way on August 19, officials of the Vadodara Municipal Corporation (VMC) said. Some heritage conservationists in the city believe that the changing ground water level due to 2024 floods could also have a major role to play in the weakening columns of the structure. The VMC, meanwhile, began emergency repairs of the iconic structure on Thursday. Even as the civic body is yet to issue a formal tender for the

restoration of the monument, it has instructed Savani Heritage — the agency hired to assist in preparing a structural report — to undertake immediate repair works.

Officials of the VMC told The Indian Express that workers on the site found signs of rodent infestation in the structure that could be "among the reasons" for its deterioration. An official of the VMC, on the condition of anonymity, said, "The team working on the immediate repair of the crumbling pillar has found some spots of rodent infestation and it will be a vital aspect while restoring the structure..."

## Maharashtra among 5 states that account for over 70% of country's e-truck charging demand: Study

### Pune. (Agency)

A new study has mapped the country's e-truck charging needs and identified five states — Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Madhya Pradesh — that will account for over 70 per cent of India's truck charging demand.

The International Council on Clean Transportation's (ICCT) latest study, released recently at the India Clean Transportation Summit in New Delhi, assesses depot and highway charging needs for medium- and heavy-duty battery electric trucks in India through 2050.

On Friday, the freeway was completely out of bounds for citizens as traffic was blocked, leading to a cascading effect on the Eastern Express Highway and the Atal Setu, which also witnessed traffic snarls.

There were massive traffic jams at the north end of the freeway in Chembur as well, leading the police to close down a few roads to stop protesters from taking the freeway.

Jarange-Patil, who began an indefinite hunger strike at Azad Maidan on Friday morning over his demand for quota benefits for the Maratha community, had said earlier that he "would not back down this time".

"We will not leave Mumbai until our demands are met," he had asserted.

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To meet the projected demand from electric trucks, ICCT's study estimates that India will require around 9 GW (Gigawatt) of charging capacity by 2030.

Ranked at the top among

states in projected charging

infrastructure requirements by

2030, Maharashtra will require

an estimated 1.92 GW of

installed charging capacity, the

## 'Regret that judiciary vacated the premises': Baroda Bar Association seeks 'restoration' of iconic Nyaymandir in Vadodara

The district and sessions court had been functioning out of the premises for over a century before it was moved to its new address in Diwalipura in 2018

### Vadodara. (Agency)

Even as the Vadodara Municipal Corporation (VMC) has begun "emergency repairs" of a crumbling Mandvi gate, the Baroda Bar Association on Friday urged the District Collector to "intervene" and restore the iconic Nyaymandir building that served as the "temple of justice" for 128 years.

In a letter addressed to the District Collector, the Baroda Bar Association (BBA) said that although the district and sessions court has shifted to the new premises in Diwalipura area of the city, the lawyers continue to "feel a deep sense of belonging" to the heritage building and its run-down state has "left them in tears".

Seeking immediate intervention to have the VMC restore the property, the BBA said, "Although the possession of the Nyaymandir is with the Vadodara Municipal Corporation, it is a building of historic heritage and therefore, it is the responsibility of the VMC to maintain it... But it has been learnt that the VMC has no value of the building and

therefore, has been turning a blind eye to Nyaymandir. Not only is the structure in a run-down state but there is litter all around the premises and trees growing from the building, which is leading to more damage... Without repairs, the structure may collapse and cease to exist..."

Stating that the BBA is ready to bear the expenditure to



ensure that the structure is clean and free of vegetation, the letter stated, "If those having the possession of the premises (VMC) are unable to ensure that the property is kept clean and safe from vegetation growth, the BBA must be given the responsibility as we will gladly accept the same and even bear the expenses of keeping the premises safe..."

## Mumbai police extend permission to Maratha quota protesters; traffic blocks continue in city

The Mumbai traffic police issued an advisory on Saturday, asking people not to take the Eastern Freeway, which was still witnessing gridlocks amid the Maratha reservation agitation.

**Mumbai. (Agency)**  
The Mumbai police on Saturday extended police permission for the Maratha quota agitation, led by activist Manoj Jarange-Patil, a day after thousands of protesters thronged the city, causing traffic blocks in south and central

Mumbai. While the extension period for which the permission was granted was not mentioned, sources said that, usually, permission for such protests is extended for a day at a time.

A police officer said that an estimated 50,000 to 60,000 Maratha agitators had entered

Mumbai on Thursday night on nearly 11,000 vehicles. "Nearly 25 per cent of them have gone to places in Thane and Navi Mumbai, as it is easier to find places to stay there.

However, they may join protests on Monday," an official said. On Saturday, the Mumbai

traffic police issued an advisory asking people not to take the Eastern Freeway, which was still witnessing gridlocks amid the Maratha reservation agitation.

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Jarange-Patil, who began an indefinite hunger strike at Azad Maidan on Friday morning over his demand for quota benefits for the Maratha community, had said earlier that he "would not back down this time".

"We will not leave Mumbai until our demands are met," he had asserted.

On Friday, the freeway was completely out of bounds for citizens as traffic was blocked, leading to a cascading effect on the Eastern Express Highway and the Atal Setu, which also witnessed traffic snarls.

To meet the projected demand from electric trucks, ICCT's study estimates that India will require around 9 GW (Gigawatt) of charging capacity by 2030.

Ranked at the top among

states in projected charging

infrastructure requirements by

2030, Maharashtra will require

an estimated 1.92 GW of

installed charging capacity, the

highest in the country. It reflects Maharashtra's concentration of freight corridors, industrial hubs, and highway networks. According to the study, this demand is expected to grow exponentially, reaching 35 GW by 2050.

The report highlights that Maharashtra, alongside Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Madhya Pradesh, collectively represent nearly 6.3 GW of India's total 2030 demand, underscoring its strategic importance in enabling nationwide decarbonisation goals. "This rapid escalation

underscores the urgent need for integrated planning across energy distribution, industrial freight operations, and highway infrastructure to manage high-volume traffic and avoid energy supply bottlenecks," Harsimran Kaur, lead author of the study from ICCT, said. The report

stresses that Maharashtra's charging strategy needs to align with upcoming national-level deployment frameworks, especially the revised Ministry of Power guidelines and the PM E-DRIVE scheme that mandate fast-charging stations every 100 km on highways.

around town: Five generations, countless laddoos, the story of 100-year-old Manoranjan Ladu Depot in Mumbai

**Mumbai. (Agency)**  
Alongside this, the civic authorities also developed a 7.5-km-long promenade along the coast, which was inaugurated by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on August 15. Furthermore, the medians of the arterial road, which accounts for five hectares of the open space, are being beautified by Tata Sons Limited.

For the remaining 53

hectares (130 acres), which involves open space on the landward side of the road starting between Breach Candy to Worli, the BMC wanted to

rope in private entities to develop and maintain the open space for which an EoI was

floated. At least five big companies, including Jindal, Raymond, RPG Foundation, Vedanta and Reliance, had submitted bids for the work.

Of the 111 hectares of land reclaimed from the sea to develop the Coastal Road, the BMC had earmarked 70

hectares to develop an open landscape that will include green pockets, gardens, cycling tracks and amphitheatres.

promenade will be the first of its kind public space featuring walkways, cycling tracks, and plazas — with trees and flowers in abundance — taking people back to Nature," Ambani said during her speech at the Annual General Meeting of RIL on Friday. "We will nurture this space as a living, breathing, and health-promoting gift to Mumbai," she added. The landscaping and maintenance work will be carried out under RIL's corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiative for a period of 30 years.

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## EDITORIAL

**Let political agendas not distract policy as trade storm loom**

The punitive American trade tariffs are upon us. In the period of economic uncertainty leading up to the US formally notifying them, one expected the just-concluded monsoon session of parliament to focus on a national response—that the government, mindful of the moment's gravity, would engage with the opposition, present options to the public, and reassure businesses.

Instead, the government redirected focus to Bills mandating the dismissal of ministers jailed for criminal offences for 30 days, resulting in automatic forfeiture of office on the 31st day. These constitutional amendments raise legitimate questions. While public faith in governance requires that those in power remain above suspicion, the proposed mechanism appears crude. Democracy thrives on the presumption of innocence and due process, not assembly-line punishments that any government could misuse. To tie a minister's tenure to the calendar of custody before guilt is established gives executive bodies disproportionate leverage. Markets are bound to notice as well. Investors, already wary of tariff uncertainty, would weigh how these bills could unsettle Centre-state relations further if they become law. In states like Bihar, where elections are due, the mere perception that governments could be destabilised through preordained action is politically unsettling.

