

Bills to remove arrested ministers in Lok Sabha, Opposition chants waapis lo

Under the proposed anti-corruption draft laws, a Prime Minister, Chief Minister or Minister facing charges with a minimum five-year jail term will be stripped of office if kept in custody for 30 consecutive days.

New Delhi. (Agency)
Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday introduced three contentious bills in the Lok Sabha under which the Prime Minister and chief ministers could be removed if they have been arrested for 30 consecutive days amid massive uproar and sloganising. The three bills introduced are the Constitution (130th Amendment) Bill, the Government of Union Territories (Amendment) Bill, and the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill. The Opposition has raised strong objections to the proposed

legislation, saying that the central government intends to bring laws to destabilise the non-BJP governments by getting its chief ministers arrested by 'biased' central agencies and removing them from their posts soon after their 'arbitrary' arrest.

WHAT ARE THE CONTENTIOUS BILLS?

According to the three big-ticket anti-corruption draft laws, any Prime Minister, Chief Minister or Minister who is arrested and held in custody for 30 straight days on charges carrying a punishment of five years or more will automatically be removed from office on the 31st day. The government's move comes against the backdrop of past controversies, when leaders such as former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Tamil Nadu minister V Senthil Balaji continued to hold office despite being in jail.

A minister, who for any period of 30 consecutive days during holding the

office as such, is arrested and detained in custody, on allegation of committing an offence punishable with imprisonment of five years or more, shall be removed from his office by the President on the advice of the Prime Minister by the thirty-first day after being taken in such custody."



one of the bills say.

OPPOSITION CRIES FOUL

Soon after the bills were listed for business in Lok Sabha, the Congress launched a scathing attack on the BJP-led central government and said that the ruling party wishes to bring such a law to remove

opposition chief ministers after failing to defeat them electorally. "What a vicious circle! No guidelines for arrest followed! Arrests of opposition leaders rampant and disproportionate," senior advocate and Congress leader Abhishek Manu Singhvi posted on X. "The best way to destabilise the opposition is to unleash biased central agencies to arrest opposition CMs and, despite being unable to defeat them electorally, remove them by arbitrary arrests!! And no ruling party incumbent CM ever touched!!," he added. Trinamool Congress leader Abhishek Banerjee also joined in and accused the Centre of attempting to crush democracy and manipulate the people's mandate by toppling state governments. "Having failed in its attempt to misuse the EC to implement SIR, the government has now activated another 'E' — ED — to bring in laws that target opposition leaders, crush democracy and manipulate the people's mandate by toppling State.

'Seems reasonable': Shashi Tharoor differs with Congress on bill to remove PM, CMs

New Delhi, Aug 20: Congress MP Shashi Tharoor on Wednesday voiced support for laying down rules to remove the Prime Minister, Chief Ministers, or Ministers of States and Union Territories from their posts if they are arrested on serious criminal charges. Taking a slightly different stance from his party colleagues on the Constitution (130th Amendment) Bill, which seeks to lay down said rules, Tharoor mentioned that while he does not know enough about the bills tabled by Union Home Minister Amit Shah, "on the face of it" it is "reasonable" that anyone doing wrong things should not be allowed to hold a political office in the country. "As far as I am concerned, I don't know those Bills well enough to give you a comment. On the face of it, it seems reasonable that anyone who does anything wrong should be liable to punishment and should not be holding a high constitutional or political office. I think that makes sense," Tharoor stated at Parliament premises. The Constitution (130th Amendment) Bill, 2025, seeks to remove a Central or State Minister who is facing allegations of corruption or serious offences and has been detained for at least 30 days. The Bill was tabled in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday. However, Tharoor's remarks differ from the party's leadership, who has termed the bills as "unconstitutional" and "draconian". Party leader Priyanka Gandhi, taking strong exception to the Bill said earlier today that the bill being touted as an anti-corruption measure is just a "veil over the eyes of people," claiming that a Chief Minister could be arrested on fabricated charges and be removed from their post after 30 days without a conviction if the bill is passed. "I see it as a completely draconian and against everything. To say it as an anti-corruption measure is just to pull a veil across the eyes of the people," the Wayanad MP said. "Tomorrow, you can put any kind of a case on a CM, have him arrested for 30 days without conviction, and he ceases to be a CM.

Man who attacked Delhi CM is "serial offender"

The Sikh Times
Simmi Kaur Babbar

New Delhi, August 20: The man who was arrested for attacking Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta during 'Jan Sunwai' at her camp office in Civil Lines here on Wednesday is a "serial offender" and several cases have been registered against him in Rajkot in Gujarat, officials said. The accused Rajesh Khimji was arrested by Delhi Police and a case has been registered against him under section 109(1) Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) (Attempt to murder) at the Civil Lines police station. Officials said that Rajesh Khimji has earlier faced cases and had been booked under various sections of Indian Penal Code (IPC) that relate to causing

grievous hurt by dangerous weapons or means, intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of peace, presence as an abettor when an offence is committed.

They said he has also been booked under sections that deal with unlawful possession of liquor. The officials said an FIR had been filed against him at Bhaktinagar police station in Rajkot in 2017 under Sections 326, 504, 114 of IPC. He was acquitted by a Rajkot court in November 2019. They said another case was filed against him (1227/2020) under Section 65AA, 116B of the Gujarat Prohibition Act.

These sections relate to the sale, purchase, possession, and transportation of intoxicants, which relate to causing



was booked in the Bhaktinagar Police Station under the same sections in another case (1591/2020) and was subsequently acquitted by a Gujarat Court in October 2023. The officials said he was booked

in Bhaktinagar Police Station (R.No.0871/2022 under Section 6PI, 116B). The case is pending in a court of Additional Civil Judge and the next hearing is scheduled on September 29 this year. An official said he was booked in a fifth case (0072/2024) in Bhaktinagar Police Station under IPC Sections 324, 323, 504, 114 and GP Act Section 135(1). He was acquitted by a Rajkot court order in December 2024.

According to Delhi Police sources, none of the relatives of the accused is in jail. They said the accused did not take any complaint letter or letter with him to CM residence. Police will seek the remand of the accused Rajesh Khimji.

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Delhi Government to extend full support to Durga Puja Committees: Kapil Mishra

The Sikh Times
Sourabh Sharma

New Delhi, August 20, 2025

Delhi Government's Minister of Art, Culture & Languages, Kapil Mishra, yesterday held a meeting with Greater Kailash MLA, Shikha Rai, and office bearers of various Durga Puja Committees. The meeting discussed preparations for the upcoming grand Durga Puja festival and deliberated on the challenges being faced in its organization. Kapil Mishra stated that Durga Puja is not only a festival of religious faith but also a living symbol of Delhi's Ganga-Jamuni culture and social unity. The government will ensure that no committee faces any difficulty in organizing the festival. The priority of the Delhi Government is to ensure that the festival is celebrated grandly, safely, and without obstacles.

Mishra further added that Goddess Durga's strength inspires us to stand against injustice and evil. This festival conveys the message of working together for the welfare of society.

Greater Kailash MLA, Shikha Rai, also presented details of the ongoing works in the constituency and raised the concerns of the committees. Office bearers of Durga Puja Committees present in the meeting shared their suggestions regarding the arrangements for the festival.

Kapil Mishra directed the officials to coordinate with the administration and police department to ensure necessary facilities and security arrangements. He assured that the Delhi Government will provide full support for the successful organization of the Durga Puja festival. He further said that the festival will be celebrated grandly from September 28 to October 2, and all possible facilities will be provided by the administration.



'Remember Arvind Kejriwal': Opposition Slams Centre Over 'PM Removal' Bill

New Delhi. (Agency)

A bill to eject senior members of the government - from the Prime Minister down - jailed (but not necessarily after a trial) for 30 days on 'serious criminal charges' has led to the opposition accusing the BJP of conspiring to illegally remove non-allied governments it could not defeat in elections.

Opposition MPs have called the bill "draconian" and "unconstitutional", and warned voters the Bharatiya Janata Party is trying to turn the country into a "police state... a dictatorship".

The opposition has argued the BJP - frequently accused of destabilising rivals' governments by poaching

MLAs and eating into Assembly majorities, or using federal investigative agencies to intimidate them into jumping camps - is trying to make such tactics legal and constitutional. I see it as a completely draconian thing... to call it an 'anti-corruption measure' is to pull a veil across the eyes of the people. Tomorrow, you can file any case against a chief minister, have him/her arrested for 30 days without conviction... and he ceases to be a chief minister? It is absolutely unconstitutional and undemocratic," the Congress' Priyanka Gandhi Vadra raged.

Another Congress leader, Abhishek



Singhvi, offered similarly scathing criticism. "The best way to destabilise the opposition is to unleash biased central agencies to arrest opposition chief ministers and then, despite being

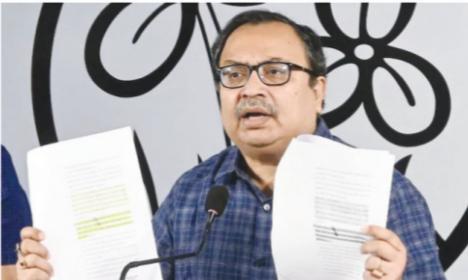
unable to defeat them electorally, remove them by arbitrary arrests," he said. "And no ruling party chief minister will ever be touched!"

Opposition leaders pointed to the case of former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, who was arrested on corruption charges linked to an alleged liquor excise policy scam. The Aam Aadmi Party boss - who led his outfit to successive wins over the BJP in Delhi elections - was arrested and jailed for over five months, without a trial, before the Supreme Court granted him bail. If the proposed bill had been in effect then, he would have been sacked on the 31st day after his arrest on March 21, 2024.

Trinamool Leader Sues RG Kar Rape-Murder Victim's Father For Defamation

Kunal Ghosh has said in his complaint that the doctor's father recently told the media that the CBI allegedly took bribes from Trinamool and he "settled" the case

Kolkata. (Agency)
A senior Trinamool Congress leader has filed a defamation case against the father of the 34-year-old doctor, who was raped and murdered at Kolkata's RG Kar Medical College and Hospital last year. Trinamool's state general secretary and spokesperson, Kunal Ghosh, has filed a case at a Kolkata court, accusing the rape-murder victim's father of defaming him. Mr Ghosh has said in his complaint that the doctor's father recently told the media that the CBI allegedly took bribes from the ruling party in West Bengal and derailed the investigation into his daughter's chilling rape and murder. The doctor's father alleged Mr Ghosh went to meet CBI officials, paid them and "settled" everything. A week back, the Trinamool leader sent a



legal notice to the doctor's father, seeking an apology. He has said he has full respect and sympathy for the doctor's father. "But they cannot just keep saying whatever they want or whatever someone teaches them to say. If he does not apologise, he will have to prove in court what he has said. My lawyer

has given him four days to respond after receiving the letter. After that, I will file a case," Mr Ghosh had said.

"He is crossing all the limits of lies and drama. I understand the pain of a father who has lost his daughter. But that leaves room for questioning the words of those who are doing and saying whatever they are saying. On whose words and on what information did you make false like this?" he asked. A 34-year-old doctor on night shift was found raped and murdered in Kolkata's state-run RG Kar Medical College and Hospital on August 9 last year. A civic volunteer, Sanjoy Roy, was arrested and later convicted of rape and murder. The case was first investigated by the Bengal police and then handed over to the CBI after a high court order.

Front continued news

After scrutiny on 824 abortions, 1,182 more cases in Haryana under govt scanner

He came to Delhi from Rajkot by train yesterday morning and he stayed at Gujarati Bhavan in Civil Lines. Officials said the accused was talking to his friend in Gujarat on phone that he has reached CM House in Shalimar Bagh. They said the accused came to Delhi for the first time. The CCTV footage obtained from the Chief Minister's residence in Shalimar Bagh revealed that the attacker was planning the attack for the past 24 hours, Delhi CMO said on Wednesday. "The cowardly attack on Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta is part of a well-planned conspiracy. The CCTV footage obtained from the Chief Minister's residence in Shalimar Bagh has made it clear that the attacker had started preparing for this attack at least 24 hours in advance," CMO said. The attacker did not reach the CM's residence and attempted the attack in a planned manner. The video has been handed over to the police, and an investigation is underway into the matter.

News box

After scrutiny on 824 abortions, 1,182 more cases in Haryana under govt scanner

Gurgaon. (Agency)

After scrutinising 824 cases, Haryana govt has shortlisted another 1,182 abortions — details of which will be checked — as part of its crackdown to stop illegal practices and improve the state's sex-ratio at birth.

Officials told TOI on Tuesday that the cases have been flagged on two parameters — abortions carried out after 12 weeks of pregnancy and/or involving couples who already have one or more daughters.

These cases of abortions carried out this year will undergo 'reverse tracking' — a detailed investigation to detect possible violations of laws related to the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act or illegal sex determination before birth. Additional chief secretary (health) Sudhir Rajpal, who chaired the weekly state task force (STF) meeting for improving Haryana's sex ratio, on Tuesday directed officials to pursue strict enforcement against doctors and clinics involved in unlawful terminations, including licence cancellations.

How gang that ran a fake police bureau cheated NRIs with 'CBI supervision account'

NOIDA. (Agency)

The accused, who were arrested for running a fake international police bureau in Noida, posed as representatives of international and Indian investigative agencies to dupe non-resident Indians (NRIs) and overseas citizens of India (OCI) cardholders, police have found.

Central Noida deputy commissioner of police Shakti Mohan Avasthy revealed the accused routinely conducted video calls on Microsoft Teams, impersonating officials from agencies such as CBI, Enforcement Directorate, Crime Branch and even Supreme Court. During these calls, they displayed forged documents carrying official-looking seals to convince their targets. Three members of 'International Police & Crime Investigation Bureau', who were arrested earlier this month, were taken into police custody on Monday, leading to major revelations. According to officials, the gang lured victims by creating fear of legal action in India. They claimed unless the victims "cooperated" in ongoing investigations, they would neither be allowed to travel to India nor receive OCI cards in the future.

The gang even issued acknowledgement letters bearing fake seals of the CBI's financial wing and Reserve Bank of India. Avasthy said, "When victims pleaded their innocence, they were told they must obtain a police clearance certificate (PCC) from the govt of India — a service the gang claimed to facilitate. Further, they were persuaded to deposit money in a so-called 'CBI Supervision Account' under the pretext that their funds would be tracked as part of an international money-laundering probe and later refunded."

With FIRs, Noida plans crackdown on illegal constructions

NOIDA. (Agency)

Noida Authority has directed officials to lodge registration of FIRs filed against illegal constructions and to pursue pending cases where police have yet to act. The Authority will also compile a consolidated database of its enforcement efforts, including information on notices issued, complaints filed, FIRs registered, and buildings sealed. According to officials, the database will help senior officers monitor progress and identify areas where delays or negligence occur. Officials have also been warned that laxity in follow-up will not be tolerated, and individual accountability will be fixed for lapses in reporting encroachments. At a review meeting held on Monday, CEO Lokesh M instructed that detailed reports be prepared on a village-wise, plot-wise, and encroacher-wise basis. These reports will serve as the foundation for lodging FIRs at the respective police stations. In many cases, the CEO added, complaints were already submitted to police, but FIRs were still awaiting registration. Senior officials have now been told to coordinate directly with police officers to ensure timely action and registration of FIRs.

Public awareness measures have also been added to the action plan. The Authority has instructed officials to repair or replace old signboards marking its jurisdiction. Many boards have become damaged or unreadable, and fresh signage will also carry warnings against unauthorised construction. Particular focus has been placed on the flood-prone areas along the Yamuna within the notified region. Encroachments in these zones, the CEO noted, carry serious risks and must be prevented. For this,

Haryana defines forests for first time, but will it leave out more of Aravalis than it includes

Gurgaon. (Agency)

THaryana govt has, for the first time, codified what it considers "forest as per dictionary meaning", laying the foundation for better implementation of environment laws that have been affected by ambiguity about this basic premise. But the state's definition is narrower than the frame of reference directed by the Supreme Court in a 1996 ruling and contains riders that could leave out of the definition's ambit large areas the environment laws seek to protect. According to a notification issued on Aug 18 by the state's forest, environment and wildlife department, land parcels of at least 5 hectares — equivalent to 10 football fields — in isolation or two hectares of forests adjoining notified forests qualify as 'forest' if have minimum canopy density of 0.4, or 40% of the land in question.

Effectively, this means that small patches of forests, Aravali hillocks with low density vegetation, scrublands, grasslands and community common lands will not be

considered as 'forests'. The state's criteria explicitly exclude linear, compact and agro-forestry plantations, and orchards beyond notified forest areas, regardless of their size or density. Examples of linear plantations are roadside 'green belts', which are just a few metres wide though these can stretch up to several kilometres. Compact forests are smaller scale areas with dense greenery. The Governor of Haryana is pleased to define the expression 'forest as per dictionary meaning' for the state of Haryana as follows: A patch of land shall be deemed to be forest as per dictionary meaning if it fulfils the following conditions: Firstly, it has a minimum area of 5 hectares, if it is in isolation; and a minimum area of two hectares, if it is in contiguity with govt-notified forests. Secondly, it has a canopy density of 0.4 or more. Provided that, all linear/compact/agro-forestry plantations and orchards situated outside the govt-notified forests shall not be treated as forest under the above definition," the notification signed by Anand Mohan

Sharan, additional chief secretary (environment, forests and wildlife), read. Haryana's definition, formed nearly six decades after the state came into existence, is narrower than the principle defined by Supreme Court in its landmark ruling in the 1996 TN Godavarman vs Union of India case. The top court had said that forests must be recognised according to the 'dictionary meaning of forest' — a criterion that means any area with characteristics of forests must be protected under the Forest (Conservation) Act, regardless of the land's status in govt records. This concept, which came to be known as 'deemed forest', widened the scope of FCA and allowed protection of all such green areas from urbanisation and deforestation. Experts on Tuesday said the state's definition would leave out a large chunk of the Aravalis from getting any legal cover. "This definition doesn't even consider the ground realities that are unique to the state. The Aravalis are majorly scrub forest and have a canopy density of 10% to 20%. This definition

won't even protect the habitat of Haryana's state bird black francolin and state animal blackbuck because these species live in grasslands... This will only benefit the builder lobby," said MD Sinha, retired conservator of forests, Haryana (South). Others pointed out that Haryana, at just 3.6% of its geographical area, already has the lowest forest cover among all Indian states. "In the last 15 years, Haryana has been developing six-lane roads in every district, which has led to a decrease in strip forests. 90% of strip forests in Haryana are gone. It has just 5 to 7 block forests, and even those are encroached on. Also, the definition is not practical as Haryana has scrub forest. The five-hectare rule won't work because there are no large patches of forest land in the state," said RP Balwan, former conservator of forests, Haryana (South). The exercise to come up with a definition of forests as per dictionary meaning was ordered by SC, which on March 4 directed all states and Union territories to identify forests to prevent the loss of green cover.

