

One person, one vote exists since 1951: Poll body rejects 'vote chori' charge

► Rahul Gandhi has been relentlessly attacking the election body over the past week, accusing it of widespread voter manipulation during the 2024 Lok Sabha election.

United Nations. (Agency)

The Election Commission (ECI) on Thursday clapped back at Congress MP Rahul Gandhi's allegations of poll irregularities, saying proof should be given instead of creating false narratives.

► Poll body demands proof of Rahul Gandhi's 'vote chori' charge

► Says dirty phrases like 'vote chori' being used to peddle false narratives

► Gandhi has accused the ECI of widespread voter manipulation

by using "dirty phrases" like "vote chori" (vote theft). In a strongly worded statement, the poll watchdog asserted that the law for "one person, one vote" has been in existence since the first

elections in 1951-1952. "If anyone has any proof of any person actually voting twice in any election, it should be shared with ECI with a written affidavit rather than colouring all the electors of India as 'chor' without any proof," the ECI said.

Gandhi has been relentlessly attacking the election body over the past week, accusing it of widespread voter manipulation during the 2024 Lok Sabha election, which favoured the BJP. The Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha alleged that fake people were added to voter lists in states like Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka.

The poll body further stated that the use of

phrases like "vote chori" was a direct attack on crores of Indian electors and an assault on the integrity of lakhs of election staff. The Election Commission's

bachao" protest marches on August 14.

WHAT RAHUL GANDHI HAS CLAIMED

The controversy started after Gandhi alleged there was a "vote chori" of over 1 lakh votes out of the 6.5 lakh votes cast in Karnataka's Mahadevapura assembly segment during the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. The Mahadevapura assembly constituency is part of the Bangalore Central Lok Sabha seat. The BJP won the Bangalore Central seat last year by a margin of 32,707 votes. Since then, the Congress has made similar claims of vote theft in other seats as well. In fact, during a party meeting, Gandhi hinted that "vote theft"

could be at play in the 70 seats that the Congress lost by margins of less than 50,000 in last year's Lok Sabha elections.

Nagpur. (Agency)

Union minister Nitin Gadkari on Thursday pitched for making India a superpower and "vishwaguru", saying the world would certainly listen to India if it becomes strong in every sector. The Road Transport and Highways Minister was addressing a gathering at a programme to mark 'Akhand Bharat Sankalp Din' organised by the Rashtra Nirman Samiti (social organisation) in Nagpur.

"We recall this day because on this day in 1947, the country was divided into two - India and Pakistan. We all, as a mission, accept that our country's partition was unnatural, and one day, our country will become 'akhand' (unified). This is the resolve we take today in this programme," he said.

Mr Gadkari praised India's unity in diversity and also lauded the country's armed forces.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has resolved to make India a 5 trillion-dollar economy, the third-largest economy in the world, as well as "atmanirbhar" and "vishwaguru", he noted, adding all these resolutions will be achieved with the efforts of every Indian. "If we become strong in every sector, then certainly the world will listen to us. Those who are strong in economics, defence, science and technology and those who are progressing in agriculture and business, and a country whose citizens are patriots and cultured, that country can only become vishwaguru," he said. Mr Gadkari praised the Rashtra Nirman Samiti for invoking the thought of "Akhand Bharat" among the people. "When we are taking the resolution for 'Akhand Bharat' today, we should also resolve to make a superpower country which is progressive, prosperous and powerful," he said.

Operation Sindoos will go down as example in humanity's fight against terrorism: President Murmu

The Sikh Times

New Delhi, Aug 14: President Droupadi Murmu on Thursday lauded as historic the Indian military response to Pakistan-sponsored terror attack in Pahalgam and said it would go down in history as an example in humanity's fight against terrorism. Addressing the nation on the eve of the 79th Independence Day, Murmu described the killing of innocent citizens on a holiday in Kashmir as cowardly and utterly inhuman and said India responded in a decisive manner and with steely resolve. "Operation Sindoos showed that our armed forces are prepared to meet any eventuality when it comes to guarding the nation. With strategic clarity and technical capability, they destroyed terrorist hubs across the border. I believe Operation Sindoos will go down in history as an example in humanity's fight against terrorism," she said. The President also noted the national unity in the wake of the attack terming it India's biggest strength against the enemy. The world, she said, has taken note of India's stance, that we will not be the aggressor, but will not hesitate to retaliate in defence of our citizens. Murmu added that Operation Sindoos was also a test case of the Atmanirbhar Bharat mission in the defence sector. "The outcome has proved that we are on the right path. Our indigenous manufacturing has achieved the critical level that makes us self-sufficient in meeting many of our security requirements. These are landmark achievements in India's defence history since Independence," she said. In the backdrop of a tariff war with the US, the President spoke of the Indian economy being the fastest growing major economy. She said India is well on the way to becoming a self-reliant nation and is moving ahead with great confidence, and with a GDP growth rate of 6.5 per cent in the last fiscal, India is the fastest growing among the major economies in the world. "Even amid stress in the global economy, demand at home is pacing ahead. Inflation has remained under control. Exports are rising. All key indicators show the economy in the pink of health. This is as much due to carefully calibrated reforms and sagacious economic management as due to the hard work and dedication of our workers and farmers," she said, noting how several people had been pulled out of poverty. Speaking of the need to root out corruption, the President said India is moving ahead towards that future with sustained good governance, and zero tolerance for corruption.



Heartfelt greetings
to all fellow citizens on
79th INDEPENDENCE DAY



Government of India



If today the world thinks Bharat is ready
to take a big leap, it has a powerful
launchpad of 11 years behind it.

- Narendra Modi

News box

4.5k cops deployed, checks intensified in Gurgaon ahead of Independence Day**Gurgaon. (Agency)**

As the country marks the 79th Independence Day, city will see the deployment of 4,500 police personnel as part of heightened security arrangements, officials said Wednesday. Over 40 inspectors, along with police and traffic staff, will be on duty on August 15, supported by additional officers equipped with available security tools. The crime branch will also patrol in civilian attire to ensure comprehensive surveillance. "Checking is ongoing throughout the city. A total of 4,500 police personnel are deployed for duty on August 15. Additionally, our crime branch team is patrolling the entire area in civilian attire. Checking is also underway at interstate points and checkpoints, as well as on routes connecting to other districts. We have also formed several dynamic checking teams to conduct surprise checks anywhere," said DCP (headquarters) Arpit Jain. He added that inspections are being conducted at hotels, lodges, malls, hospitals, railway stations, bus stands, key markets, govt buildings and other locations. Legal action will be taken against suspicious individuals, particularly those with bookings at hotels and lodges without proper verification. "Our teams are on high alert at all five locations where flag hoisting will occur, continuously ensuring safety and security. Drone permissions are not granted as per Section 163 of the BNS. I urge everyone to cooperate with the police in their security efforts," said Jain.

Illegal sheds, hoardings and ramps set up on key Gurgaon road demolished**Gurgaon. (Agency)**

Enforcement teams from MCG and GMDA demolished illegal sheds and removed encroachments from a 1-km stretch on the Dhanwarpur-Surya Vihar road. Extended ramps and unauthorised advertisement boards were also cleared. According to officials, they received complaints from residents about illegal carts allegedly involved in illicit liquor supply and drug-related activities, which were removed. The operation was part of an intensified anti-encroachment drive launched across the city. Five dedicated enforcement teams were formed to scale up operations with coordinated drives carried out at multiple locations over the past three days. Anti-encroachment drives were seen at Church Gate Road, Gurudwara Road, Subhash Chowk, Candor 47, Sector 4-7 Road, and Nirvana Country. According to officials, prior announcements urging shopkeepers and vendors to clear the footpaths were made in the Sector 23 market, Dhanwarpur Road, and Sector 4 market. Enforcement teams also carried out drives at Sector 5 Chowk-Krishna Chowk, Mayfield Garden in Sector 50, and the Bus Stand area. Public announcements were made at Jyoti Park Road and Bhondsi-Sohna Road, warning against illegal occupation of public spaces and appealing for cooperation. Officials said the ongoing action aims not only to clear illegal occupations but also to improve pedestrian and vehicular movement and raise awareness among shopkeepers, vendors, and residents on keeping public areas open and accessible.

Govt nod to MCM's Rs 65cr doorstep waste collection project**NOIDA. (Agency)**

The Haryana govt accorded approval to the door-to-door waste collection tender of MCM in a high-powered purchase committee meeting chaired by CM Nayab Singh Saini and urban local bodies minister Vipul Goel in Chandigarh on Tuesday. After a two-year gap, doorstep waste collection will resume in Manesar.

The tender was awarded to the same firm that had been handling MCM's doorstep waste collection earlier. The civic body will now soon issue an order to the firm to commence work. The project cost is Rs 64.9 crore, and the firm will be given the contract for five years.

"The appointment of the agency will provide a permanent solution to the garbage problem in the Manesar municipal area for the next five years. The agency will soon be assigned the task. The firm will collect garbage from households and dispose of it at designated locations," said MCM commissioner Ayush Sinha.

Garbage collection was halted in Manesar in July 2023. The MCM's jurisdiction – officially established by the state govt on Dec 24, 2020 – encompasses 30 villages surrounding Manesar, alongside newly developed sectors within these villages. These sectors predominantly consist of condominiums, classified as bulk waste generators. According to Solid Waste Management rules, 2016, these establishments must install on-site composting facilities for wet waste and implement dry waste recycling systems.

Fire erupts at office building in Sector 10**NOIDA. (Agency)**

Noida: A minor fire broke out on the third floor of a building in Sector 10 on Wednesday afternoon, but no injuries were reported, officials said.

Police said they received information about the blaze around 12 pm through the 112 emergency number. "A passerby called to report the fire. Five fire tenders were rushed to the spot. The building has a furniture shop on the ground floor and several small offices on the second and third floors. There was no one inside the building when it caught fire," said chief fire officer Pradeep Kumar Chauhan. He said the blaze intensified because the three-storey structure housed a furniture shop. "Initially, five fire engines were rushed to the spot, and then another five were sent. The exact cause is yet to be ascertained, but prima facie a short circuit appears to be the reason," he added.

Panels set up in April, but survey held up as Haryana yet to define 'forest'**Gurgaon. (Agency)**

Gurgaon: Months after the Supreme Court ordered all states and Union territories to define "forest" and map all such areas, not a single survey has been carried out as part of the exercise in Haryana despite the state govt establishing expert committees in April. The catch — both district- and state-level committees cannot begin work until the state finalises its definition of "forest by dictionary meaning" — a step that remains incomplete, effectively stalling the entire exercise. In April, Haryana govt notified a state-level expert committee chaired by the additional chief secretary (environment, forests & wildlife). The panel includes senior officials from forest, revenue, agriculture, industries, town planning and urban local bodies departments. District-level committees headed by deputy commissioners were also constituted, comprising municipal

commissioners, divisional forest officers and other key officials. But the terms for the committees allow them a month to two to carry out surveys and submit their reports, with one key condition: they can start work only after the state provides the forest definition. On March 4, the Supreme Court ordered all states and UTs to first define "forest" and identify all such areas, including the Aravalis. This exercise will allow protections to forest land under the Forest Conservation Act and prevent further loss of green cover in ecologically fragile zones. Asked why the process was delayed, Haryana's principal chief conservator of forests Vineet Kumar Garg said on Wednesday, "We have sent the forest definition for finalisation to the state govt. We will start the process once it is final." Experts and activists alleged that Haryana govt, over the decades, have avoided identifying and mapping forest land. This built on the landmark 1996 TN Godavarm

stalling the process. "This is planned disobedience of the Supreme Court's Godavarm judgment. Constituting committees without giving them the definition is a tactic to ensure no actual work is done. Haryana is trying to give away what little forest it has to private builders by not recognising it as forest," said RP Balwan, retired conservator of forests, Haryana (South).

The top court's March order came while hearing writ petitions challenging amendments to the Forest (Conservation) Act. Citing the 2011 Lafarge judgment, the court ordered states/UTs to form expert committees within a month and warned that state chief secretaries would be held personally responsible for any lapses. The Lafarge order, linked to environmental approvals for mining in Meghalaya, had directed all states to identify and map forest land. This built on the landmark 1996 TN Godavarm

case, which established that forests must be recognised based on the dictionary definition of "forest" — meaning any area with forest characteristics must be protected under FCA, regardless of its official status in govt records. This "deemed forest" concept significantly widened FCA's scope. However, successive Haryana govt have maintained there is no clear definition or criteria to identify forests.

Forest analyst Chetan Agarwal highlighted the administrative impasse and said, "Govt has created a Catch-22 situation. They formed committees in April to comply with the March court order but tied their hands by saying the forest definition will be issued by the state govt, which has still not materialised." The case will next be taken up by the SC on Sept 9, where Haryana govt may be required to explain why it is yet to come up with a definition for 'forest'.

Day after Nuh clash over parking dispute, 5 held**Gurgaon. (Agency)**

A day after a clash broke out between two groups of Rajasthan and Haryana over a parking dispute in Mundaka of Ferozepur Jhirkha at the Nuh-Rajasthan border, Nuh police arrested five Rajasthan residents. The two groups belonging to two communities exchanged heated arguments and pelted stones at each other, besides torching a bike and a shop in Nuh.

Nuh SP Rajesh Kumar said there was no communal angle to the clash and confirmed that it was a parking dispute between two men, including the complainant and a resident of Rajasthan's Hajipur village, who called their accomplices. According to the police, the man from Rajasthan parked his car in the middle of the road at the Nuh-Rajasthan border and when the complainant asked him to move it to the side, a violent confrontation took place in which the latter was reportedly hit with a beer bottle. Four people sustained major injuries in the clash and were undergoing treatment and several others sustained minor injuries, a police official said. Those arrested were identified as Lukman, Zubair, Umardin, Sakurulla Khan and Rustam — all from Alwar, and booked under sections 115 (voluntarily causing hurt), 126 (wrongful restraint), 190 (liability of members of an unlawful assembly for offences committed in prosecution of their common object), 191(3) (rioting), 324(4) (mischief), 326(f) (causing damage to property, including agricultural produce, using fire or an explosive substance), and 351(2) (criminal intimidation) of the BNS at Ferozepur Jhirkha police station.

Nuh police spokesperson ASI Krishna stated that three separate teams were conducting raids to arrest the remaining suspects. "For security reasons, two police units have been deployed at the incident site. SP Rajesh Kumar himself is monitoring the situation along with other senior



to at least 40 lux (intensity), and replacing metal crash barriers with reinforced concrete ones to reduce fatalities in collisions. Service roads in Narsinghpur, notorious for flooding during rains, will be reconstructed using ready-mix concrete to eliminate frequent repairs. The recarping of service lanes aims to improve traffic flow during diversions. The project also includes improved signage and lane markings. Commuters welcomed the move but remain cautious about timely completion.

If done efficiently, this will be a huge relief. While traffic police issue challans to drivers of two-wheelers plying on the expressway, some sections of the service lanes are not even motorable. The service road from Hero Honda Chowk to Kheri Daula is not only narrow but is in a dilapidated condition with regular sewage overflows," said Rajat Dewan, a South City-1 resident who commutes daily to Manesar.