The message being sent—that electoral victories can be



undone through legal mechanisms—may serve immediate political interests, but would hardly strengthen democratic norms. In any case, the complex mechanism to pass constitutional amendments will test the ruling coalition's strength in parliament and its ability to persuade states to ratify them. The opposition, for its part, has partially responded with a boycott of the Joint Parliamentary Committee examining the Bills.

The gesture may signal protest, but participation would enable opposition members to put tough questions on record and, if necessary, leave a dissent note that would stand as a formal counterweight. A boycott, by contrast, risks being read as abdication, ceding the field entirely to the ruling benches. The main concern here is about priorities. The government should explain why it rushed through the introduction of these Bills and face the public's questions about its motives. The opposition, as the voice of the people in parliament, must use every available tool to hold the government to account. Even outside parliament, both sides need to prioritise resolving the growing economic crisis before addressing other issues.

IN his Independence Day speech, Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid stress on the critical role of nuclear power in building a truly self-reliant India and achieving energy independence. The importance of nuclear energy is also reflected in this year's Budget, subsequent policy statements and efforts to open the sector to private sector participation. An interim target of achieving 100 GW (gigawatts), which includes both large and small reactors, by 2047 has also been envisaged. Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) with a capacity of 300 MW or below, are gaining special attention these days as they can play a key role in decarbonising hard-to-abate industries, providing a stable power supply to remote areas, serving captive power requirements and producing hydrogen. Hard-to-abate industries—such as cement, steel, power, oil and natural gas, chemicals and fertilisers—are difficult to decarbonise due to high energy requirements and emissions from chemical processes.

Three types of SMRs—200 MWe (megawatt electrical) Bharat Small Modular Reactors, 55 MWe SMRs and five MWth (megawatt thermal) High Temperature Gas Cooled Reactors—are being designed and developed indigenously. These augur well for realising India's nuclear vision. The road ahead, however, is not that rosy. There are hurdles to be crossed, the main one being ensuring public acceptance by addressing apprehensions about human safety and environmental impacts. Public unease around nuclear energy is deeply shaped by history. Memories of Chernobyl (1986) and Fukushima (2011) continue to loom large, fuelling perceptions that a nuclear accident is both catastrophic and inevitable. The core fear is the uncontrolled release of radioactive material in the event of severe accidents that could cause long-term

environmental damage and health impacts. Radioactive waste, with its millennia-long hazard profile, is another persistent worry. Questions are often raised about the long-term storage safety, risks of

radiation exposure to plant workers has consistently been well below global regulatory limits, with public exposure averaging less than 10 per cent of the prescribed thresholds. The country's plants follow a

power plants have

scenarios. Their design offers multiple advantages: smaller reactor cores containing less fissile material, thereby reducing the potential radiological source; and lower operating pressures in certain configurations. Furthermore, factory fabrication of modules ensures stringent quality control and reduces variability associated with on-site construction. These combined features not only strengthen overall safety but also make it possible to consider smaller Emergency Planning Zones, opening opportunities for siting reactors closer to demand centres such as industrial hubs or urban microgrids.

It is heartening to note that the DEA and the AERB are looking into this matter with requisite urgency. Nonetheless, regulatory bodies emphasise that emergency planning will continue to be rigorous for all nuclear facilities to safeguard against security-related contingencies.

Building public trust is a major prerequisite for ensuring successful deployment of nuclear power plants. India's own experience—local opposition in some cases—shows that even the best-engineered plant can face hurdles if safety is not understood and accepted by those living nearby.

It would also be desirable that the Nuclear Power Corporation of India (NPCIL) and the AERB involve a few other reputed organisations to ensure wider outreach with no information bias. The communication strategy must be proactive right from the site selection stage and address all safety concerns. Sharing of success stories in India and other countries would also be helpful.

After the Fukushima disaster, Indian reactors underwent significant safety upgrades: hydrogen recombiners to prevent explosions, filtered containment venting systems to limit radiological release and enhanced flood protection measures. Every site also has Severe Accident Management Guidelines (SAMGs) in place, supported by emergency power backup and mobile equipment for extreme events. India's operating nuclear

leakage and economic costs. For SMRs, these general fears are compounded by their limited operating experience, potential siting closer to population centres, fuel supply chains and waste management.

As private sector participation grows, questions may also arise about adequate availability of trained operators. The regulatory framework in India is fairly strong. The public concern thus seems to be based on limited public exposure to factual safety records and modern reactor safety features.

India's nuclear fleet has operated for decades with an enviable safety record. As documented in reports,

"defence-in-depth" approach—multiple, redundant safety barriers, robust heat removal systems, emergency core cooling and airtight containment structures.

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India's operating nuclear

professionalism of India's Department of Atomic Energy (DAE)/Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) in ensuring nuclear and radiation safety in the country. Building on this foundation, emerging technologies like SMRs incorporate advanced safety features to further enhance reliability and public confidence.

The SMR concepts incorporate passive safety systems that function without human intervention or external power, relying instead on natural forces such as gravity. This inherent resilience makes them particularly robust in the face of extreme events, including station blackout.

**GST 2.0: Time to take the next big leap in tax reform**

On Independence Day, the Prime Minister announced reforms to the goods and services tax regime that amount to a historic redesign. The GST regime, rolled out seven years ago, is considered a landmark reform. It is a destination-based consumption tax that aims to unify the country into a common economic market, with one system of indirect taxes. It eliminates interstate frictions. It is fully electronic and has in-built incentives to file taxes and claim credit on taxes paid in the value chain and, hence, is supposed to reduce leakages. It was also expected to be buoyant due to increased compliance.

But some shortcomings have become evident over seven years. The need for GST 2.0 was felt mainly because of the multiplicity of tax slabs, frequent changes in classifications leading to disputes, the lack of coverage of significant parts of GDP, and the huge compliance burden it has placed, especially on small businesses. It fails to fully reimburse exporters for all the domestic taxes paid, making exports uncompetitive. The newscheme will hopefully address all these shortcomings. Another apprehension of the state governments is about shortfall in revenue. The GST reform was achieved as a grand bargain between the Union and state governments. The former gave up its right to impose excise and service taxes, and all states surrendered their right to impose state-level sales tax, value-added tax, and other sundry taxes such as octroi. The states were persuaded to surrender their tax autonomy by a legally binding promise to make up the revenue shortfalls. This is the GST compensation clause in the original Act of 2017, which expired in 2022. Now, the states are afraid that they will face a steep fall in their tax shares. GST 2.0 will, hopefully, also address this. The fact is that most spending obligations are with the state and local governments, whereas two-thirds of the revenue is garnered by the Union, which is then devolved according to a formula. The time has come to re-examine whether the share of GST be split 60:40 in favour of the states, rather than the 50:50 in the current design.

Different states have differing spending priorities depending on their developmental stages and reality. The proposed reform must ensure that states receive a larger, predictable share of GST receipts to meet their development needs. It is expected that in GST 2.0, the multiplicity of rates—from 5, 12, 18, 28 and 40 percent, with some other, additional rates—will be collapsed only into two rates: one for merit goods like food and medicine, and a standard rate for all other items. This simplification will reduce the disputes of classification and the resultant litigation. There will be a much smaller set of 'sin goods' for which a penal rate will apply. Most items in the 12 percent and 28 percent slabs are expected to move to 5 percent and 18 percent, respectively, greatly reducing consumer confusion, litigation, and compliance costs. Some analysts' research shows that nearly 75 percent of GST receipts will be routed through the 18 percent slab, and the effective average rate may drop by 1 percentage point, freeing purchasing power and stimulating growth.

**India's battle of the bulge**

A report published by Lancet has depicted an alarming picture of the state of obesity in India—about 21.8 crore men and 23.1 crore women, or a third of India's population, are likely to be overweight or obese by 2050.

In India, people with a body mass index (BMI) of above or equal to 25 are categorised as obese or overweight. According to the World Health Organization, those with a BMI of 25 or more are considered overweight, and those with 30 or more as obese. The BMI is a measure of a person's body fat based on their height and weight, and is calculated by dividing a person's weight in kilograms, by the square of their height in meters ( $\text{kg}/\text{m}^2$ ).