Yamuna waters enter Jewar villages, officials say there's no need to panic

Noida/Ghaziabad. (Agency)

The Yamuna's rising waters have touched floodplain areas in Noida and Ghaziabad, prompting officials to issue advisories and take precautionary measures. Authorities have, however, assured there is no immediate threat to residential areas as the river is below the danger mark.

On Sunday evening, a significant discharge of 178,976 cu.m from the Tajewala Barrage (Hathni Kund) led to a rise in the Yamuna's levels. This prompted the advisory, urging residents to vacate flood-prone areas and move to safer locations with their families and livestock. The lower reaches of several Jewar villages, such as Jhupa, Kanigarh, Govindgarh, Samsam Nagar, Pormanagar, and Karrol, were inundated on Tuesday. Jewar MLA Dhirendra Singh visited the areas to assess crop damage and asked officials to expedite relief efforts.

"Since Monday evening, the water began increasing and destroyed our crops of wheat and paddy. There is, however, no threat to life as no one lives that side," said Manoj Bainsla, a resident of Jhuppa.

Additional district magistrate Atul Kumar confirmed that officials had already begun documenting crop losses for calculating compensation. "We are on high alert. But so far, there is no situation that warrants rehabilitation for the villagers. The Yamuna's water is within floodplain areas as of now and has not breached the banks or advanced towards residential areas," he added. In Noida, flood banks along sectors 135 and 150 have seen a rise in water levels, prompting residents and landless labourers to move to higher ground as a precaution. "Those working beyond the flood banks at farmhouses and gaushalas had to shift their temporary settlements to Pushta road," said Nirmal Singh of Mornmathal. At Asgarpur village near Sector 135, Kumkum — who works at a local cowshed — said the water had receded on Tuesday evening, alleviating immediate

Discom officials to face FIR for electrocution deaths during rain in Gurgaon

Gurgaon. (Agency)

Executive and junior engineers, and sub-divisional officers (SDOs) of the discom will face penal action if deaths are reported due to electrocution during rain, chief principal secretary to the CM Rajesh Khullar has directed police.

But this order doesn't apply to the three fatalities recorded on the night of July 9, when a spate of heavy monsoon showers triggered chaos in the city. Though a case for death by negligence was registered in one of the electrocution deaths, no officials were named in the FIR. Asked about fixing accountability in these three cases, Khullar said on Tuesday that these incidents were under investigation and appropriate action would be taken. "However, now on, in case of any such incidents in the future, the discom official will be named in FIR at the time of registration of the case," he said. TOI reported on Tuesday that Khullar was in the city for the past week to come up with an action plan with authorities to manage Gurgaon's civic mess. Officials said the

senior officer also directed the discom to deploy its staff for field inspections to check power lines in the city.

Among those who died on July 9 was a graphic designer, Akshat Jain. He was returning home from a gym when his motorcycle skidded on Ghasola Road and he came in contact with wires submerged



in rainwater. Pawan Kumar, a 26-year-old food delivery executive, died after being electrocuted near Sector 18. His body was found next to an electric pole. A shopkeeper who attempted to rescue him

also suffered electrical burns. Prashant Mishra (22) died in Arjun Nagar after touching a railing that had become electrified by a frayed wire submerged in ankle-deep water. He was declared dead before help arrived. Last year too, three people were electrocuted near IFFCO Chowk after they came in contact with a high-voltage wire that snapped because of an uprooted tree and dangled into a waterlogged footpath. The pedestrians were walking towards a metro station in the rain when the incident occurred.

Officials said Khullar has directed Gurgaon police commissioner Vikas Arora to register FIRs against concerned officials if any such incidents occur.

"All leaves of employees and officers of the power department have been cancelled till Nov. Every officer must personally inspect the field, check power lines, and ensure proper trimming and disposal of tree branches," Khullar told officials. DHBVN has given the responsibility of 'safety officer' to the executive engineer.

2 youths shooting videos accused of being spies, thrashed by mob

Ghaziabad. (Agency)

Amid rumour mongering over dubious drone sightings, two young men were attacked by a mob in Faridabad's Sector 78 after being mistaken for spies on Monday evening. The attackers, armed with sticks, also set ablaze the victims' scooter and even manhandled a police team as they attempted to rescue the beleaguered youths.

Ayush Kumar, a BTech student from Lingayat Vidyapeeth, and his friend Avi had ventured to the deserted Triveni Society for a photoshoot related to their startup. Their creative endeavour, however, turned into a nightmare when a group of around 15 men confronted them.



The mob accused the duo of flying a drone, despite their appeals to the contrary. "We were on the rooftop taking photos with our phones when we heard people approaching. As we descended, we were

met by a group accusing us of flying a drone. Despite our explanations, Bittu Khatana struck my leg with a stick and threatened to kill us. The group beat us up with sticks and set my scooter on fire," Ayush said in his police complaint. The situation escalated when a team of cops arrived at the scene. According to a police spokesperson, the cops were also attacked while attempting to rescue the two youths.

"The mob was assaulting the boys when we intervened. We managed to rescue them and arrest Bittu Khatana, a mobile phone shop owner, who was identified as the key instigator," said sub-inspector Yashpal Khatana, along with the others.

Congress stages protest over sanitation mess, dumps waste at MCG office in Gurgaon

NOIDA. (Agency)

Resorting to a dramatic protest at MCG office over "mountains of waste", Congress on Tuesday gave an ultimatum of 15 days to civic body officials to resolve the sanitation crisis of the city.

Unloading a tractor-trolley full of waste inside the MCG premises to highlight the city's mounting sanitation woes, the protesters — led by senior Congress functionary Raj Babbar, Gurgaon urban district president Pankaj Daur and rural president Vardhan Yadav — raised slogans against BJP govt and warned the officials of escalated action if the situation was not resolved soon. Babbar said, "We have given an ultimatum. The party will announce the further course of action after 15 days. We dumped garbage at the MCG office in protest. It is a symbolic act to remind officials — who draw hefty salaries — of the realities faced by residents every day." Congress functionaries also submitted a memorandum to MCG additional commissioner Ravinder

Yadav, who came to meet the protesters since the MCG commissioner Pradeep Dahiya was holding a meeting with some RWAs on Tuesday. The MCG additional commissioner said, "We are already working on a mission-mode to resolve the sanitation problems of the city. We have had a marathon of



meetings in the last few days chaired by chief principal secretary to CM Rajesh Khullar to address these issues. Also, we have given assurance to the Congress leaders who protested today that the sanitation problem will be resolved." The functionaries said this marks the first protest organised

in Haryana after the party's recent reshuffle, in which separate presidents were appointed for Gurgaon's rural and urban segments along with 32 new district committee presidents across the state. Slamming the ruling govt and MCG, Vardhan said, "MCG and BJP govt in Haryana have become a curse for the residents of Gurgaon. BJP is no longer the Bharatiya Janata Party — it has become the Bharatiya Janata Party. The city is surrounded by mountains of waste. Expats feel ashamed to call Gurgaon their home, while corporate leaders openly mock it as a 'city of pigs' on social media. This is not just an environmental crisis, it is a matter of dignity for all of us. That is why we are here, to register our strong resentment." Echoing the sentiment, Daur said, "What should we call it — a Nagar Nigam or a Narak Nigam? Residents today are forced to live in hellish conditions.

BJP has turned Gurgaon into a 'koodagram'. By dumping waste at

the corporation's doorstep, we want them to experience the pain residents go through every day. This govt survives only on announcements; delivery is zero."

Around 11.30 am, Congress functionaries began assembling outside the MCG office in Sector 34 before marching towards the premises, raising slogans against the civic body, BJP govt and mayor Raj Rani Malhotra. By noon, the protesters

stormed into the MCG office premises as Vardhan drove up on a tractor-trolley filled with garbage, dumping it right in the parking lot used by the commissioner and the mayor. **THE SIKH TIMES**
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Ayodhya once saw bullets for devotees, now it showers them with flowers: CM Adityanath

'Black magic scare' in Delhi court

New Delhi: It was no ordinary morning at Delhi's Tis Hazari courts. A murder accused surgeon walked into the courtroom, flung rice on the floor and left advocates wondering if 'black magic' had just been performed inside the sanctum sanctorum of justice. For the next 20 minutes, the trial court stood still, its proceedings halted by an act that the judge later

Rera warns action against gurugram developer

New Delhi: In a stern warning to Ramprastha Promoters & Developers Private Limited, the Haryana Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA), Gurugram, has asked the promoters to either fall in line or ready for civil imprisonment for not complying with various orders passed by this Authority, earlier. On prolonged non-compliance of the Authority's order, the RERA Gurugram court had issued a production warrant of Arvind Walia and Sandeep Yadav, the directors of Ramprastha Promoters, to Bhondsi jail authority on 29.07.2025 to appear before it, today. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) had already arrested Sandeep Yadav and Arvind Walia, promoters of Ramprastha Group, in a money-laundering case. The RERA Gurugram had passed different orders in 2020 directing the developer to refund approximately three crores to those who had approached the Authority for relief. But all these years, the directors of the Ramprastha promoters did not comply with the RERA court orders. Vide order of this Authority 20.04.2022, the promoters were asked to file affidavit to disclose their asset/properties which could be attached to realise the decretal amount but none of the promoters filed any such affidavit in this regard. "Show cause as why you are being promoters be not detained in civil prison for a term not exceeding three months for failing to comply with the order," said the RERA show cause notice issued today. The next date of hearing is fixed for 08.08.2025.

Heroin worth over Rs 50 lakh seized, 1 held

New Delhi: The Delhi Police Crime Branch has arrested a 42-year-old man from Rawana and seized 172 grams of heroin worth more than Rs 50 lakh in the international market from his possession. The police said the operation was carried out by the Central Range, Kamla Market, following a tip-off. The accused, identified as Samru Mirza, alias Sameer, was intercepted at around 8:50 am. During a search conducted under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, heroin was found hidden inside his bag. A case under Section 21 of the NDPS Act has been registered at the Crime Branch police station. Police officials said the heroin had been sent for forensic examination and investigations were on to trace his supply network and identify other individuals connected to the seized consignment. Mirza, originally from West Bengal, has been living in Delhi for several years. According to the police, he dropped out of school in the second standard and later worked as an auto-rickshaw driver. While his family continues to live in West Bengal, he has been staying alone in Delhi. Records show that Mirza has a criminal history with several cases lodged against him in the city. The Crime Branch stated that efforts were being made to establish the forward and backward linkages of the drug supply chain. The police said the accused was in custody and further action would be taken based on the outcome of the investigation.

NAME CHANGE

MUBEEN S/O KASAM R/O WARD NO. 1, NUH, DISTT. NUH, HARYANA 122107. HAVE CHANGED OF MY NAME MUBIN KHAN TO MUBEEN FOR ALL FUTURE PURPOSE

NAME CHANGE

I hitherto known as KIRAN SHARMA

called "shocking and surprising". The accused, Dr Chander Vibhas, a surgeon by profession, threw rice on August 11 in Judge Shefali Barnala Tandon's court, sparking hesitation among lawyers who refrained from approaching the dais. The act, the court noted, not only disrupted its work but undermined the very dignity of judicial proceedings. "This is very shocking and surprising to the court that the present accused Dr

Chander Vibhas, who is stated to be a surgeon by profession and belongs to the educated and elite class, has acted in such unreasonable manner and created interruption in court proceedings," the judge remarked. The court staff immediately ordered the doctor to collect the rice and summoned a sweeper to clean the floor. For 10 minutes, the proceedings remained suspended until the sweeper arrived and order was restored. When questioned, Dr Vibhas claimed that the rice had "simply fallen" from his hands, but failed to explain why he was carrying it inside the courtroom. The staff

pointed out that rice had also been found on the floor on August 2, the last date of hearing, when the doctor was physically present. Though Dr Vibhas claimed he had attended that hearing through videoconferencing, the record confirmed his physical presence. The court held that the incident fell squarely under Section 267 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, which penalises intentional insult or interruption to a public servant during judicial proceedings. "Disrespect towards the court or disruption of judicial proceedings sends a damaging public message and such overt

act/behaviour of accused today not only disrupted the court proceedings and undermined the judicial process but also threatened the very foundation of our legal system. Section 267 of the BNS exists to ensure that the courts can do their work without harassment or disturbance, preserving both the order of proceedings and the authority of law. The act done by the accused, if it goes unchecked, will erode the court's ability to function," Judge Tandon said. The surgeon later apologised and his lawyer pleaded mercy, arguing he had been misguided by someone else into committing

the act. The defence assured the judge that such behaviour would not be repeated. The court, after taking into account the apology and expres-

sion of remorse, pronounced its sentence: "After considering all facts and circumstances, including apology tendered by the accused and his feel-

ing of remorse, he is sentenced to undergo imprisonment till rising of the court and a fine of Rs 2,000 to be deposited with state."

Newly opened road projects redefine Delhi-NCR travel

New Delhi: Imagine zipping from Delhi's Singhu Border to the IGI Airport in just 40 minutes - something that until now seemed like a commuter's daydream. Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday turned it into reality by inaugurating two mega road projects designed to cut Delhi's traffic woes and redefine travel across the Capital and NCR. The newly-opened Delhi section of the Dwarka Expressway and a major stretch of Urban Extension Road-II (UER-II) together promise to slash travel time, ease congestion at choke points and improve connectivity for both daily commuters and industry. Built at a cost of Rs 5,360 crore, the 10.1-km Delhi stretch of the Dwarka Expressway will seamlessly link the city to Haryana, offering multi-modal connectivity to Yashobhoomi, Metro's Blue and Orange Lines, upcoming Bijnor railway station and Dwarka's cluster bus depot. With its two packages - from Shiv Murti to Dwarka Sector 21 and from Dwarka Sector 21 to the Delhi-Haryana border - the project connects directly to UER-II and beyond. The Prime Minister also threw open the Alipur-Dichaon Kalan stretch of UER-II, along with new links to Bahadurgarh and Sonipat, developed at a cost of around Rs 5,580 crore. The expressway is expected to decongest busy junctions like Mukarba Chowk, Dhaula Kuan and NH-9, while providing faster routes for goods movement across NCR. Chief Minister Rekha Gupta hailed the projects as a "revolution in Delhi's speed." She said: "Who would have thought that the journey from Singhu Border to the airport could be completed in just 40 minutes? Who would have imagined that the dreaded traffic jams of Mukarba Chowk, Dhaula Kuan and NH-8 could be overcome so smoothly? All of this has been made possible by the foresight and resolve of Prime Minister Narendra Modi." The 19-km Haryana section of the Dwarka Expressway had been inaugurated earlier in March 2024, completing a crucial corridor that is now being billed as a game-changer for Delhi-NCR mobility.

NAME CHANGE

I hitherto known as OKMAR KAUR D/o KUSUM R/O House No. K-6/12, Gali Number-21, West Ghonda, Garhi Mandu, North East Delhi, Delhi-110053, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as OKMAR KAUR.

NAME CHANGE

I hitherto known as VIBHA W/o AJAY KUMAR RAI, R/o E 225/B, Main 20 FT Road, West Karawali Nagar, Khajuri Khas, PO: Karawali Nagar, Dist. Shahdara, Delhi-110090, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as VIBHA RAI.

NAME CHANGE

I, hitherto known as Suresh Kumar Dhawan alias Suresh Dhawan S/o: Hari Chand Dhawan R/o P-10, 1st floor, Malviya Nagar, PO: Malviya Nagar, Sub District: Hauz Khas District: South Delhi State: Delhi- 110017, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as SURESH KUMAR DHAWAN.

NAME CHANGE

I hitherto known as Altar Bai W/o Roshan R/o C-124, Sanjayan Colony, Bhatti Mines, Fateh Pur Bari, South Delhi, Delhi-110074, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as SHADAM for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE

I, SADAM S/O MOHD MURTAZA residing at 106 BLOCK-A, JHUGGIES SHASTRI MARGA, PATTARGANJ, DELHI-110091, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as SHABNAM.

NAME CHANGE

I hitherto known as HARMENDER KUMAR S/O RAI RAJNARAYAN TOKAS R/O 2-2A, GROUND FLOOR, MOHAMMADPUR VILLAGE, NEW DELHI-110096 have changed my name to HARMENDER KUMAR TOKAS for all future purpose.

NAME CHANGE

I, RAMESH SRIWASTAVA W/o PRADHUMAN KUMAR SHRIWASTAVARAO FLAT NO B-104, GALLI NO-12 BEHIND DC COURT AKV TOWER KAPASHERA PO: GURGAON ROAD DIST. SOUTH WEST DELHI-110094 HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO RAM SAGAR YADAV.

NAME CHANGE

I, RASHID AHMED S/O BASHIR AHMED RIO 36/90 TRILOKPUR EAST DELHI-110091 HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO ABDUL RASHID AHMED.

NAME CHANGE

I, MEHRUN AHMED D/O ABDUL RAZAK RIO 36/90 TRILOKPUR EAST DELHI-110091 HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO MAHERUN BEGAM.

