

## Bhagwant Mann Throws Open Challenge to Centre: "Punjab Will Never Bow Down"

The Sikh Times  
Simmi Kaur Babbar

Chandigarh, August 24, 2025 – In a fiery and defiant statement, Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Bhagwant Mann has thrown a direct challenge to the Central Government, declaring that Punjab will "never bow down at any cost" before New Delhi's policies.

Speaking in an aggressive tone against what he termed as "anti-Punjab moves" by the Union Government, Mr. Mann accused the Centre of deliberately targeting Punjab and attempting to weaken the rights of its people. The Chief Minister strongly condemned the Centre's reported move to cut nearly eight lakh ration cards in Punjab, calling it an attack on the poor and marginalized sections of society. "The Centre is running its

scissors over eight lakh ration cards in Punjab. I will not allow even a single ration card to be cancelled. Not one card will be scrapped as long as I am the Chief Minister," Mann thundered, sending a clear and uncompromising message.

He reiterated that ration cards are a lifeline for lakhs of poor families and any attempt to withdraw them will be resisted tooth and nail. Mr. Mann declared that Punjab's self-respect and dignity are non-negotiable. Punjab will never kneel before the Centre. No matter what the price, we will not bend.

We will stand strong with the people of Punjab, he said, stressing that his government will act as a shield for the poor and oppressed against arbitrary decisions. The Chief Minister minced no words in labeling the Central Government as "Punjab-virodi" (anti-Punjab). "The Centre's policies

are discriminatory. They are continuously conspiring against Punjab. But I want to assure Punjabis that I will never compromise with the rights of our people," Mann added, hinting at a wider struggle between the State and the Centre over federal rights. This is not the first time

Bhagwant Mann has raised his voice against the Centre. In the past, he has repeatedly spoken out on issues ranging from delayed GST compensation to Punjab's share of river waters, from agricultural concerns to federal autonomy. Each time, he has framed Punjab's struggle as one of justice, dignity, and rights.

Earlier this year, Mr. Mann publicly challenged the Centre over the withholding of MGNREGA funds, vowing that Punjab would not be treated as a "step-child." He has consistently defended Punjab's farmers, assuring them that his

government stands firm against policies that could harm agriculture. He has also pressed for fair treatment of Punjab in national development policies, accusing the Centre of sidelining the state despite its contribution to the nation's food security.

By making this bold statement, Bhagwant Mann has once again positioned himself as the defender of Punjab's rights in the national arena. His message was loud and clear – Punjab will not tolerate discrimination, and his government will not allow the Centre to deprive its citizens of their fundamental entitlements. The Chief Minister's fiery words are expected to trigger a fresh political storm between the Aam Aadmi Party-led Punjab Government and the Bharatiya Janata Party-led Centre, further sharpening the Centre-State confrontation.



## 'Top Court's Order': INDIA Bloc's Veep Nominee On Amit Shah's 'Supporting' Maoist Charge

Sudershan Reddy, along with Justice S S Nijjar, was part of a Supreme Court bench that had in July 2011 ordered the disbanding of Salwa Judum.

Agency New Delhi.

A day after Home Minister Amit Shah attacked him over the Salwa Judum judgement and accused him of "supporting" Naxalism, Opposition vice presidential candidate B Sudershan Reddy on Saturday said he did not wish to join issues, asserting that the verdict was not his but that of the Supreme Court. Mr Reddy, along with Justice S S Nijjar, was part of a top court bench that had in July 2011 ordered the disbanding of Salwa Judum, ruling that using tribal youths as Special Police Officers in the fight against Maoist insurgents was illegal and unconstitutional. Citing the judgment, Home Minister Shah accused the former judge of the Supreme

Court of 'supporting' Naxalism and said that had it not been there, Left Wing extremism would have ended by 2020.

Mr Reddy said that Mr Shah would not have made the remarks had he read the complete judgement.

"I do not wish to join an issue directly with the Honourable Home Minister of India, whose constitutional duty and obligation is to protect the life, liberty and property of every citizen, irrespective of ideological differences. Secondly, I have authored the judgement. The judgement is not mine, the judgement is of the Supreme Court," he told PTI in an interview. Mr Reddy said there was another judge sitting

with him on the bench and repeated attempts to get it "overruled" did not fructify. "On merits of the judgement, I would not speak because I am trained by my peers that one should not speak about the greatness of one's own judgement. It is for the people to judge. It is not my personal document. I wish the Honourable Home Minister

could have himself read the whole judgement instead of getting briefed by, I do not know... he would not have that much time to read the judgement which runs into about 40 pages. If he would have read the judgement, perhaps he would not have made that comment. That's all I say and leave it there," Mr Reddy said.

The Opposition's vice presidential candidate said he does not want to disturb the decorum of the debate by further commenting on the matter. "There must be decency in the debate," he said. Speaking in Kerala on Friday, Mr Shah said, "Sudershan Reddy is the person who helped Naxalism. He gave Salwa Judum judgment.