India ranked third in the world with an estimated 4.5 crore people categorised as obese in 2023. The top rank was held by the US, with an estimated 7.94 crore obese people, followed by China with 5.73 crore. However, the proportion of obese people to the total population in India and China being 7.2 percent and 8.2 percent, respectively, are much lower than that for the US (42.9 percent). In many developed and developing

countries, the obesity rate is around 30 percent or more. Global data shows that between 1990 to 2022, the overall percentage of adults above 18 years with obesity has more than doubled from 7 percent to 16 percent, while for children and adolescents aged 5 to 18 years, this proportion rose from 2 percent to 8 percent.

These rates vary widely across countries and regions.

Results of India's National Family Health Survey (NFHS) reveal an upward trend in the prevalence of obesity among Indian men and women. Between NFHS-4 and NFHS-5 rounds, corresponding to the periods 2015-16 and 2019-21, the proportion of overweight or obese persons among Indian men and women increased from 18.6 percent and 20.7 percent respectively; during 2015-16 and 2019-21, to about 22.9 percent and 24 percent respectively. Over these two periods, the percentage of obese children in India (under five years) rose from 2.1 percent to 3.4 percent. The obesity rate was higher among urban Indians than rural Indians. Abdominal obesity was higher among Indian

women as compared to Indian men. A study led by Sakshi Singh of Lucknow's King George's Medical University noted that male children in India were at a higher risk of developing obesity compared to female children. Further, children studying in private schools were at a higher risk, compared to those studying in government schools. Children of working women faced a higher risk of obesity, as compared to children of non-working women. Genetics, sedentary lifestyle, including consumption of high-fat and high-sugar foods; lack of physical activity; socio-economic and other factors account for this rising trend in obesity.

Obesity increases the risk of cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, musculoskeletal disorders and certain types of cancers. The International Diabetes Federation projects that by 2050, India will be home to the second-largest number of diabetic (15.6 crore) people in the world.

This rising trend in obesity is a matter of concern for the government and households, hence, a larger share of government and household budget

must be allocated for healthcare expenditures. The economic costs of obesity, in terms of health care costs and lost productivity, are immense. As per a 2023 report in the British Medical Journal, the global burden of overweight and obesity is expected to reach \$4.2 trillion by 2035. Obesity costs the US healthcare system about \$172 billion per year, whereas for the UK National Health Services it costs around £6.5 billion a year.

According to Global Obesity Observatory, the economic cost of obesity in India in 2019 was estimated at \$28.95 billion (about ₹2.5 lakh crore), which is about 1.02 percent of India's GDP.

It is expected to rise to \$81.53 billion (about ₹7 lakh crore) by 2030 which is about 1.57 percent of India's projected GDP. Without intervention, these costs for India may reach \$838.6 billion (about ₹69.6 lakh crore) by 2060. National Sample Survey's Consumer Expenditure Survey data reveals that not only undernutrition, but also overnutrition has been a serious problem in India. While undernutrition has received considerable attention in policy interventions in India, overnutrition has largely been neglected. Liberalisation of the Indian economy has led to consumption of more processed foods, meats and junk food, which have aggravated obesity in India.

Unlike in schools abroad, where participation in sports and gymnastics are compulsory, it is optional in India. Sports and gymnastics must be made compulsory in our schools. It is not enough that we practice yoga only on International Yoga Day, but also do it on a regular basis to improve health and well-being.

Awareness campaigns to encourage people to be fit, and shift to sustainable and healthier diets need to be accelerated. Although the government has implemented initiatives such as Fit India movement, Poshan Abhiyan, Khelo India to foster fitness and healthier lifestyle, these have had no visible impacts so far. It is laudable that the Union health ministry has taken cognisance of the matter and started acting.

# Students protest delay in appointing guest faculty in government colleges in Bengaluru

**Students are left with only one or two classes handled by permanent lecturers, while most sit idle and return home.**

**Bengaluru.(Agency)**

Hundreds of students under the banner of All India Democratic Students Organisation (AIDS) protested in Freedom Park on Friday, demanding immediate appointment of guest faculty in government degree colleges.

For the past month, government colleges across Karnataka have been reportedly functioning without adequate staff. Students are left with only one or two classes handled by permanent lecturers, while most sit idle and return home.

"The Supreme Court in its judgement on implementation of NEP-2020 had ruled that the state government can have its own policy on educational matters and is not compelled to follow the Centre. Yet, on UGC guidelines regarding appointment of guest lecturers, the government is not showing willingness to frame its own policy. This shows its attitude towards government degree students. Meanwhile, private colleges have begun classes on schedule and many are holding their first internals already as well. Yet, classes are yet to resume in government colleges. Here, we expect the state government to take responsibility of the issue," said AIDS Bengaluru district president Apoorva CM.



## Police cannot exercise 'unbridled power' to curtail citizens' freedom: Allahabad HC

**Lucknow.** Directing the closure of a history-sheet opened against a man booked under the Uttar Pradesh Prevention of Cow Slaughter Act eight years ago, the Allahabad High Court observed that the police cannot exercise "unbridled and uncanalised power" to curtail fundamental freedoms guaranteed to citizens. The court further held that police do not have an unfettered licence to arbitrarily enter names of persons, merely based on personal likes or dislikes, in the surveillance register. The HC made the observations while hearing a writ petition filed by Mohammad Wajir. The petitioner had approached the court seeking a writ of certiorari to quash an order dated June 23, in which the Superintendent of Police, Siddharth

Nagar, rejected his representation for the closure of history-sheet No. 18-A (Category). The application was rejected based on reports submitted by the Circle Officer and the Station House Officer, Bhawaniganj, Siddharth Nagar, which mentioned provisions of the Uttar Pradesh Police Regulations, particularly paragraphs 228 and 240 (which deal with opening a history sheet). "We have to examine the case based on facts and circumstances. We are of the considered view that Regulation 228 and 240 do not give an unbridled, uncanalised power to the police to use it in such a way which has the necessary consequence of squeezing out the fundamental freedom of the citizen," the court observed.

## Debris on beach: NGT tells Greater Chennai Corporation to file compliance report by Sept 2

**Chennai.(Agency)**

The southern bench of National Green Tribunal on Friday directed the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) to file a detailed compliance report on the removal of construction debris dumped along the Pattinapakkam shore, a CRZ-1A ecologically sensitive zone, by September 2.

The direction comes after the Tamil Nadu Coastal Zone Management Authority (CZMA), invoking Section 5 of the Environment Protection Act, 1986, ordered the civic body on August 27 to immediately clear the debris and restore the site to its original condition.

The authority had set a deadline of August 29 for compliance, citing that the dumping and levelling activity is a prohibited activity under CRZ Notification, 2011, as no clearance had been obtained. Chief Secretary N Muruganandam held a meeting



with officials concerned on Thursday and instructed them to comply with the CZMA directions.

During Friday's hearing, CZMA informed the tribunal that only partial clearance had been undertaken by GCC as of Thursday evening. The tribunal noted with concern that despite clear directions, the civic body had failed to fully comply.

Petitioners submitted photographs showing that only a seven-metre-wide stretch had been cleared while large quantities of debris remained.

GCC counsel, however, argued that the corporation was not responsible for dumping but

had merely provided vehicles and barricades at the request of the police to facilitate crowd management during Vinayaka Chaturthi idol immersion. The corporation also submitted photographs claiming that clearance was carried out on Friday morning.

The Bench observed that GCC could not "wiggle out" of responsibility by shifting the blame on to the police, pointing out that the corporation's vehicles were used in the activity and that it remained accountable for compliance with environmental laws.

"The direction of CZMA is categorical. GCC must file a

compliance report with photographic evidence on Tuesday," the bench said, warning that non-compliance will be viewed seriously and will invite further action.

The tribunal also flagged larger concerns about the immersion of non-eco-friendly idols in natural waterbodies. It referred to previous NGT orders, CPCB guidelines of 2020 and Tamil Nadu Government Orders of 2018, as well as a Madras High Court ruling, which clearly mandate that only certified eco-friendly idols can be immersed in rivers, lakes, or the sea.

The matter has been posted to September 2 for GCC's compliance report, along with updates from the Pollution Control Board and state authorities on preparations to enforce eco-friendly immersion practices during the Vinayaka Chaturthi idol immersion festival this weekend.

**Chandigarh.(Agency)** At a time when the Aam Aadmi Party's Delhi leadership is facing Opposition heat for not being visible in Punjab at a time when the State is ravaged by floods, Rajya Sabha MP Raghav Chadha was seen in the state on Friday — after a gap of over a year.

Chadha visited the Gurdaspur and Dinanagar areas and was seen taking a motor boat as he reviewed the situation on the ground in the flood-affected areas. Chadha had stayed away from the party's campaign ahead of 2024 Lok Sabha elections, as he was abroad. He had then said that he had got his eyes operated on and was advised rest. Last time, he was seen publicly was on May 28, 2024, while taking out a road show in Ropar.