NAME CHANGE

I, Kaushal Kumar Yadav S/o Awadhesh Yadav R/o K-5/101, Block K-5, Mohan Garden, Ultam Nagar, Delhi-100099, have changed my name to Kaushal Yadav permanently

NAME CHANGE

I, DURGESH SRIWASTAVA W/o PRADHUMAN KUMAR SHRIWASTAVARAO FLAT NO B-104, GALLI NO-12 BEHIND DC COURT AKV TOWER KAPASHERA PO: GURGAON ROAD DIST. SOUTH WEST DELHI-110094 HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO DURGESH KUMARI

NAME CHANGE

I, AFTAB F/O AMIRUDDIN MIRZA R/O A-97, 9 J J COLONY PH-2 NANGLOI DELHI-110041 have changed my name to AFTAB MIRZA Permanently

NAME CHANGE

I, S. R. MOHD YUSUF R/O H.NO.301 Main Quutub Garhi Road Village Ludar pur delhi-110081 have changed my name to MOHD YUSUF Permanently

NAME CHANGE

I, S. R. MOHD YUSUF R/O H.NO.301 Main Quutub Garhi Road Village Ludar pur delhi-110081 have changed my name to MOHD YUSUF Permanently

NAME CHANGE

I, PARMOD KUMAR GOYAL F/O GIAN CHAND GOYAL R-36 UPG FLOOR VIKAS PURI DELHI-110081 HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO PARMOD GOYAL Permanently

NAME CHANGE

I, Umesh Balkrishna Arote S/o Balkrishna Thakaji Arote Permanently residing at C-703, Aaradhya Nakshatra-C, Chandni Chowk, New Delhi, Panchvati, Nashik, Maharashtra-422003. Presently residing at Flat 42205, Ground Floor, DDA Janta Li-2, Pehlajpura, New Delhi-110044. declare that name of my wife has been wrongly written as Poornam in my minor daughter Umang Kandari aged 13 years in her School Records. The actual name of my wife is Poornam Kandari.

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NEWS BOX

US destroyers head toward waters off Venezuela as Trump aims to pressure drug cartels

WASHINGTON. (Agency)

The United States is deploying three Aegis guided-missile destroyers to the waters off Venezuela as part of President Donald Trump's effort to combat threats from Latin American drug cartels, according to a US official briefed on the planning. The USS Gravely, the USS Jason Dunham and the USS Sampson are expected to arrive soon, said the official, who was not authorized to comment and spoke Tuesday on the condition of anonymity. A Defense Department official confirmed that the military assets have been assigned to the region in support of counter narcotics efforts. The official, who was not authorized to comment about military planning, said the vessels would be deployed "over the course of several months." The deployment of US destroyers and personnel comes as Trump has pushed for using the US military to thwart cartels he blames for the flow of fentanyl and other illicit drugs into American communities and for perpetuating violence in some US cities. Trump has also pressed Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum to cooperate more on security than her predecessor, specifically being more aggressive in pursuit of Mexico's cartels. But she has drawn a clear line when it comes to Mexico's sovereignty, rejecting suggestions by Trump and others of intervention by the US military.

Trump in February designated Venezuela's Tren de Aragua, MS-13 in El Salvador and six groups based in Mexico as foreign terrorist organizations. His Republican administration has also stepped up immigration enforcement against alleged gang members. The designation is normally reserved for groups like al-Qaida or the Islamic State group that use violence for political ends — not for money-focused crime rings such as the Latin American cartels.

Hurricane Erin Closes Beaches, Triggers Warning Along US East Coast

Rodanthe, N.C. (Agency)

From Florida to New England, people trying to enjoy the last hurrahs of summer along the coast were met with rip-current warnings, closed beaches and in some cases already treacherous waves as Hurricane Erin inched closer Wednesday. While forecasters remain confident that the center of the monster storm will stay far offshore, the outer edges are expected to bring high winds, large swells and life-threatening rip currents into Friday. But the biggest swells along the East Coast could come as early as Wednesday.

New York City closed its beaches to swimming on Wednesday and Thursday, and New York Gov. Kathy Hochul ordered three state beaches on Long Island to prohibit swimming through Thursday. Several New Jersey beaches also will be temporarily off-limits, while some towns in Delaware have cut off ocean access. Off Massachusetts, Nantucket Island could see waves of more than 10 feet (3 meters) later this week. But the biggest threat is along the barrier islands of North Carolina's Outer Banks, where evacuations have been ordered. Erin has become an unusually large and deceptively worrisome storm, with its tropical storm winds stretching 230 miles (370 kilometers) from its core. Forecasters expect it will grow larger in size as it moves through the Atlantic and curls north.

On Tuesday it lashed the Turks and Caicos Islands, where government services were suspended and residents were ordered to stay home, along with parts of the Bahamas before its expected turn toward Bermuda.

China To Showcase New Military Hardware At September Parade

WASHINGTON. (Agency)

China will unveil a slate of new domestically produced military hardware that will showcase its "powerful capability to prevail in modern war" at a parade next month, officials said Wednesday. The event, marking 80 years since the end of World War II, will see President Xi Jinping inspect troops in Beijing's Tiananmen Square, with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin and other world leaders expected to attend. Millions of Chinese people were killed during a prolonged war with imperial Japan in the 1930s and 40s, which became part of a global conflict following Tokyo's attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941.

The ruling Communist Party has held a series of blockbuster events in recent years to commemorate its wartime resistance. On September 3, China's military will showcase its latest equipment, "reflecting the evolution of modern warfare," said Major General Wu Zeke, an official at China's military commission. "All of the weapons and equipment taking part in this review were selected from domestically produced, currently active main battle systems, with a significant proportion being newly unveiled equipment," Wu told reporters at a briefing. These will include strategic heavy weapons, hypersonic precision systems, as well as unmanned and counter-unmanned equipment making their first public debut, he added. The parade, which will last around 70 minutes, will "fully showcase our military's powerful capability to prevail in modern war," Wu said. It will also feature ground troops marching in formation, armoured columns, aerial echelons and other high-tech fighting gear.

The Kremlin has confirmed Putin will attend, and Chinese officials said other world leaders are also expected to take in the scene. China in March raised its defence spending for 2025 by 7.2 percent. The increase comes as Beijing's armed forces undergo rapid modernisation and eye deepening strategic competition with the United States.

Nazrul said that political parties making statements about the timing of the elections is part of the political process.

DHAKA. (Agency)

Bangladesh's interim government is "unwavering" in its commitment to hold general elections in February next year, Law Adviser Asif Nazrul has said, according to media reports on Wednesday. "The government is moving forward with all preparations for the election," Nazrul was quoted as saying by the state-run Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS). "The polls will be held in February, and the government's stance on this remains unwavering," he said after a meeting at the Cabinet Division on Tuesday. The law adviser's comments came amid growing speculation over the elections, following



statements by National Citizen Party leaders who dismissed the possibility of polls taking place in February next year without key reforms and the completion of trials initiated by the interim government. Commenting on the issue, Nazrul said that

major qualitative change in this discourse. Therefore, whatever is said about the timing of the election should be seen as part of the political process," he said.

However, the responsibility for conducting polls ultimately rests with the government, not any political party, Nazrul added.

"On behalf of the government, we are saying in unequivocal terms that the election will be completed in February," he said.

Nazrul added that Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus is a "globally respected figure and that there is no question of straying from his commitment, with the election to be held as per the announced schedule. Earlier this month, Yunus said the general elections would be held in February and the Election Commission subsequently announced the polls would be held in the first week of the month. These would be Bangladesh's 13th parliamentary elections. A roadmap for it would be announced within this week, according to Election Commission officials.

At least 20 people killed in fresh spell of monsoon rain in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD. (Agency)

More than 20 people have died in a fresh spell of monsoon rain in Pakistan, the country's disaster management agency said on Wednesday. Torrential downpours across Pakistan over the last week have caused flooding and landslides that swept away entire villages, leaving hundreds of people dead and dozens missing. The National Disaster Management Authority said Wednesday that 10 more people had died in Karachi, the financial capital in the south, due to urban flooding that caused house collapses and electrocution. Eleven others died in the northern region of Gilgit-Baltistan, it added. More than 400 people have been killed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, a mountainous northwest province bordering Afghanistan, since last Thursday. Landslides and flash floods



are common during the monsoon season, which typically begins in June and lasts until the end of September. In total, the authority added, close to 750 Pakistanis have died since the season started. Pakistan is among the world's

most vulnerable countries to the effects of climate change and is increasingly facing extreme weather events. Monsoon floods submerged one-third of Pakistan in 2022, resulting in approximately 1,700 deaths.

Kim Jong Un's sister says North Korea will never see the South as a diplomatic partner

The siblings' consecutive statements came after South Korean President Lee Jae Myung announced efforts to revive a 2018 inter-Korean military pact to ease border tensions and called on Pyongyang to rebuild trust and resume dialogue.

SEOUL. (Agency)

The powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said her country will never see South Korea as a partner for diplomacy, state media reported Wednesday in her latest taunt of Seoul's new efforts to mend ties. Kim Yo Jong, who is one of her brother's top foreign policy officials, denounced the ongoing South Korea-U.S. military drills as a "reckless" invasion rehearsal and claimed Seoul's peace gestures



Central News Agency said. She urged the Foreign Ministry to pursue "proper countermeasures" against South Korea, which she labeled the "most hostile state," as well as Seoul's allies. On Monday, Kim Jong Un condemned the South Korean-U.S. military drills and vowed a rapid expansion of his nuclear forces as he inspected his most advanced warship being fitted with nuclear-capable systems. KCNA said

Kim Yo Jong condemned the South as the "top-class faithful dog" of the United States and that the reparation of inter-Korean relations desired by Seoul "will never" happen. The siblings' back-to-back statements followed the latest outreach by South Korean President Lee Jae Myung, who said last week that Seoul would seek to restore a 2018 inter-Korean military agreement aimed at reducing border tensions, while urging Pyongyang to reciprocate by rebuilding trust and resuming dialogue. In response to Kim Yo Jong's latest comments, South Korea's Unification Ministry, which handles inter-Korean affairs, said Lee's government will continue to take "proactive steps for peace" and called for mutual respect between the countries. Since taking office in June, Lee has moved to repair relations that worsened under his conservative predecessor's hard-line policies, including removing front-line speakers that broadcast anti-North Korean propaganda and K-pop.

Over 50 killed after bus carrying returning Afghan migrants hits truck

AFGHANISTAN. (Agency)

More than 50 people were killed in western Afghanistan late Tuesday when a passenger bus carrying migrants recently returned from Iran collided with a truck and a motorcycle, local police and a provincial official said. Police in Herat province said the accident was caused due to the bus's "excessive speed and negligence" on a road outside Herat city in Guzara district. The bus was carrying Afghans recently returned from Iran and en route to the capital Kabul, provincial governor spokesman Mohammad Yousaf Saedi told AFP. "All the passengers were migrants who had boarded the vehicle in Islam Qala," said Saedi, referring to a border crossing point. A massive wave of Afghans have returned from Iran in recent months after Tehran initiated a pressure campaign to force millions of migrants to leave. At least 1.5 million people have returned to Afghanistan since the start of this year from Iran and Pakistan, who have long hosted millions of Afghans fleeing decades of war and humanitarian crises, according to the United Nations' migration agency. Police in Guzara district said a motorcycle was also involved in the accident on



Tuesday night. The bus first collided with the motorcycle then hit the truck, which was carrying fuel, police said, adding that the collision sparked a fire.

Three bus passengers survived, according to police. Two people travelling in the truck and another two on the motorcycle were among the dead.

An AFP journalist at the site saw the burnt shell of the bus on the road hours after the accident, along with the broken remains of the two other vehicles. Traffic accidents are common in Afghanistan, due in part to poor roads after decades of conflict, dangerous driving on highways, and a lack of regulation. In December last year, two bus accidents involving a fuel tanker and a truck on a highway through central Afghanistan killed at least 52.

Colombian court frees former President Uribe from house arrest until it rules on bribery case

The former president, who governed from 2002 to 2010 with strong support from the U.S., is a polarizing figure in Colombia, where many credit him for saving the country from becoming a failed state.

BOGOTA. (Agency)

A Colombian appeals court ruled on Tuesday that the country's former president, Alvaro Uribe, must be released from house arrest while he challenges his conviction for bribery and witness tampering. The conservative leader was sentenced on Aug. 1 to 12 years of house arrest for threatening and trying to flip witnesses who had spoken to investigators about his alleged role in the formation of a right-wing paramilitary group in the 1990s. Uribe denies the charges and has appealed the conviction to

the Superior Tribunal in Bogota, the country's capital. The court has until mid-October to issue a definitive ruling on the case, which has gripped Colombia and also provoked reactions from Uribe's allies in the United States. The Superior Tribunal said Tuesday it approved an injunction filed by Uribe's defense team seeking his release from house arrest. Uribe's lawyers argued his right to due process was violated by the arrest order against him, as well as his right to a presumption of innocence. The former president, who governed from 2002 to 2010 with strong support from the U.S., is a polarizing figure in Colombia, where many credit him for saving the country from becoming a failed state, while others associate him with human rights violations and the rise of paramilitary groups in the 1990s. During Uribe's term, Colombia's military obtained crucial victories against the FARC rebels, which later forced the group into peace negotiations and turned Uribe into an icon of Latin America's

conservative movement. But thousands of young people were also killed by the military and passed off as rebels by soldiers



seeking promotions, as officers were pushed to augment their kill rates. The case against Uribe dates back to 2012, when he filed a libel suit against Ivan Cepeda, a left-wing legislator who had gathered statements from former members of paramilitary groups accusing Uribe of being one of the founders of Bloque Metro,

a paramilitary group that defended cattle ranchers from attacks by rebel groups. In 2018, Colombia's Supreme Court dismissed the suit and instead launched an investigation of Uribe, who was accused by prosecutors of trying to obstruct justice by flipping witnesses who had spoken to Cepeda about the former president's alleged ties to the illegal group. Sandra Heredia said in July there was enough evidence to determine that Uribe conspired with a lawyer to coax three former members of paramilitary groups who were in prison into changing testimony they had provided to Cepeda, whose father was killed by paramilitaries in the 1980s. Uribe's defense said that the evidence was obtained illegally, and that Uribe had only sought meetings with the imprisoned paramilitary figures as part of his preparation for trial and to verify testimonies that were also being used in a murder trial against his brother, Santiago Uribe.

GENCO MD visits BHEL plant, focuses on delivery schedules in Andhra

During his visit, Chakradhar Babu inspected the Electrical Machine Block, where components like generators and excitors are manufactured, and the Turbine Block, which produces turbine modules.



VIJAYAWADA . (Agency)

Andhra Pradesh Power Generation Corporation (APGENCO) Managing Director KVN Chakradhar Babu visited the Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) plant in Haridwar to review the progress of manufacturing and repair work on power generation equipment.

During his visit, Chakradhar Babu inspected the Electrical Machine Block, where components like generators and excitors are manufactured, and the Turbine Block, which produces turbine modules.

He closely monitored the production of turbines and generators for 210 MW to 800 MW supercritical units, along with the repair and refurbishment systems.

The Managing Director also reviewed the casting and forging of rotor blades and other critical parts for the Lower Sileru and Polavaram projects.

He assessed major repair work being performed on 800 MW generator rotors and High-Pressure/Intermediate-Pressure (HP/IP) turbines from APGENCO's thermal power stations. Chakradhar Babu was accompanied by BHEL Executive Director Ranjan Kumar and other senior officials.

In his discussions with the representatives of BHEL, he emphasised the need for high-quality workmanship, strict adherence to timelines, and reliable delivery schedules, highlighting these projects as top priorities for the Andhra Pradesh government.

He stressed that the timely completion and commissioning of these units, particularly for the Lower Sileru and Polavaram projects, will significantly strengthen the state's power sector and help meet the increasing energy demands of the people.

Fire breaks out in MRC Nagar apartment in Chennai, no injuries reported

Three persons trapped inside were rescued and brought out unharmed while others were shifted to a nearby school.



CHENNAI .(Agency)

A fire broke out in a private apartment complex at MRC Nagar, Pattinapakkam, on Monday evening. No injuries were reported, police

Mumbai rain: Suburban train services see delays; 3 long-distance trains from CSMT rescheduled

While there is an average delay of 15 to 20 minutes on Western Railway suburban train services, Harbour and Main line services on Central Railway are running smoothly, officials said.

Mumbai . (Agency)

Heavy rains and overnight downpour continued to impact suburban train services in Mumbai, and long-distance trains, on Wednesday. The Western Railway cancelled 17 early morning services due to waterlogging and multiple suburban trains across the Churchgate-Dahanu Road section were operating with an average delay of 20 to 25 minutes. While Central Railway services were restored on Tuesday night, several long-distance trains faced delays on account of the rain and waterlogging.

Western Railway has announced that Train No 10115 Bandra Terminus-Madgaon Express, will short-originate from Kaman Road and remain cancelled between Bandra Terminus and Kaman Road. Waterlogging was reported at Vasai Road station, leading to cautious movement of trains on the Up Fast line, where services were operated at restricted speed.

"In the morning we cancelled around 17 trains due to waterlogging issues. Since there is less demand in the morning, services were curtailed temporarily, but all trains are back in place now and running smoothly. As there is still some waterlogging, we have reduced the speed of the trains,



so there is an average delay of 15 to 20 minutes," said Vineet Abhishek, Chief Public Relations Officer, Western Railway. Central Railway services on both the Main and Harbour lines were restored Wednesday morning after being declared fit for operations. The Down Harbour line was cleared at 2 am and the Up line at 3 am, with services now plying on all sections,

officials said. "The Harbour line and Main line services are running smoothly after the early morning restoration. Suburban operations are normal across all sections," said a Central Railway spokesperson.

Long-distance trains, however, remained affected. Three trains originating from Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus were rescheduled on Wednesday owing to operational disruptions caused by heavy rains and waterlogging. The CSMT-Chennai Central service, scheduled to depart at 12.45 pm, was rescheduled to 4.40 pm. The Antodaya Express to Gorakhpur, scheduled at 1.30 pm, was rescheduled to 5.15 pm. The CSMT-Howrah Duronto Express, scheduled for 5.15 pm, will now depart at 12.15 am on August 21. On Tuesday, Central Railway operations had been severely hit, with all Main Line services between CSMT and Thane being suspended due to flooding at Sion and Chunabhatti. Twenty-seven long-distance trains were cancelled and several others were short-terminated, while the Western Railway had cancelled around 100 services amid waterlogging between Nalasopara and Vasai Road. By evening, services were gradually restored with delays of up to 15 minutes.