To check jaywalking, iron fences along 15km of DME**Ghaziabad. (Agency)**

With hundreds of people courting accidents daily by jumping over its fences and crossing Delhi-Meerut Expressway on foot, NHAI has decided to install iron barricades across a 15km length of the corridor from UP Gate to Dasna abutting NH-9. Once approved, the work will be completed over 8 months. Used by more than 10 lakh vehicles daily, the access-controlled expressway, clubbed with the national highway (NH-9), is not just one of the widest traffic speeds in NCR but is also among the most notorious for traffic violations. While wrong-side driving, using entry ramps to exit, and banned two-wheelers on the expressway are routine, a recent NHAI survey identified the Indirapuram-Vijay Nagar stretch as a jaywalking hotspot. People are often seen darting across the DME as buses, autos and

e-rickshaws stop in the middle of NH-9 to pick up or drop off passengers. Most of the 18 underpasses here double as vending



zones and are shunned by pedestrians to avoid a detour. The underpasses for light vehicles, including cars, near Shipra, CISF, Pusta Road and ABES cut have ample space for pedestrian movement. But taking one of these underpasses is perceived as a detour and time-consuming by people who

get off buses or autos on NH-9," a senior NHAI official said. While barriers already exist on the expressway's stretch at Noida's Sector 62, Model Town, Bamheta and Dasna, they have not been enough to deter people from dashing through the DME traffic. "People, some with kids, try to slip through the mangled iron fences or leap over them to save just 5 minutes, completely disregarding the vehicles approaching at 80 to 100 kmph on the DME," the NHAI official added. Traffic department data show until July this year, 26 accidents were reported on the DME and NH-9 in Ghaziabad which left 20 dead. In 2023, 44 people lost their lives in 53 accidents on NH9/DME. In 2024, 21 people lost their lives in as many accidents.

Deadline set to clear demolition waste from roads & vacant plots in Gurgaon**Noida. (Agency)**

Minister for urban local bodies (ULB) Vipul Goel on Wednesday directed MCG officials to clear three lakh metric tonnes of construction and demolition (C&D) waste lying on roads and public areas within a month. The minister also set a 15-day deadline to resolve the stray cattle menace. The minister, while addressing a meeting of officials, gave instructions to improve sanitation, keep public places garbage-free, increase cleaning resources, timely lift C&D waste and make debris collection mandatory when passing building plans. Emphasis was placed on the prompt resolution of sewage-related issues and ensuring all works under the Haryana Municipal Corporation Act.

Chief principal secretary to the CM Rajesh Khullar was also present at the meeting, held at PWD rest house. The ULB minister told corporation officials to ensure effective and swift action regarding stray cattle roaming on roads and public places, asking them to send them to cow shelters. Goel said, "Noticeable changes should be visible in this direction within the next 15 days. A special WhatsApp helpline number should be issued for citizens to report stray cattle and abandoned

animals." Rewards will be announced for those providing information. Moreover, an incentive scheme will be implemented for sanitation workers, where employees capturing animals and handing them over to the relevant agency will be rewarded," he added.

The minister said all officials should work in a "timely and result-oriented manner" to establish Gurgaon's image as a clean and orderly city. Officials said currently, around 5,000 cows and 1,500 bulls roam freely in the city. Kamdhenu and Nanditham shelters, operated by the municipal corporation, have the capacity to accommodate an additional 5,000 cows and 500 bulls. Khullar instructed officials to arrange for cow shelters at two other locations to ensure the safekeeping of animals as soon as possible. Earlier, Khullar, who held a meeting with the MCG, GMDA officials, directed them to ensure that no garbage, polythene or debris should be visible on the city roads and an effective action plan should be implemented for this. He said Haryana CM Nayab Singh Saini has given clear instructions to make

Gurgaon a better city and the govt "was fully committed to this goal". On the issue of stray animals, he urged the concerned officials to "take immediate and concrete steps". MCG commissioner Pradeep Dahiya said works were carried out at 153 potential waterlogging sites. To provide relief during the rainy season, the corporation set up a special call



centre with 15 operators and upon receiving information, the drainage team reaches the site. To resolve sewage issues, the corporation has formed a

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Asiatic lion numbers in Gujarat increase 32% in 5 yrs, touch 891

The Sikh Times

New Delhi: Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav announced the figures during an event to observe World Lion Day at Barda Wildlife Sanctuary in Gujarat's Porbandar district, which was also attended by Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel. Union Minister Yadav said: "The Asiatic Lion (Panthera leo persica) is a global symbol of successful wildlife conservation. On this World Lion Day, we celebrate their remarkable recovery. From just 284 lions in 1990, the population has now risen to 891 in 2025—a 32 per cent increase since 2020 and over 70 per cent growth in the past decade." It is heartening to note that such remarkable growth has been made possible through collective will, dedication and policies rooted in co-existence," he said. At the event, Yadav announced a Rs 180 crore plan for conservation and tourism infrastructure in Barda Wildlife Sanctuary. This includes facilities for visitors, roads, water sources and veterinary care. Barda currently has 17 lions—six adults and 11 cubs—which moved there naturally in 2023. The Gujarat government has granted in-principle approval for a safari park and zoo in Barda. A National Referral Centre for Wildlife Healthcare is planned in Junagadh district, with 20.24 hectares of land already allocated. Project Lion, launched on August 15, 2020, has a budget of Rs 2,927.71 crore over 10 years. It covers the Greater Gir Landscape, which spans 11 districts of Gujarat. The programme focuses

on creating satellite habitats for lions beyond Gir, improving veterinary facilities, and involving local communities in conservation. It also includes disease surveillance, genetic diversity initiatives and measures to reduce human-lion conflict through awareness programmes and technology-based monitoring. World Lion Day celebrations were held across all districts of the lion landscape, connected to the main event via satellite. Schools took part in awareness activities. In 2024, 18.63 lakh students participated

ed virtually. The Asiatic lion is listed as endangered on the IUCN Red List. Its only wild population is found in Gujarat. Conservation efforts began in the early 20th century after the population dropped to fewer than 20 individuals. The Gir National Park and surrounding sanctuaries remain the core habitat for the species. In recent years, lions have been recorded in coastal areas and agricultural land, prompting expansion of suitable habitats to reduce conflict.

Dangling danger: Loose hanging wires in Capital a big safety threat

New Delhi: Tangled clusters of loose wires hanging across market areas and congested lanes remain a common sight in the national capital, raising both safety and civic concerns among residents and shopkeepers. In East Delhi's Laxmi Nagar, narrow lanes are criss-crossed by what locals describe as a "nest" of cables, many of them leftover Wi-Fi connections. "These wires have been here since I can remember. In 20 years of running my tea stall here, I've only seen them multiply," said Chandan, a tea shop owner. "When a connection is no longer needed, the wires are just cut, not removed." For residents, dangling cables are a daily nuisance. "They've hit me in the face a couple of times since they're almost at my height," said Harshita, a student living in a paying guest accommodation nearby. While sipping tea, Sapna, another local, said: "They may not always carry electric current, but incidents of electrocution in the city threaten them frightening." While Laxmi Nagar's wires may appear harmless, other areas face graver risks. In the packed lanes of Chawri Bazaar, shopkeepers say they live under constant threat. "These wires have already caused fires in the past. We've complained, but no one listens," said Ramesh, a shopkeeper. The dangers are not hypothetical. Last year, a 12-year-old boy in southwest Delhi's Sanjay Colony died after coming into contact with loose wires on an electricity pole. In another incident last year, a 26-year-old man was electrocuted in central Delhi's Patel Nagar after touching an iron gate during heavy rain. The police said he might have slipped on the waterlogged street and grabbed the gate for support, unknowingly coming into contact with an exposed motor wire. Another case that shook the Capital, two years back, was that of Sakshi Ahuja, who died after touching a live wire in a waterlogged area near a railway station parking lot. Just hours earlier, a student Sohail had also lost his life to submerged live wires. Residents say these tragedies highlight the urgent need for coordinated action between civic agencies and electricity distributors to remove abandoned cables and secure live wires. Until then, the web of hazards above Delhi's streets remains both a physical and psychological threat.

Yamuna water level nears warning mark in Delhi

New Delhi: The Yamuna river in Delhi reached the mark of 204.40 metre at 9 am at the Old Railway Bridge, nearing the warning level of 204.50-metre, officials said on Saturday. The situation is being monitored and all the agencies concerned have been asked to take precautionary measures to handle with flood-like situation, they said. "The reason for the increase in level is mostly due to the high amount of water released from the Wazirabad and Hathnikund barrage every hour," an official from the central flood room said. The increase in level is likely due to rainfall in the upper catchment areas of Haryana and Uttarakhand, he added. The Old Railway Bridge serves as a key observation point for tracking the river's flow and potential flood risks. As per the flood control department, Wazirabad is releasing around 30,800 cusecs and Wazirabad barrage is realising around 25,000 cusecs of water every hour.

Noida daycare horror caught on camera, attendant hits

New Delhi: The incident occurred at a daycare facility inside the Paras Tiera residential complex and came to light after the child's parents noticed unusual bite marks on her thighs. A horrific video from a daycare in Noida has surfaced, showing a woman worker hitting and biting a 15-month-old toddler. A case against her was registered, and she was arrested. According to reports, the parents became alarmed after seeing the marks and immediately consulted a doctor, who confirmed that they were human bite marks. Following this, the family demanded access to the daycare's CCTV footage from the residential society's authorities. The footage revealed horrifying scenes and the attendant was seen hitting the infant on the face and deliberately dropping her to the ground.

NAME CHANGE

I, AMRITA W/O AMIT KUMAR R/o H.no: H-160, B-Block, Gali No-3, Sunder Nagar, Noida, Noida, Delhi-110093, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as AMRAWATI SAROJ.

NAME CHANGE

I, NARESH KUMAR residing at VILL-CHOA CHAKRALA, PO-CHORU, TEHSIL-NADAU, DIST-HAMIRPUR, HIMACHAL PRADESH-177044, have changed my minor daughter's name from DEEP SHIKHA to DEEPSHUKHA THAKUR for all future purposes vide Affidavit dated 12/08/2025 before Notary Public, Delhi.

PUBLIC NOTICE

is for general information that I, RAJESH BHARIA S/O RAMESH CHANDER BHARIA R/o A-109, Ganesh Nagar, Tilak Nagar, West Delhi, Delhi-110018 Decade that name of mine has been wrongly written as RAJESH KUMAR in my service record. The name of mine is RAJESH BHARIA respectively, which may be amended accordingly.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is for general information that I, VINOD KUMAR S/o BHULLAN SINGH R/o 1/5850/2, Gali No-2 Near Tikona Park East Rohatsh Nagar Shadara North East Delhi, Delhi-110032, declare that name of mine and my father have been wrongly written as SHRI VINOD and SHRI BHULLAN in my service record. The actual name of mine and my father are VINOD KUMAR and BHULLAN SINGH respectively, which may be amended accordingly.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is for general information that I, UMEASH S/O JAY PAKASH R/O E-27/36 Gali No-11, Pusta-ka-sona Vihar, Karawal Nagar, Po Karawal Nagar, Dist- North East Delhi, Delhi-110094 declare that name of mine has been wrongly written as DHARAMSHAR in my minor son RISHAB aged 7 years in his Birth Certificate No. 236505. The actual name of mine is UMEASH which may be amended accordingly.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is for general information that I, SUNIL KUMAR S/o RAJESH KUMAR R/o H- No-49 New Light Colony, Road No-64, Near Mother Dairy, Tahir Pur, East Delhi, Delhi-110095 declare that name of mine and my father have been wrongly written as SHRI SUNIL and SHRI RAJESH in my service record. The actual name of mine and my father are SUNIL KUMAR and RAJESH KUMAR respectively, which may be amended accordingly.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is for general information that I, MAHENDER SINGH S/o JAGDISH R/o E-42/18, Nand Nagar, North East Delhi, Delhi-110093, declare that name of mine and my father have been wrongly written as RABIYA BEGUM and IJAZ AHMED in my Passport No. L 5831998. The actual name of my mother and my husband are RABIYA and IJAZ AHMED respectively which may be amended accordingly.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is for general information that I, AKBAR ALI S/O SAFI ULLAH MANSOORI R/O F-1/69, Block DDA FLAT SUNDER NAGARI, DIST SHAHDARA, DELHI-110093 declare that name of my father and my wife have been wrongly written as SAFIULLAH and SAFINA in my Passport No. C7462223. The actual name of my father and my wife are SAFI ULLAH MANSOORI and SAFEEENA respectively which may be amended accordingly.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is for general information that I, AYAKUT LUKMANI W/O SHABBIR CHUDIWALA residing at H NO-199, 2ND FLOOR, BANK ENCLAVE, LAXMI NAGAR, DELHI-110092 vide a public notice dated 18.10.2021 published in the news paper The Sikh Times and also vide another public notice dated 18.10.2021 published in the news paper Virat Vaibhav had disowned her son Mohd. Umair son of Mohd. Salauddin and debarred him from all their moveable and immoveable properties due to his disobedience and bad behaviour / needs and severed all relations with them. But now my aforesaid clients will draw the said disownment and debarment public notice as against their son Mohd. Umair and revive their relations with their son for all intents and purposes as he has turned to be faithful and obedient towards my client and shall be entitled to his share and right in the moveable and immoveable properties owned by my clients.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, LAKSHMI SETHI Father of No-1444963N Rank-HW Name-ROHITA SETHI Presently residing at GOUTAMI, GANJAM, ODISHA-751054, have changed my name from ULLA SETHI to ULLA SETHI for all future purposes vide Affidavit dated 14/08/2025 before Notary Public, Delhi.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, LAKSHMI SETHI Father of No-1444963N Rank-HW Name-ROHITA SETHI Presently residing at GOUTAMI, GANJAM, ODISHA-751054, have changed my name from ULLA SETHI to ULLA SETHI for all future purposes vide Affidavit dated 14/08/2025 before Notary Public, Delhi.

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NEWS BOX

"No unilateral Ukraine Peace Deal In Alaska": Zelensky, EU Leaders To Trump

Berlin . (Agency)

Tump not to strike a unilateral Ukraine peace deal with President Vladimir Putin during their upcoming meeting in Alaska, CNN reported. German Chancellor Friedrich Merz convened a virtual summit with Trump, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, and several European leaders amid fears that Putin could seek to influence the US president into accepting terms favourable to Russia.

After the virtual summit, Zelensky and German Chancellor address reporters in Berlin, Germany, following their meeting with US President Donald Trump on Wednesday, as per CNN.

Two European diplomats familiar with the virtual meeting confirmed that Trump appeared to say that he would push for an unconditional ceasefire in his meeting with Putin. According to sources, Trump said that he believed that a ceasefire would be a show of goodwill from Russia, and he also noted that the Ukrainian territory is not for him to negotiate.

The leaders of Ukraine, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Finland, NATO, and the European Union had taken part in the virtual meeting with Trump. It was followed by another larger meeting of the "Coalition of the Willing" that US Vice President JD Vance attended, according to CNN.