**India-Pakistan match non-issue, Opposition should raise important matters: Ajit Pawar**

**The Deputy Chief Minister also said there was no substance in the Opposition's allegations of vote theft.**

PUNE. (Agency)

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar has hit out at the Opposition leaders raising "non-issues" like an India-Pakistan cricket match, instead of talking about matters such as crop losses due to heavy rains or traffic congestion.

He was reacting to Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut's criticism of the Union government's decision to allow the Indian team to play with Pakistan in the Asia Cup against the backdrop of the terror attack in Pahalgam. "A section of people feel that India should not have any



ties with our rivals like Pakistan which is responsible for terrorist activities in our nation.

There is another group which watches these matches enthusiastically. As far as the Opposition is concerned, it needs to raise some important issues," Pawar said on Saturday. "Today there are some vital issues like heavy rainfall, crop damage and traffic congestion.

However, members from the Opposition chose to speak on non-issues such as the India-Pakistan match," he added.

Pawar also said there was no substance in the Opposition's allegations of vote theft. "Some people shared the data with the Opposition and later admitted that it was wrong information. The Opposition is trying to set a fake narrative but it will not succeed," he said.

## 'Didn't think will fly to space': Astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla at IAF event

New Delhi. (Agency)

Astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla Sunday said he grew up as a "shy and reserved" person and while young, he never dreamt of flying to space, news agency PTI reported. Speaking at an Indian Air Force (IAF) event at Subroto Park in Delhi, Shukla said he used to listen to stories of Rakesh Sharma's historic spaceflight, however, the dream to travel to space did not take root early in his life. "I grew up as a shy and reserved person. We used to hear stories of the spaceflight of Rakesh Sharma in our childhood days," he said at the event which comes after the successful Axiom-4 mission, making Shukla the first Indian to travel to the International

Space Station (ISS).

The Group Captain of the Axiom-4 mission, Shukla, speaking to reporters later, called the mission to be a beginning, not an end. "I think the recipe is ready and we just need to execute our plans. It's a great time for India's space exploration. The Axiom mission was not an end but a beginning. I will work with ISRO to realise our dream..." he said. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh was also present at the venue to felicitate the

Addressing the gathering, Singh said the



Gaganyaan mission symbolises as "new chapter" in the journey of Atmanirbhar Bharat. Group Captain Prasanth Balakrishnan Nair, Group Captain Ajit Krishnan, Group Captain

Angad Pratap, and Wing Commander Shubhanshu Shukla are the four chosen Gaganyaans, who will lead India's mission. Formally announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2018, the Gaganyaan mission aims to send a three-member crewed flight into the 400 km-orbit for a three-day mission in 2027.

**'Lessons learnt will help in executing India's missions'**

Shukla thanked Singh for the felicitation ceremony. "Raksha Mantri felicitated me and I think this mission is a big achievement for our country and it happened at the right time," he told the reporters.

## Sikh Dignity Insulted: Kisan Leader Baldev Singh Sirsa Stopped at Delhi Metro for Wearing Kirpan

The Sikh Times  
Sourabh Sharma

New Delhi, August 24 – In a shocking incident yesterday, respected Kisan leader Sardar Baldev Singh Sirsa was forcibly stopped at a Delhi Metro station near Gurdwara Bangla Sahib because he was wearing his kirpan, a mandatory article of Sikh faith. Security personnel not only restrained him but also asked him to remove his kirpan, causing deep humiliation. Sardar Sirsa, known for his leadership in farmers' movements and his respected role within the Sikh Qaum, strongly resisted this demand. He refused to remove the kirpan and, standing at the Metro premises, he addressed the public through a live video, denouncing

the discrimination and calling it an attack on the religious freedom of Sikhs. Sardar Gurcharan Singh Babbar, President of the All India Sikh Conference (Babbar), issued a powerful statement condemning the incident. He declared, "This is not Aurangzeb's rule, not Nadir Shah's rule, not Ahmad Shah Abdali's rule, not Zakaria Khan's rule, not Massa Ranghara's rule, and not even Wazir Khan's rule. This is independent India – and Sikhs cannot be insulted in their own country." He further warned that in recent times there has been a deliberate conspiracy to humiliate Sikhs across India. Babbar said that such repeated insults must be stopped immediately, otherwise Sikhs in Punjab, across India, and worldwide will not remain silent. The All India Sikh Conference has



appealed directly to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to take personal action in this matter, stressing that Sikh religious freedom must be protected without compromise. This is not an

isolated case. Just recently, a Sikh girl at Purnima University, Jaipur, was pressured to remove her kirpan and kara, causing widespread anger. Similarly, other incidents in different parts of the country have raised serious questions about the safety of Sikh identity and religious rights in India. Babbar pointed out that this series of events appears to be part of a systematic attempt to target Sikh faith and dignity. All India Sikh Conference has also appealed to the Jathedar of Shri Akal Takht Sahib, the President of Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), Amritsar, and the President of Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee (DSGMC) to take immediate, serious note of this issue.