Holiday or not? Confusion reigns as parents receive no circular as heavy rain batters Pune

Pune .(Agency)

Parents of school-going children in Pune were left confused Wednesday morning about whether to send their wards to school in the absence of a circular from the district authorities amid the incessant rain.

Officials of the Education Board said the district collectorate cited the India Meteorological Department (IMD), saying the rain would subside post-afternoon, so no holiday has been declared.

Some schools took the lead to declare a holiday due to the excessive rain, while others remained open.

Parents of children who go to Sanskriti School were informed of the school's closure on Monday. Bharati Vidyapeeth's Ravindranath Tagore School of Excellence informed parents that Wednesday would be a working day. The school said it would inform the parents if the district authorities announced any changes.

Some schools in Aundh declared a holiday a day in advance, given the yellow alert issued by IMD for Pune. Schools in Lonavala also declared a holiday Wednesday and Thursday given the red alert issued for the ghat areas of the district.

In Pimpri Chinchwad, some parents did not send their children to school amid the rain. "The school had declared a normal working day, but I did not send my child to school because of the incessant rainfall since Tuesday night," said Rashmi Gade, a resident of Moshi Pradhikaran. In some cases, parents decided to go with the school's timetable and send their wards to school. Akanksha Rawat, Director, Cornerstone Neey, said only the young children have been given the day off by the school on the grounds of safety. "The school staff and teachers are working," Rawat added. Shivali Jagtap, Principal, SSPM School, said the school was working according to its regular schedule. The rain has been battering Pune and its surrounding regions since Monday. Ghat areas of the district have reported heavy to extremely heavy rainfall in the last 24 hours.

Expedite pothole-filling work: Maheshwar Rao to palike officials

BENGALURU .(Agency)

Chief Commissioner of BBMP Maheshwar Rao on Tuesday instructed palike officials to speed up pothole-filling work across the city. Speaking at a workshop for engineers, Rao told the officials to ensure quality in pothole-filling work. Although pothole-filling work is done regularly, rain posed a big challenge to the palike, he said.

He directed the officials to use cold mix and ecofix material to fill potholes and deploy jet patcher machines where necessary.

The officials should strictly follow the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). The quality control division of the palike has been tasked with monitoring the pothole-filling work. Zonal commissioners, joint commissioners and chief engineers have been asked to inspect roads while repair work is on, he said.

To improve sanitation, each zone should prepare a weekly schedule for ward-level cleanliness drives. Cleaning footpaths, and clearing garbage and construction debris in the morning using silt removal equipment and tractors have been made mandatory, he



said. A demo on pothole-filling SOP was held during the workshop.

'Climate change acts like a steroid, good network of early warning systems only way out': experts as Mumbai records over 900 mm of rainfall in 4 days

Mumbai .(Agency)

As Mumbai experienced one of the heaviest rain spells during August, climatology experts and scientists warned that such situations will become a more common occurrence in a warming world owing to climatic factors.

After a prolonged dry patch in July, a spell of extremely heavy rain returned to the city around August 16. Usually, July is one of the wettest monsoon months for Mumbai, while the intensity of rainfall usually decreases during August.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD)'s data show that Mumbai's Santacruz observatory recorded 944 mm of rainfall, and the Colaba observatory witnessed 461.8 mm of rainfall until August 19. Meanwhile, between July 1 and July 31, the Santacruz observatory recorded 799.4 mm of rainfall, followed by 379.6 mm at Colaba.

"While there is a natural variability of monsoon weather systems, climate change acts like a steroid. The northward swing of

the southwesterly monsoon winds is pumping massive amounts of moisture from the warm Arabian Sea into the northern Western Ghats. This northward swing is a combination of global warming, especially the warming over the Middle East, and the natural variability of the monsoon winds," said Dr Raghu Murtugudde, Emeritus Professor, University of Maryland, and retired IIT Bombay professor.

The moisture supply for the summer monsoon rainfall along the west coast of the Indian subcontinent is mainly transported from the Arabian Sea. However, recent climate studies show that the Middle East is warming almost twice as fast as other inhabited parts of the world, which has been causing a dramatic increase in atmospheric instability in the Arabian Sea by thrusting moisture supplies northward. Therefore, the regions of Northwest India have been vulnerable to unprecedented rainfall. "We all know that there has been a rise in temperature due to

global warming. Secondly, the exponential warming of the Arabian Sea has increased the moisture influx along the West Coast, contributing to heavy precipitation. In this

Professor, Department of Civil Engineering and Convener, Interdisciplinary Program in Climate Studies, IIT Bombay.



scenario, the only way out is to have a very good network of early warning systems, nowcast systems for urban flooding," said Dr Subimal Ghosh, Institute Chair

IIT Mumbai has created the Mumbai Flood Monitoring System, which helps in disseminating timely information to various stakeholders," Ghosh added.

Last year, the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW) prepared a Thane City Action Plan for Flood Risk Management, which offered a framework for administrators to strengthen preparedness, response, and mitigation measures against urban floods.

Based on a detailed analysis of 52 years of rainfall data, the system analyses intensity-duration-frequency curves, estimates peak flow discharges, and creates a ward-wise urban flood risk index to identify vulnerable hotspots. However, a similar type of regulation is yet to be drafted for Mumbai.

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), in 2021, released the Mumbai Climate Action Plan (MCAP), which showed that 35 per cent of Mumbai's population is vulnerable to waterlogging in the city.

Via Anchorage: No short-cut to peace in Ukraine

The Donald Trump-Vladimir Putin meeting in Anchorage promised forward movement on Ukraine, but delivered only limited outcomes. The good news is there was no breakdown—no deal, but no bitterness either. That in itself is a positive. President Trump mentioned that agreement had been reached on several issues, with only “one or two” matters proving sticky. It does not take much imagination to conclude that the unresolved points revolve around Russia’s insistence on holding Donbas and the status of Crimea. Ceasefire could have been announced as an interim measure while details of a wider settlement were worked out later. That this did not happen suggests disagreement was serious enough—perhaps Putin himself insisted that the war continue until his core demands were addressed. Trump’s own words were guarded: “There is no deal without a deal”. Yet his body language in Anchorage was not negative, nor was Putin’s. If a deal eventually emerges, Trump is likely to double down on another arena of conflict: Gaza. Bringing about a ceasefire there, alongside progress in Ukraine, would strengthen his credentials for international recognition, perhaps even a Nobel Prize. His effort to bring Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to the White House on Monday, for follow-up discussions does suggest Anchorage was not the end of diplomacy but only a pause.

The immediate result, however, is that the fighting continues. Ukrainian forces remain dug in along defensive lines that have scarcely shifted since late 2024, while Russian forces probe with their greater manpower and industrially-backed munitions. The war has long since settled into a grinding stalemate; with no concessions in the offing. Putin preserved his strategic flexibility, reassured his military and burnished his domestic standing. The mere fact of his appearance in Anchorage, meeting an American president as an equal, was itself a symbolic victory. It reinforced Moscow’s narrative that sanctions have not diminished Russia’s global relevance. For Ukraine, Anchorage was at best a holding action. It gained no ceasefire, no pause and no relief from daily bombardment. Zelensky was conspicuous by his absence from the table, and that itself fed unease in Kyiv. His subsequent invitation to Washington is a welcome corrective, but it highlights that Ukraine’s place in these discussions remains fragile. For Moscow, the optics of parity with the US were invaluable. Putin’s strategy is unlikely to change; no outright conquest, but steady escalation—incremental territorial pushes, missile and drone strikes on infrastructure and psychological pressure on both Ukraine’s morale and Western patience. Europe, for its part, faces deepening dilemmas. Its leaders watched the Anchorage choreography with unease. For them, the base issue has always been the Russian threat to Europe itself. Nato’s eastward march was meant as a bulwark; Ukraine became the flashpoint, “a nation too far”. Now Europe must ask itself: can it accept Ukraine outside Nato but still afford it the benefits of an informal security partnership? Can it contemplate creative, if uncomfortable, compromises—shared or UN-supervised arrangements in Crimea, partial de-militarised zones, or hybrid security guarantees? These are not easy questions, but black-and-white positions will not end this war. Shades of grey must form the eventual solution. Anchorage also underlined why peace is elusive. Russia insists on keeping occupied territory, while Ukraine regards any loss of sovereignty as existential. Nato and EU aspirations remain Ukraine’s goal, but for Russia, these are red lines.

The nuclear age has always had its own language. From the Cold War’s deterrence and mutual assured destruction to later euphemisms like ‘credible minimum deterrent’ and ‘no first use’, every phrase was carefully weighed. Grammar itself became an instrument of restraint. The assumption was that words could discipline weapons and prevent their use. Even adversaries understood that in nuclear affairs, words were kinetic—capable of mobilising, intimidating or escalating without a single missile moving. Public discourse was integral to deterrence; statements were crafted, cleared and channelled through measured voices because a careless phrase could move troops or trigger alerts. That discipline is fraying. The grammar of restraint has been coarsened. Where the nuclear discourse was once confined to deliberate communiqués, it now seeps into campaign rallies, press conferences and television soundbites. The podium, once a place for statecraft, has been weaponised for domestic theatre. In a nuclear context, such theatre is not harmless; it is rehearsal for miscalculation, an unravelling of the very norms that have kept the world away from nuclear conflict for decades.

The danger lies not only in what is said but in what is left unanswered. When a host nation’s silence, the UN’s absence and the indifference of other nuclear powers combine to let a nuclear threat pass unchallenged, they bypass accountability and erode nuclear norms. Nuclear deterrence rests on a paradox: weapons are kept to prevent war, not to wage it. That paradox survives only through restraint, in posture, deployment, and above all, in language. Thomas Schelling, the Nobel laureate strategist, warned that deterrence is not merely about weapons but about “the manipulation of risk”. Language, therefore, is part of the arsenal. Careless words can tilt the balance as dangerously as careless deployments. Admiral Arun Prakash, our former Chief of Naval Staff, has cautioned that nuclear dialogue is as critical as nuclear posture. India’s credibility, he notes, has long rested on disciplined restraint in both. To dismiss reckless rhetoric as mere domestic theatre is a perilous misjudgment in the nuclear age.

Not from a bunker

A stark case illustrates this decay. On the soil of a major democracy, a nuclear-armed Army Chief declared: “If we think we are going down, we’ll take half the world down with us.” This was not whispered in a bunker but spoken into a microphone, to both domestic and global audiences. The host nation did not challenge it. The UN

Collapse of nuclear grammar

The world’s silence in the face of nuclear blackmail is not neutrality — it is complicity

stayed silent. Other permanent members of the Security Council looked away. It signalled that nuclear blackmail could be voiced in broad daylight without diplomatic cost. Every unchallenged threat lowers the threshold for the next, rewriting restraint into recklessness.

Beyond treaties

This danger extends beyond treaties like the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The real threat lies not only in possession but in how nuclear weapons are spoken of, threatened and normalised. When a defeated military chief, standing over his own Prime Minister, threatens both a democratic neighbour and half the world from the soil of another democracy, and the world stays silent, it creates a precedent more corrosive than any treaty



violation. It tells authoritarians everywhere that nuclear blackmail can be practised openly without consequence. It hollows out the very grammar of restraint. Some argue that such rhetoric is for domestic consumption. But in the nuclear age, perception can be as potent as capability. A misread signal can push a rival toward a pre-emptive stance. An ambiguous phrase can be mistaken for intent. And when crises run in parallel, from contested borders to cyber incidents—the margin for error narrows dangerously.

Lessons from other norms

The international community has shown that restraint can be codified not only in arsenals but in principle. The Ottawa Landmine Treaty of 1997 proved that when the world agreed that certain weapons were unacceptable, the stigma itself carried weight. The Chemical Weapons Convention established that some threats cross a universal red line, regardless of circumstance. Even reluctant powers have felt compelled to justify or conceal transgressions rather than openly defy the norm. These cases show that restraint can be institutionalised not merely through

possession treaties but through shared conviction that some weapons, and the rhetoric around them, must be delegitimised altogether. Alarming, the nuclear discourse is moving in the opposite direction. Instead of strengthening taboos against threat and use, silence and indulgence are hollowing them out. What landmines and chemical weapons were spared by stigma, nuclear weapons may lose through the normalisation of recklessness.

The Sindoorn construct

India’s own history offers a powerful counterpoint. In Operation Sindoorn, when Pakistan’s military was vulnerable and tensions ran high, India had every capability to escalate. Yet it chose measured restraint.

Targets were struck with precision, and the operation concluded without broadening the conflict. This was not weakness; it was principle applied over impulse. Op Sindoorn proved that nuclear-age statecraft can be firm without being reckless. It showed that power anchored in restraint strengthens credibility rather than erodes it.

Restoring the grammar of restraint

Reflection must come first, but action cannot wait. To protect the nuclear age from the recklessness of the microphone, the world must restore principle to its grammar and discipline to its nuclear lexicon before it is too late. A multi-pronged approach is essential:

Hosts must call out nuclear blackmail on their soil, making it clear that such rhetoric is unacceptable.

Institutions—the UN, the P5, regional forums—must reaffirm that even the threat of use demands collective censure, not polite silence. Diplomatic platforms must be treated as regulated spaces. A press conference or official visit is not a personal stage; it is an instrument of state-to-state communication. Civil societies and the media must learn the vocabulary of restraint, reporting reckless nuclear talk as escalation, not flourish. Defence establishments must brief political leaders regularly, bipartisan, historically anchored and threat-assessed, so leaders understand the cost of even casual nuclear rhetoric. This is not about curbing expression but about ensuring leaders grasp the immense consequences of their words.

The principle

When principle falls silent, power rushes in. Unchecked by grammar, it speaks in its own dialect—the language of threat. That is a dialect the world must never become fluent in, for fluency would mean catastrophe spoken as second nature.

Nations need to unite to defeat plastics pollution

The collapse of the talks at Geneva presents opportunities to the parties to make amends in the future. No date or venue for the next round has yet been announced, which opens the ground for negotiations among nations

Talks for a global plastics treaty at Geneva have ended without a deal. With two powerful blocs of nations entrenched in their stated positions, the collapse of negotiations for an international legally-binding instrument after three years of efforts was not really a surprise. Exasperated negotiators going through marathon sessions failed to reach common ground as two treaty drafts in the last 48 hours remained unacceptable. Clashing visions to fight plastic pollution made the negotiations difficult right from the start. The so-called ‘high-ambition coalition’ that includes the EU and Australia alongside African as well as small Pacific nations remained insistent on robust measures on the entire life-cycle of plastics; whereas the ‘like-minded countries’ vehemently opposed the upstream measures. As a result, critical issues such as production cuts, phase-out timelines for single-use plastic, chemicals of concern, and recycle-and-reuse were never resolved. To be clear-eyed, the treaty was in jeopardy the moment it began with industry lobbyists outnumbering negotiators from some participating countries. An analysis during the early rounds of discussions revealed that such pressure groups



figured even in government delegations, exposing the worrying levels of control the plastics industry had on the negotiations. The collapse of the talks at Geneva, however, presents opportunities to the parties to make amends in the future. No date or venue for the next round has yet been

announced, which opens the ground for negotiations among nations.

Given plastic’s alarming impact on the environment, the need for aligning the visions of the high-ambition bloc with the sovereign rights and development needs of the primary producer nations can hardly be overemphasised. Similarly, adoption of the ‘common but differentiated responsibilities’ principle would make sense to bring the developing nations on board. India, which has thrown its weight behind the like-minded nations, has made its stand clear by stating that any financial mechanism must be based on understandings reached at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. A crucial factor for a future Global Plastics Treaty would be the voting mechanism to decide, which remained a bone of contention this time. Though majority voting is an option in the absence of a consensus, it should be the last choice. For a legally-binding instrument to defeat the monster of plastic pollution, the world must vote unequivocally.

Unchain university students from desks

Indian universities’ insistence on in-class teaching is out of step with both pedagogical research and practices at some of the best universities. For genuine academic excellence that arises from empowerment and trust, we have to think beyond the confines of the classroom

hours corralled in classrooms necessarily translates into better learning? And, more importantly, what do we lose by doing so, both as individuals and as a collective academic community aspiring towards global standards? To understand this persistence, one must reach back to the origins of the ‘factory model’ of education, devised during colonial and industrial times to produce disciplined, predictable workers rather than intellectually-agile citizens. Indian academia has inherited not just the infrastructure but also the attitudes of this antiquated, control-centred approach. We have equated rigorous supervision with quality, time in class with learning, and discipline with genuine engagement. However, research in educational psychology and the lived experience of leading universities worldwide have since revealed that this equation is flawed. Global pedagogical thought, influenced by figures such as Lev Vygotsky, Jean Piaget and John Dewey, champions the idea that knowledge is actively constructed, not passively absorbed. Learning is context-rich, socially mediated and deeply self-directed. And yet, in India, the ‘teacher as sole authority, student as vessel’ model persists, out-of-step with both research and the demands of the 21st century. Holding to this model comes at a cost. Students, forced to sit through hour after hour of top-down instruction, may appear compliant, but genuine engagement with content—deep, critical learning—wanes. When the academic calendar is crammed with contact hours, students have little time for essential independent reading, interdisciplinary exploration, or the solitary acts of thinking and reflecting that university life should offer.

This approach underestimates students’ maturity and capacity for self-regulation, resulting in what Paulo Freire termed the ‘infantilisation’ of learners. Students, policed and over-scheduled, are given scant practice in taking initiative, a crucial skill as adults and global citizens. The rationale, often stated, that busy timetables keep students “out of trouble” is not just



patronising, but fundamentally at odds with the purpose of higher education, which is to nurture independent thinkers and responsible actors. Moreover, the toll of such prolonged sedentary, passive engagement is not just cognitive, but also physical. Studies highlight increased risks of back pain, poor fitness and rising anxiety among students; compounded by cognitive fatigue and diminished motivation. Research in cognitive psychology, such as the well-known ‘spacing effect’, finds that distributed,

active engagement fosters deeper, longer-lasting learning than uninterrupted content delivery. Yet, these are ignored. Nor are teachers spared the consequences. Faculty members tasked with delivering day-long lectures lose out on precious time for research, curriculum innovation and individual mentoring. When exhaustion becomes routine, the entire institution suffers. Staff morale plummets, creativity is stifled, and research productivity falls—all factors that global rankings penalise.