After the meeting, Zelensky said leaders agreed on "five common principles" to lay out the "format of negotiations" to be held in Alaska, including a focus on a ceasefire and "truly reliable" security guarantees. "Everything concerning Ukraine must be discussed exclusively with Ukraine. We must prepare a trilateral format for talks. There must be a ceasefire, that is number one," he said. He added: "There must be security guarantees, truly reliable ones. And today, President Trump spoke of his support for this and of America's readiness to participate."

Russia cannot have a veto over Ukraine's European and NATO prospects," he said. "Peace talks must be combined with appropriate pressure on Russia."

Zelensky also emphasised that sanctions against Russia should be strengthened if no ceasefire agreement is reached on Friday.

Arab World Slams Netanyahu's 'Greater Israel' Remarks

Cairo.(Agency)

The Arab League has condemned in the strongest terms the statements made by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu regarding the annexation of parts of the territories of sovereign Arab states, in preparation for the establishment of what he called "Greater Israel."

The League considered these statements to be a violation of the sovereignty of Arab states and an attempt to undermine security and stability in the region. In a statement released Tuesday, the League said these remarks represent a serious threat to collective Arab national security and a flagrant challenge to international law and the principles of international legitimacy. The statements also reflect expansionist and aggressive intentions that cannot be accepted or tolerated, and they reveal an extremist mindset steeped in colonial delusions.

Within the same contest, Egypt has condemned the statements raised in some Israeli media regarding the so-called "Greater Israel," while affirming its commitment to establishing peace in the Middle East. In a statement issued by the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs this evening, Egypt demanded official clarifications regarding these statements due to the indications they carry and that could trigger instability.

3 Killed, Over 60 Injured In Pak's Independence Day Celebrations: Report

Karachi . (Agency)

Three people, including a senior citizen and an 8-year-old girl, were killed during Independence Day celebrations in Pakistan's Karachi due to "reckless" aerial firing, while over 60 others sustained gunshot injuries, Geo News reported, citing a rescue official.

The incidents occurred across the city, with the young girl hit by a stray bullet in Azizabad and a man named Stephen killed in Korangi. At least 64 others suffered gunshot wounds in the citywide incidents, Geo News reported. Rescue officials said dozens were injured due to celebratory gunfire. Authorities condemned the practice as reckless and dangerous, urging citizens to mark Independence Day in safer ways.

Police have initiated their investigation and assured that strict action will be taken against those found involved in aerial firing. According to a report obtained by ARY News, at least 42 people, including five women, lost their lives in firing incidents across Karachi in January. Additionally, 233 people, including five women, were injured in these incidents. Five people were killed while thwarting robbery attempts in the firing events, which were reported in different regions of the city. In other instances, individuals lost their lives as a result of stray gunshots or aerial fire. However, none of the seven people who died in firing incidents—including a woman—have been named. Police officers attributed the episodes to several factors, including disagreements, personal animosities, and resistance to robbery attempts, ARY News reported. Road accidents, robbery resistance, and aerial firing also contributed to a spike in deaths in Karachi earlier in January. According to the Chippa Foundation, 528 people, including children and the elderly, were injured in road accidents, and 36 people died as a result. In addition, robbery resistance incidents resulted in three fatalities and fifteen injuries.

Trump pledged to move homeless people from Washington. What we know and don't know about his plans

Here's a look at what we know and what questions remain about how Trump's actions will affect the city's homeless population.

World.(Agency)

US President Donald Trump says homeless people in the nation's capital will be moved far from the city as part of his federal takeover of policing in the District of Columbia and crackdown on crime.

With his exact plans unclear, there is concern among advocates and others who say there are better ways to address the issue of homelessness than clearing encampments, as the Republican administration has pledged to do. Washington's status as a congressionally established federal district gives Trump the opportunity to push his tough-on-crime agenda, though he has not proposed solutions to the root causes of homelessness or crime. Here's a look at what we know and what questions remain about how Trump's actions will affect the

city's homeless population: How many homeless people are in Washington? It is difficult to obtain accurate counts of homeless populations. On one day at the end of each January, municipal agencies across the United States perform what is called a "point-in-time" count aimed at capturing the total number of people in emergency shelters, transitional housing or without any housing. The 2025 count in the district put the total at 5,138 adults and children, a 9% decrease compared with the year before, according to Democratic Mayor Muriel Bowser.

Where will the city's homeless people be taken?

It's not entirely clear.

Trump wrote on his social media site before Monday's news conference announcing the takeover that "The homeless have to move out, IMMEDIATELY. We will give you places to stay, but FAR from the Capital."

Asking during a media briefing at the White House on Tuesday where homeless people would be relocated, press secretary Karoline Leavitt said local police and federal agencies would "enforce the laws

that are already on the books," which, she said, "have been completely ignored." Citing a city regulation that she said gives local police "the authority to take action when it comes to homeless

options, she said. As of Tuesday, Leavitt said only two homeless encampments remained in district parks maintained by the National Park Service and would be removed this week. What are city officials doing for the homeless?

District officials said Tuesday they were making additional shelter space available after Trump said federal agents would remove homeless people in the city.

Kevin Donahue, the city administrator, said outreach workers were visiting homeless encampments and that the city has a building available that could house as many as 200 people, if needed.

Donahue made the comments during a conversation with community advocates and Bowser. The conversation was broadcast on X. He said the outreach would continue through the week with a "greater level of urgency."

Bowser said that when Trump sees homeless encampments in the city it "triggers something in him that has him believing our very beautiful city is dirty, which it is not."

US to cooperate with Pakistan over critical minerals, hydrocarbons: Secretary of State Rubio

NEW YORK . (Agency)

WASHINGTON: The US government on Wednesday stated that it is "looking forward" to strengthening its cooperation with Pakistan in areas of critical minerals and hydrocarbons, with a renewed focus on economic cooperation in other emerging sectors.

Announcing its intent in a congratulatory message on Pakistan's Independence Day, the US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, in statement, highlighted the importance of continued collaboration between the two nations. "On behalf of the United States, I extend our warm congratulations to the people of Pakistan as they celebrate their Independence Day on August 14," Rubio said in the statement issued by US Department of State. He also acknowledged Pakistan's engagement with the US on key fronts, particularly counterterrorism and trade. "The United States deeply appreciates Pakistan's engagement on counterterrorism and trade. We look forward to exploring new areas of

economic cooperation, including critical minerals and hydrocarbons, and fostering dynamic business partnerships which will promote a prosperous future for Americans and Pakistanis," the statement further read.



The message comes at a time when Washington is actively seeking to further its ties with India's terror-harboring neighbour. Earlier in July, US President Donald Trump announced a trade deal with Pakistan, touting a joint initiative to develop oil reserves in the country and even floated the idea that "some day" Islamabad might sell oil to New Delhi.

In a post on Truth Social, Trump stated that the US and Pakistan are currently in the process of selecting the oil company for the partnership. "We have just concluded a Deal with the Country of Pakistan, whereby Pakistan and the

United States will work together on developing their massive Oil Reserves. We are in the process of choosing the Oil Company that will lead this Partnership. Who knows, maybe they'll be selling Oil to India some day!" Trump stated. Meanwhile, the Trump administration had also announced the lowest tariff rates for Pakistani goods to the US in South Asia in his new tariff plans announced earlier this month, with 19 percent imposed on Islamabad.

India, on the other hand, faced a 25 percent tariff under the new plan. Trump later announced an additional 25 percent tariff on Indian goods to the US, bringing the total to 50 percent, due to India's continued oil purchases from Russia.

S Jaishankar To Visit Russia Next Week, Hold Talks With Top Leaders

S Jaishankar's trip to Russia comes days after National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval travelled to Russia and met President Vladimir Putin and several top-ranking officials.

Washington . (Agency)

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will travel to Moscow next week to hold crucial talks with his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov, amid some strain in India's ties with the US over New Delhi's procurement of crude oil from Russia. Mr Jaishankar's trip to Russia comes days after National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval travelled to Russia and met President Vladimir Putin and several top-ranking officials. The two sides are also likely to give final touches to various

elements of Putin's visit to India later this year, people familiar with the external affairs minister's trip to Moscow said. Deputy spokesperson of Russia's foreign ministry Aleksey Fadeyev said in Moscow that the heads of the two countries' foreign offices will discuss "most important issues of the bilateral agenda". The people cited above said Mr Jaishankar will be on a two-day visit to Russia and is likely to call on Putin, besides holding wide-ranging talks with Foreign Minister Lavrov. The external affairs minister is also expected to co-chair the 26th session of the India-Russia Intergovernmental Commission on Trade and Economic, Scientific-Technological and Cultural Cooperation. The Russian delegation at the dialogue is likely to be led by First Deputy Prime Minister Denis Manturov. India's continued energy procurement from Russia is likely to figure in Mr Jaishankar's meetings with Russian leaders in Moscow. US President Donald Trump issued an

executive order last week, slapping an additional 25 percent tariff on Indian goods as a penalty for New Delhi's continued purchase of Russian oil. The additional duties raised the overall tariff on India to 50 percent. Defending its purchase of Russian crude oil, India has been maintaining that its energy procurement is driven by national interest and market dynamics. India turned to purchasing Russian oil sold at a discount after western countries imposed sanctions on Moscow and shunned its supplies over its invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Consequently, from a mere 1.7 percent share in total oil imports in 2019-20, Russia's share increased to 35.1 percent in 2024-25, and it is now the biggest oil supplier to India. During Mr Jaishankar's visit to Moscow, the two sides are also likely to deliberate on the Ukraine conflict. India has been consistently calling for ending the Russia-Ukraine conflict through dialogue and diplomacy.

Harvard and Trump administration are nearing settlement including a \$500 million payment

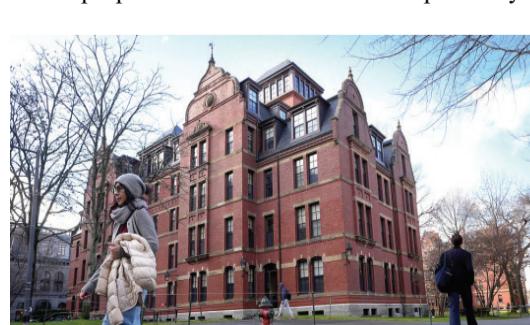
A \$500 million payment would be the largest sum yet as the administration pushes for financial penalties in its settlements with elite universities.

WASHINGTON . (Agency)

Harvard University and the Trump administration are getting close to an agreement that would require the Ivy League university to pay \$500 million to regain access to federal funding and to end investigations, according to a person

familiar with the matter. The framework is still being sorted out with significant gaps to close, but both sides have agreed on the financial figure and a settlement could be finalized in coming weeks, according to the person who spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity to discuss internal deliberations. Harvard declined to comment. The agreement would end a months-long battle that has tested the boundaries of the government's authority over America's universities. What began as an investigation into campus antisemitism escalated into an all-out feud as the Trump administration slashed more than \$2.6 billion in research funding, ended federal contracts and attempted to block Harvard from hosting international students. The university responded with a pair of lawsuits alleging illegal retaliation by the administration after Harvard rejected a set

of demands that campus leaders viewed as a threat to academic freedom. Details of the proposed framework were first reported by



The New York Times. A \$500 million payment would be the largest sum yet as the administration pushes for financial penalties in its settlements with elite universities. Columbia University agreed to pay the government \$200 million as part of an agreement restoring access to federal

funding, while Brown University separately agreed to pay \$50 million to Rhode Island work force development organizations. Details have not been finalized on where Harvard's potential payment would go, the person said.

The Republican president has been pushing to reform prestigious universities that he decries as bastions of liberal ideology. His administration has cut funding to several Ivy League schools while pressing demands in line with his political campaign. None has been targeted as frequently or as heavily as Harvard, the richest US university with an endowment valued at \$53 billion. More than a dozen Democrats in Congress who attended Harvard cautioned against a settlement on Aug. 1, warning the university it may warrant "rigorous Congressional oversight and inquiry." Capitulating to political demands, they said, would set a dangerous precedent across all of higher education.

Fire at cafe in Thane residential complex, 35 people evacuated

Mumbai . (Agency)

Thirty-five people were evacuated from a residential complex in Thane's Kalwa area on Thursday morning, after a fire broke out at a cafe located inside the building. However, no one was injured in the incident, officials said. The blaze erupted at 4.58 am on the ground floor of a six-storey building in Parsik Nagar of Kharegaon, said the Thane Municipal Corporation (TMC). The incident occurred in the B wing of Chandrabhaga Park complex, where the 1000-sqft Parsik Café functions. The owner of the cafe alerted TMC's disaster management cell after noticing the smoke, TMC said. "People in the nearby B Wing were sleeping when the blaze started. All the residents were evacuated with the help of the fire department and disaster management staff," said Yasin Tadvi, head of TMC's disaster management cell.

Three fire engines arrived at the location shortly after the call, and firefighters managed to confine the fire by 6.25 am, Tadvi said. The accident allegedly resulted in extensive damage to the interiors of the cafe, such as furniture, refrigerators, and other kitchen appliances. An officer from TMC's regional disaster response stated that prompt evacuation prevented casualties. "Residents were cooperative during the operation, and this enabled us to evacuate the building without waste of time," the officer added.

The source of the fire remains to be identified, authorities said, adding that an inspection will be conducted to determine the extent of structural and electrical damage to the building. Residents were allowed to return to their residences after the fire was completely extinguished and the area was deemed safe.

TMC has instructed residents of the complex and surrounding areas to check the condition of electrical installations and to report any potential fire hazards immediately.

Pune: Man beaten to death by gym trainers

The cops have arrested the two accused Yash Patole (25) and Pranjal Taware (22), both of whom are gym trainers and also co-own the shop selling protein and other nutrition supplements in Charkholi area.

Pune . (Agency)

TWO GYM trainers — a 22-year-old woman and a 25-year-old man — allegedly beat a man to death with metal rods in the protein supplement shop they own in Charkholi area. Probe revealed that the attack was a fallout of a fight between the accused and the deceased over the latter verbally abusing them and creating ruckus in their shop.

Police have identified the deceased as Gopinath Varpe alias Lalla (35), who was unemployed. The cops have arrested the two accused Yash Patole (25) and Pranjal Taware (22), both of



whom are gym trainers and also co-own the shop selling protein and other nutrition supplements in Charkholi area.

"Probe suggests that Varpe came to the shop on Wednesday afternoon. He started hurling abuses at Patole and Taware and started creating ruckus. This escalated to a fight. Taware and Patole beat up Varpe with metal rods on his head and elsewhere on the body. Varpe was taken to hospital where he was pronounced dead. Later Taware and Patole came to the police station.

Mumbai records highest single-day rainfall in August, IMD issues yellow alert

Mumbai . (Agency)

Weeks after reeling under a dry spell, Mumbai woke up to its rainiest day of the month on Thursday morning as the city recorded its highest single-day rainfall at 53 mm. The intensity of showers is likely to further gather pace with the India Meteorological Department (IMD) issuing a yellow alert for Mumbai and its neighbouring districts until August 17.

The IMD has, however, issued an orange alert for Raigad and Ratnagiri districts for two days, between August 16 and 17.