In Gurdaspur and Dinanagar, Chadha distributed ration and medical kits and said that repair and rehabilitation work will be taken up. He announced that he would allocate money from

## Spotted in Punjab after a year, Raghav Chadha tours flood-hit areas, distributes relief material



MPLAD fund for flood safety measures.

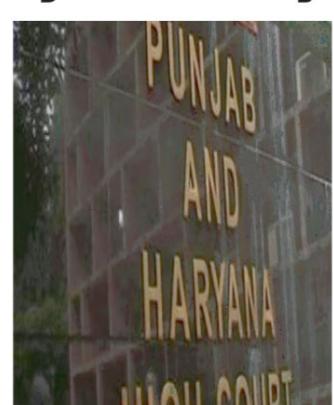
He later took to X. "Several parts of our Punjab have been severely affected by floods, with families losing their homes, farmlands submerged and livelihoods disrupted. Today, I visited different parts of Gurdaspur & Dinanagar to assess the situation and extend whatever support I can to the people of Punjab. We distributed relief kits and ration, and assured people that repair and rehabilitation work will be

## Legible medical prescription a fundamental right, rules Punjab and Haryana High Court

**Chandigarh.(Agency)**

What started as a routine anticipatory bail plea culminated in a landmark ruling on healthcare rights, with the Punjab and Haryana High Court declaring that legible medical prescriptions and diagnoses are an essential part of the right to health and, therefore, a Fundamental Right under Article 21 of the Constitution.

The order, delivered by Justice Jagdeep Singh Puri on August 27 (Wednesday) stemmed from an anticipatory bail plea in a case alleging cheating, forgery, and rape. The complainant accused the petitioner of promising her a government job in exchange for money, conducting fake interviews, and sexually exploiting her. The petitioner denied the allegations, citing a



consensual relationship and monetary disputes. The court, noting the petitioner's cooperation and the payments being for an illegal purpose, granted anticipatory bail without commenting on merits of the case. The turning point: illegible handwriting in medical reports.

What transformed the case was the court's suo motu observation on the illegibility of the medico-legal report. "While looking at the medico-legal report filed by the respondent-State along with reply as Annexure R-1, it shook the conscious of this Court as not even a word or a letter was legible," the order recorded. A similar issue surfaced in another case, where clinical notes were "totally illegible."

"It is very surprising and shocking to note that in this era of technology and accessibility of computers, the notes on the medical history and on the prescriptions by the Government doctors are still written by hand, which cannot be read by anybody except perhaps some chemists," Justice Puri observed.

According to the 2024-25 report, the total enrolment in the schools of Punjab stands at 59,08,507, which is almost 80,000 less than 59,88,681 recorded in 2023-24.

The latest data shows that 26.69 lakh children in Punjab

## U-DISE report 2024-25: Enrolment in Punjab's private schools crosses 30 lakh, around 4 lakh more than govt schools

**Ludhiana.(Agency)**

The total enrolment in Punjab's schools has witnessed a dip of nearly 80,000, according to the latest Unified District Information System for Education (U-DISE) report 2024-25 released Thursday by the Union Ministry of Education. The report revealed that more students study in the state's private schools than government-run ones.

According to the 2024-25 report, the total enrolment in the schools of Punjab stands at 59,08,507, which is almost 80,000 less than 59,88,681 recorded in 2023-24.

The latest data shows that 26.69 lakh children in Punjab

are studying in government-aided schools and 1,179 in schools under other categories. While enrolment in government

schools has dipped from 28.23

lakh last year to 26.69 lakh this year, it has increased in private schools. Last year, 29.81 lakh children were enrolled in private schools, which has increased to 30.63 lakh this

year. Enrolment in government-aided schools has also declined to 1.74 lakh this year from 1.82 lakh last year.



According to the U-DISE report 2024-25, Punjab has a total of 2,7281 schools, including 19,243 government schools, 437 government-aided, 7,589 private unaided schools, and 12 others. There are

2,73,130 teachers in the state as per the latest data, a slight increase from the 2,73,092 last year. At least 2,431 schools in Punjab are single-teacher institutions imparting education to 76,942 children.

Of the 27,281 schools in the state, 26,890 have libraries or reading corners, 26,438 have playgrounds, 1,453 have digital libraries, and 20,462 have kitchen gardens, the report said. Nearly all schools (27,273) have functional drinking water facility. On access to toilets, it said that 26,727 schools have functional toilets for girls and 26,260 have functional toilets for boys.

As many as 27,261 schools have functional electricity connections, and 5,772 have solar panels, it added.

## Dams full to the brim, more rain forecast: Punjab to see many long nights before monsoon ends

**Jalandhar.(Agency)**

The three major reservoirs of the region — Pong on the Beas, Ranjit Sagar on the Ravi, and Bhakra on the Sutlej — have already neared or crossed their critical thresholds (water levels) even as more than a month of monsoon is still left.

The three swelling rivers and their rivulets have inundated the catchment areas and the Punjab

government has already evacuated 7,689 people making it one of the worst floods that the state has seen in the recent years. Even as teams of National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), Army, and Border Security Forces are on the ground conducting search and rescue operations, a fresh Meteorological Department (IMD) forecast of heavy to very

heavy rainfall in Punjab for next 3-4 days coupled with the high water levels in the dam have become a cause of concern.

The Pong Dam has already crossed its threshold level of 1,390 feet, reaching over 1,393 feet on August 26. By Friday (August 29), the level came down to 1,391.39 feet, but the inflow was still quite high at 64,682 cusecs. The Ranjit Sagar

Dam touched its maximum level of 527.91 metres on Tuesday, but by Friday the level came down to 524.80 metres. While the inflow was 33,437 cusecs, the outflow was 51,650 cusecs. Waters of the dam played havoc in villages of the Majha region this year. The Bhakra Dam, meanwhile, has remained almost stable since Tuesday, standing at 1,671.96 feet, around eight feet

below its permissible level of 1,680 feet. However, inflows rose sharply on Friday — from 49,541 cusecs in the morning to 72,868 cusecs in the afternoon. Outflows also increased from 37,592 cusecs in the morning to 54,200 cusecs by afternoon.

According to Bhakra Beas Management Board (BBMB) officials, reservoirs are usually filled to their permissible limits

by the end of September, when the monsoon officially ends. This year, however, heavy rains in the catchment areas of Himachal Pradesh have filled the dams almost a month in advance. Now, any additional rainfall will have to be released downstream through these dams. Officials caution that if Punjab also receives heavy showers simultaneously, the combined flows could worsen flooding in the already inundated seven districts of the state and possibly extend it further. The worst-affected villages are in Pathankot, Gurdaspur, Fazilka, Kapurthala, Tarn Taran, Ferozepur, Hoshiarpur and Amritsar districts, while heavy rain triggered a flood alert in Patiala on Friday.

# Word spreads faster than wind about woman being abused for dowry: Supreme Court

The Supreme Court acquitted a mother-in-law in a dowry harassment case, citing lack of evidence. The bench observed that "word spreads faster than wind" in such matters, undermining the prosecution's claims.

New Delhi. (Agency)

Word spreads faster than the wind about a woman being harassed for dowry by the parents-in-law, the Supreme Court on Friday said while acquitting a woman accused of subjecting her daughter-in-law to cruelty.

A bench of Justices Aravind Kumar and N V Anjaria passed the judgement on a plea against the Uttarakhand High Court's verdict which affirmed the conviction and three-year sentence to the woman.

She was convicted under Section 498-A of the erstwhile IPC on the grounds that her daughter-in-law, who died, informed her family members about facing harassment for



dowry.

Section 498-A of the IPC dealt with the offence of cruelty meted out to a married woman by her husband or his relatives.

The top court, however, noted the appellant's neighbour, who was examined as a witness in the case, claimed she never made any dowry demand.

"Her evidence having been brushed aside by the trial court and also high court on the premise that she could not have deposed any fact with regard to the demand of dowry as it happens within the four walls is an erroneous finding, particularly in such matters the word spreads faster than the wind about a daughter-in-law being harassed for the dowry by the parents in law," the bench

said. The deceased's father filed a complaint in June 2001 alleging his daughter was found dead inside the matrimonial

home.

It was alleged she was pregnant at the time of her death and the deceased used to inform that her mother-in-law was commenting on her sarcastically for dowry. The complainant also said his son-in-law was not in the city.