The result is a loss of institutional vitality and the intergenerational transmission of low aspirations. Contrast this with the world’s best universities. In the US, Europe, and parts of East Asia, students may spend fewer formal hours in class, but are trusted and expected to learn independently, collaborate with peers, engage in real-world projects, and participate in diverse experiential learning opportunities. The university campus is not just a collection of classrooms, but a vibrant ecosystem: libraries, labs, community sites, workshops, and discussion forums are part of the

extended learning environment. Reform at the institutional level requires a shift in mindset from control to facilitation. It means recognising that genuine academic excellence arises not from surveillance and compulsion, but from empowerment and trust. As Malcolm Knowles’ andragogy (adult learning theory) emphasises, university students are adults; their learning thrives when self-directed, relevant, and problem-based.

Global rankings for 2025 have triggered fresh bouts of soul-searching within India’s higher education sector. While explanations abound—from resource limitations to lack of internationalisation—one critical but under-recognised factor continues to undermine true educational excellence quietly: India’s near-unchallenged obsession with prolonged, in-class direct teaching and rigid requirements for on-campus presence. This deep-seated attachment to the classroom as the central, even exclusive, site of learning is symptomatic of broader systemic problems, and urgently demands reflection. The current controversy at the University of Delhi over the mandated 12-hour daily on-campus presence for students is both emblematic and alarming. Why do our institutions cling so stubbornly to the notion that more

No lessons learnt: Punjab farmers fear repeat of 2023 floods as Bhakra opens floodgates

With the fresh discharge of the Bhakra Dam water, flood alerts have been issued in Rupnagar, Ludhiana, Jalandhar, Kapurthala and Tarn Taran districts.

Ludhiana .(Agency)

The Bhakra Beas Management Board (BBMB) Tuesday opened the floodgates of the Bhakra Dam to manage soaring water levels after heavy monsoon inflows. The decision, though necessary to protect the reservoir, has triggered fear among farmers across Punjab's border belt, who see echoes of the devastating floods in 2023.

According to BBMB, about 45,000 cusecs of water was released into the Sutlej River Tuesday — 38,000 cusecs through turbines and another 7,000 cusecs via the spillway — as part of a phased, controlled release.

At 11 am Tuesday, the water level in Bhakra touched 1,665 feet, exceeding the prescribed safe mark of 1,650 feet. The water inflow peaked at 70,500 cusecs, compelling authorities to act before the reservoir approached its brim capacity of 1,680.82 feet. The last time Bhakra's gates were opened was on August 13, 2023, when a trial release of around 8,000 cusecs was carried out after water levels touched 1,672 feet. BBMB officials said the Bhakra Dam floodgates are being opened in a phased and controlled manner to avoid a sudden rise in water levels downstream. Instead of releasing the full quantum at once, water is being discharged gradually through turbines and spillways so that the Sutlej can absorb the flow without causing

immediate flooding in villages along its course, they said. The Pong Dam also recorded a rising level of 1,383 feet, with an inflow of 84,000 cusecs and discharge of 66,000 cusecs. BBMB also announced that starting at 6 am Wednesday, the Pong Dam will release an extra 6000 cusecs of water into the Beas River due to increasing inflows. With the fresh discharge,



flood alerts have been issued in Rupnagar, Ludhiana, Jalandhar, Kapurthala and Tarn Taran districts, while officials maintain 24x7 vigil over embankments and vulnerable areas. The combined impact of Bhakra and Pong releases is expected to influence water levels and flood risk in several downstream regions. Himanshu Jain, Deputy Commissioner, Ludhiana, conducted a flood prevention mock

drill in Garhi Fazli village Tuesday.

Farmers recall 2023 floods. In Ferozepur and Fazilka, around 30 villages are already waterlogged. "We are reminded of the 2023 floods, the way the Sutlej water is rising. My one acre of paddy has been under water for days and is beyond saving. This is not just nature's fury, but a manmade situation," said

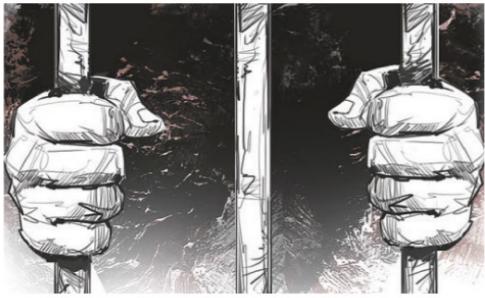
Sukhjinder Singh, a farmer from Retewali Bhaini village. Others demanded compensation, pointing out that riverbed farmers have been denied relief since 2007 as the land records are not in their names, except once during former chief minister Parkash Singh Badal's tenure.

"In 2023, Bhagwant Mann's government backed out. Those who got aid received only ₹6,800 per acre. The government must wake up to farmers' suffering," said Baljinder Singh Babbu, former sarpanch of Hussainiwala village in Ferozepur.

Gaps in preparedness

Villagers warned that even basic flood protection work had been neglected. "The roads and bundhs damaged in the 2023 floods were never repaired. If more water comes, villages will face huge destruction. Already, crops are gone, only houses are left," said Iqbal Singh Mallah, nambardar of Muthianwala, Jamabega and Balamega.

Batting away crime: Businessman foils robbery attempt in Bengaluru



BENGALURU .(Agency)

In a dramatic incident, a 38-year-old businessman fought off an armed intruder in his HSR Layout duplex, fending him off with a baseball bat for nearly 40 minutes before the intruder fled.

The incident occurred between 11 pm on Wednesday and 2 am on Thursday at the residence of T Ajith Kumar Reddy, a resident of HSR Layout, 2nd Sector. The accused, later identified as Narasimhalu (50), also a resident of HSR Layout, was arrested on Saturday after the police tracked him down using a car key he accidentally dropped at the crime scene.

According to Reddy, he was asleep in his first-floor bedroom when he was jolted awake by a masked man armed with a knife and rope. "He was tall, heavily built, and had covered his face with a mask. He jumped on me and threatened to attack if I did not cooperate. He tried to tie me up with the rope he had brought," Reddy recalled.

The accused, who was also carrying a screwdriver and a backpack, began to attack him. "I pushed him away and ran through the house, but he chased me and blocked both the front and back exits. When I found a baseball bat, I fought back. At one point, I pulled down his mask and saw his face. Enraged, he began choking me.

CMRL begins safety trials between Porur and Poonamallee

CHENNAI .(Agency)

Chennai Metro Rail has commenced safety certification trials on Phase 2, covering the stretch from Poonamallee Bypass to Porur Junction, marking a step closer to launching passenger services on the western corridor.

The tests, which began on August 16, are being conducted on the elevated stretch between Poonamallee Bypass and Porur Junction, part of Stage 1A of the 118.9-km Phase 2 expansion.

The Research Designs and Standards Organisation (RDSO), the technical arm of the Ministry of Railways, is carrying out the certification trials - a prerequisite before the corridor can open to the public. During the tests, metro trains are being run at varying speeds up to the design limit of 90 kmph to evaluate ride comfort, traction and braking performance, as well as track reliability.

The run between Poonamallee and Porur was completed in nine minutes during initial trials, said MA Siddique, managing director of Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL).

The commencement of safety certification trials marks a significant milestone in Phase 2. We are moving steadily towards commissioning the project for the benefit of the public, while adhering to the highest safety standards," he added.

The certification process is expected to take around two weeks. If successful, it will pave the way for opening the western corridor to passengers, easing connectivity to the city's expanding suburbs. MA Siddique, CMRL Directors T Archunan (Projects), S Krishnamurthy (Finance), Manoj Goyal (Systems & Operations), A.R. Rajendran, Chief General Manager, and other senior officials of CMRL and general consultants witnessed the trials.

Gujarat braces for heavy rains; red alert issued for multiple districts

Ahmedabad . Parts of Gujarat were lashed by torrential showers on Tuesday, while coastal districts are likely to receive heavy to very heavy rains in the next two days as authorities devised relief and rescue plans to deal with any emergency situation even as red alert have been issued for multiple districts.

According to the data from the State Emergency Operations Centre (SEOC), Dwaraka and Kalyanpur in Devbhoomi Dwaraka received 138 mm and 129 mm rainfall, respectively, in 12 hours between 6 am and 6 pm on Tuesday.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has warned against heavy rainfall in Amreli, Bhavnagar, Surat, Navsari, Valsad, Kutch, Devbhoomi Dwaraka, Porbandar and Junagadh with red alert on Wednesday and Thursday. The weather department has

DGP: 750 illegal properties of anti-social elements demolished across Gujarat

Ahmedabad .(Agency)

DGP Vikas Sahay on Tuesday said that the Gujarat Police has prepared a list of anti-social elements in a drive held on March 15, 2025.

Addressing a press conference after the 'Monthly Crime Conference' at Ektanagar in Narmada, the DGP said 750 illegal properties linked to those in the list were demolished so far. Out of the 750 illegal properties, 650 were on government land, the DGP said, adding that 2,190 illegal electricity connections had been severed.

He said that the police department is carrying out result-oriented work at various stages to curb crime in the state. Special emphasis is being placed on taking strict action against usurers and ensuring that common citizens are freed from the clutches of moneylenders. "Under this action, complaints were registered in 64 cases

in July and 105 people were accused. As many as 956 accused persons have been arrested in 400 cases so far this year," a statement from the Home Department, quoting Sahay, said.

To return the valuables including the stolen goods seized from the accused in the state to their owners, the police department, in coordination with courts, has organised 761 events across the state in July under 'Tera Tujko Aarpan' programme and goods worth over Rs 25 crore were returned to their owners. Goods worth over Rs 127 crore have been returned to its owners so far this year,

the DGP said. Police have started a "Cyber Center of Excellence" to curb cybercrime and strengthen action against criminals. An estimated amount of Rs 28 crore has been returned to the citizens in July in cases of fraud committed against people under cybercrime.



predicted moderate to heavy rainfall across the entire state till August 25. A meeting of the weather watch group was held at SEOC, Gandhinagar on Tuesday to seek detailed information about the rain situation in Gujarat till next week.

Other talukas that received heavy rainfall on Tuesday included Mangrol in Junagadh recording 95 mm, Umergaon in Valsad 67 mm, Mandvi in Kutch 50 mm, Maliya Hatina in Junagadh 42 mm, Jamjodhpur in Jamnagar 41 mm, Nakhatra in Kutch 32 mm, Bagasara in Amreli 29 mm, Vapi in Valsad 29 mm, Lakhpat in Kutch 23 mm, Una in Gir Somnath 23 mm, Vyara in Tapi 21 mm and Khambla in Amreli 21 mm.

The Meteorological Department has issued a red alert in Amreli, Bhavnagar, Surat, Navsari and Valsad districts on August 20 and 21 in Kutch, Devbhoomi Dwaraka,

Porbandar and Junagadh districts.

Meanwhile, a total of 12 National Disaster



Response Force (NDRF) teams and 20 State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) teams have been deployed in different districts to meet any emergency situation. In addition, one NDRF team has been kept in reserve

and instructions have been issued to allocate one SDRF team for the Tarnetar fair being organised in Surendranagar district.

Out of the 206 reservoirs in the state, 61 reservoirs are on high alert, 27 reservoirs are on alert and 21 reservoirs are on warning level, stated the department.

The IMD has also issued an orange alert against heavy to very heavy rains in Panchmahal, Dahod, Vadodara, Chhota Udepur, Narmada, Bharuch, Dang and Tapi, Porbandar, Junagadh, Devbhoomi Dwaraka and Gir Somnath on August 20 and Banaskantha, Patan, Mehsana, Sabarkantha, Navsari, Valsad, Surendranagar, Jamnagar and Morbi on August 21. For August 22, an orange alert has been issued for the districts of Surendranagar, Jamnagar, Morbi, Dwaraka and Kutch.

Haryana hands over probe into Bhiwani playschool teacher's death to CBI

Chandigarh .(Agency)

The Haryana government has decided to hand over the probe into the death of a 19-year-old playschool teacher from Bhiwani district to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

Amid widespread protests over her death, Chief Minister Manohar Singh Saini on Wednesday announced the decision on social media platform X. "Based on the family's demand, the Haryana government is handing over the case to the CBI for an impartial investigation. Complete justice will be ensured in this case," he stated. He further added, "To ensure justice for our daughter from Bhiwani and her family, the state government and police administration are working with full seriousness and transparency. I am personally

monitoring the case and receiving regular updates."

According to the family, the 19-year-old had left home on August 11 to visit a nursing college in Singhan to inquire about admission. When she did not

return by evening, her father contacted the police through Dial-112, Haryana's emergency response system. Family members allege that police accompanied them to the college but only questioned three intoxicated men who claimed they had not seen her and that the college had closed at 1 pm. Her body was discovered in a field in Bhiwani's Singhan village on August 13. Earlier, villagers from Dhani Laxman had refused to allow the woman's cremation until those responsible for her alleged "murder" were arrested. They had also demanded a CBI probe, expressing dissatisfaction with the Haryana Police's investigation, which pointed to a possible suicide.

In response to growing unrest, heavy police force had been deployed in the area, and internet services were suspended in Bhiwani and Charkhi Dadri districts for two days, starting Tuesday.



return by evening, her father contacted the police through Dial-112, Haryana's emergency response system. Family members allege that police accompanied them to the college but only questioned three

'First-generation lawyers overlooked': Allahabad HC flags 'entitlement culture' in state counsel appointments

Making the observation, the court said only scions of influential families are given opportunities to represent state corporations, and highlights the decay in the system

Lucknow .(Agency)

Criticising the prevailing entitlement culture in the appointment of counsel for state corporations, wherein opportunities are extended predominantly to scions of influential families, the Allahabad High Court observed that a considerable number of first-generation lawyers seldom receive an opportunity to represent such corporations.

The court made the observation while hearing a petition filed by one Jubeda Begum and others against the Uttar Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (UPSRTC).

The order stated that the writ petition arose due to prima facie disobedience of the court's directions. Upon inquiry, the respondent Corporation found that the situation resulted from professional negligence or incompetence on the part of the counsel representing it before the Labour Court. The Corporation has since initiated appropriate action in this regard.

The court observed, "Appointment of meritorious counsel by a fair and transparent

procedure is central to good governance of a government corporation and is consistent with the mandate of constitutional law. Hitherto, an entitlement culture has taken root in appointments of counsel for State corporations, where only scions of influential families are given opportunities to represent (them). This observation does not take away the competence of any counsel appointed by the Corporation, but highlights the decay in the system where these offices are appropriated by those who can peddle influence in the corridors of power."

The matter is res integra. The Supreme Court, in Kumari Shreelakshmi Vidyarthi vs State of UP... enjoined the State to adopt a transparent and fair procedure while appointing State counsel. The said mandate applies in equal measure to various government corporations, including the UPSRTC." The court said that several first-generation lawyers are very competent, possess unimpeachable integrity, and are industrious by disposition. "Counsel of the

aforsaid class rarely get a look in when appointments of State counsel or counsel for the Corporations are made, as they are not able to curry any influence with the powers

to be. Modes of appointment of counsel which accord weight to accidents of inheritance and neglect achievements of merit cannot be countenanced in State Corporations."

It further added that, "This culture of appointments has also degraded the professional representation of the

Corporations. In many cases, this Court has found that the counsel for the Corporations who are appointed through the spoils system receive notices and do not appear in court. They simply sub-delegate the files entrusted to them."

The court also observed that in the currently existing system, young first-generation counsel "who are not well-connected politically or do not belong to influential families" are overlooked in appointment as counsel for the State or State-run Corporations despite their competence and scholarship. "The failure of the State instrumentalities to discern merit in such a class of counsel can be disheartening to young first-generation lawyers... Such an environment prevents members of the Bar from developing and contributing to the rule of law. The unjust nature of the system has serious adverse consequences on governance by law. The justice delivery system becomes weak and unable to serve... common citizens due to systemic deficiencies."



BJD Backs Bihar's Electoral Roll Revision, Warns Against Disenfranchisement

BJD leader reaction came amidst the INDIA bloc leaders protesting over the Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls in Bihar.

Agency New Delhi.

Biju Janata Dal (BJD) leader Amar Patnaik on Tuesday said his party would "welcome" the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls but warned that if the exercise was carried out in a manner leading to "disenfranchisement of rightful

voters", the BJD would "oppose it tooth and nail". His reaction came amidst the INDIA bloc leaders protesting over the SIR of electoral rolls in Bihar. "This is an exercise which is being conducted by the Election Commission (EC) of India. We believe that the Commission, as a constitutional authority entrusted with electoral roll revision, will do it fairly and we will cooperate. The moment it is unfair, we will oppose it," Patnaik told reporters after meeting EC officials. The BJD MP said the Election Commission must ensure that no eligible voter is left out in the process.

"If it is done or implemented hurriedly, resulting in the disempowerment and disenfranchisement of rightful electors, then we will oppose it till the very last man who should be included," he said. Mr Patnaik also accused the Commission of



avoiding accountability by shifting the onus of proof onto political parties.

"Why should political parties give an affidavit? It is the data of EC, so if anyone who should give an affidavit, it should be the Election Commission itself," he said, reacting to Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar serving a seven-day ultimatum on Congress leader Rahul Gandhi to submit a signed affidavit to back his vote theft claims. "The Election

Commission has to give an affidavit that those whose names appeared twice or three times in the rolls did not actually vote. That evidence is only with them -- the register of voters. It is not with any political party. Asking for affidavits from third parties is a huge eye wash," he said.

Asked whether the BJD would coordinate with the opposition INDIA bloc on this issue, Patnaik maintained that his party had taken the lead independently.

"The Biju Janata Dal is the first political party which raised this issue significantly before the Election Commission, at least in Odisha. We did not seek support from other political parties. "We are a popular regional party with independent thinking. We will take it to its logical conclusion," he said.