After experiencing overcast skies and drizzle throughout Wednesday, moderate showers swept the city overnight. Data from the IMD showed that between Wednesday and Thursday morning, the Santacruz station recorded 50 mm of rain, while the Colaba coastal observatory registered 53 mm of rain. According to records from the city's automatic weather stations, the highest rainfall was recorded in the western suburbs

at an average of 41.4 mm, followed by 32.4 mm in the eastern suburbs and 21 mm in the island city division.

Some pockets of the city received heavy rainfall, with Malad receiving 85 mm of rain, followed by 72 mm of rain in the Andheri area and 70 mm of rain in Powai, according to reports of BMC. This comes as a respite for the city experiencing an extended period of dry spell over the past few weeks, making it Mumbai's rainiest day of August so far.

The city has been experiencing a rain deficit owing to the absence of heavy rain over the past weeks. Even as the city's suburban station receives an average of 566 mm of rain in August, the Santacruz observatory has received only 114 mm of

rain until August 14.

Pointing to several active systems in the region, the IMD has said that Maharashtra,

rainfall forecast between August 13 and

August 19.

According to meteorologists, as of Wednesday, there was a low-pressure area over west central and adjoining northwest Bay of Bengal, off North Andhra Pradesh and South Odisha coasts. Further, an associated upper air cyclonic circulation is slated to intensify and become well-marked over the next 24 hours. Besides, an east-west trough is also currently running from the Bay of Bengal up to the northeast Arabian Sea.

"Under its influence, the rainfall activity over Maharashtra is very likely to increase during 13-19 August 2025," said an IMD scientist.



including Mumbai and the extended Konkan region, is set to witness a resurgence in rain activity with heavy

Why BEST is diverting buses on several routes in Mumbai

Mumbai . (Agency)

The Brihanmumbai Electric Supply and Transport (BEST) has implemented a series of temporary bus route changes across Mumbai over the past three days due to festival preparations, cultural events and civic work.

On Wednesday evening, services on route number 333 in the Marol Depot area were curtailed at Chakala Cigarette Factory from 7.15 pm to make way for pavilion construction for the Ganpati festival at Maharshi Valmiki Chowk.

The previous day saw multiple diversions in the Worli area owing to Govinda Pathak rehearsals on Veer Nariman Road in Worli Village. From 7.15 pm, routes 169, 118, 162, 56, 54, 44 and 125 were diverted from Babasaheb Worlikar Chowk via Annie Besant Road, turning right at Hadkamkar Chowk and making a U-turn at Abdul Gaffar Circle.

While buses on routes 118 and 162 travelled towards Worli Village, the remaining headed to Worli Depot. On the same evening, service on

route 216 was suspended at Naigaon Police Colony from 7 pm due to the Ganpati arrival ceremony at MHADA Colony in Bhoiwada. Later, at 10.30 pm, service on route 605 in the Vikhroli Depot area was curtailed at Vaibhav

A517, were diverted in the down direction from Maharashtra Nagar via the bridge and Indian Oil Nagar because of encroachment removal work undertaken by the municipal corporation.

"All diversions are temporary and will remain in effect until the conclusion of the respective events and completion of road works," said a BEST official.

On August 12, traffic changes for Angarak Chaturthi affected operations in the Worli Depot area, with buses on routes 37, 87, 28, 33, 85, 92, 62, 54, 86, 172, 169 and 165 diverted from S K Bole Road via Gopal Krishna Gokhale Road, turning right from Jakadevi Chowk onto Appasaheb Marathe Marg from 10.30 am the same day. In Maharashtra Nagar, the same nine routes affected by later encroachment work had already been diverted from 10.15 am. in the down direction via the bridge and Indian Oil Nagar because of ongoing road repairs.



Chowk in connection with Dahi Handi practice at Tembiwada, Bhandup.

Earlier on Tuesday, at 10.15 am, nine services operating from the Shivajinagar Depot, A26, A53, A60, A507, A511, A380, A372, A493 and

In marathon debate on roadmap for Viksit UP, govt cites accolades, Opp pokes holes

Lucknow .(Agency)

A SPECIAL 24-hour marathon discussion on creating a "vision document" for a developed Uttar Pradesh by 2047 began in the state Assembly around 11.30 am on Wednesday, with the BJP government calling for a united effort towards the goal, even as the Opposition dismissed it as a "lollipop" and demanded that the ruling party first "account for its 2022 poll promises."

Setting the ball rolling on the discussion on the topic 'Developed India-Developed Uttar Pradesh, Self-reliant India-Self-reliant Uttar Pradesh', state Finance and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Suresh Kumar Khanna said UP is on the path of becoming the second-largest economy in the country.

He emphasised that India would become a developed nation only when the states take concrete and effective steps for development. "Today, we are preparing a long-term vision and, for this, it is necessary that all the respected members unite and become a part of this effort so that our country and state can be fully

developed on completion of 100 years of independence," Khanna said. Senior ministers highlighted the achievements of the government in various fields and reaffirmed their commitment to make UP the most developed state of the country by 2047.



However, the Opposition demanded the government's reply on the fulfillment of promises made in the BJP's "Sankalpa Patras", or manifestos, ahead of the 2017 and 2022 Assembly polls. Senior Samajwadi Party (SP) leader Shivpal Singh Yadav asked whether all

the promises made by the BJP in the 2022 Assembly polls have been fulfilled. "If not, then how can we expect (vision of 2047) to be fulfilled." He said that any vision should be for a maximum of five years. "You people are speaking of the vision for 2047 — which will be

after 22 years. We want to say that this is not a vision, this is a lollipop." "First, the 2022 manifesto should be accounted for. Future matters will come later; the past should be accounted for first," the opposition leader said. He said the BJP government "has brought the dream of 2047 in the House", implying that when today's youths are taking their grandchildren to school, the government is promising to bring about development at that time.

Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak hit back at the Opposition, especially the previous SP government, alleging that the condition of infrastructure and law and order in the state was "pathetic" before the BJP came to power in 2017.

The incident took place in the Ghosipurwa locality, where construction work to cover the drain and carry out other related projects is underway.

Gorakhpur Mayor Dr Mangesh Kumar Srivastava said a showcause notice has been issued to the contractor who was assigned the work and the junior engineer of the municipal corporation. Additional Municipal Commissioner, Gorakhpur, Durgesh Mishra said a committee has been

formed to look into the matter. He said action would be taken on the basis of its findings.

According to local residents, heavy rainfall on Monday led to waterlogging on a road in the locality. In the evening, the victim, accompanied by her 12-year-old elder brother, was returning home when she accidentally fell into an open portion of the drain. The force of the current took her forward several metres before locals managed to pull her out of the water. She was taken to a hospital, where doctors declared her dead. Officials claimed that apart from a "small uncovered portion" where the incident occurred, the rest of the drain in that area has been covered. The victim's father, Anees, earns his livelihood by operating a handcart. Sub-divisional magistrate, Gorakhpur, Deepak Kumar Gupta, said a compensation of Rs 4 lakh has been provided to the girl's family.

Pune metro to increase frequency during peak hours to address passenger rush

"The change ensures smoother rides, especially during the busy Ganpati season," said Shravan Hardikar, Managing Director of Maha-Metro.

Pune. To cater to the increasing rush of passengers in the metro during peak hours, the Pune Metro Rail project has decided to increase a total of 64 trips of its services on the two routes and operate train service at every six minutes during peak hours from August 15.

"From August 15, Pune Metro will operate train services at a 6-minute headway during peak hours. This significant improvement means commuters will wait less and travel faster, with 54 extra trips daily across both lines. The change ensures smoother rides, especially during the busy Ganpati season," said Shravan Hardikar, Managing Director of Maha-Metro.

This increase in frequency of trips during peak hours will be between 8 am to 11 am and 4 pm to 8 pm when the trip will be every six minutes. However, the trip will continue to be every 10 minutes during non peak hours from 6 am to 8 am, 11 am to 4 pm and 8 pm to 11 pm.

There were a total of 490 trips on both routes of PCMC-Swargate and Vanaz-Ramwadi corridors which span 33.2 km. Of the operation routes, 27.2 km is elevated and 6 km is underground, passing through key stations such as Shivaji Nagar, District Court, KasbaPeth, Mandai, and Swargate.

"With the entire Phase I now fully

operational, Pune Metro serves over two lakh commuters every day, offering the city a safe, green, and efficient way to travel," he said.

The trials to reduce headway to six minutes have been ongoing for the last two months, he said, adding that after fulfilling all technical requirements, the headway time to 6 minutes is now going to be implemented from August 15. Hardikar said, "The 6-minute headway during peak hours is a step towards making metro travel faster and more convenient for the people of Pune, there will be 13 per cent more trips in a day.

The trips are now 490 trips and will be increased to 554 trips from August 15."



The MNC dilemma: eastern efficacy vs western efficiency

Multinational companies (MNCs) are interested in building a substantial business in a growing India. This was not so some decades ago, because those who had been present in India found it to be a minuscule contributor, and those who had none found the entry too onerous. Illustratively, in 1967, Hindustan Lever contributed little to the global profits and market capitalisation of parent Unilever. Nowadays, the Indian company now renamed Hindustan Unilever accounts for about 25-30 percent of the group's global profits, and more importantly, 40-50 percent of its global market capitalisation. India is a key market for many MNCs like PepsiCo, Coca-Cola, Castrol, Suzuki Motor and Nestlé. MNCs face four dilemmas. First, should the business be geography-supreme (local leadership driven) or product-supreme (global leaders driven)? Second, if the subsidiary has Indian shareholding, how should governance be adapted? Third, how can the parent develop a dependable Indian management cadre that delivers its strategies? Fourth, and very importantly, since the parent company is usually a listed entity with performance pressures from an impatient main board, how can a balance be achieved? During the 1970s, there was much debate about how international operations should be organised. Will an MNC succeed by rapidly transferring a well-established product across geographies (product-supreme), or is success achieved by an adapted product with a focus on local needs (geography-supreme)? Does India merit a structure different from other countries? The answers vary by domain and company.

Procter & Gamble was a late globaliser that achieved success by a product-supreme approach. Nestlé's expatriate CEO and global organisation felt challenged by the Maggi noodles crisis until the company was headed by an Indian national. Unilever was an early globaliser and succeeded through a geography-supreme approach. When I joined Hindustan Lever in 1967, United Africa Company (UAC), running the group's African market, accounted for as much as a third of Unilever profits. The main Unilever board had three UAC directors who sat separately in UAC House, away from the Unilever House in London's Blackfriars. Over the last five decades, I have had deep experience with some Indian MNC subsidiaries—Hindustan Unilever, ICI, and Castrol—apart from a powerful Indian MNC, the Tata Group. In the late 1980s, C K Prahalad and Gary Hamel stormed management thinking with 'core competence'. They argued every corporation has one and should grow by exploiting and strengthening it. This thought developed into the mantra: stick to the knitting. About the same time, I attended a conference of Unilever leaders in Kingston, UK. One strand of discussion centred around how Unilever should be organised globally: product-supreme or geography-supreme. I recall arguing that, for India, geography can be a core competence—management depth, distribution systems, low-cost manufacturing competence, innovation and research. Hence, the Indian subsidiary should remain geography-supreme. MNCs that changed in India from their geography-supreme structure to a global one seemed to have tepid run. ICI India, later Akzo Nobel India, whittled its presence from a massive multi-technology portfolio to just decorative paints, finally exiting from that too. Pharma companies like Pfizer and Glaxo created clones of an international structure in which the local board became decorative. I privately wondered whether these were being designed and operated based on a 'western' model (organise for efficiency). The truth was that new board structures, following the Cadbury Committee, introduced new pulls and pressures.

THE 80th anniversary of the atomic bombing of the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6 and 9, 1945, respectively, was observed last week. The catastrophic human tragedy unleashed by the bombings was only outdone by the cruel irony of the folksy names the bombs were given by the attackers—Little Boy and Fat Man. And the pilot of the aircraft which dropped the bomb thought it was a proud moment of his life to pilot this vaahan of death, which he named after his mother, Enola Gay. Such is the banality of evil. As the years have gone by, the memory of those horrors, of melting human flesh and vapourised bodies, of clocks and watches frozen in the moment of impact and the awesome terror of the mushroom cloud which has become the signature of apocalypse, has been dimmed by time. It should not be. The danger of an apocalypse of a greater scale and intensity lurks beneath a pervasive complacency. The younger generations have scant familiarity with this tragic history, even though it is they who must work to ensure that it is never repeated.

It is true that the taboo against the use of nuclear weapons has prevailed since Hiroshima and Nagasaki. And, contrary to the many dire predictions made in the post-atomic age, the number of nuclear weapon states has increased from the original five (US, UK, Russia, France and China) to only nine today (adding Israel, India, Pakistan and North Korea). It is also true that the global stock of nuclear weapons, mainly in the arsenals of the US and Russia, has come down from a maximum of 40,000 at the height of the Cold War to about 14,000 today, with the US and Russian stocks still by far the largest. This may be a cause for hope, but as long as nuclear weapons exist, the danger of a nuclear holocaust will persist. What is worrying is the lack of civil society mobilisation and activism in calling for a nuclear weapon-free world. In the 1980s, when I was representing India at the Geneva-based Committee on Disarmament, there was the most vocal Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in Europe. Even the Mahabodhi Society under its venerable head, Fujii Guru, parked itself outside the Council chamber, chanting hymns for peace, reminding the world, as only a Japanese activist could, of the need to ensure that Hiroshima and

Nagasaki remained compelling reasons to achieve a nuclear weapon-free world. Later, at the turn of the century, I was part of the Global Zero movement, which campaigned with passion and perseverance for a world free of nuclear weapons. It was led by Bruce G Blair, who had been part of the US nuclear command and control and well understood the fragility of nuclear peace. Blair passed away in 2020 and the movement lost its drive and energy. I believe that without a civil society movement on a global scale, the vision of a world free of nuclear weapons will remain a chimera.

There are several reasons to doubt the stability of the global nuclear regime. Theories of nuclear deterrence, which it is claimed has kept the nuclear peace over the past 80 years, have always been of questionable value

theatre weapons right up to a strategic, no-holds-barred exchange) proliferated. These were more mind games than reflections of reality. If nuclear deterrence, even in a binary context, proved to be so complicated, how would it work in a landscape populated by several nuclear weapon states? Would a binary nuclear exchange, say between India and Pakistan, remain binary or must factor in the role of China? Would China's entry into a nuclear war in the sub-continent draw in Russia and the US? The multiplicity of nuclear actors and the impossibility of predicting their reactions make the danger of managing relations among nuclear weapon states much more complex and unpredictable. It is only in multilateral negotiations involving all N-weapon states that one may begin to address the danger of a nuclear war. A start could

be made by a multilateral compact among nuclear weapon states never to be the first to use nuclear weapons and ideally to pledge never to use or threaten to use them. Such a compact would have inhibited Russia from brandishing the use of a theatre nuclear weapon against Ukraine in the ongoing war. Technology is also playing a role in enhancing the threat of a nuclear war. The technology to assemble a crude but highly destructive device is now freely available. Deterrence may work against states, but becomes irrelevant in dealing with non-state actors. It is conceivable that a terrorist or a jihadist group lays its hands on a useable device and launches it against a state from the territory of another state without the latter's knowledge and connivance. Would retaliation with nuclear weapons against that state be justified? It may even be conceivable that the device may be launched from within the territory of a state. What would retaliation entail in this context?