The parents-in-law and brother-in-law of the deceased were arraigned as accused in the case. The men were, however, acquitted by the trial court, which concluded the woman died by suicide due to harassment.

The mother-in-law moved to the high court, which affirmed the trial court's judgment. The top court noted

that the demand for dowry in any form was itself sufficient for Section 498-A of the IPC being attracted.

"Likewise, harassing of a married woman with a view to coercing her or her relatives to meet any unlawful demand would also fall within the mischief of the expression 'cruelty,'" it said.

Referring to the deposition of the deceased's mother, the bench said, it would not inspire any confidence to any person of common prudence to arrive at a conclusion that on account of either harassment for dowry or on account of a demand for dowry made by the appellant, she died by suicide.

## Anti-terror agency chargesheets 5 Maoist operatives for murder of Army jawan

New Delhi. (Agency)

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has filed a chargesheet against five Maoist operatives for the killing of an Indian Army personnel in Chhattisgarh's Kanker district in 2023. In its supplementary chargesheet before the NIA Special Court in Jagdalpur, the anti-terror agency named Bhawan Lal Jain, Suresh Kumar Salam, Shailendra Kumar

Baghel, Anduram Salam, and Sonu Hemla under the IPC, Arms Act, and Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. The case is related to the murder of Army jawan Motiram Achala, who was gunned down by armed Maoists at a village fair in Amabeda in February 2023 while he was home on leave.

According to the NIA probe, Jain, Salam, Baghel, and Anduram acted as sleeper cells

of the CPI (Maoist), while Hemla was part of the Kuyemari Area Committee of the North Bastar Division. Along with a senior Maoist leader, they allegedly identified Achala and executed the attack in a crowded local bazaar to spread fear among villagers. All five accused were arrested in March this year. Earlier, in June, the NIA had chargesheeted another accused, Ashu Korsa, after taking

## 75 Monuments Restored, Many Still Forgotten: Delhi Charts Fresh Heritage Revival Plan

The scheme will aim to improve basic infrastructure such as lighting, toilets and pathways, while also hosting art and cultural programmes

New Delhi. (Agency)

Delhi may boast over a thousand monuments, but most lie hidden, neglected or fenced off from public view. Now, the city's government says it wants to bring them back to life, not just as restored structures, but as spaces buzzing with cultural activity. At a roundtable



conference held on Friday, Minister for Art, Culture and Language in Delhi government, Kapil Mishra announced that nearly 75 monuments have already been restored. The next phase will target dozens more, with help from corporate groups, heritage experts and local communities.

**A New Push Through "Adopt a Heritage"**

The central proposal on the table is the "Adopt a Heritage" scheme, under which private partners, called 'Monument Mitras,' will take responsibility for maintenance, amenities and programming at select sites. Each adoption will last five years, subject to review.

**"Delhi's Monuments Have Been Neglected"**

UNESCO, Aga Khan Trust, INTACH Delhi Chapter, Dalmia Group's Sabhyata Foundation, Bharat, K-2 India and several other organisations participated in the conference.

According to officials, the scheme will aim to improve

basic infrastructure such as lighting, toilets and pathways, while also hosting art and cultural programmes to attract visitors.

been neglected. The objective now is to ensure public participation and make these sites more beautiful, accessible and vibrant," he said. This is the first time the Archaeology Department will formally collaborate with corporate groups for monument conservation.

**Forgotten Sites on the List**

The monuments chosen for revival include some of Delhi's most overlooked structures: Bhuli Bhatiari ka Mahal, Malcha Mahal, Dara Shikoh Library, Hastals Minar, Kos Minar, Quli Khan's Tomb and others. Built between the 8th and 19th centuries, these sites represent Delhi's layered history but remain almost invisible to most residents.

**From Ruins to Cultural Hubs**

The plan is not just to restore walls and domes, but to turn monuments into cultural activity hubs.

According to officials, the scheme will aim to improve

two terrorists attempting to infiltrate across the Line of Control in the Gurez sector of Jammu and Kashmir's Bandipora district were gunned down by the Indian Army on Thursday. A heavy exchange of fire continues between the security forces and terrorists.

The encounter took place

near Naushehra Naar under Operation Naushera Nar IV, where alert troops engaged a group of heavily armed infiltrators trying to cross into Indian territory. A brief exchange of fire ensued, resulting in the elimination of two terrorists, while according to the sources, five more terrorists could be hiding in the area.

According to sources in the security grid, he was responsible for facilitating more than 100 infiltration attempts from various areas of the Gurez sector, with the majority being successful due to his intimate knowledge of the region's tough terrain and secret routes. This made him special for all terror groups.

While he was a Hizbul commander, he helped every terror outfit in planning and executing infiltrations from the Gurez and neighbouring sectors along the Line of Control.

After evading security forces for years, his luck ran out during the latest infiltration attempt. The killing of Bagu Khan is being seen as a blow to the logistical network of terror outfits in the area. This encounter came days after the

## Delhi High Court Asks Hospital To Treat Ill Child In Economically Weak Section

New Delhi. (Agency)

The Delhi High Court on Friday directed a private hospital to provide medical treatment under the EWS category to a 12-year-old boy in dire need of a ventilator bed after he fell from a building. The high court noted the boy's father was a daily wager and faced enormous challenges in finding a ventilator bed at any government hospital in the capital following which the minor was taken to the private hospital.

The court took suo motu cognisance of a newspaper report which said 12-year-old Rishabh Singh Parihar fell from the first floor his building on August 19 and was admitted to Shree Aggarsain International Hospital in Rohini.

A bench of Justices Prathiba M Singh and Manmeet PS Arora, which spoke to the child's uncle over a phone call, was initially considering moving the boy to a government hospital.

However, noting the progress in the child's medical condition, the court decided not to shift him from the current facility. The court further made it clear till the next date, the hospital will not demand money and continue to treat the child properly.

"The child shall be considered in the EWS category and no payment shall be demanded by the hospital from the parents of the child till the next date of hearing. Issue notice to the hospital. On the

implementation of the Hospital Management Information System (HMIS), said in the EWS category, the criteria deserves to be increased in the case of hospitals for most private hospitals did not



**The court further made it clear till the next date, the hospital will not demand money and continue to treat the child properly.**

next date, the hospital may make its submissions," the bench said, posting the matter for September 2.

The order would be communicated to the head of the hospital. Advocate Ashok Agarwal, who was appointed amicus curiae by the court in another case relating to the

properly extend medical facility to the category though under a binding obligation.

The news report claimed a few days into his treatment at the government hospital, the child complained of severe headache, nose bleeding and vomiting and was rushed to the private hospital.

**Show of solidarity: JNU students rally against termination of asst professor**



New Delhi. (Agency)

A day after the Jawaharlal Nehru University Students' Union (JNUSU) issued a strongly worded statement condemning the termination of Rohan V H Choudhary from the Centre for Political Studies, the campus witnessed a significant student-led demonstration in solidarity with the professor.

From Friday morning, students began assembling outside the activity centre. The protest was spontaneous, and students cited the seriousness of the issue and the implications for academic freedom as their motivation to gather.

Holding placards that read "We Stand with Rohan", "Dissent is not a crime", and "No to authoritarianism, yes to academic freedom", students from across disciplines, including literature, sociology, and even engineering, joined the demonstration. Several faculty members were also seen

quietly standing with the crowd, some choosing anonymity, while others made their presence known in a show of defiance.

Speaking at the protest, JNUSU president Nitish Kumar said, "Rohan's termination is not just an attack on him; it is an attack on every student who dares to question, every teacher who refuses to submit, and every idea that challenges the status quo." JNUSU vice-president Manisha echoed similar sentiments, adding,

"When a teacher is punished for not falling in line, it is the students who are being told to stay silent. But we will not be silent or afraid." Meanwhile, the general secretary, Muneha Fatima, announced that the students' union would soon begin a series of sit-ins, solidarity lectures, and open mics aimed at raising awareness about the increasing threats to academic independence.

## Waterlogging paralyses Delhi traffic; over 250 flights disrupted

New Delhi. (Agency)

Heavy rain lashed Delhi on Friday morning, leaving several areas of the national capital submerged and paralysing vehicular movement across key stretches. The downpour led to severe waterlogging on arterial roads, with commuters struggling through inundated streets, and some locals even wading and swimming through knee-deep water.