NSUI slams ABVP over DUSU office attack, vows to defeat 'politics of hate'



Agency New Delhi.

The National Students' Union of India (NSUI) on Tuesday condemned the vandalism at the office of Delhi University Students' Union (DUSU) president Ronak Khatri, blaming the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) for what it called "an act of frustration." NSUI national president Varun Choudhary said the incident exposed ABVP's "real face." "The attack on our president's office is nothing but a cowardly act. ABVP is known for violence and gundagardi on campus, due to which ordinary students, particularly female students, feel unsafe," he said. Choudhary recalled that ABVP had attempted similar intimidation during the last DUSU polls but was defeated. "The students of Delhi University rejected their politics of hate and gave NSUI a historic victory. We are confident they will do so again," he added.

Highlighting NSUI's agenda, Choudhary said the organisation was focused on real student concerns such as affordable fees, timely scholarships, social justice and women's safety. "While ABVP tries to divide and threaten, NSUI stands with every common student. We assure students that once again we will open a 'Mohabbat Ki Dukan' in Delhi University. This time too, love will triumph over hate," he further said.

Vatsala Agarwal to take charge as new DGHS



Agency New Delhi.

The Delhi government has appointed Dr Vatsala Agarwal, as the new Director General of Health Services (DGHS). She is currently working as the director of Janakpuri Super Speciality Hospital and holding an additional charge as Medical Superintendent of Deep Chand Bandhu Hospital as well. An official order announcing her appointment as the new DGHS was issued on Monday.

Dr Agarwal, a senior bureaucrat in the city's health administration, has previously served as director and medical superintendent in several government hospitals. She has also held the additional charge of director of the Delhi State Cancer Institute. Officials said her elevation comes at a time when the post of DGHS has remained unsettled for months.

The top position in the health department fell vacant after Dr Rati Makkar opted for voluntary retirement on August 9. Following her exit, Deputy DGHS Dr Rajesh Kumar was holding an additional charge.

Meanwhile, the Delhi government has also appointed a new dean at Maulana Azad Medical College. Dr Munisha Agarwal, a professor in the Department of Anaesthesia at the same medical college, will take charge as dean, officials confirmed.

Supervise ancient monuments in Mehrauli, top court tells ASI

The court was hearing two appeals that sought directions to prevent authorities from demolishing or removing the dargah and other monuments in the Mehrauli and Sanjay Van areas.

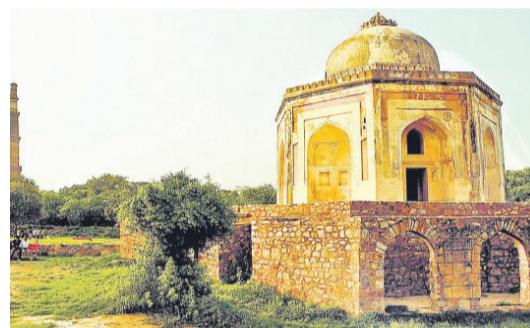
Agency New Delhi.

The Supreme Court on Tuesday asked the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to consider supervising monuments located inside Delhi's Mehrauli Archaeological Park, including the 13th century "Ashiq Allah Dargah" and the "Chillagah of Baba Farid", a site associated with the revered Sufi saint. The court was hearing two appeals that sought directions to prevent authorities from demolishing or removing the dargah and other monuments in the Mehrauli and Sanjay Van areas. A bench of Justices B V Nagarathna and R Mahadevan recalled its earlier order of February 28, which had restrained any "constructions, additions or alterations" in the area without prior permission of the top court. "Why do you want to demolish it

in the first place?" the bench asked the counsel for the Delhi Development Authority (DDA). The DDA's counsel clarified that the authority had no

encroachment," the counsel said.

Emphasising that the monuments must be safeguarded, the bench said, "That monument has to be preserved. We are only concerned with the monument." The appellants, who had challenged a Delhi High Court order, argued that the monuments could not be treated as encroachments since they had stood in the area since the 12th century. Referring to the ASI's status report, they submitted that although the structures were not notified as centrally protected, the ASI could supervise their upkeep and maintenance. The DDA, however, maintained that its role was limited to clearing unauthorised encroachments on public land in line with the apex court's orders. The ASI has earlier noted that both shrines carry deep religious significance.



objection to the dargah itself but pointed to several unauthorised structures that had cropped up nearby. "The question which really arises is, how much of it is the protected monument and how much of it is the

Rain brings brief respite to residents; IMD predicts more showers this week

Agency New Delhi.

Rain accompanied by thunderstorms lashed the city on Tuesday, with the India Meteorological Department (IMD) forecasting cloud cover and intermittent rainfall to continue till August 25. The highest rainfall was recorded at Rajghat with 13.1 mm, followed by Mayur Vihar with 8.5 mm, Palam with 4.6 mm, and the Ridge with 3 mm, even as the Safdarjung observatory noted only a trace. The IMD has forecast generally cloudy skies with chances of very light to light rain or thundershowers during the night and early hours of Tuesday, followed by similar conditions on August 20 and 21.

Light to moderate showers are expected

on August 22 and 23, which could bring some respite from the prevailing humid weather. On Tuesday, Delhi's maximum temperature at Safdarjung



settled at 35.2 degrees celsius, one degree above normal, while the minimum stood at 26.7 degrees celsius, near the season's average.

Humidity levels oscillated between 61% and 89%. While central and eastern parts of the city witnessed the heaviest spells, Noida recorded the highest rainfall in the region with 54 mm till Tuesday evening. Other NCR locations such as Faridabad and Noida reported between 0.5 mm and 1.5 mm of rain. The IMD attributed the rainfall activity to a monsoon trough running from Gujarat across central India to the Bay of Bengal, along with the influence of a western disturbance over north India. Winds blew from the northeast and southeast at 10 to 15 kmph during the day. For the coming days, the weather office has predicted maximum temperatures between 32 and 34 degrees celsius.

"Attempt To Create Narrative": Big Action Against Psephologist's Institute

The ICSSR said in a post that it has taken serious cognizance of data manipulation by CSDS and "its attempt to create a narrative with the intention of undermining the sanctity of the Election Commission of India".

Agency New Delhi.

A day after psephologist Sanjay Kumar apologised for an error in flagging significant voter additions and deletions in the Maharashtra election, a government-run research body has said it will issue a show-cause notice to the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), where Mr Kumar is a faculty member. The Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) has said in a post on X that it has taken serious cognizance of data manipulation by CSDS and "its attempt to create a narrative with the intention of undermining the sanctity of the Election Commission of India".

The ICSSR is an autonomous body under the Union Ministry of Education and CSDS receives funding from the government-run research body. In a post on X, the research body has written, "It has come to the notice of ICSSR that an

individual holding (a) responsible position at CSDS, an ICSSR-funded research institute, has made media statements that had to be retracted subsequently citing glitches in data analysis regarding elections in Maharashtra. Further, the institute has published media stories based on biased interpretation of the SIR exercise by the Election Commission of India."

"ICSSR holds the Indian Constitution in (the) highest esteem. Election Commission of India is a high constitutional body which has been holding free and fair elections in the largest democracy of world for decades together," the post says. "ICSSR takes serious cognizance of the data manipulation by CSDS and its attempt to create a narrative with the intention of undermining the sanctity of the Election

Commission of India. This is a gross violation of the Grant-in-Aid rules of ICSSR, and ICSSR shall issue a Show Cause Notice to the Institute," the research body has said.

The psephologist had earlier claimed that the number of voters in Maharashtra's Nashik West and Hingna Assembly segments rose by 47 per cent and 43 per cent, respectively, between the Lok Sabha election last and the Maharashtra

Over 50 Delhi schools receive fresh bomb threat emails from 'terrorisers 111' group; demands USD 25K

Agency New Delhi.

Over 50 schools have received another bomb threat mail in the national capital region in the early hours of Wednesday, police officials have informed. According to Delhi police, a group identifying itself as 'Terrorisers 111' sent an email to various schools, including DAV public school, Faith academy, doon public school, Sarvodaya vidyalaya, and others demanding USD 25,000. The same group had allegedly demanded USD 5,000 in cryptocurrency after sending various bomb threats on August 18.

The group sent a bulk email to the principals and administration staff of various schools, claiming that they have "breached their IT systems" and will detonate bombs within 48 hours across school premises.

"We are the Terrorisers 111 group. We have planted explosives inside your building, and others across the city. Devices include high-yield C4 bombs and timed charges placed in classrooms, auditoriums, staff rooms, and school buses, designed to cause maximum casualties. We have breached your IT systems, extracted student and staff data, and compromised all security cameras. We are monitoring your actions in real time. Transfer 2000 USD to Ethereum address within 48 hours, or we will detonate the bombs," the email read.

"Evacuate all schools and suspend operations immediately to avoid loss of life. Any attempt to contact authorities will trigger immediate detonation and public release of your sensitive data. Terrorisers 111 Group does not forgive or forget. Payment is your only option to prevent disaster. Act now," the email added. Earlier, two schools in Malviya Nagar and Prasad Nagar in Karol Bagh received a bomb threat at 7:40 AM, with a fire tender being dispatched in the area.

Top court questions Governors' powers, federal harmony in handling state bills

Agency New Delhi.

The Supreme Court on Wednesday questioned whether the country has lived up to the expectations of the Constitution's framers regarding harmony between the governor and the state government, as well as consultation on various issues between the two power centres. The observation came from a five-judge Constitution bench headed by Chief Justice BR Gavai, during the hearing of a Presidential Reference seeking clarity on the powers and discretion of governors and the president in dealing with Bills passed by state legislatures. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, referred to the Constituent Assembly debates on the appointment and powers of governors.

He argued that the post is not a political refuge for retired politicians but carries significant responsibilities under the Constitution. "Governors are not just postmen. They represent the Union of India. An individual who is not directly elected is no less than those who are," he told the court.

He emphasised that governors are expected to act with discretion, including options to pass, withhold, or refer a bill, but within the constitutional framework. He clarified that withholding a bill does not mean killing it outright.

The bench, comprising Justices Surya Kant, Vikram Nath, PS Narasimha, and AS Chandrakar, engaged in a detailed discussion on Articles 200 and 201 and the federal structure envisaged by the Constitution. Justice Narasimha asked the Solicitor General to consider the constitutional use of the word "withhold", noting that it appears in multiple places in the Constitution.



polls earlier this year. He also claimed that the number of voters sharply fell in Ramtek and Devlali constituencies by 38 per cent and 36 per cent, respectively.

The claims prompted the Congress to step up its 'vote fraud' offensive against the BJP and top party leaders shared Mr Kumar's findings in an attempt to corner the ruling party and the Election Commission, which the Congress has accused of colluding with the BJP.

Then, in a surprise development, Sanjay Kumar deleted his tweets and issued an apology. "I sincerely apologize for the tweets posted regarding Maharashtra elections.

Error occurred while comparing data of 2024 LS and 2024 AS. The data in row was misread by our data team. The tweet has since been removed. I had no intention of dispersing any form of misinformation," he said in a post on X.

NEWS BOX

From Shock to Celebration: Fans React to Naomi's Emotional RAW Moment

New Delhi. (Agency)

In a business built on surprise returns, shocking betrayals, and championship upsets, sometimes the most unforgettable moments are the ones that blur the line between the spectacle and real life. That's exactly what happened on Monday Night RAW when Naomi stepped into the ring and revealed she was pregnant.

The crowd reaction was instant, equal parts of shock and celebration, and by the time the segment wrapped, it was clear this wasn't just another storyline twist. It was one of those rare, goosebump-inducing WWE moments where the performance paused just long enough to let real life shine through, and the WWE Universe embraced it with open arms. This was another punch in the bag for the WWE community, along with other historical reveals in the past like Becky Lynch's pregnancy announcement, Edge's retirement speech, and Roman Reigns' leukemia reveal in 2018.

Fans Go Wild on RedditOn r/SquaredCircle, fans instantly flooded threads with



congratulatory messages and emotional reflections: "Really happy for her, relieved there's nothing bad going on." Another user captured the bittersweet vibe: "I'm so happy for her. I know she's wanted this. It's gonna suck seeing her gone for a while with how awesome she's been this year." "That was amazing. I love that she didn't break character for more than a few seconds. That was one of the coolest announcements because of that." These comments show and highlight how deeply invested the fan community remains in her performance, even amid real-life milestones. Reactions from WWE Superstars Some of the biggest names in WWE offered heartfelt and lighthearted reactions via social media: Becky Lynch took to X and poked fun with her trademark sarcasm: "How irresponsible getting pregnant as a champion."

Carlos Alcaraz shocks Raducanu, internet with daring around-the-net shot

New Delhi. (Agency)

Even though Carlos Alcaraz and Emma Raducanu lost their first US Open mixed doubles match against the top-seeded Jack Draper and Jessica Pegula, they showcased a sense of chemistry that completely captivated the audience. The match lasted just 51 minutes and ended with a scoreline of 4-2, 4-2, but despite the result, Alcaraz delivered some of the most compelling shots of the day. In the second set of the second game, Draper was relentlessly testing Raducanu's limits. The top-seeded duo had the lead, and the opposing team was just a point away from equalising the score. Then came a moment of brilliance from Alcaraz—one that not only thrilled the crowd but also reignited hope for the pair, even if the scoreboard wouldn't reflect a win by the end. Alcaraz pulled off an around-the-net



post shot, shocking his partner with a point-saver. Carlos Alcaraz's around-the-net-post shot during the match speaks volumes about his court awareness and the creativity he brings to the game. In that crucial second game, he saw a rare opening and didn't hesitate—delivering a forehand volley with laser precision that curved around the net post and landed cleanly in the opponent's court. It wasn't just visually impressive; it saved them a vital point. Emma Raducanu was visibly stunned by the shot. Her face lit up instantly—eyes wide, mouth agape, and soon after, a beaming smile that captured just how magical that moment was. Raducanu's reaction to Alcaraz's shot became an instant hit online. It was the perfect blend of shock, admiration, and joy—something fans deeply resonated with. While she had been laser-focused during the match and visibly dejected after missing a crucial shot earlier, her demeanor transformed as she registered what Alcaraz had just pulled off.

Real Madrid off to underwhelming start as Mbappe penalty earns 1-0 win over Osasuna

Real Madrid were off to a stuttering start against Osasuna in their LaLiga opener. The last year's runner-ups earned a 1-0 win owing to a penalty from Kylian Mbappe.

New Delhi. (Agency)

Real Madrid began their LaLiga campaign with a narrow and uninspiring 1-0 home win over Osasuna on Tuesday, August 19, as a second-half Kylian Mbappe penalty masked an otherwise disjointed display from Xabi Alonso's side. Mbappe converted from the spot six minutes into the second half after winning the penalty himself, giving the hosts their only goal of the game. However, despite dominating possession, Madrid were unable to add to their lead, and the performance left much to be desired. "In the first half we didn't have space and then in the second half we



scored early," Mbappe told Real Madrid TV. "We had more chances and we had more control. We expected to score the second, but it didn't come." Madrid, who last appeared competitively in a humbling 4-0 defeat to Paris Saint-Germain in the Club World Cup semi-finals, looked far from fluent against a disciplined Osasuna side. The visitors were reduced to ten men in stoppage time after Abel Bretón was sent off for an off-the-ball foul on Gonzalo García, but by then, the game had already drifted into a low-energy

finish. Alonso's first LaLiga match in charge featured three debutants in his starting backline – Trent Alexander-Arnold, Dean Huijsen, and Alvaro Carreras – as Madrid controlled the tempo early but failed to translate that into clear chances. Their best opportunity of the first half came via a long-range strike from Eder Militao, which forced Osasuna goalkeeper Sergio Herrera into a solid save. Juan Cruz's foul on Mbappe early in the second half handed Madrid a much-needed breakthrough. The Frenchman sent

Mohamed Salah makes history with third PFA player of the year award

New Delhi. (Agency)

MANCHESTER: Mohamed Salah became the first player to win the Professional Footballers' Association (PFA) men's player of the year for a third time on Tuesday after guiding Liverpool to Premier League glory. The Egyptian scored 29 goals and provided 18 assists to propel the Reds to a record-equalling 20th English top-flight title with four games to spare last season. Salah also scooped the award in the 2017/18 and 2021/22 seasons. The 33-year-old picked up the Football Writers' Association and Premier League player of the year awards in recent months. Aston Villa's Morgan Rogers won young player of the year following a breakthrough campaign that saw the attacking midfielder make his senior international debut for England. Salah is joined in the 2024/25 PFA

Premier League team of the year by Liverpool team-mates Virgil van Dijk, Ryan Gravenberch and Alexis Mac Allister.

Milos Kerkez, who moved to Anfield from



Bournemouth in June, is also selected, as are the Arsenal trio of William Saliba, Gabriel Magalhaes and Declan Rice.

Matz Sels and Chris Wood are recognised for their fine campaigns at Nottingham Forest, while wantaway Newcastle striker Alexander Isak is included after finishing second to Salah in the Golden Boot race.

Arsenal's Mariona Caldentey won the women's player of the year accolade after her role in helping the Gunners win the Champions League. The Spanish midfielder scored 19 goals in all competitions, including eight in the Champions League, in her first season in England. Olivia Smith recently joined Caldentey at Arsenal in a world-record £1 million (\$1.4 million) deal and won the women's young player of the year prize following her superb season at Liverpool.

Shreyas Iyer is not liked as much as someone else: Ex-coach questions Asia Cup snub

New Delhi. (Agency)

Former India assistant coach Abhishek Nayar has questioned the decision to leave out Shreyas Iyer from India's squad for the upcoming Asia Cup 2025, stating that the 30-year-old's exclusion – even from the reserves – raises serious questions about the selection process. Speaking on Star Sports, Nayar expressed his surprise at Iyer's absence, especially considering his strong performances in the Indian Premier League over the past two seasons. After captaining Kolkata Knight Riders to the IPL title in 2024, Iyer led Punjab Kings to their first final in over a decade earlier this year, while also contributing consistently with the bat. "I wanted to ask that question – how is he not even in the reserves if he's such a strong contender?" Nayar said. "Sometimes, selection meetings can be quite interesting, and the discussions even more so. But I genuinely



can't understand what justification there could be for not including Shreyas Iyer in a 20-member squad." Shreyas last played a T20 International for India in December 2023, scoring a half-century against Australia. Since then, he has not been recalled to the T20I side, missing the 2024 T20 World Cup and now the Asia Cup, despite strong domestic form and leadership credentials.