Nuclear weapons are now integrated with cyber systems and rely for targeting on satellite systems. There is already a nuclear-cyber-space continuum and a disruption at any point in this continuum can cause accidental use of nuclear weapons, or false alarms triggering a premature retaliation. The application of artificial intelligence and the diminishing of human agency in decision-making will make the nuclear danger far greater than it already is. We are hurtling into a future which contains the seeds of our own extinction.

Reconsider burden of rural banking on PSUs

As a business choice, ICICI Bank seems to be moving away from mass banking to preferential services for a higher income bracket. By limiting access only to bigger-ticket account holders, it should be able to provide more targeted services and benefit from higher average transactions

ICICI Bank has created a stir by raising its minimum monthly average balance (MAB) five-fold to ₹50,000 for urban customers and to ₹25,000 for new semi-urban ones, while for rural accounts the MAB requirement doubles to ₹10,000. Defaulting account holders will have to pay a penalty of 6 percent of the shortfall or ₹500, whichever is lower. Oddly, the move comes at a time some public sector banks are becoming more accessible by removing minimum balance requirements altogether. Those like SBI and Punjab National Bank do have minimum MABs, but have done away with penalties for default. Most private banks required a minimum MAB of ₹10,000. Predictably, ICICI Bank has drawn flak for the change. Customers have called out the move on social media as 'elitist' and 'discriminatory', pointing out the minimum balance is higher than the average monthly salary in India. Others have said these are barriers to deliberately exclude the middle and lower classes. As a business choice, ICICI Bank seems to be moving away



from mass banking to preferential services for a higher income bracket. By limiting access only to bigger-ticket account holders, it should be able to provide more targeted services and benefit from higher average transactions.

Administratively, it would save the bank a considerable sum as every physical transaction through a branch—a preferred option for many small-ticket transactions—is estimated to cost ₹24. On the other hand, each online transaction costs just ₹2.3. However, for a developing nation, a bank initially nurtured with public money making itself less accessible by tweaking MAB norms is unfortunate. Banking, like many other public services, is also a social vehicle that provides access to credit and digital transactions for the teeming millions. RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra has clarified the regulator cannot compel the bank to change its MAB norms. Maybe it's time to review the onus of rural banking, or banking for the poor, on the state-run banks. Banking may take a leaf from telecom, which tried to bridge the digital divide by instituting a universal service obligation to extend services to commercially less viable areas. Meanwhile, ICICI Bank could review its stance before transitioning to become a 'rich-only' bank.

Unfurl sturdy sails to navigate trade doldrums

We can no longer let trade diplomacy be managed by a changing bureaucracy. We must learn from earlier manoeuvres at WTO and build competencies at home

Donald Trump's tantrums, which began during his first term as US president, seem to have peaked in his second term. During his first term, Trump initiated the virtual destruction of the World Trade Organization (WTO), an organisation established to ensure orderliness in global trade and facilitate gradual movement towards free trade taking into account the diverse development stages of the members. He achieved this by blocking the appointment of appellate body members, thereby preventing the powerful dispute settlement mechanism from functioning and enabling aggrieved members from imposing retaliatory tariffs on the aggressor. This brings me back to my days as India's ambassador to the WTO. We were under constant pressure to reduce our tariffs. We received lectures about the benefits of free trade from the US, the EU, and several other allies within their camp and from the director general of the WTO. We had defensive interests in agriculture—there was no way we could let our farmers down. The EU also had defensive interests, and we initially aligned with them. The EU and the US had collaborated during the Uruguay Round to impose an Agreement on Agriculture that prioritised their interests while neglecting the rest. Agricultural exporting countries and those with defensive interests alike were dissatisfied because this agreement allowed the big two to increase subsidies on agriculture with the vast majority of other members were left out in the cold. The US and EU attempted the same strategy again, reaching an understanding that protected each other's interests, sidelining all others. We took the initiative, along with Brazil, to form a new group comprising major developing countries like China, Egypt, South Africa, Thailand and others. This proved to be an unyielding opposition to the big two, resulting in the talks breaking down at the Cancun Ministerial Conference in 2003.

Nevertheless, we recognised that problems could be addressed only through negotiations and that we needed to correct some of the mistakes made during the Uruguay Round through the new round of talks initiated in 2001 at Doha. We collaborated with other countries to endeavour to get the negotiations back on track through the July Framework Agreement of 2004. Unfortunately, thereafter there was no progress in the talks, and the Doha work programme was ultimately abandoned after many years of discussions. The failure of these negotiations likely facilitated Trump's unilateral actions, which have thrown global trade into chaos. He imposes tariffs not only for trade reasons but also for political motives. For instance, in the case of Brazil, he imposed tariffs because he believes the current Lula government and the judiciary are persecuting the former right-wing President Jair Bolsonaro and his supporters. However, Brazil successfully engaged with American business interests, prompting them to intercede with Trump, which resulted in the effective rate being reduced from 50 percent to about 30 percent. It may not be long before Trump imposes tariffs on a democratic nation if a party he disapproves of comes to power or pursues a policy he disagrees with, as in the case of India's purchasing of Russian oil. In his characteristically narcissistic manner, he seems to believe that the world is his empire. His whimsical approach has led to a state of utter confusion in global trade for both the global exporters and the American importers, who really do not know what price to quote in US trade.

Trump believes these new tariffs will benefit the US, but history does not support this view. As Michael Bordo and Mickey Levy noted in their paper, Trump's tariffs: disregarding lessons from history, scenarios and

probable outcomes published in June, "Restrictions on global trade and capital flows were ramped up during WWI, beginning an extended era of US protectionism. New US laws sharply curtailed the immigration flow, and the Fordney-McCumber Tariff Act of 1922 imposed tariffs of 14 percent on all imported goods. With the onset of the Great Depression, the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act imposed effective tariffs of 20



percent on imports, exacerbating the economic contraction and initiating a period of constrained international trade, capital flows, and immigration." According to the authors, an average tariff level of 10 percent or more will lead to uncertainties, slowdowns, and recessions. An average tariff above 14 percent will have disastrous effects on the global economy. Additionally, the effects of tariffs on domestic inflation and their impact on the dollar will be adverse for the US. What should India do? We are the 10th largest trading partner of the US, but unlike China, we cannot

pressure Washington by cutting off essential lifelines for American industry. We need to focus on opening more markets for our exporters and seeking new sources of technology. The India-UK Free Trade Agreement was a step in the right direction. We must reach an agreement soon with the EU, which, like us, has defensive interests in agriculture. The BRICS platform should be strengthened.

The forthcoming visit of our Prime Minister to the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation meeting in Beijing can open new avenues for partnership with China. We must separate our border issues from trade. We must re-examine the possibilities of joining other free trade agreements like the CPTPP (Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership), from which the US has now withdrawn, and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, while also looking to open markets in Latin America, Arab countries and Africa. We need to be at the forefront of efforts to revive the WTO. The Centre must take the initiative to open a new chapter in cooperative federalism with states to revive internal reforms that will enhance our competitiveness in the global arena. There is another lesson that India must learn. Trade diplomacy can no longer be managed by a bureaucracy that is subject to frequent change. The US faced a similar issue early in the 20th century, and it established the Office of the Trade Representative to handle foreign trade and foreign direct investment exclusively. With foreign trade now constituting 45 percent of our GDP, we must look to protect our interests by creating more specialisations in trade, expertise in trade law, and development of negotiating skills.

1 hurt, 4 stranded as flash flood hits Himachal Pradesh's Kinnar; Army steps in to help

Shimla (Agency)

A flash flood struck Hojis Lungpa Nala in Himachal Pradesh's Kinnar district on Wednesday night, washing away a bridge across the Sutlej River, injuring a person, and leaving four others stranded.

The deluge was triggered by a cloudburst in the higher reaches of the Rishi Dogri Valley. The site was an active road construction zone under the Central Public Works Department, the Indian Army said.

More than a dozen sheds built for workers and officials engaged in the road construction were destroyed, and heavy machinery, including four trucks and a few JCBs, was washed away in the incident.

"Four people were stuck on one side of the seasonal rivulet when the flash flood hit. They were located through the drones by the Indian Army. Other workers managed to run towards safe locations before the Army was called for assistance," Amit Kumar Sharma, Deputy Commissioner, Kinnar, said.

NITI Aayog meet calls for reforms to boost India's R&D ecosystem

Ahmedabad (Agency)

Removing bureaucratic and procurement bottlenecks through AI-enabled systems, pre-approved vendor lists, and digitised approvals, and establishing a centralised funding database were among the key recommendations made at the fifth regional consultative meet on 'Ease of Doing Research and Development (R&D)'.

The meet, jointly initiated by NITI Aayog and hosted by the Gujarat Council on Science and Technology (GUJCOST), concluded on Wednesday at Science City, Ahmedabad, with a renewed vision to make India a globally competitive hub for research and innovation.

The two-day deliberation, held on August 12 and 13 brought together over 110 eminent leaders from Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan. Participants shared insights and actionable recommendations to simplify administrative processes, accelerate translational research, strengthen institutional competitiveness, and enhance access to knowledge resources. Prof Vivek Kumar Singh, Senior Adviser, NITI Aayog, opened the discussions by stressing upon "the urgent need for structural reforms, agile regulatory systems, and collaborative models to unlock India's R&D potential".

"Scientific advancement demands not only investments but also an ecosystem that is agile, transparent, and enabling," he said. Delivering the valedictory address, Dr V K Saraswat, Member (S&T), NITI Aayog, urged stakeholders to transform Indian research institutions into globally benchmarked centres of excellence. He called for "simplification of compliance procedures, institutional benchmarking, and stronger academia-industry linkages to drive high-impact and self-reliant research".

Will not publish or circulate commission report: Karnataka government tells HC

BENGALURU (Agency)

The State Government on Wednesday gave an undertaking before the Karnataka High Court that it will not publish or circulate the report submitted by the Commission of Inquiry headed by Justice John Michael D'Cunha into the stampede that claimed 11 lives outside M Chinnaswamy Stadium during the RCB victory celebrations on June 4.

Recording the submission made by Advocate General K Shashikiran Shetty that the report will not be published or circulated till September 4, the next date of hearing, the division bench of Justice Jayant Banerji and Justice Umesh M Adiga adjourned the hearing of the petition filed by DNA Entertainment

Networks Private Limited to September 4 to enable the State Government to file its objections.

Accusing the commission of not following the procedure laid down in the Commission of Inquiry Act by not giving sufficient opportunity of hearing and also to cross-examination, DNA alleged that its reputation has been affected adversely because of the report. DNA contended that the commission contended that it is a company that falls under the category 'person' appearing in Section 8(b) of the Act, and therefore, the reputation and goodwill have been affected adversely because of the report, which was leaked to the media. The commission has finalised the report without recording the statements of the witnesses, DNA alleged.



The Army supplied food and other necessary items to the four stranded employees of the road construction company using drones, Sharma said. "They will be rescued by afternoon," he added. The Indian Army said on Thursday that its swift response had

unstable terrain, the team reached the location and discovered four civilians stranded on the far bank," a defence spokesperson said.

A senior Army officer privy to the rescue operation said the HADR team illuminated the area to aid night rescue operations. "They also guided the stranded civilians to higher and safer ground and evacuated the injured individual to Regional Hospital, Reckong Peo," the officer said.

The Army said it also deployed a Logistics Drone High Altitude (LDHA) system to ferry essential items like eatables and coconut water across the floodwaters to help the stranded people through the night.

Meanwhile, purported videos of the incident showed people running towards safety before the flash flood hit. Since the outset of the monsoon this year, Himachal Pradesh has witnessed over 150 deaths and infrastructure losses worth approximately Rs 2,500 crore.

From cleaning, repairing of roads to Guru Tegh Bahadur sites: Bains pledges Rs 20L from discretionary funds, one month's salary as part of religious sentence

Amritsar (Agency)

Complying with the direction of the Akal Takht, Punjab Education Minister Harjot Singh Bains has pledged Rs 20 lakh from his discretionary funds and one month's salary for the cleaning and repair of approach roads to sites

associated with Guru Tegh Bahadur.

In compliance with the order received from the Five Singh Sahibaan at Sri Akal Takht Sahib, and with the grace of Guru Sahib Ji, after completing the assigned service, I went to Sri Akal Takht Sahib, offered Ardaas, and submitted a report regarding the completed service, Bains said.

For the cleaning and improvement of the roads leading to Gurdwara Guru Ke Mahal,

around other sites linked to Guru Tegh Bahadur. As a humble Sikh, I request forgiveness for mistakes committed knowingly or unknowingly in the past, and seek blessings to serve religion, the community, the nation, Punjab and society to the greatest extent in the

future, he said. The Sikh clergy summoned Bains for organising entertainment performances, involving dance and music, at a programme held in Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir, on July 24 to mark the 350th martyrdom anniversary of Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth of the ten Sikh Gurus. The Punjab Language Department organised the event, held at Tagore Hall in Srinagar.

At the meeting held at the

Akal Takht secretariat, Bains apologised for the Srinagar event, which was seen as a deep affront to Sikh sentiments. The Sikh clergy asked him to immediately visit Gurdwara Guru Ke Mahal, the birthplace of Guru Tegh Bahadur, in Amritsar, to inspect and ensure repairs and cleanliness on the approach roads and nearby streets.

At the meeting held at the

NFR Collaborates with IIT Guwahati to adopt Biodegradable Compostable Materials replacing use of Traditional Plastic

The Sikh Times

Maligaon, 14th August: Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR), under the leadership of General Manager Shri Chetan Kumar Shrivastava, has taken a significant step towards environmental sustainability by joining hands with IIT Guwahati, led by Professor Vimal Katiyar, to introduce biodegradable and compostable materials as a replacement for conventional plastic. Developed at IIT Guwahati's in-house Research and Development facility, this ISO 17088 compliant bio-plastic degrades in compost within a short time. As a pilot initiative, NFR has introduced eco-friendly green bed-roll bags on its trains, replacing traditional plastic bags used for distributing linen to passengers. The initiative will formally be rolled out on 15th August 2025, coinciding with the celebration of India's 79th Independence Day, with around 40,000 such bags to be distributed across 25 trains originating from terminals in Assam, West Bengal, Bihar, Tripura and Arunachal Pradesh. NFR has always been at the forefront towards adopting green initiatives over its transportation system. The zone has implemented rapid railway electrification, solar energy generation, AI-based intrusion detection systems to safeguard elephants and others, rainwater harvesting, quick watering systems, automatic coach washing plants, bio-toilets, mechanized



cleaning system, composting of solid waste, afforestation, and the transformation of waste lands into green areas.