According to officials, traffic was thrown out of gear at multiple locations, including NH-24 in East Delhi and the Pragati Maidan underpass, which were heavily waterlogged. Major stretches such as the Delhi-Noida-Direct (DND) Flyway, Mathura Road, Vikas Marg, ISBT, Geeta Colony and Rajaram Kohli Marg witnessed long traffic snarls as vehicles moved at a snail's pace. A particularly long queue of vehicles was reported between Badarpur and Ashram, causing severe inconvenience

to office-goers and school buses. Areas such as West Vinod Nagar, Patparganj, Mayur Vihar, Sangam Vihar and the vicinity of AIIMS were among the localities that bore the brunt of waterlogging. The Delhi Traffic Police said its teams were deployed at multiple points to manage the situation. "Due to rain and waterlogging in some pockets, traffic movement was slow. Our personnel have been deployed to streamline the situation and assist commuters," an officer said. As residents grappled with the chaos, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) mounted a sharp attack

on the Delhi government, alleging corruption in desilting works meant to prevent such flooding.

AAP's Delhi unit chief Saurabh Bharadwaj shared a video from Patparganj on social media platform X, accusing the government of failing to even maintain appearances.

"They think the rainy season will end and the trouble will be averted. Delhi residents fear this BJP government will push the city back in every sector," he charged. Bharadwaj also directly questioned the CM over desilting contracts and audit reports.

## 7 Delhi colonies set for revamp under PPP model: PWD

New Delhi. (Agency)

In a push to modernise ageing housing stock and unlock underutilised land, the PWD has initiated a redevelopment drive across seven residential pockets in the city, to be executed through a public-private partnership (PPP) model. The move is aimed at creating sustainable government housing while opening up commercial avenues to fund the project.

Officials said the selected sites include Vikas Bhawan-I at ITO, Timarpur, Gulabi Bagh, Kalyanavas, Probyn Road, Sindhora Khurd, Sindhora Kalan and Bahapur. The PWD has already shared land and building details with the National Buildings Construction Corporation (NBCC), the central government's construction PSU, which will submit a detailed PPP proposal.

"Once NBCC's proposal comes through, we will take the project forward," a senior official confirmed.

NBCC has experience in undertaking large-scale redevelopment projects, having overseen the transformation of government housing complexes in Kidwai Nagar, Sarojini Nagar, Nauroji Nagar and Kasturba Nagar, which had high-rise residential towers with commercial infrastructure.

offices, retail spaces, and even the sale of surplus land parcels to cross-subsidise construction costs. Gulabi Bagh, Sindhora Khurd and Sindhora Kalan together host nearly 1,200 government quarters. Timarpur has around 90 and 16 residential quarters, while nearby Probyn Road has additional quaters. In East Delhi's Kalyanavas, 70 government flats are also earmarked for redevelopment.

PWD officials acknowledged that most of these colonies are decades



# Jasprit Bumrah, Shubman Gill among others to undergo pre-season fitness tests at CoE



**New Delhi. (Agency)**  
India Test skipper and T20 vice-captain Shubman Gill reached the BCCI Centre of Excellence here for fitness assessment and preparations ahead of travelling to Dubai for the upcoming Asia Cup.

The Indian squad members are scheduled to assemble at Dubai on September 4 ahead of their

tournament opener on September 9 against the hosts United Arab Emirates. A bout of flu had forced Gill to skip the ongoing Duleep Trophy quarterfinal against East Zone, where he was named as the North Zone captain. Gill was recovering from his illness at his Chandigarh home before flying out to Bengaluru. It's

possible that Gill may fly out of Bengaluru to Dubai as this time the players will reach Dubai in a staggered manner from their respective locations, unlike in the past when the team would assemble in Mumbai before travelling en bloc.

Apart from Gill, wicketkeeper-batter Jitesh Sharma too has arrived at the CoE for pre-

tournament preparations. PTI understands that lead pacer Jasprit Bumrah, Washington Sundar, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Mohammad Siraj and Shardul Thakur too are set to arrive at CoE for the mandatory pre-season assessment. Thakur is set to lead West Zone in the Duleep Trophy semifinals, while Jaiswal and Sundar, who are on

the standby list for the Asia Cup, are also set to feature in the last four matches of the domestic season opener. Some of the other Asia Cup-bound players, such as Arshdeep Singh, Harshit Rana (North Zone) and Kuldeep Yadav (Central Zone) are already playing the Duleep Trophy quarterfinals.

Meanwhile, South Zone will have to name a new skipper for the Duleep Trophy semifinals (September 4-7) as Tilak Varma has been included in the Asia Cup squad. Injury trouble for Mukesh Kumar Kerala's Mohammed Azharuddeen is the vice-captain, and he could be promoted to the leadership role or they have more experienced candidates in R Sai Kishore, Devdutt Padikkal or N Jagadeesan.

East Zone suffered a setback as pacer Mukesh Kumar was not bowling in the second innings, possibly owing to a niggle that he sustained during the first innings here.

The Bengal pacer sat out for nine overs in the first innings to tend to his thigh/groin before resuming the bowling. Mukesh also came out to bat in East Zone's first innings. However, he was not available to bowl in the second innings on the third day of the Duleep Trophy quarterfinals.

**Digvеш Rathi, Nitish Rana fined for verbal spat in Delhi Premier League**

**New Delhi. (Agency)**  
Digvеш Rathi and Nitish Rana have been fined heavily for their on-field altercation during the Eliminator match of the Delhi Premier League 2025

way back but was pushed away by the umpire. Things got heated up as Sumit Bharti came charging towards Yadav, leading to another altercation. The umpire continued to push



(DPL 2025). The fixture between West Delhi Lions and South Delhi Superstar saw Rathi and Nitish at loggerheads and had to be separated by other players and umpires. Rathi has been fined 80% of the Match Fees for a Code of Conduct breach under Article 2.2 (Level 2) for the conduct contrary to the spirit of the game. On the other hand, Rana has been fined 50% of the match fees for a Code of Conduct breach under Article 2.6 (Level 1) - using a gesture that is obscene, offensive or insulting during a match. There was another heated moment witnessed during the game as South Delhi Superstar's fast bowler Aman Bharti gave a send off to West Delhi Lions' batter Krish Yadav (31 off 22) after dismissing him in the 11th over of the match. Yadav retaliated, exchanging words with the seamer on his

## Djokovic jokes about injury after reaching US Open 4th round: Can't let rivals know



**New Delhi. (Agency)**  
Novak Djokovic joked about his injury issues after reaching round 4 of the US Open 2025. Djokovic beat Briton Cameron Norrie 6-4, 6-7(4-7), 6-2, 6-3 after quickly recovering from a lower back problem at Arthur Ashe Stadium on Saturday, August 30. Following his victory, he etched his name in the record books, becoming the oldest man to reach the last 16 in the tournament since American Jimmy Connors managed the feat at the same age in 1991. Having struggled with a back issue during the match, the four-time US Open champion said that his team wants him to be tested during each match, as he hasn't played much since his loss in the semi-final against Jannik Sinner at Wimbledon. He also joked about his fitness concerns, saying he's fit as ever.

"My team wants me to suffer on the court so I can get

## Cody and Brandi Rhodes surprise fans with second baby

**New Delhi. (Agency)**  
WWE's own power couple Cody Rhodes and Brandi Rhodes surprised fans and followers alike with the joyful arrival of their second daughter, Leilani Ella Runnels, on Friday, August 29. The announcement was heartfelt yet completely unexpected. Brandi took to Instagram to share the news with an adorable photo of her holding her newborn's hand along with the caption, "Welcome to the world, Leilani Ella Runnels. We are in love. Thank you God for answered prayers. Cody + Brandi + Libby + Lani = Love". Also jumping right into the celebration was Cody, who reposted with a

snapshot of their older daughter Liberty (Libby) decked out in a "Big Sister" hat, casting out the perfect smile of sibling pride. Cody has openly talked about how fatherhood transformed him. Wrestling, as he used to put it, was inherently "selfish," but Liberty shifted that focus entirely off him. He's now no longer striving solely for personal glory but instead aims to build the best life possible for his family. He also opened up about his experience with fatherhood to PEOPLE, saying: "And she's changed everything for me. You have to go home and report back to a three and a half year old who doesn't care if you just wrestled

in front of 80,000 people. She cares if you make funny noises and there's ice cream, you know? So changed everything for me in the best of ways." Brandi's journey to motherhood, on the other hand, particularly this time around, was one not without its own hurdles. It turns out that the duo had intentionally kept Leilani's arrival under the wraps, especially given Brandi's health history. Earlier this year, Brandi underwent surgery for endometriosis, managing a very high-risk pregnancy along with being 42 years old, which prompted the couple to wait until everything was safe before making.