Nayar acknowledged that selection is often based on a range of factors, but suggested that personal preferences may have played a role in this instance. "Any selection, after a while, comes down to who you prefer a little more than the other. In that regard, maybe Shreyas Iyer is not liked as much as someone else. Maybe," he said. Chief selector Ajit Agarkar addressed the issue during the squad announcement, clarifying that Iyer's exclusion was not due to any fault of his own.

"With regards to Shreyas, there's no fault of his – nor is it ours," Agarkar said. "We can only pick 15, and at the moment, he might have to wait for his chance."

Why Shubman Gill for Asia Cup T20? With Virat Kohli gone, his idea endures

Sanju Samson and Abhishek Sharma symbolise India's new brand of T20 audacity, yet selectors have turned to Shubman Gill for balance. His return, signals not just a tactical switch but also the renewal of an insurance policy that Virat Kohli once provided to the T20I side.

New Delhi. (Agency)

YES, it is official now. Shubman Gill is back in the T20I fold, named vice-captain of the 15-member Asia Cup squad led by Suryakumar Yadav. Was this expected? Certainly. Was it inevitable? Perhaps, yes. The Gujarat Titans skipper returns to a T20I top order that, until very recently, appeared to be operating seamlessly. In Sanju Samson and Abhishek Sharma, India had discovered a new-look opening pair playing a brand of modern T20 cricket that thrilled both analysts and audiences. The left-right combination had been afforded a stretch of 12 games together, signalling that the Gautam Gambhir-led team management

was working with a clear vision — one aligned with the aggressive demands of the contemporary game. The numbers underline the point. Since the last T20 World Cup, Abhishek Sharma has piled up 511 runs in 14 matches at a strike rate of



199. Samson, in the same period, has contributed 417 runs at 182.80. Only three batters in world cricket have both scored more than 400 runs and struck at over 180 in that time. Together, Samson and Abhishek compiled five centuries and four fifties, while Tilak Varma emerged as India's reliable No. 3 or 4, surging to second in the ICC T20I rankings with 413 runs at a strike rate of 170. As a unit, India crossed 200 eight times — more than any other team — and won on each occasion. On the face of it,

this was a side running on autopilot. Most selection committees around the world might have hesitated to disturb such a well-oiled top four, with Suryakumar Yadav adding his experience to the mix. Yet, on Tuesday, the selectors not only recalled Shubman Gill but also elevated him to the role of vice-captain. The message was unambiguous: Gill is not returning to warm the bench.

THE GILL CONUNDRUM

Why Gill, and why now? His IPL record is stellar, yet his T20I numbers are more modest: a strike rate of 139 overall, and just 129 across his last seven innings. For critics, this sits uneasily with the ultra-aggressive approach India have cultivated under Gambhir. His recall has inevitably sparked debate, particularly since it comes at the expense of players like Yashasvi Jaiswal and Shreyas Iyer. Some view the decision as evidence that the BCCI wishes to anoint Gill as their next all-format superstar — a marketable face to succeed Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma as they approach the twilight of their international careers. Former India wicketkeeper and commentator Deep Dasgupta dismisses such speculation, calling it unfair to the player's undeniable quality.

Hero Asia Cup 2025: Trophy Gaurav Yatra spreads hockey fever in Bihar

The Hero Asia Cup 2025 Trophy Gaurav Yatra is touring Bihar and other states, promoting the upcoming tournament in Rajgir (August 29th-September 7th). The tour aims to boost hockey interest among youth and encourage public participation. The trophy has received enthusiastic welcomes in districts like Buxar, Muzaffarpur, and Motihari, with local officials and residents participating in celebrations. The Yatra will conclude in Rajgir before the tournament begins.

CHENNAI. (Agency)

Ahead of the Hero Asia Cup 2025, which will be held in Bihar for the first time, the Trophy Gaurav Yatra will pass through all the districts of the state to promote the continental tournament to be held in Rajgir from 29 August to 7 September. To spread the passion of hockey among the people, the Trophy Gaurav Yatra, starting from August 17, will travel through all the districts of Bihar as well as the states of Chennai, Chandigarh (Punjab, Haryana), Delhi, Odisha, Assam and Jharkhand.

This yatra aims to ignite interest in hockey among the youth, promote sports culture and ensure public participation in this historic event. After visiting Patna, Vaishali, and Bhojpur, the Trophy



Gaurav Yatra reached Buxar, Muzaffarpur and Motihari on Tuesday. The trophy was given a grand welcome in all the districts. In the welcome ceremony organised at Buxar Collectorate, Buxar District Magistrate Dr Vidyanand Singh, Superintendent of Police Shubham Arya, who was the chief guest, explained to the people the importance of the Asia Cup's organisation in Bihar.

Trophy Gaurav Yatra: A journey through Bihar's hockey enthusiasm

A large number of players and local people also greeted and welcomed the trophy and the players who went on the yatra with great enthusiasm. District Magistrate of Muzaffarpur Subrata Sen, District Sports Officer Rajendra Kumar, Physical Teacher Ram Kumar Rai, Karunesh Kumar and a large number of players and local people present welcomed the Trophy Gaurav Yatra in a welcome ceremony organised at Muzaffarpur Collectorate. The District Magistrate encouraged the players by playing hockey.

Ola Electric shares jump 13%, up over 20% in two sessions. Should you buy

New Delhi.(Agency)

Ola Electric shares extended their rally on Wednesday, surging over 13% in intraday trade. The company's shares were trading 13.23% higher at Rs 50.76 around 10:27 am on the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE). The surge came on the back of heavy trading volumes. This marks the second straight session of gains for the electric two-wheeler maker. On Tuesday, the stock climbed almost sharply after founder and chairman Bhavish Aggarwal outlined an aggressive strategy to reclaim market share and improve profitability in India's competitive EV segment. The recent rally comes after a bruising year for the company. Ola Electric shares have plunged 41% so far in 2025 and are down nearly 63% over the past 12 months, leaving investors cautious even as the stock bounces back sharply this week. The rebound, however, faces an immediate challenge: looming GST reforms. Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced last week that the government plans to lower GST rates on several goods and services by Diwali, and proposals under discussion include cutting GST on small cars from 28% to 18%. Analysts warn this could disrupt the fragile recovery in the EV sector. HSBC Global Research said while the move may boost auto demand overall, it could hurt electric vehicle makers if states raise road taxes to make up for lost revenue. Nomura voiced similar concerns, noting that if the GST cut on internal combustion engine vehicles goes through, the price gap between petrol and electric vehicles will widen sharply, potentially slowing EV adoption. The policy uncertainty comes at a time when Ola Electric's financial performance remains under severe pressure. For the quarter ended June 30, the company reported a consolidated net loss of Rs 428 crore, up 23% year-on-year, while revenues halved to Rs 828 crore. EBITDA losses widened to Rs 237 crore, with margins slipping to -28.6% from -12.5% a year earlier. For now, the market seems to be cheering Ola Electric's bold revival plan, but the real test lies ahead. Will the government's tax reforms derail the EV push, or will they trigger a broader boom in mobility that benefits everyone?

Sensex, Nifty open lower as financial stocks offset IT gains; global worries weigh

New Delhi.(Agency)

Benchmark stock market indices opened lower on Wednesday, as early gains in IT stocks were offset by declines in heavyweight financial and banking sector shares. The S&P BSE Sensex was down by 125.67 points to 81,518.72, while the NSE Nifty50 lost 34.50 points to 24,946.15 as of 9:33 am. Dr. VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Investments Limited, said that the market has been responding to the potential demand boost to sectors like automobiles, FMCG, insurance and select financials which are expected to benefit from the GST rationalisation.

"Improvement in India-China relations also have contributed to the rally. However, there is no scope for a sustained rally since the August 27th deadline for the 25% secondary tariff on India is fast approaching, and the news coming from the Trump administration is not positive," he added. Infosys led the gains in early trade with a rise of 1.72%, followed by Bharti Airtel up 1.67%, NTPC adding 1.46%, Eternel gaining 1.42% and Hindustan Unilever up 0.95%. Bajaj Finance was the biggest drag falling 1.16% along with Tata Motors down 0.86%, BEL slipping 0.79%, ICICI Bank losing 0.70% and Larsen & Toubro declining 0.66%.

Indian-state run refiners resume Russian oil purchase amid tariff threats: Report



New Delhi.(Agency)

India's state-run refiners Indian Oil IOC, NS and Bharat Petroleum BPCL, NS have bought Russian oil for September and October delivery, resuming purchases after discounts widened, two company officials aware of the matter said on Wednesday.

The resumption of Russian oil imports by Indian state refiners could reduce supplies for top buyer China, which had stepped up purchases during their absence. The refiners halted purchases in July due to narrower discounts and after India was criticised by Washington for its purchases of Russian oil. President Donald Trump also threatened an additional 25% levy on Indian goods, effective August 27, to penalise New Delhi for its continued buying of the oil. Discounts for Russian flagship Urals crude have widened to about \$3 per barrel, making the oil attractive for Indian refiners, while China has stepped up purchases, the officials said.

In addition to Urals, IOC has also bought other Russian crude oil grades including Varanney and Siberian Light, they said. Indian companies do not comment on their crude imports. On Monday, IOC, the country's top refiner, told analysts that it would continue to buy Russian oil depending on economics.

In recent weeks, Chinese refineries bought 15 cargoes of Russian oil for October and November delivery, according to two analysts and one trader.

US targets Indian refiners, says richest families made excess profits

The criticism from US is focused on India's private refiners, particularly Reliance Industries and Nayara Energy, which together account for a large share of refined fuel exports to Europe.

New Delhi.(Agency)

What began as quiet encouragement for India to absorb Russian crude in the early days of the Ukraine war has now turned into sharp criticism from the US. The United States directly accused Indian refiners of profiteering from Russian oil. On Tuesday, US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent told CNBC that India was engaging in what he described as "arbitrage", buying discounted Russian

crude, refining it into fuels, and reselling the products to Europe and other regions that have sanctioned Moscow. "They are just profiteering. They are reselling," Bessent said. "They've made \$16 billion in excess profits, some of the richest families in India."

US TARGETS INDIAN REFINERS

The criticism is focused on India's private refiners, particularly Reliance Industries and Nayara Energy, which together account for a large share of refined fuel exports to Europe. According to Bloomberg and Kpler data, these two refiners exported \$60 billion worth of petroleum products in FY 2024-25, with \$15 billion going to the European Union in just the first half of this year.

Reliance, led by Mukesh Ambani, signed a long-term deal in December 2024 with Russia's Rosneft to import up to 500,000 barrels per day, worth around \$12-13 billion annually, for 10 years. Nayara Energy, which is nearly half-owned by Rosneft, has also sharply raised its

Russian dependence. By 2025, 72% of Nayara's crude purchases came from Russia, compared with 27% in 2022, according to Kpler. Exports from both refiners are significant. Nayara exported



nearly 3 million metric tonnes of fuel in the first half of 2025, around 30% of its total output, with buyers including Vitol, Aramco Trading, Shell, and bp. Reliance exported over 21 million tonnes in the same period, supplying firms like bp, ExxonMobil, Glencore, Vitol, and Trafigura. **INDIA'S RUSSIAN OIL**

Labubu mania is back as Pop Mart shares rise by 11%, CEO predicts record sales

Pop Mart reported a 204% rise in revenue to 13.88 billion yuan for the first half of 2025, beating the average analyst estimate of 13.76 billion yuan. Net income jumped 397% to 4.57 billion yuan, highlighting the company's rapid growth.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Shares of Chinese toy maker Pop Mart International Group Ltd. surged the most in nearly four months on Wednesday after CEO Wang Ning said the company could easily surpass its annual sales target and announced plans to launch a new mini Labubu doll, reported Bloomberg.

The stock climbed as much as 11% to HK\$10.6, marking its highest level since the company went public in December 2020. Earlier losses of up to

4.7% were quickly reversed, despite some analysts warning about potential long-term demand for Pop Mart's popular characters.

CEO PREDICTS HIGHER SALES AMID GLOBAL DOLL CRAZE

During an earnings call, Wang admitted that even he has struggled to predict earnings growth amid the global craze for Labubu dolls. "Earlier this year we aimed for 20 billion yuan (\$2.8 billion), but now 30 billion yuan seems quite achievable," he said. The new mini Labubu is expected to launch this week, though details remain limited.

STRONG REVENUE AND NET INCOME GROWTH

Pop Mart reported a 204% rise in revenue to 13.88 billion yuan for the first half of 2025, beating the average analyst estimate of 13.76 billion yuan. Net income jumped 397% to 4.57 billion yuan, highlighting the company's rapid growth.

GLOBAL EXPANSION STRATEGY

The Beijing-based company is pushing ahead with its global expansion plans,

capitalising on the international popularity of Labubus, plush toys that have become a pop-culture hit in Western markets, especially the US. Overseas revenue surged 440% to 5.6 billion yuan in the first six months of the year. Pop Mart expects its total foreign store count to exceed 200 by year-end, up from 140 currently. Co-CEO Moon Duk II said expansion will continue at pace in the US, while fellow co-CEO Si De confirmed focus on this market over the next one to two years. Analysts at Citigroup said Pop Mart's expertise in intellectual property and overseas expansion is likely to support its growth in the second half of 2025. However, some analysts remained cautious, noting that the long-term popularity of Labubu dolls carries uncertainty.

FUTURE PLANS

The company plans modest store growth in China, adding no more than 10 new outlets this year, while focusing on improving performance at existing stores.

Shifted to new tax regime? Here are 5 investments you shouldn't drop

New Delhi.(Agency)

Many taxpayers shifting to the new income tax regime are in a dilemma. Should they stop investing in traditional tax-saving options now that most deductions are gone? The answer is largely no. While the new regime offers lower tax rates without exemptions, some long-standing investment tools still play an important role in protecting your money and building long-term wealth.

PPF

The Public Provident Fund remains one of the safest ways to build a retirement corpus. It still offers tax-free interest (currently 7.1% p.a.) and carries a sovereign guarantee. The 15-year lock-in might seem restrictive, but it also pushes investors to remain disciplined. If retirement planning is your goal,



continuing PPF makes sense.

NPS

Under the new regime, employee contributions no longer receive deductions. However, employer contributions (up to 14% of basic salary) continue to be deductible. The NPS also offers a low-cost, diversified investment option for

retirement.

HEALTH INSURANCE

With medical costs rising rapidly, one critical illness can wipe out years of savings. Health insurance protects you from such shocks. Though the Section 80D deduction is an added benefit, what really matters is keeping your policy active to protect your portfolio.

TERM INSURANCE

A term plan is not an investment. It is a safety net for dependents in case of the breadwinner's death. Even though Section 80C deductions don't apply in the new regime, the real purpose is to shield dependents from financial shock. Dropping it only because it no longer offers tax savings can create serious risk. Continue it until your financial goals are fully secured.

Game over for money-based online gaming industry in shock over proposed ban

If passed in Parliament, the bill will outlaw all money-based online games (irrespective of whether they involve skill or chance), ban advertisements promoting such platforms, and bar banks and financial institutions from processing related transactions.

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Union Cabinet has cleared the Promotion & Regulation of Online Gaming Bill, 2025, setting the stage for what could be the most sweeping crackdown yet on India's booming online gaming sector. If the bill is passed in Parliament, it will outlaw all money-based online games (irrespective of whether they involve skill or chance), ban advertisements promoting such

platforms, and bar banks and financial institutions from processing related transactions. Anyone offering such games could face up to three years in jail and fines, according to the draft. Market leaders like Dream11, Games24x7, Winzo, GamesKraft, 99Games, KheloFantasy, and My11Circle are now staring at an existential crisis. India's online gaming market is currently valued at \$3.7 billion and was projected to more than double to \$9.1 billion by 2029. But nearly 86% of today's revenue comes from real-money formats. Wipe that out, and the financial lifeline of the industry disappears overnight. The All India Gaming Federation (AIGF) has written to Union Home Minister Amit Shah, seeking urgent intervention on the proposed Online Gaming Bill, warning that a blanket prohibition could inflict severe damage on the sector.

In its communication, the federation stressed the need for "progressive regulation" rather than outright prohibition, highlighting the potential fallout for millions of players and the broader industry. According to the AIGF,

passing the bill in its current form could push crores of legitimate gamers toward illegal gambling networks and unregulated operators. "The bill, if



enacted, will cause serious harm and drive players into the hands of fly-by-night operators," the federation said, cautioning that a blanket ban would strike a "death knell" for a legitimate, job-creating industry. While industry insiders declined to comment officially, they said that it will do more harm than good, wiping out lakhs of jobs, drive users to illegal gambling and even hurt economic growth.

WHAT THE BILL SAYS

According to government sources, the draft legislation leaves little room for

IMPORTS SURGE

India's Russian crude imports have climbed since the invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Kpler data shows that before the war, India bought only 68,000 barrels per day. That surged to a peak of 2.15 million barrels per day in May 2023, before settling at 1.78 million barrels per day in July 2025. Russia now supplies about 36% of India's oil needs, compared with a negligible 0.2% share before the conflict. Indian state-run refiners such as Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum (BPCL), and Hindustan Petroleum (HPCL) have also been importing Russian crude, though their purchases largely meet domestic demand. By contrast, private refiners have played a bigger role in exporting fuels back to Europe and other markets. Reuters reported that IOC and BPCL have resumed buying Russia's Urals crude for September delivery after discounts widened again.