Notably, the inoculum generation plant at Kamakhya has played a vital role in recycling biodegradable waste, which helps in reprocessing used bed-roll bags into new ones, further reducing plastic pollution. The collaboration with IIT Guwahati, coupled with NFR's sustained eco-friendly measures, marks a practical and scalable approach towards greener railway operations. This initiative not only enhances passenger convenience through durable and environmentally responsible solutions but also contributes towards reducing landfill waste, lowering the carbon footprint and conserving natural resources. By aligning operational efficiency with ecological responsibility, NFR continues to lead by example in building a cleaner, greener and more sustainable future for the railway sector and the communities it serves.

Punjab DGP cites Pak Army Chief's Florida comments to caution rank and file to remain alert

Punjab (Agency)

In his meetings with Police officers across Punjab for the past two days, Director General of Police Gaurav Yadav has referred to the anti-India statements made by Pakistan's Army Chief Field Marshal Asim Munir in Florida, USA, and asked the Punjab Police officials to be alive to the inimical designs of the Pakistan Army on India and Punjab.

In the past 48 hours the DGP has been hotfooting across Jalandhar, Amritsar, Ferozepur, Bathinda, Patiala and Ludhiana holding meetings with all 8 ranges, 28 CPs/SSPs, and SP/DSPs on security issues and getting feedback. A senior Punjab Police official who attended the meetings informed that the DGP made specific reference to Pak Army Chief's comments about India and said that his remarks gave an important insight into

what he may be planning to do to destabilise the situation in a border state like Punjab.

Munir had made several provocative statements about India during a black-tie dinner in Tampa, Florida, on August 10. According to reports, he issued a nuclear threat, stating, "We are a nuclear nation, if we think we are going down, we'll take half the world down with us".

He also addressed the Indus Waters Treaty, warning that Pakistan would destroy any dam India builds on the Indus River with "ten missiles".

The DGP referred to the security situation on J&K and how in recent past Pakistan has attempted to create unrest in Punjab through sporadic violence carried out by terrorist groups and gangsters who are actively supported by its intelligence agency Inter Services Intelligence (ISI). "The DGP

cautioned that there were continuous efforts being made by Pakistan to destabilise the security situation through gangs and separatist groups and that Munir's comments show where his focus lies and what plans he may have to inflict damage on India through over and covert means.

The DGP pointed out that the ring leaders of all Punjab-centric violent groups were located in Pakistan and these groups had their vital nodes in that country too therefore it was necessary for Punjab Police to remain alert," the officer said.

The field officials were briefed by the DGP that it has been observed in the recent past that the Pakistan Intelligence Operatives (PIOs) have become very desperate in Punjab and have been pressing their local contacts for some immediate 'action'.

Yellow alert: Bengaluru to expect rain till weekend

BENGALURU (Agency)

Wednesday's day-long spell of rain brought Bengaluru to a crawl, with several parts of the city getting waterlogged, and drainage systems once again coming under the spotlight as water entered low-lying areas. The 11.6mm of rain left residents wading through ankle-deep water in many neighbourhoods.

Traffic on major roads slowed to a near standstill during peak hours, as flooded stretches and pothole-ridden roads turned the evening commute into hours-long misery. Vehicles struggled to navigate waterlogged underpasses, and two-wheeler riders had to push stalled bikes through the slush. Pedestrians faced their own set of challenges, negotiating broken and slippery footpaths and muddy streets.

The city's already fragile infrastructure crumbled under the downpour, and stormwater drains overflowed.

According to the India Meteorological

Department (IMD), light rain is likely to persist for the next 36 hours, prompting a yellow alert that will remain in place until the weekend. The weather activity is being driven by a low-pressure area over west-central and adjoining northwest Bay of Bengal, coupled with an upper air cyclonic circulation affecting southern India.

On Thursday and Friday, light to moderate rain is likely in isolated pockets, with maximum temperatures gradually rising to around 28°C. The weekend forecast is similar, with light to moderate rain or isolated thunderstorms and wind speeds of 30-40 kmph. Minimum temperatures are expected to hover between 20°C and 21°C, while maximum temperatures will stay between 27°C and 28°C.

As of 8.30pm Wednesday, the city recorded maximum temperature of 22.6°C and minimum of 19.6°C, with 11.6mm of rainfall and relative humidity at 95%.

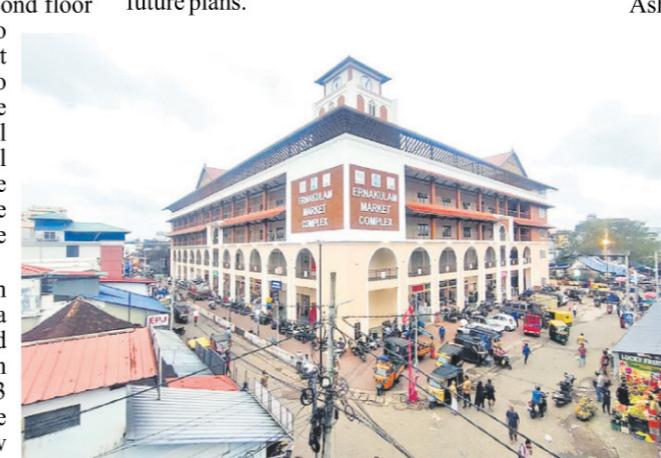
Ernakulam Market complex left 'underutilised' following dispute among vendors

KOCHI (Agency)

The renovated three-storey Ernakulam Market complex was opened with much fanfare. However, nearly eight months have passed and most of the stalls on the first floor and all of the second floor remain empty with vendors unwilling to occupy them. Moreover, a High Court stay order -- on a petition filed by two vendors -- has further complicated the process of space allocation. Of the total 275 proposed stalls in the complex, all 183 on the ground floor and two on the first floor were occupied by vegetable and grocery vendors. And, these continue to function unhindered.

C J George, president of the Ernakulam Market Stall Owners Association, said a dispute over allocation on the ground and first floors has resulted in underutilisation of the facility. "There were a total of 213 stalls in the old building. Before demolition and construction of the new building, it was agreed to rehabilitate existing vendors. As it turned out, the revamped complex only had space for 183 stalls on the ground floor. As a result, 30 stalls were allocated on the first floor," he said, adding that two vendors who were not satisfied with the process filed for injunction.

Kochi corporation had entrusted the association with allocation of booths. Now, with the stay order in place, the civic body must wait for legal proceedings to end before moving ahead with future plans.



Mayor M Anilkumar said the issue affects the revenue of the corporation. "This is a dispute between vendors. And, because of the stay order we cannot rent out the remaining space. It affects the corporation's revenue," he added.

The 19,822.14 sqft complex was opened to the public last December. The project, completed at a cost of Rs 72 crore, has commercial and office space on the third floor.

Ashraf, secretary of the association, said most vendors are reluctant to move into the first and second floors. "They claimed that it would affect business as most of the customers purchase essentials from the ground floor," he added. "On the second floor, the corporation was planning to set up a food court and rent out the remaining space to companies. However, with the stay order there is lack of clarity about further allocations," he said. George said that business has been bad as customers depend on roadside shops for vegetables and groceries. "Vendors along Market Canal have better display and space. Also, we need to ensure that the waste management system and arrangements in the complex are proper. The corporation can generate revenue from the facility only if all stalls are occupied and operational," he added. The mayor added that the corporation had a plan to relocate street vendors to the facility. "We had discussed the possibility of relocating the vendors along the canal to the complex. The stay order is delaying further discussions," he said.

How Pune's indestructible JM Road shames contractors, babus, netas alike

► Can a road in India remain pothole-free for 50 years? A 2.5-km stretch in Pune, known as Jangli Maharaj Road, shines as an example of civic engineering amid the pan-India pothole plague. Built in 1976, the road came with a 10-year warranty and hasn't needed major repairs in all these years.

Agency New Delhi.

"We don't do that here." This Black Panther line could sum up the mood of diners stepping out of one of the many restaurants on Pune's Jangli Maharaj Road, after watching clips of crater-filled streets elsewhere in India. Videos of dust-choked lanes, pond-sized puddles, streets with cheese-like holes and collapsing bridges are playing out on TV and shared on social

media. Even as newly constructed roads and bridges crumble, Pune's Jangli Maharaj (JM) Road, built almost 50 years ago, stands out as a unique civic marvel. In all these years, the 2.5-km road hardly needed repairs, and came with a warranty from the contractor. The JM Road, constructed in 1976, has stood the test of time, staying intact for nearly half a century until it was renovated in 2014. The road, in fact, needed re-tarring 35 years after it was opened to the public. For generations, Punekars have listed the Jangli Maharaj Road among things they are proud of. Digital Marketing executive Siddharth Laxmeshwar, in his 40s and raised in Pune, says Punekars always swear by Jangli Maharaj Road when it comes to quality infrastructure. His father, Upendra Laxmeshwar, in his 70s, fondly recalls how good the road has always been, so much so that in his youth he "used it as a racetrack at night". "I have personally done 130 kmph on JM Road," Laxmeshwar Sr, a



Pune-based musician, tells India Today Digital. Built in 1976, Pune's Jangli Maharaj Road, now lined with popular restaurants and some important temples, has only needed a few repairs and upgrades in all these decades. Its remarkable condition and longevity must put today's netas and babus to shame, especially in a time when headlines like these are all over the place: "Rs 6.5 crore Chikkodi bridge in Karnataka collapses just three months after inauguration", "Delhi airport roof caves in months after inauguration", "Heavy-duty truck

swallowed by caved-in road in Gurugram".

PUNE'S JM ROAD A CONTRAST TO INDIA'S CRUMBLING INFRA

Social media is overflowing with videos and photos showing Indian cities' crumbling public infrastructure. A few weeks ago, citizens on social media dared netas and babus alike to fix the roads. While Union Road Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari promises Indian highways will be "better than the US in two years", even the recently constructed signature Delhi-Mumbai Expressway has developed a crater. This is for a highway constructed by the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI), forget the roads inside cities, under state PWDs and urban local urban bodies. Why can't residents of every Indian city pull the Black Panther line when it comes to potholes and broken roads? Like Pune's 2.5-km Jangli Maharaj Road, a civic engineering marvel that's stayed strong for 49 years.

DUSU polls on Sept 18, Rs 1 lakh bond sparks protests



Agency New Delhi.

The Delhi University Students' Union (DUSU) elections will be held on September 18, with vote counting scheduled for the following day, the university announced on Wednesday. Voting for day classes will take place from 8:30 am to 1 pm, while evening class students will cast their votes between 3 pm and 7:30 pm. According to DU's notification, the last date to submit nomination papers—along with a Rs 500 annual fee and a Rs 1 lakh bond—is September 10 by 3 pm. Scrutiny of papers will follow the same day, with the final list of candidates out by September 11 at 5 pm.

Nomination papers for DUSU posts must be submitted at the Conference Centre, North Campus, while those contesting for Central Council seats must file them at their respective colleges. The university's new guideline mandating a Rs 1 lakh bond has drawn sharp criticism from student bodies. NSUI leader and current DUSU president Ronak Khatri called the bond "discriminatory," arguing that it excludes students from lower-income backgrounds.

ABVP's Delhi Secretary Sarthak Sharma echoed the sentiment, warning of mass protests if the rule isn't revoked. "We've submitted a memorandum to the Registrar demanding a rollback," he said. AISA national president Neha hinted at a possible Left alliance to counter the ABVP.

National Zoological Park plans to revamp animal adoption with shorter durations, simpler process



Agency New Delhi.

Delhi's National Zoological Park is preparing a major overhaul of its animal adoption scheme, aiming to make it more flexible, appealing, and easier for the public to participate. The revamped policy will, for the first time, allow people to symbolically "adopt" animals for shorter durations — from a single day to several months — instead of being tied to the current one-year requirement.

According to zoo officials, the proposal, recently cleared by the Advisory Committee and awaiting final approval from the Union Environment Ministry, is designed to build stronger emotional connections between visitors and the animals in their care. At present, the adoption process is limited, offers minimal perks such as entry passes and souvenirs, and attracts few participants. Only around 20 animals are under adoption, with no takers yet for the zoo's three elephants. The highest annual adoption rate is for elephants at Rs 6 lakh, while the lowest is Rs 700 for certain birds. Under the proposed plan, one-day adoptions will cost between Rs 500 and Rs 1,000, depending on the species. Monthly, quarterly, and half-yearly options will also be available, with rates calculated based on the animals' food expenses.

Officials believe these shorter commitments, coupled with potential tax benefits, could encourage more individuals and organisations to get involved. To manage the process efficiently, the zoo is also considering creating a separate society dedicated to handling adoptions and related funds.

Muslim man, 21, lynched in Maharashtra for speaking to girl at cafe

Agency New Delhi.

A 21-year-old Muslim man was beaten to death in Maharashtra's Jalgaon district by a group of assailants, after he was seen talking to a girl at a cafe. The incident triggered tension in the area, with police arresting eight in connection with the incident. The victim, identified as Suleman Rahim Khan, was attacked two days ago after being allegedly spotted chatting with a 17-year-old girl at a local cafe. An argument broke out between Khan and a group of youths, who allegedly followed him and the girl to another location, where they assaulted him again.

During the attack, Khan sustained severe head injuries. His parents rushed him to a hospital, but he succumbed to his injuries during treatment.

Khan's father said Suleman said his son was beaten "very brutally" and had injuries all over his body. He added that his son had been in Jamner to submit an application for police recruitment. The father and other family members were also allegedly assaulted when they tried to intervene. Police said the situation in Jamner remains tense and have warned against spreading rumours. Following the incident, a large crowd gathered outside the Jamner police station, prompting authorities to step up security in the area.

While the exact motive for the murder is yet to be established, police have arrested four more suspects, taking the total number of arrests to eight. Four of them have been remanded in police custody for five days, while six others remain at large. Teams have been formed to trace and arrest the absconding suspects. The victim's family is among only four Muslim families living in the village.

Amid row over SC crackdown, Delhi's civic body picks up 100 stray dogs in two days

Agency New Delhi.

Amid mounting concerns over stray dog attacks and rabies cases in Delhi, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has begun implementing the Supreme Court's recent directive to remove stray canines from city streets and shift them to dedicated shelters.

The civic body has already captured 100 dogs since Monday's order, Mayor Raja Iqbal Singh said on Wednesday. The apex court had directed the Delhi government and civic bodies in Gurugram, Noida, and Ghaziabad to ensure all stray dogs are moved to shelters, observing that the situation was "extremely grim," especially for children, due to frequent dog bite incidents leading to rabies. The MCD has decided to execute the plan in phases, starting with aggressive, rabies-infected, and sick animals. Singh said the corporation's 20 existing Animal Birth Control (ABC) centres are being converted into shelters to house captured dogs, ensuring they receive adequate care. "We are making sure all facilities are in place so that the dogs do not face problems," he said. In the second phase, the ABC centre in Dwarka will be expanded, and in the third phase, Ghoga Dairy in outer Delhi, with 85 acres of land, will be developed into a large shelter complex. The mayor emphasised that there is no shortage of land or funds for the project.

"This is a people's government, and resolving the stray dog problem is a priority. Residents have suffered for a long time, but we now have the resources and are moving ahead in a planned way," he said. According to Singh, 25 MCD teams are currently deployed across the city, responding to residents' complaints and picking up identified dogs. The civic body also plans to set up a dedicated helpline to streamline stray dog-related grievance redressal.