The 32-year-old pacer, who also skipped the recent white-ball series against the West Indies and South Africa, will undergo routine scans on his back after experiencing tightness since returning from the Caribbean last month, according to a report from CODE Sports. Cricket Australia's decision to rest

Cummins underlines its focus on preserving his fitness for the five-Test Ashes series, beginning in Perth later this year. Despite sitting out the New Zealand tour, Cummins is still expected to feature in October's ODI series against India and line up for at least one Sheffield Shield fixture with New South Wales in the lead-up to the Ashes. Speaking on Thursday, fellow fast bowler Josh Hazlewood confirmed that Australia's Test quicks will follow different preparation schedules leading into the marquee series. The Test guys will play more than one Shield

game," Hazlewood told reporters. "They'll probably play two or three, but everyone's on different programs." I used it last year and found it very beneficial - time on the field, multiple spells in a day, it's hard to replicate at

training. "It felt like over the last 12 months the best way for me to go about it is just keep ticking over, keep playing, not having too long off bowling. If I can just stay up there at match intensity as long as I can, that's the best way forward." Australia's pace depth is already under scrutiny ahead of the 2025/26 summer. Fringe quicks Lance Morris, Spencer Johnson and Ben Dwarshuis are all battling injuries, leaving Cummins, Hazlewood, Mitchell Starc and Scott Boland shouldering the responsibility of leading the attack in the Ashes.

## Promise of compassion: RCB announce Rs 25 lakh aid for stampede victims' families



**New Delhi. (Agency)**

Indian Premier League (IPL) franchise Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) have announced financial aid of Rs 25 lakh for the families of each of the 11 fans who lost their lives in the stampede outside M. Chinnaswamy Stadium on 4 June 2025.

The announcement was made on Saturday through the franchise's official accounts on X and Instagram, under their newly launched social initiative, RCB Cares. The tragedy, which happened

during RCB's title celebrations in Bengaluru, remains one of the darkest moments in the city's sporting history. Thousands of jubilant supporters had gathered outside the Chinnaswamy Stadium less than 24 hours after RCB clinched their maiden IPL title with a victory over Punjab Kings in the final in Ahmedabad. But the celebrations turned into chaos as the uncontrolled surge of fans towards the stadium gates left 11 dead and more than 50 others injured. Eighty-six days

on, RCB have come forward with a more substantial compensation package. In an emotional statement, the franchise acknowledged the magnitude of the tragedy and expressed solidarity with the grieving families. "Our hearts broke on June 4, 2025. We lost eleven members of the RCB family."

They were part of us. Part of what makes our city, our community & our team unique. Their absence will echo in the memories of each one of us. "No amount of support can ever fill the space they've left behind. But as a first step, and with the deepest respect, RCB has extended Rs 25 lakh each to their families. Not just as financial aid, but as a promise of compassion, unity, and ongoing care."

"This is also the beginning of RCB CARES: a long-term commitment for meaningful action that begins by honouring their memory. Every step forward will reflect what the fans feel, expect, and deserve."

## Indian fan zones sold out 50 days ahead of series, says Cricket Australia



**New Delhi. (Agency)**

Cricket Australia on Saturday announced that fan zones dedicated to Indian supporters for the upcoming white-ball series between Australia and India have sold out nearly 50 days before the first ball is bowled, highlighting the soaring demand for the contests between two of the game's biggest draws.

Public tickets for matches in Sydney and Canberra have also been fully booked, with Cricket Australia urging spectators to secure seats for the remaining fixtures as they too are selling quickly. We are thrilled by the overwhelming response to the Indian fan zones selling out across all eight venues," said Joel Morrison, Cricket Australia's Executive General Manager, Events and Operations. "We are excited to see the momentum building around this series and the strong passion fans continue to display for the game. "We're looking

forward to a vibrant atmosphere in the stands and a world-class contest on the field between two great cricketing nations. "India's tour begins with the one-day international opener on 19 October at Perth Stadium, followed by fixtures at Adelaide Oval on 23 October and the Sydney Cricket Ground on 25 October. Batting stalwarts Virat Kohli and captain Rohit Sharma are expected to feature in the 50-over format, having stepped away from Test and Twenty20 internationals. The ODIs will be followed by a five-match Twenty20 international series, starting on 29 October at Manuka Oval in Canberra. The series will then move to the Melbourne Cricket Ground on 31 October, Bellerive Oval in Hobart on 2 November, Gold Coast Stadium on 6 November and The Gabba in Brisbane on 8 November. This season marks the first time that men's internationals will be staged across all eight Australian states and territories, with Canberra and Hobart both hosting India during the T20 leg.



# Pawan Singh Puts Hand Around Anjali Raghav's Waist, Says 'Saw An Insect' Internet Calls It 'Molestation'

**B**hojpuri superstar Pawan Singh is no stranger to the spotlight, but this time he is back in the news for all the wrong reasons. A video from a public event has gone viral on social media, leaving fans shocked and sparking heated debate online. The reason? Pawan Singh made Anjali Raghav feel uncomfortable during the promotions of the new song *Saiyan Sewa Kare*.

In the clip, Pawan Singh joined Anjali Raghav on stage as she addressed the crowd and what happened in between her speech left everyone shocked. Pawan suddenly leaned toward Anjali and touched her waist as she, visibly uncomfortable, smiled awkwardly.

That's not all. He even explained his action, saying he thought he saw

something, like an insect, on her waist and asked her to stay still so he could remove it.

#### Internet Furious Over Pawan Singh's Action

While Anjali tried to keep her composure and brushed it off with a smile, the internet was left furious and flooded the video with comments filled with disappointment,

calling out Pawan Singh for his inappropriate and disrespectful actions. "That's absolutely pathetic behaviour. Shameful that such people get any fan following at all," wrote one of the users on X. Someone else echoed the same sentiment, writing, "This is molestation."

#### Pawan Singh's Past Controversies

This isn't the first time Pawan Singh has found himself in controversy. Back in 2019, the *Tu Lagawelu Jab Lipistic* fame was reportedly booked for defaming and posting 'vulgar' pictures and videos of Akshara Singh on the internet.

According to a statement given by the actress, as reported by DNA, she decided to end her friendship with Pawan after he got married in March 2018. Pawan, however, did not want things to end and began pressuring her to continue what they shared. Pawan Singh's marital life has also grabbed enough attention. The singer got married to Neelam Giri in 2014 and a year later, she died by suicide. Later, in 2018, he tied the knot with Jyoti Singh but within months, she came out accusing Pawan of mental harassment.



# Rakul Preet Singh

## Jets Off For Pati Patni Aur Woh 2 Shoot Amid Attack On Crew

**R**akul Preet Singh was recently clicked at the airport, as she headed out for the shoot of *Pati Patni Aur Woh 2*. Opting for a casual yet chic outfit, Rakul nailed the perfect blend of comfort and elegance with a stylish white co-ord set. The actor's travel for the shoot comes after reports that locals in Prayagraj beat up the film's crew following an argument. The buzz around *Pati Patni Aur Woh 2* has been steadily growing, with fans eager to see Rakul Preet Singh in a fresh avatar in the franchise's new chapter. The film also stars Ayushmann Khurrana and Sara Ali Khan. Rakul, for her airport appearance, posed for the paps and quickly headed towards the airport gate. Take a look at her photos here:

#### What happened during Pati Patni Aur Woh 2 shoot in Prayagraj?

The shoot of *Pati Patni Aur Woh 2* has kicked off in Prayagraj, but the sets have already witnessed unexpected drama. Several viral videos circulating online claim that locals of the city assaulted members of the film's crew following an argument.

In one of the clips, three men can be seen physically attacking a crew member, while another video reportedly captures Sara in a heated exchange with co-star Ayushmann. Though the makers have not issued any confirmation, the footage has sparked widespread chatter on social media.

A now-viral video shows two locals approaching a

crew member during the filming of a car sequence. The altercation quickly escalated, with claims suggesting that the person being beaten might have been the film's director. While some bystanders attempted to diffuse the situation, others allegedly joined in, leading to a full-blown scuffle. As the videos continue to spread online, fans await an official clarification from the makers of the film.

Meanwhile, Rakul Preet Singh, has an impressive line-up of big-ticket films. She is preparing for the



highly anticipated sequel *De De Pyaar De 2*, where she will be seen sharing screen space with Ajay Devgn and R Madhavan. Most recently, the actress appeared in the comedy-drama *Mere Husband Ki Biwi*, co-starring Bhumi Pednekar and Arjun Kapoor. Directed by Mudassar Aziz, the film hit theatres on February 21.