Online gaming bill: Nazara Technologies and Delta Corp shares take a hit

New Delhi.(Agency)

Shares of online gaming company Nazara Technologies and casino operator Delta Corp tanked on Wednesday as the Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the Online Gaming Bill, 2025. The bill, which proposes strict rules for money-based online games and makes online betting a punishable offence, is expected to be tabled in the Lok Sabha later today. Nazara Technologies saw its stock fall as much as 7.78% to Rs 1,308.70 in early trade before recovering



slightly. At 11:38 am, the stock was trading at Rs 1,306.00, down 6.69%. The fall came even as the company issued a clarification that it has no direct exposure to the real money gaming (RMG) segment. In filing to the exchanges, Nazara said that both revenue and Ebitda contributions from the RMG business stood at zero in the June quarter. The company explained that its only indirect exposure is through a 46.07% stake in Moonshine Technologies Private Limited, which operates PokerBaazi.

"As Nazara does not hold a majority stake or exercise control, Moonshine's revenue is not consolidated in the company's financial statements and has no impact on the company's reported revenue or Ebitda. The contribution to PAT by Moonshine as share of profit and loss by associate is negative in Q1-26," Nazara said. Meanwhile, shares of Delta Corp also reacted to the development. The stock dropped 6.47% to a low of Rs 87.24 on the BSE in morning trade. However, it recovered part of the losses and was last trading at Rs 96.90, up 4% around 11:38 am. Delta Corp shares had gained 11% on Tuesday after news of the bill's approval by the Cabinet, but investors appeared to book profits in Wednesday's session. In its latest annual report, Delta Corp said it had exited the online gaming business by selling its subsidiary Deltatech Gaming (Adda52) to Head Digital Works (HDW) for Rs 491 crore.

ambiguity. It proposes a blanket ban on all real-money gaming transactions, regardless of whether the underlying game involves skill or chance, which is a crucial departure from previous regulatory interpretations. Banks and payment gateways will be prohibited from processing any payments linked to these platforms, effectively cutting off the financial artery that sustains the business. Advertising such games will also be illegal. Players will still be able to access free-to-play or subscription-based games, where users pay a fixed fee but cannot wager during gameplay. However, anything involving money stakes will be prohibited once the law comes into effect. "The Online Gaming Bill introduces a comprehensive framework to regulate real-money gaming platforms, prohibit online betting, and penalize violations. It focuses on licensing, player safeguards, and responsible gaming," says Ranjeet Mahtani, Partner at Dhriva Advisors. "However, it does not address taxation, particularly GST, where disputes on rate and valuation remain pending before the Supreme Court."

After 'Shaky Shaky', Bigg Boss 17's

Isha Malviya

Grooves To Guru Randhawa's Qatal

Bigg Boss 17 contestant and actress Isha Malviya is making waves on social media. This time it's for a dance video set to Guru Randhawa's hit song "Qatal." Shared on Instagram, the clip quickly went viral, racking up thousands of likes and comments. In the video, Isha Malviya can be seen dancing in a stylish brown slit dress, perfectly syncing her moves to the song's catchy beats. Within just a few hours of posting, the reel had garnered over 31,000 likes.

Fans Go Gaga

The reel drew a flood of admiration. "Wow", one user commented, while another wrote, "Her dance steps." A comment read, "Sorry dance achaa nhi hai kya."

Fans also filled the section with fire and heart emojis, enjoying her performance and outfit. Isha Malviya's fans have always complimented her style and confidence. The response to this video is another example of how she perfectly understands the art of reaching out to her viewers through reels.

The Shaky Shaky Girl

Isha Malviya recently gained massive attention with her music album "Shaky Shaky," which became a viral hit on social media. The album's popularity further strengthened her online presence and reinforced her status as a trendsetter among young audiences.

Her new dance on "Qatal" proves she remains a social media favourite and shows her strong presence on Instagram trends. The catchy beats of "Qatal" combined with Isha Malviya's stylish performance made the reel popular.

Popularity Beyond Television

Since her stint on Bigg Boss 17, Isha Malviya has become a prominent digital influencer, blending glamour with creativity to carve a space for herself in both television and online entertainment. Her recent dance performance on Guru Randhawa's "Qatal" reaffirmed her status as one of the most engaging personalities in the industry, continually blurring the line between TV fame and social media stardom.



Apoorva Mukhija

Turned 24th Birthday Into A '12-Hour Dance Concert' At Tomorrowland

Birthdays are always special, and Apoorva Mukhija made her birthday unforgettable by celebrating at her favourite place in the world, Tomorrowland. The content creator kept her fans posted as she danced, laughed and lived the best time of her life at the world's most iconic music festival with her friends who joined her for the birthday trip. Throughout the clip she shared on Instagram, Apoorva was glowing with excitement. In her own words, "Hi, I'm Apoorva and I'm turning 24 in my favourite place in the entire world, Tomorrowland." But as she hilariously revealed, it wasn't all fun. After dancing for 12 hours and walking over 21 kilometers, half her group of friends were too tired to even show up for her birthday.

Apoorva Mukhija At Tomorrowland

One of her friends, Rahul, had "fallen 15 times," which left him limping through the festival grounds. Yet Apoorva wasn't one to let exhaustion ruin her day. Playfully, she even joked, "I know I'm not wasting the peak of my youth being tired," before heading for another round of music and dancing.

Apoorva's on-point storytelling in the video proved her ability to turn even the most chaotic festival moments into comedy and fans love her exactly for that. At one point, she was stuck in a traffic jam and a stranger offered her "safety," as she shared herself. Guess what? Laughing, she teased her followers, saying, "And that's how I met your father, kids. Just kidding. Life is not a movie." As the day unfolded, Apoorva and her friends explored Tomorrowland, vibing at the beautiful Library Stage and

trying to make "aesthetic videos", only to realise none of them were dancing to the same beat.

Apoorva Mukhija's Birthday Hour

But the standout moment came when the clock struck birthday hour. Apoorva and her crew rushed to the iconic main stage. Words fell short for her as she described the feeling of being surrounded by thousands of people. Her voice in the background said, "In that moment, nothing else mattered—my problems, my fears, my insecurities. It was just me, the music, and my people by my



side." Signing off, Apoorva Mukhija admitted she has had many good birthdays, but this one at Tomorrowland will always remain etched in her heart. Meanwhile, on the work front, Apoorva Mukhija was last seen in The Traitors which premiered on Amazon Prime Video.

Yellow Saree, Pointed Heels And Mumbai Rain: We Just Summed Up Shilpa Shetty's Day



Mumbai rains may bring chaos, but Shilpa Shetty turned it into a scene straight out of Bollywood. The actress was spotted stepping out of her makeup van, draped in a sunshine-yellow saree that instantly gave flashbacks of Raveena Tandon's iconic Tip Tip Barsa Paani look.

Heavy showers continue to lash Mumbai and several other regions across Maharashtra, bringing daily life to a standstill. From waterlogged streets to disrupted travel, the rains have left the city grappling with its yearly monsoon woes. Amid this, several Bollywood celebrities have raised concerns about the difficult conditions, urging people to stay indoors whenever possible. Some stars shared videos of flooded roads with playful captions, while others used their platforms to highlight the safety of commuters battling the downpour.

While many stars have been sharing their thoughts on the weather, it is Shilpa Shetty's video that has been doing rounds online.

Shilpa Shetty Channels Raveena Tandon's Tip-Tip Avatar?

Braving the downpour, Shilpa, 50, carried the six-yard with her signature grace, pairing it with a delicate matching blouse and white heels. An assistant held an umbrella over the actress, shielding her while she carefully managed her heels on the wet ground.

The actress then quickly made her way under a shade, yet not without leaving a glamorous impression. With her hair left open and makeup kept understated, the actress lit up the gloomy weather, much like Raveena did on screen decades ago.

Fans Reacts to Shilpa Shetty's Look

The comment section of the viral video flooded with love from the fans. One fan commented, "Can't believe she is 50," while another fan wrote, "Ye sirf hamari Shilpa ma'am hi kar sakti hai," followed by red hearts.

RJ Mahvash Gets Stuck In Mumbai's Heavy Rain, Shares Update: 'It's Really Scary'



RJ Mahvash shares her experience of being stuck in Mumbai's heavy rains, calling the situation "really scary" as the city faces severe weather and flooding.

Severe rains have been recorded in several parts of the country in the past few days, and the situation in Mumbai is quite critical, with the city on red alert and an advisory to stay indoors. In this, RJ Mahvash, who is rumoured to be dating ace cricketer Yuzvendra Chahal, has taken to her social media to share that she was stuck in the rain and the situation is very scary. "Please be safe Mumbaikars. Don't go out. Bhot bura phans ke aayi hu main bhi. It's really UNSAFE and scary. Stay home. Barish ruk hi nahi rahi hai 4 din se," Raj Mahvash wrote on Tuesday while sharing a picture of a flooded road with a car stuck on it.

About Mumbai Rains

Heavy rains in Mumbai have flooded many areas, stopping trains, delaying flights, and blocking road traffic. Schools and offices stayed shut. The Mithi River crossed the danger level, forcing 400 people to move out. The city recorded over 300 mm of rain in a day.

Why is RJ Mahvash in the news?

"Please be safe Mumbaikars. Don't go out. Bhot bura phans ke aayi hu main bhi. It's really UNSAFE and scary. Stay home. Barish ruk hi nahi rahi hai 4 din se."

A user commented, "Kisika pati churana?? Cheating," hinting at Yuzvendra Chahal's separation from his wife Dhanashree Verma and their rumours since then. Hitting back at the troll, Mahvash replied, "Maine churaya nahi isliye I wouldn't know but yes kisika pati churana CHEATING." People began to speculate about her relationship with Chahal after they were seen watching a Champions Trophy match together in Dubai. She was also seen cheering for him during his Indian Premier League (IPL) games.

Who is RJ Mahvash?

RJ Mahvash is an actor, radio host, film producer, and social media personality. While she has established herself well in the worlds of the internet and radio, Mahvash has also dabbled in acting, appearing in projects such as Section 108 and Yash Patnaik's miniseries.

We agree that parenting a child is a huge task - surviving nine months of pregnancy, then the pain of labor, and later chasing your child through the crawling, feeding, toilet training stages - it's a lengthy experience indeed. But all this pain and agony disappears and a coat of excitement grips you when you first hear your baby calling you 'Mamma-Dada' or when your baby takes his very first step.



Men feel worse when part 10 things all brand

Though parenting a newborn requires a large amount of effort and energy, the positive aspect of the reward you receive by watching your baby grow and develop is priceless. Today, we help each and every new parent by presenting a few tips ranging from child potty training to baby care, so that parenting becomes an (ever so slightly) easier task for you. Dr. Shilpa - Nutritionist, Diet Consultant and Founder of Nutrilife Health Management, shares some amazing facts and tips to make parenting more interesting and easy...

Potty can even take hours

Don't get into high hopes when you take your child to eliminate the waste. Some kids may surprise you by doing this mechanism in minutes. Don't expect your child to do the same; your child can even take hours to eliminate his waste. Let him take his own time, and keep cool - says Dr. Shilpa.

Elastic waists are your baby's friends

Make your child's dressing and undressing process simple and effortless. Many kids are uncomfortable with buttons and zippers, because it can be a time consuming affair and can make your baby frustrated when he wants to visit the bathroom. Hence, invest in elastic waist pants or shorts, until your child is comfortable with the buttons and



swaps.

Don't go overboard with technology

You may be geeky when it comes to new technologies, but it can scare your child quite a bit. When you take your child to the bathroom, and there is an automated flusher installed, the loud noise may petrify your child. The fear can grip so deeply that he may never use the bathroom alone - adds Dr. Shilpa.

More time with your child and less work

If you want to get the required attention from your child then you too must dedicate time for your child. Focus on the things that make your baby happy. When you are with your baby, avoid multitasking as this can spoil your relationship with your baby.

You might have to change a whole lot of bed sheets...

Some kids take much longer to master the technique of staying dry overnight. In case your child wakes up wet, then don't yell at him, it is completely normal. The reason for him to wake up wet could be

that he is in deep sleep. Just keep an extra set of bed sheet to let him sleep peacefully.

You will make new friends

You might have an endless list of good pals, but those friends may just end up being a peripheral group now. You don't choose your friends now, your child chooses friends for you. Nowadays, you will end up hanging with moms and dads of those children that your child met at the playground or playmates from school.

Your living room will be messy

Slowly when your baby grows up, you will jump with joy to see your baby rolling, crawling and then finally walking. But that peace of moment

can turn into a nightmare when your baby becomes mobile.

You will see your living room turn into a huge mess, when your child will suddenly turn into a mischievous monster. Suddenly you will see your closet empty and all the clothes on the floor, and whatever is within his reach will find its way to the floor and odd corners of the room.

Keep calm, and don't forget to keep hazardous objects beyond your baby's reach.

Your child may throw more tantrums than a teenage girl...

Every parent shares stories of their kid's monster tantrums with friends. Dr. Shilpa says, 'Indeed it is a toddler's

job to throw tantrums, but as a parent it is your job to set boundaries for your child with firm loving and caring disciplines.'

Your maternity leave will be tougher than the toughest work days

You may plan your maternity leave by doing all last minute tasks at work and then feel like your vacation has just started on the last day before maternity leave begins. But you're in for a surprise. Your maternity leave is an incredible time to bond with your baby but it can be a little gruesome as well.

You might just end up without showering up till 4 pm, completely entrenched in your baby's daily

cycles of breastfeeding, changing nappies, diapers etc. But before you resume work you won't feel like going anywhere without your baby, because of the incompleteness without him.

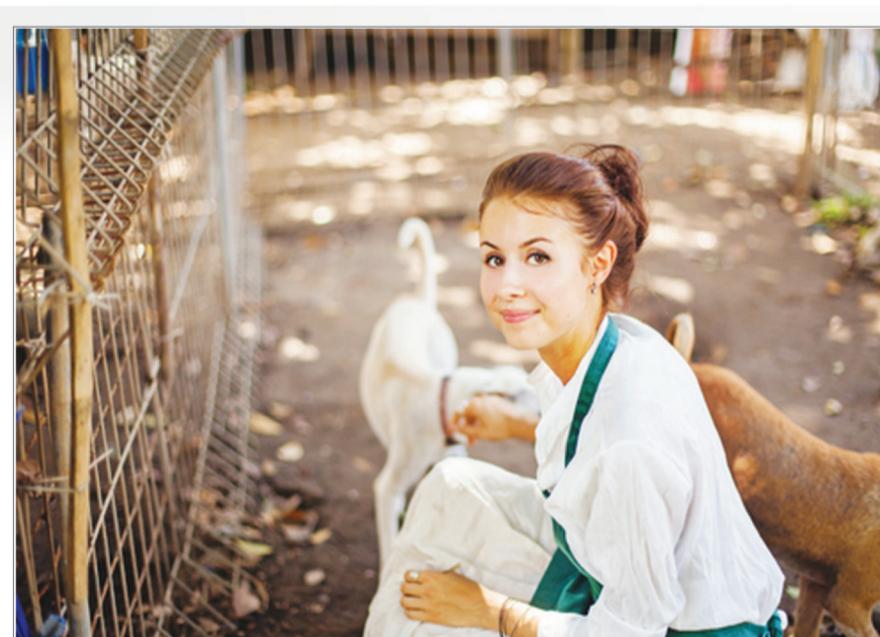
When you are with your baby, everything turns out to be sweet

There can be incredible sweet moments with your baby, even if you've just yelled at him. These moments are very special for each and every parent, who wishes to keep those memories alive forever. After a serious fight with your baby, your baby can make your day just by coming close to you, kissing your nose and gently whispering to you, 'I Love You'.

Pets bust stress and make you humane

Not just adults, children can benefit immensely from a pet too. Dr Jyotika Chibber, who conducts healing sessions for patients, often with the help of a pet says, "Pets give children a companion that needs and seeks attention at times, but gives back loads of love. Children also feel a sense of security with a dog or pet at home. When parents are out at work, children tend to play and spend time with pets. This keeps them engaged and active. A child also learns to fall into a routine because the pet can teach them that effortlessly."

Studies have shown that pet therapy can help children who suffer from attention deficit disorder (ADD) enabling them to focus on a pet, which in turn helps them learn to concentrate. Radhika says that therapy pets (animals trained to extend therapeutic touch) can turn out to be an antidote to depression and help patients at healthcare centres. Pets also provide social



interaction. In a healthcare facility, people come out of their rooms to socialise with the animals and end up knowing each other better.

Renowned veterinarian, Dr Schoen, and an author of a book on animal healing was quoted in a report which said that love for pets can literally save lives and their love for humans can be a transforming experience. According to DR Schoen, 'in order to bond with animals, we need to step outside ourselves and learn to communicate on their terms.'

Agreeing with Dr Schoen's words, Suryaveer Bhullar, a pet lover says,

sensitive to energies and accordingly warn us of the dangers. There have been cases reported where pets have sacrificed their lives to save their owners. However, when it comes to pet care, it is better to take veterinary precautions."

Actress Kashmira Shah who has a pet Pomeranian at home says, "Pets are a source of expectation, hope and communication. Looking forward to a social call or getting home after time away gives that spark of anticipation to me. I come alive with my pet." Since many Mumbaiites find it difficult to leave early from their workplaces and tend to spend little time at home, the desire to keep a pet remains unanswered. Dr Jyotika and Radhika tip a way out, "Adopt a stray dog or cat, feed a roti or bread to him daily. You do not need to move him to your house but pay attention to his health and you will be amazed at the way he loves you by wagging his tail and waiting for you when you return late at night from work. Unconditional love from a pet is a therapy on its own. All one needs to do is indulge in it."



into acute depression. By walking the dog, feeding and bathing her pet, she felt a sense of reassurance. "Animals allow humans to focus, even for a short period of time, on something other than themselves. This distraction tends to help the pet owners in relaxation," cued

"Everyone has the need to 'touch'. Many humans are uncomfortable hugging or touching people who are close to them. With a pet, this habit is easy to break making it easier to express emotions. The nonverbal connection is invaluable in the healing process."

Pancham Hariharan, a college student and a keen pet lover finds her pet dog extremely instinctive. She says, "Every time a stranger is moving towards me in a crowded area, my dog barks out a sort of a warning. This is enough to make the person move away. I feel safe with my pet around." Dr Jyotika agrees. "Pets can definitely foresee troubles being