Rules made but not implemented: In stray dogs case, top court raps civic bodies

A three-judge bench of the Supreme Court reserved its order on petitions challenging its much-criticised August 11 verdict directing the rounding up of all animals in Delhi-NCR.

Agency New Delhi.

The Supreme Court on Thursday blasted local authorities for inaction on the stray dog menace and reserved order on petitions challenging its August 11 verdict directing the rounding up of all animals in Delhi-NCR. "Parliament frames rules and laws, but are not implemented. Local authorities are not doing what they should be doing. They should be here taking responsibility," a three-judge bench of the Supreme Court, comprising Justices Vikram Nath, Sandeep Mehta and NV Anjaria, said. However, the top court did not grant a stay on the directions issued to civic bodies by the bench of Justices JB Pardiwala and R Mahadevan on August 11.

In its much-criticised August 11 order, the top court directed authorities in Delhi-NCR to round up stray dogs and



put them in shelters within eight weeks. After the order sparked a massive uproar, the Chief Justice of India withdrew the case from the two-judge bench. On Thursday, the three-judge bench said it would see if any urgent orders or a stay on the August 11 verdict was needed.

"On the one hand, humans are suffering and, on the other hand, the animal lovers are here," the court said.

CENTRE BACKS AUGUST 11 ORDER

Appearing for the Delhi government in

the case, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said there was a "loud vocal minority" and a "silent suffering majority". "I have seen people posting videos of eating meat and then claiming to be animal lovers," Mehta said. At the outset, he made it clear that nobody was an "animal hater" as he dished out data on dog bite cases and rabies deaths. "WHO data shows 305 deaths a year. Most children are under the age of 15," Mehta said. He quoted a report to say that 37 lakh dog bites happen every year, which is an average of about 10,000 every day.

The Solicitor General underscored that sterilisation of strays does not stop rabies. "Even if the dogs are immunised, that won't stop them from mutilating children... Dogs do not have to be killed, they have to be separated. Parents cannot send children out to play," he said.

Massive Tree Uprooted, Crushes Biker To Death In Delhi Rain Chaos

Agency New Delhi.

A 50-year-old man was crushed to death after a massive tree uprooted and fell on him in Delhi amid heavy rain. The biker, identified as Sudhir Kumar (50), was riding with his daughter, Priya (22), when an old neem tree uprooted and fell flat on the biker and adjacent vehicles in South Delhi's Kalkaji. The national capital, Delhi, has been witnessing a downpour since early morning, leading to waterlogging and traffic jams, disrupting lives. According to the CCTV footage, at 9:50 am, an old neem tree uprooted and fell on the vehicles in Delhi's Kalkaji. After waiting for a few seconds, one of the cars that came under the tree managed to drive past the incident location.



However, the bike remained trapped under the tree. People rushed to rescue the bikers.

Police responded swiftly to the PCR call and launched a rescue operation. The two victims were extricated and shifted to the hospital through Centralised Accident and Trauma Services (CATS) ambulance. Both father and daughter were admitted to

the AIIMS Trauma Centre. The man died of his injuries.

Additionally, an i10 car parked in the vicinity sustained damage due to the fallen tree. The visuals from the ground show a tree fallen flat on the ground, blocking the entire road. JCB has been deployed to cut the tree into smaller parts and remove it from the road.

The Fire Department is also on service, trying to clear the area and restore traffic movement. Delhi woke up to heavy showers, prompting the India Meteorological Department (IMD) to issue a red alert, warning of more rain in the coming hours. Several parts of the national capital reported waterlogging and slowed traffic, causing inconvenience to commuters during the morning rush hour.

Can't ignore ground reality: On J&K statehood, top court points to Pahalgam

Supreme Court hears plea to restore Jammu & Kashmir statehood, stresses ground realities and cites

Pahalgam attack. The centre asked to file a reply within 8 weeks.

Agency New Delhi.

The Supreme Court on Thursday, while hearing a plea seeking the restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir, emphasised that ground realities must be taken into account. A bench comprising Chief Justice of India BR Gavai and Justice K Vinod Chandran underscored the significance of the Pahalgam issue during the proceedings. The court issued a notice to the Centre, directing it to file a reply within eight weeks on the plea to restore J&K's statehood.

The plea, filed last year by academician Zahoor Ahmad Bhat and socio-political activist Khurshaid Ahmad Malik, sought a court directive for the Centre to reinstate statehood within two months, as reported by the news agency PTI. "It is submitted that any further delay in restoring statehood would result in a serious diminishment of the democratically elected government in Jammu and

Kashmir, constituting a grave violation of the principles of federalism, which form part of the basic structure of the Constitution of India," the petition said.

It also noted that assembly elections and the Lok Sabha polls in Jammu and Kashmir were conducted peacefully, "without any incident of violence, disturbance or any security concerns being reported." The plea added, "Therefore, there is no impediment of security concerns, violence or any other disturbances which would hinder or prevent the grant/restoration of the status of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir as had been assured by the Union of India in the present proceedings." The petitioners warned that the non-restoration of statehood would

result in a lesser form of elected implementation. "Jammu and Kashmir is being operated as a Union Territory for a period of almost five years now, which has caused many impediments and grave losses to the development of Jammu and Kashmir and has affected the democratic rights of its citizens," the plea said.

In its December 11, 2023 verdict, the Supreme Court upheld the revocation of Article 370, which granted special status to Jammu and Kashmir, while directing that assembly elections be held by September 2024 and statehood be restored "at the earliest."

The court had described Article 370 as a temporary provision and clarified that the President of India could revoke it in the absence of the Constituent Assembly of the erstwhile state, whose term ended in 1957.



legislative assembly results were declared on October 8, 2024. They also pointed out that, despite the apex court's directions for restoration "at the earliest and as soon as possible," the Centre had not provided any timeline for

ICICI Bank cuts minimum balance after backlash. Check new rules and penalties

New Delhi.(Agency)

ICICI Bank has eased its minimum balance requirement for new savings accounts after facing criticism over an earlier steep hike. The updated rules came into effect on August 13, and will apply only to accounts opened on or after August 1, 2025. Customers with older accounts will continue under the previous terms.

LOWER BALANCE LIMITS FOR DIFFERENT AREAS

The bank has announced a sharp cut in the monthly average balance (MAB) for urban and metro customers, bringing it down from Rs 50,000 to Rs 15,000. For semi-urban branches, the required MAB is now Rs 7,500, while rural customers will need to maintain a minimum of Rs 2,500.

This marks a considerable relief, particularly for those in cities who were most affected by the earlier hike.

UNDERSTANDING THE MINIMUM ACCOUNT BALANCE

A minimum account balance is the smallest amount of money that must remain in your savings account to avoid a penalty. Banks set these requirements based on the account type and location. Falling below the set limit can lead to charges, which are often deducted automatically from the account.

WHO WILL NEED TO FOLLOW THE RULES

The revised balance requirements apply only to customers who opened their savings accounts after August 1, 2025. Those with older accounts will continue to follow the earlier rules, which in some cases mean keeping a higher amount in their accounts.

PENALTY FOR FALLING SHORT

If the required balance is not maintained, ICICI Bank will charge 6% of the shortfall amount or Rs 500, whichever is lower.

JSW Cement shares list at 4% premium on stock market debut

MUMBAI.(Agency)

JSW Cement made a steady debut on the stock market on Thursday, opening at a premium of around 4% over its issue price of Rs 147. On the BSE, the shares opened at Rs 153, up 4.1%, while on the NSE they began trading at Rs 153.50, a gain of 4.4%.

The listing performance was in line with market expectations as the grey market premium (GMP) had indicated a possible gain of around Rs 5 per share ahead of the debut. The last reported GMP stood at Rs 4.8, suggesting an estimated listing price of Rs 151.8 and an expected gain of 3.27%.

Allotment of shares for the JSW Cement IPO was finalised on Tuesday, August 12, 2025. JSW Cement IPO opened for subscription on August 7 and closed on August 11. The company's Rs 3,600 crore IPO, which comprised a fresh issue of Rs 1,600 crore and an offer for sale worth Rs 2,000 crore, received strong decent interest from investors. Overall, the issue was subscribed 8.22 times. Interest was particularly high



from institutional buyers, with the qualified institutional buyers (QIB) category subscribing 16.71 times. Non-institutional investors (NII) subscribed 11.60 times, while the retail portion saw a subscription of 1.91 times. Gaurav Garg, Lemmon Markets Desk, said, "JSW Cement's IPO is suitable for investors with a long-term horizon and a high-risk appetite. While short-term listing gains are uncertain due to rich valuations and near-term earnings pressure, the company holds long-term promise as India transitions toward more sustainable and resource-efficient infrastructure development."

Rising US tariffs, demand for renewables a big opportunity for southern states: Ampin Energy CEO

BENGALURU.(Agency)

The increasing demand for power, especially renewable energy and the high tariffs being imposed by the United States have come as an opportunity for the Indian energy sector especially for the southern states, which have the highest potential, to quickly grab, said Pinaki Bhattacharyya, Founder, Managing Director and CEO, Ampin Energy Transition Private Limited. Speaking to the media at the sidelines of the day-long seminar on Renewable Energy Transition for Commercial and Industrial Consumers in the Southern Region, he said the cells, modules, solar and wind panels were manufactured in India, but were being exported to other countries, leaving the demands inside the country dry. Now the relations of India with its neighbouring countries are not good and the tariff revisions imposed will help improve the production and costing for the Indian market. This will only strengthen India's energy sector in the coming times, he said. The Union government has set a net-zero target by 2070 and 500 gigawatt of renewable energy (RE) generation by 2030, of this 200 gigawatt is being generated and to meet the target at least 50 gigawatt needs to be generated year-on-year. Karnataka has also set a target of increasing its RE generation from the existing 24 gigawatt to 38 gigawatt in the next five years.

TDK Ventures invests \$21 million in Bengaluru-based Ultraviolette

India's electric two-wheeler market presents a massive opportunity to cut emissions and deliver cleaner urban transport.

New Delhi.(Agency)

TDK Corporation has announced that its corporate venture capital arm, TDK Ventures, Inc., has invested \$21 million in Ultraviolette, a Bangalore-based innovator in high-performance electric motorcycles. The funding, part of Ultraviolette's latest investment round, underscores TDK Ventures' commitment to advancing sustainable mobility worldwide.

India's electric two-wheeler market

presents a massive opportunity to cut emissions and deliver cleaner urban transport. While electric scooters have reached 18% market penetration in just four years, electric motorcycles remain below 0.1%. Industry estimates project the segment could grow into a market worth over \$50 billion within a decade. Ultraviolette's proprietary software platform powers both its electric motorcycles and scooters, enabling the transition for India's 20 million-unit two-wheeler market. The company is also the first Indian EV manufacturer to sell in the EU and is preparing for entry into other developed markets. With a portfolio spanning mid-premium motorcycles and scooters, Ultraviolette combines aspirational design, high performance, and advanced safety features to offer compelling alternatives to internal combustion vehicles. Its flagship F77 MACH 2 and F77

SuperStreet models have won multiple industry awards, while upcoming products — the Tesseract scooter and Shockwave light motorcycle — have already secured over 70,000 paid



bookings worth more than \$120 million. The brand is expanding its reach from 20 Indian cities today to a target of 100 by year-end, and began sales in 10 EU countries earlier this year. "TDK Ventures believes in empowering visionary companies driving the next wave of

sustainable innovation," said Nicolas Sauvage, President of TDK Ventures. "Ultraviolette exemplifies this with their industry-leading engineering, vertical integration, and bold vision to reimagine the future of motorcycling. We are excited to support their journey toward electrifying the world's largest motorcycle markets." Ultraviolette's innovations include a patented five-level battery safety system, a proprietary vehicle operating system, and a vertically integrated plant capable of producing 100,000 units annually. Its premium motorcycles deliver up to 30 kW peak power, top speeds of 155 km/h, and real-world ranges up to 300 km. The company's F99 Factory Racing Platform holds the record for the fastest Indian-made motorcycle at 258 km/h. Models are priced between USD \$2,000 and \$10,000, targeting a broad spectrum of consumers in India and overseas.

Cognizant to roll out wage hikes for 80% of eligible employees. Details here

IT giant Cognizant is set to give salary hikes to 80% of eligible employees from November 1, with top performers in India receiving high single-digit increases.

New Delhi.(Agency)

IT services major Cognizant will implement salary increases for nearly 80% of its eligible employees starting November 1, 2025, according to a report by Moneycontrol. The move follows the company's earlier indication during its second-quarter earnings that most employees would receive merit-based increments in the latter half of the year. The hikes will apply to employees up to and including the Senior Associate level. The exact increase will depend on performance ratings and the employee's location. The announcement ends months of uncertainty around the

increment cycle. Cognizant typically starts salary hikes from August 1 but delayed this year's cycle due to global economic headwinds, including US tariffs that impacted client budgets. In

rewarding performance.

The decision comes on the back of strong financial performance in the second quarter. Cognizant reported revenue of \$5.25 billion, an 8.1% year-on-year rise, while net income jumped 14% to \$645 million. Bookings surged 18% during the quarter and included two large deals worth over \$1 billion each. The company also raised its 2025 constant-currency revenue growth forecast to 4 to 6% from its earlier estimate of 3.5 to 6%, while retaining its adjusted operating margin guidance at 15.5 to 15.7%. Headcount increased by about 7,500 employees during the quarter, taking the total to 343,800, driven largely by fresh hiring in India. Attrition dropped to 15.2%.

Cognizant also announced plans to upskill employees in artificial intelligence through a new learning facility in Chennai.



India, high performers can expect increases in the high single digits, while others will receive smaller adjustments. Earlier this year, most associates at Cognizant received their highest bonuses in three years, signalling the company's focus on

Cognizant hikes salary for 80% of eligible staff; follows TCS move amid industry headwinds

New Delhi.(Agency)

IT services major Cognizant will roll out salary hikes for about 80% of its eligible employees effective November 1, 2025, the company said on Thursday. The move aligns with its second-quarter guidance to award merit-based increases to the vast majority of staff in the second half of the year. The hikes will apply to employees up to the Senior Associate level, with the amount varying by country and individual performance. In India, consistent top performers will receive increases in the "high single digits." "Top performers will receive the highest increases. Earlier this year, Cognizant paid most of its associates their highest bonuses in three years," a company spokesperson said. Nasdaq-listed Cognizant posted a 14% year-on-year rise in net income to \$645 million for the quarter ended June 30, 2025, compared with \$566 million a year ago. Revenue for the quarter grew 8.1% to \$5.25 billion. The company maintained its 2025 adjusted operating margin guidance at 15.5–15.7%, an expansion of 20–40



basis points, and narrowed constant currency revenue growth guidance to 4–6%. Operating margin for the quarter stood at 15.6%. CFO Jatin Dalal during the earnings call had said that the decision on salary increases had not been finalised earlier in the year, but the aim was "to cover a vast majority of our employees during the second half." Voluntary attrition fell to 15.2% in Q2 2025, from 15.8% in Q1 and 13.6% a year earlier. Headcount stood at 343,800 at the end of June, up 7,500 from both Q1 2025 and Q2 2024. The company plans to hire 15,000–20,000 freshers in 2025. The announcement by Cognizant comes days after Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) said it would raise salaries for about 80% of its workforce from September 1, 2025, covering junior and mid-level staff. Reports suggest increments of 6–8% for offshore employees and 2–4% for onshore employees.