**Ekta Kapoor Seeks Blessings At Lalbaugcha Raja As She Marks 30 Years In Entertainment**



**P**roducer and television trailblazer Ekta Kapoor visited Mumbai's iconic Lalbaugcha Raja to seek blessings from Lord Ganesha, continuing a personal tradition that has been part of her spiritual calendar for years. Known to be a devout believer, Kapoor not only welcomes Ganpati Bappa into her home annually but also makes it a point to visit the famed Lalbaugcha Raja pandal during the festive season. Taking to Instagram, Kapoor shared visuals from her darshan, captioning them with unfiltered devotion: "LALBAUG CHA RAJA!!!! Bhappaaaaaaa." The post resonated with fans who have long associated the producer's success with her deep-rooted faith.

#### A Milestone Year for Ekta Kapoor

The visit comes at a time when Kapoor is celebrating 30 years in the entertainment industry, a career that has reshaped Indian television and redefined content across formats. From changing the landscape of daily soaps to building one of the strongest production houses in the country, Kapoor's journey has been marked by resilience, reinvention, and sheer creative drive.

This year also brought a major career milestone as she received her first National Award as co-producer of *Kathal*, a critically acclaimed Netflix film that combined satire, humour, and social commentary to wide appreciation.

#### Upcoming Projects

Even as she looks back on three decades of content creation, Kapoor shows no signs of slowing down. On the work front, she has lined up a string of ambitious projects: *VVAN*, a collaboration with TVF starring Sidharth Malhotra and Tamannaah Bhatia, billed as a mythological spectacle.

*Bhoot Bangla*, a horror-comedy directed by Priyadarshan and headlined by Akshay Kumar, expected to deliver a mix of laughs and scares.

A nostalgic revival of her iconic television drama *Kyun Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi*, bringing back one of the most defining shows in Indian pop culture to a new generation of audiences.

## South Actress Nivetha Pethuraj Makes Relationship With Rajith Ibran Official



**N**ivetha Pethuraj is making headlines currently after she officially announced her relationship with Rajith Ibran. In the official post, Nivetha Pethuraj shared a picture where she was seen wrapping her arms around her beau. The actress looked stunning in a saree as she leaned on Rajith Ibran, who was dressed formally. The actress shared the shot without a message and only added a handful of emojis. Rajith Ibran, Nivetha Pethuraj's fiancé, is reportedly a businessman and model located in Dubai.

According to Mint, the pair plans to marry later this year in a modest ceremony attended primarily by close friends and family members. While the history of their relationship has not been made public, the revelation has received significant support from fans and colleagues, with the couple's photo getting thousands of likes and congratulatory remarks. More information regarding their marriage has yet to be formally published.

#### Who is Nivetha Pethuraj?

Nivetha Pethuraj is an actress well known for her work in Tamil and Telugu cinema. The 34-year-old actress won Miss India UAE and later competed in Miss India Worldwide 2015. Nivetha made her acting debut in 2016 with the critically acclaimed *Oru Naal Koothu* and soon established herself with key roles in films such as *Tik Tik Tik* with Jayam Ravi, *Thimiru Pudichavan* with Vijay Antony and Vijay Sethupathi's *Sangathamizhan*. She rose to prominence in Telugu cinema with performances in films such as *Ala Vaikunthapurramuloo*, starring Allu Arjun. She also made an appearance in *JioHotstar's* horror thriller *Boo*.

Nivetha Pethuraj most recently starred in the web series *Paruvu*. The Telugu crime thriller revolves around the issue of honour crimes in India and delves into the sociopolitical realities of Amaravati.

The series, which stars Nagendra Babu and Naresh Agastya, is currently available for streaming on ZEE5. Over the years, Nivetha has been the focus of controversy, including charges regarding her personal life and financial backing from a leading actress and politician.



# Make your Kitchen a sleek and stylish Space

Your kitchen should be a sleek and stylish space. Here are some simple tips you need to keep in mind when you are choosing a modular kitchen.

Yet stylish - that is what modular kitchens are all about. These kitchens not only make cooking convenient and efficient, they also make your kitchen look like a happier and fun place to be in. Modern modular kitchen furniture include various units of cabinets, each designed for a unique purpose, so it increases your efficiency. Pick one that has the most appropriate design to suit your particular needs.

Here are some simple tips you need to keep in mind when you are choosing a modular kitchen...

#### Know your Budget

With the variety available these days, you could easily tend to overspend. So, it is best to decide on a budget before you go out shopping for your modular kitchen. There are small-budget kitchens also available that do not compromise on functionality. And of course, there are very high-budget kitchens that are glamourous.

#### You need to plan well

Measure the exact area and also keep in mind the layout and kind of space you have in your kitchen before you go out looking for a modular kitchen set-up. An important thing that you need to bear in mind is what your specific needs are — do you need a built-in hob, or would just a simple oven work? Do you need a microwave oven or grill? What kind of chimney do you want and how much space are you allocating for it? Would you opt for an L-shaped kitchen counter or would you need a kitchen island?



What would you choose — there is a variety of designs and materials available right from the more contemporary steel and glass, to the classic wood and stone. It would be wise to choose something that not just looks nice but is also sturdy and long-lasting. Another thing you need to keep in mind is that it should be easy to clean.

#### Size it up

Keep comfort in mind when you are selecting your modular kitchen. The cabinets that you get installed in your kitchen should be within your reach. You should be able to use them without straining yourself unnecessarily.

#### Flashy or functional

When you are selecting decorations and fixtures for your kitchen, you should ideally look for designs that are functional. The decorations should not obstruct your free movement in the kitchen.

#### Does it cater to your needs?

Your modular kitchen should have cabinets and drawers that cater to your daily and specific cooking needs in the kitchen. Ideally, separate racks and storage units for your cutlery should be built. You should have your ovens and other electrical appliances fitted in according to your needs.

#### Light right

When you are getting your kitchen installed, make sure you know where you want the lights. If you have a large window in the kitchen, you should install your kitchen in a way that it does not get blocked — a dark kitchen area can hinder energies. It is a good idea to use accent lights, wherever needed. Under-cabinet lighting is also essential for your work area.



1. Anyone with the interest and little space for growing plants, even on a window-sill or balcony can build and enjoy Bonsai collection.

2. The 3 main techniques to grow your own Bonsai plants are growing, pruning and shaping.

**Growing-** select a tree from a nursery which has a thick trunk. take a small ceramic container to plant the bonsai - usually the depth of the pot should be equal to the thickness of the trunk of the plant. Place a plastic net at the base of the container, so that water can drain out. Now add the specially prepared bonsai soil made of garden soil, cow manure, broken brick pieces, sand and organic manure (available in the market). Trim 1/2 to 1/3rd of the existing roots of the plant, leaving most of the thin white roots (known as feeder roots) and some old thick roots. Plant the tree into the pot.

**NOTE-** materials matter, so if the soil good, the bonsai will take few months or even a year to grow, and two years for fruits to flower

**Pruning:** Generally, you have to prune the roots and the foliage. Pruning bonsais is one of the more enjoyable aspects of growing bonsais.

**Pruning roots:** Due to small containers, bonsai roots are stunted in growth. By pruning roots, you will ensure that there is space for the new roots to grow, which is critical for the health and growth of the bonsai. Prune roots twice a year and change the soil when it's done.

**Pruning Foliage:** This is vital for aesthetic purposes. Work out a specific design in the mind for your tree and shape it into the form you desire. Removing dead leaves help keep it healthy and beautiful.

**Shaping:** To create a desired shape, you can use a wire (copper wires are the best) to assist the branches to grow as per your design. Make sure that the wire is of the right thickness and does not break the branches. Hold the branch you are wiring in both hands and carefully wind the wire around it.

3. Select the plants which can be easily trimmed and shaped, and ones with a rough bark.

4. For the flower and fruit bonsais, four to five hours of direct sunlight is essential.

5. Avoid too much of watering. Alternate days are good enough.

6. Ready-made bonsais are available. Plant them into containers with the given steps

7. Bonsais are kept indoors, but a suitable place is on the window sill, balcony, terrace or a garden shelf. Avoid keeping them in an A/C room for long.

8. Although Bonsai trees can be grown from seeds,

**Beginners guide to Bonsai**

# Bonsai



**You can make your bonsai into master pieces provided you follow the right techniques. We list down the basics of bonsai.**

more developed material is already available. Seedlings, cuttings or young trees with smaller leaves are usually preferred.