RBI's new rule: Cheques to clear in just hours starting this date

New Delhi.(Agency)

For a long time, cheque clearance in India has been a time-consuming process, often taking up to two working days. This delay has caused inconvenience for individuals and businesses who rely on cheque payments. From October 4, 2025, that hassle will largely be removed as the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is set to introduce a faster clearance system that will process cheques within hours. Under the new rule, cheques will be scanned, presented, and cleared continuously during business hours, reducing the clearing cycle from the current T+1 days to just a few hours. This change will take place under the Cheque Truncation System (CTS), which until now has worked on batch processing. According to the RBI circular, the new system, called

Continuous Clearing and Settlement on Realisation, will be rolled out in two phases.

Phase 1 will begin on October 4, 2025, and Phase 2 will follow on January 3, 2026. The move aims to improve efficiency, reduce settlement risks, and enhance customer convenience.

In the new set-up, there will be a single presentation session from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Cheques deposited at bank branches during this period will be scanned and sent to the clearing house immediately. The drawee bank (the bank on which the cheque is drawn) will then send a positive confirmation for honoured cheques or a negative confirmation for dishonoured ones.

During Phase 1, drawee banks must confirm cheques by the end of the confirmation session at 7:00 PM. If they fail to respond, the cheques will be

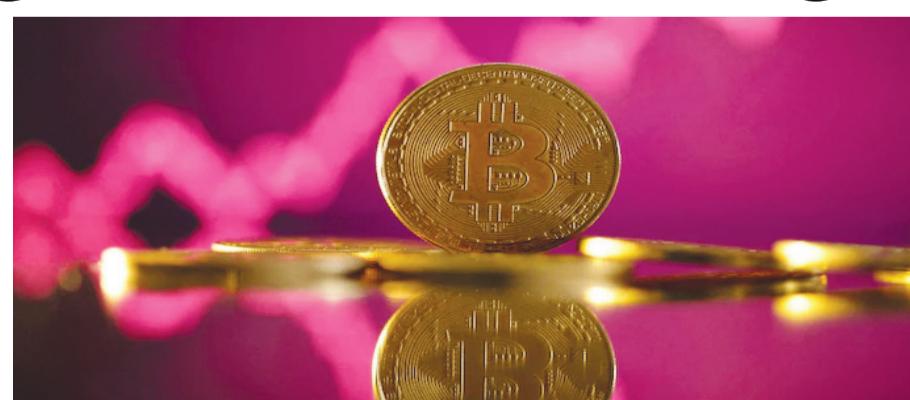
considered approved and included for settlement. Phase 2 will bring in a stricter timeline. From January 3, 2026, cheques must be confirmed within three hours of presentation. For example, if a cheque is received between 10:00 AM and 11:00 AM, it must be confirmed by 2:00 PM. If no confirmation is given within the time limit, the cheque will be deemed approved. Once the settlement is complete, the clearing house will send the confirmation details to the presenting bank, which must release the funds to the customer immediately, but no later than one hour after settlement. The RBI has instructed banks to inform customers about the new process and to ensure they are ready to handle continuous cheque clearing from the implementation dates.

Bitcoin surges past \$124,000 to hit all-time high. What's fueling the rally

Bitcoin hit an all-time high of \$124,000. Here's why Bitcoin surged past \$124K and will it keep climbing

New Delhi. (Agency)

Bitcoin hit a record high on Thursday, surging past \$124,000 for the first time before easing slightly to \$123,868. Ethereum also climbed sharply, trading near \$4,717, its highest level since 2021. The rally reflects a mix of strong institutional demand, favourable macro conditions, and growing expectations of easier US monetary policy. Himanshu Maradiya, Founder and Chairman of CIFDAQ, explained the drivers behind the rally. Bitcoin surged past \$124,000 for the first time, setting a new all-time high before easing to \$123,868. The rally was fueled by strong institutional demand and growing expectations of a September interest rate cut, with CME FedWatch now showing a 93.7% probability. Softer-than-expected US



CPI data at 2.7% y/y boosted optimism, though a core inflation uptick to 3.1% could keep the Fed cautious," he said. "Ethereum also limbed near its 2021 peak, trading at \$4,717. Institutional inflows remain a key driver. BTC ETFs added over \$3.6 billion in the past month, while corporate and sovereign treasuries now hold 3.64 million BTC, or 17% of supply," he noted. "The markets may experience consolidation between \$120K and \$125K, but strong structural demand and limited supply will support further gains through the

end of the year." Edul Patel, Co-founder and CEO of Mudrex, added further context on the broader market impact: "Bitcoin hit a fresh all-time high of \$124,400, taking the overall crypto market cap to a record \$4.18 trillion. Multiple factors, such as strong optimism for a September rate cut, corporate accumulation, consistent ETF inflows, and bullish derivatives activity, have contributed to the rally." "Moves by the Trump administration to ease investment in crypto assets have further improved market sentiment. Currently trading at \$123,600, the breakout has pushed BTC into price discovery, with liquidation clusters forming near \$125,500. If the momentum continues, we could see BTC heading towards \$140,000 in the coming weeks," Patel added. Simply put, the rally has been supported by expectations of a September interest rate cut from the Federal Reserve. CME FedWatch currently shows a 93.7% probability of a cut, while softer-than-expected US CPI data at 2.7% year-on-year has boosted market optimism. However, a rise in core inflation to 3.1%, however, could make the Fed more cautious, adding an element of uncertainty to near-term market movements. It is worth noting that institutional adoption remains a key driver. Bitcoin ETFs added over \$3.6 billion in inflows in the past month, and corporate and sovereign treasuries now hold 17% of total BTC supply. This structural demand, combined with limited supply, has created a strong foundation for further gains, even if markets consolidate between \$120,000 and \$125,000 in the short term.

Rakul Preet Singh's

Strappy Midi Dress Brings A Splash Of Summer In Monsoon

Rakul Preet Singh went out for a casual outing with her husband, Jackky Bhagnani and brother, Aman Preet Singh, this afternoon. The sibling duo recently celebrated Rakshabandhan, and it seems their lunch date alongside the film producer was an extended part of the holy festival. Amid this, it was the actress' look for the day that captured the attention of many. In a video posted on Instagram, Jackky Bhagnani, Aman Preet Singh, and Rakul Preet Singh can be seen exiting their car parked outside an eatery and walking inside the place one after the other. While the F.A.L.T.U star was seen grinning while posing for the lens, his brother-in-law was found humbly asking the shutterbugs stationed outside the restaurant not to take his pictures.

Rakul Preet Singh Looks Like A Fresh Breeze Of Air During Latest Outing
Following them, Rakul Preet joined her brother and husband, but managed to pose a bit before entering the restaurant premises. Donning a melon coloured Verona Dress from the brand Summer Away (previously Summer Somewhere), the diva's swag was on point. The ankle-length, fully lined maxi dress features a deep V-neckline and tie details, along with a side high slit, making it extremely suitable for summer fashion.

The diva completed her look with yellow flip-flops, stylish shades, subtle makeup and a ponytail hairstyle. On the other hand, Jackky looked dapper in a mustard



yellow collared shirt, which he kept unbuttoned at the top, giving a relaxed vibe. He paired it with black washed jeans and white sneakers, adding a fresh and chic touch to his look. The actor turned producer was also seen wearing dark sunglasses that nailed her laid-back style game.

Meanwhile, Aman Preet opted for a white T-shirt teamed with grey pants and a pair of casual footwear to keep his look simple yet cool.

Rakul Preet Singh's Rakshabandhan Celebration With Aman Preet Singh
The actress recently dropped a series of photos and videos on Instagram, featuring glimpses from her Rakshabandhan celebrations with her brother, Aman Preet Singh. Alongside the sneak peeks, she penned a meaningful note for him that can be read as "Sibling bond that stays forever .. we both protect one another now and always .. to my crazy other .. happy rakshabandhan.. I love you sooo much.."



Janhvi Kapoor

Sidharth Malhotra Add New Page To Param Sundari Promotions

Janhvi Kapoor and Sidharth Malhotra are clearly in full-on promotion mode for their upcoming film Param Sundari which is all set to release on August 29. The much-loved duo was recently spotted at the Mumbai airport, seemingly headed for yet another round of promotional appearances and making sure to sprinkle a little off-screen charm with their casual outings. Dressed in ethnic wear, the two looked every bit magical as they arrived to board a flight. Sidharth Malhotra kept it classic in a crisp white kurta set whereas Janhvi Kapoor went for a soft and elegant pink kurta set for a touch of grace, both serving ethnic fashion goals together.

What really won hearts was their genuine warmth as both flashed radiant smiles that could melt anyone's heart. Before heading inside, they made sure to greet the paparazzi with a sweet wave and polite 'Thank You'.

Janhvi Kapoor and Sidharth Malhotra Reach Super Dancer 5 Sets

Before this, Janhvi Kapoor and Sidharth Malhotra's last stop was the sets of Super Dancer 5. The duo's sweet camaraderie was hard to miss as the actor patiently waited near Janhvi's vanity van and while walking alongside her, they exchanged a sweet chat, giving fans a glimpse of their warm friendship.

Dressed to the nines, Janhvi looked stunning in a heavily embellished traditional South Indian ensemble whereas Sidharth went for a not-so-casual look, capturing everyone's attention.

Param Sundari Trailer

Dinesh Vijan and Maddock Films have released the much-awaited trailer of Param Sundari. The lead pair of the film recently opened up about their experience of working on the film.

Janhvi Kapoor, in a statement, reportedly said, "Sundari is deeply personal to me. Her grace, quiet strength, and love for her roots resonate with my own South Indian heritage. Shooting in Kerala, surrounded by such beauty, I felt an emotional connection to her world that I hope the audience will feel too."



Sidharth Malhotra, on the other hand, expressed his hope that the audience would feel the warmth and joy while watching the film. He said, "With Param Sundari, I feel like I'm revisiting the kind of romance I grew up loving, but telling it in a way that feels fresh and relatable. Param has that Delhi boy charm, with a love story that makes you cross worlds." The actor added, "I hope the audience feels the same warmth and joy we felt while making it." Param Sundari is directed by Tushar Jalota.



Poonam Pandey Is All Set For Her Spiritual Visit To Kamakhya Temple



Poonam Pandey, known for her bold fashion takes, turned heads yet again as she was spotted wearing a gorgeous saree while heading to a spiritual trip to Kamakhya. Poonam was spotted by paps as she donned a green saree, highlighting a simple yet elegant look. The actress and model was spotted wearing a bright green saree, featuring narrow golden and maroon borders, as she headed for the trip. Poonam Pandey was seen pairing her saree with a red spaghetti strap blouse, adding a modern twist to the otherwise traditional look.

Poonam Pandey Heads to Kamakhya

Kamakhya is one of the most popular places in the country, where every year thousands of people visit to offer their prayers to the goddess. On Wednesday, August 13, Bollywood actress Poonam Pandey was captured on her way to Kamakhya. Poonam's look marked a shift from her bold fashion choices as she opted to drape herself in an elegant saree. She accessorises her look with gold bangles and stud earrings. To finish off the look, she chose to wear a pair of red sandals that match her blouse.

Poonam Pandey styled her hair in soft waves and left it open and opted for minimal and subtle makeup. Overall, her traditional yet casual look seemed extremely comfortable yet stylish, making it perfect for travel.

On the Professional Front

Poonam Pandey has been working in the entertainment industry for over a decade. She started her career in 2010 as a model and rose to prominence after becoming one of the top contestants of the Gladrag Manhunt and Megamodel Contest and appearing on the cover page of the magazine.

In 2013, Poonam made her debut in Bollywood with Nasha alongside Shivam Patil. Since then she has appeared in various films, including The Uncanny Malini & Co., and The Journey of Karma, among others.

Shahid Kapoor Smiles For Photos With Female Fans, Video Goes Viral



Shahid Kapoor has once again proved that he is one of the most adored stars—not just for his acting skills, but also for his down-to-earth nature. A recent video captured the Kabir Singh actor clicking photos with a group of female fans as he stepped out in the city. In the video, shared by Filmygyan, we can see Shahid Kapoor clicking photos with female fans. He is all smiles and is also interacting with them. The actor's humble gesture has won hearts on the internet. Many fans have called him handsome. And others dropped heart emojis in the comment section. The video has been going viral on social media.

Shahid Kapoor's Chhatrapati Shivaji Biopic Shelved:

Shahid Kapoor's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj has been officially shelved. Director Amit Rai, best known for OMG 2, confirmed the news in a recent interview with Mid-Day. He also expressed his frustration with the film industry's systemic issues.

In an interview with Mid-Day, director Amit Rai said, "The system is so cruel. Even if you have proved your mettle with a R180 crore film [OMG 2], it's not enough. How is a director supposed to work here, under these systems of casting, production, star, and management? You live with a story for five years, and within minutes, somebody writes a five-pager, pointing out what is wrong and what is right in the film."

Shahid Kapoor's work front:

On the work front, Shahid Kapoor's last big-screen appearance was in Deva, a remake of the Malayalam film Mumbai Police. In the action thriller, the actor plays a rogue cop trying to solve a murder case while also looking for a mole in his department.

Shahid Kapoor is currently busy with the shoot of Vishal Bhardwaj's next. A high-voltage box office clash is likely to happen at box office in December this year. The makers of Shahid Kapoor's next has reportedly decided to stick to the original release date of the upcoming film, despite major competition from Ranveer Singh's Dhurandhar and Prabhas' much-anticipated The Raja Saab. There is no intention of altering the film's release, setting the stage for a massive three-way showdown. Times Now has quoted Bollywood Hungama report which mentions that there is no change in release date of Shahid Kapoor's next. The portal reported a source close to the development as saying, "It was the makers of Shahid Kapoor's next that took the December 5 slot first."



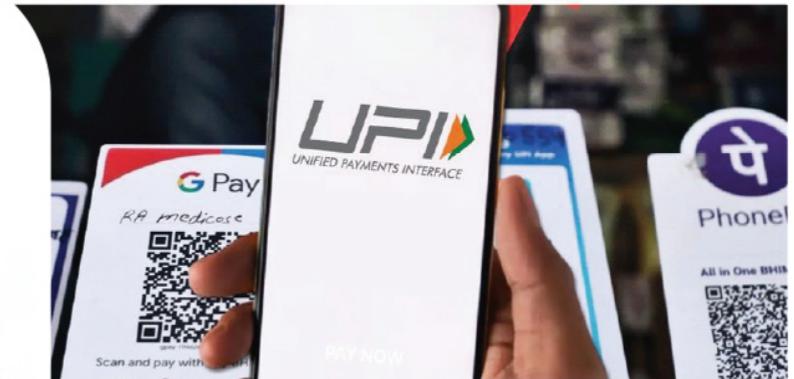
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