**Continued news page 2**

## Front continued news

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According to Babbar, this is not just about one individual. Sardar Baldev Singh Sirsa is a symbol of Sikh Quam and the farmers' struggle. An insult to him is an insult to the entire Sikh nation. This cannot be tolerated. The Sikh community is now looking to the Prime Minister of India and the highest Sikh religious institutions to respond with urgency. The incident has already triggered outrage and raised fresh concerns over the erosion of Sikh religious freedoms. The All India Sikh Conference has made it clear "Stop the attacks on Sikh dignity now – or face a united response from the entire Sikh Quam."

## News box

## Man dies by suicide in Gurgaon, four months after he lost Rs 4L in online gaming

## GHAZIABAD (Agency)

A 39-year-old man allegedly died by suicide after losing his life's savings in online gaming. Bhudev Mahto, who had been working with a textile company in Manesar for the past 15 years, succumbed to depression after losing Rs 4 lakh through March-April. He bottled up the stress and did not share it with anyone in his family, which only compounded his depression. Originally from Butidih village in Purulia district of Bengal, Bhudev had been living in a rented house in Manesar with his wife Probhati. Both were employed in separate textile units, while their two sons – aged 13 and 10 – live with their grandparents in their village.

## Have Sunday plans? Wait, there's a rain alert in Gurgaon

## Gurgaon (Agency)

Parts of the city experienced light rain on Saturday, providing a brief respite from humid conditions. Despite a clear start to the day, clouds gathered by noon. The maximum temperature was recorded at 31.8 degrees Celsius, down from 32.3 degrees a day earlier. The minimum settled at 27 degrees, higher than Friday's 24.9 degrees. Although an orange alert was in place for the city on Saturday, only light rain was seen. India Meteorological Department (IMD) recorded 1.5mm of rainfall till 5.30pm. However, IMD has continued with a yellow alert for Sunday and Tuesday, with a possibility of heavy showers at isolated places. According to the weather department, the monsoon trough continues to run close to its normal position. An upper air cyclonic circulation lies over central parts of north Madhya Pradesh and adjoining south Uttar Pradesh, extending up to middle tropospheric levels with a southwestward tilt. Another circulation persists over Punjab, while one more is positioned over northeast Assam in the lower tropospheric levels. These conditions, IMD said, are likely to trigger widespread to fairly widespread rainfall across the state over the next three to four days. "Most places can expect light to moderate showers accompanied by thunderstorms, while heavy rain is possible at isolated locations. Rainfall activity is expected to ease thereafter," an IMD official said. So far this month, the city received 135.5mm of rainfall against the normal of 144.5mm, having a deficit of 6%. Overall, the city recorded 413mm – an excess of 13% compared to 367mm this season since June.

## After SC rap, Greater Noida revives 194 ponds 87 more to go

## Noida (Agency)

The Greater Noida Authority has launched a drive to revive ponds across the region. Officials said 194 of 281 ponds have already been cleaned with support from locals and environmental activists. Earlier this month, the Supreme Court directed the district magistrate of Gautam Budh Nagar and the Greater Noida CEO to ensure the removal of all encroachments from pond catchment areas and prohibited construction there. The order was passed as the judges considered contempt proceedings against the authorities for failing to implement the SC's Nov 2019 judgement, in which the apex court had cancelled the allotment of all water bodies to private parties in Saini village in Dadri and ordered Greater Noida to remove all constructions in the pond's catchment area. The authority has cleaned and restored two ponds in Dabra and Jaitpur villages in collaboration with Pondman Ramveer Tanwar and his team. It has also planted saplings of peepal, neem, banyan, lemon, and other species around these ponds to create a green belt. Additional CEO Shrilakshmi VS said that Greater Noida has 281 ponds out of which 194 have been cleaned so far. "The remaining ponds will be restored in the coming months. Encroachments on some ponds will be removed with police assistance before their revival," she said. She added that clean ponds not only help maintain groundwater levels and support aquatic life but also add to the beauty of villages. "We appeal to NGOs and residents to join hands in restoring ponds," she added. GB Nagar is divided into three tehsils – Sadar, Jaiwar, and Dadri – and it has 1018 ponds. A petition is also in the National Green Tribunal (Abhishek Kusum Gupta Vs State of UP & Others) over the issue. Noida administration filed a compliance report in NGT in March 2025 in the context of this petition, stating that a thorough survey identified 245 ponds within Sadar. Of these, 48 ponds (approximately 20%) are encroached upon through unauthorized activities.

# ED searches in Delhi and Gurgaon lift veil off cyber gang that cheated US citizens of Rs 125 crore

## GHAZIABAD (Agency)

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) conducted raids at seven locations in Gurgaon and Delhi, uncovering a cyber scam that cheated US nationals of over \$15 million (Rs 125 crore). The ED launched its probe based on an FIR filed by the CBI, under various sections of the IPC, 1860 and the Information Technology Act, 2000. The FIR alleged that a group of accused had conspired to operate illegal call centres from Delhi and adjoining areas between November 2022 and April 2024, posing as tech support executives to defraud foreign nationals.

According to the ED, three accused persons – Arjun Gulati, Divyansh Goel, and Abhinav Kalra – were actively running call centers in Noida and Gurgaon.

Masquerading as tech support providers, the scammers would approach most US nationals through fraudulent phone calls and pop-up alerts. They allegedly tricked victims into granting remote access to



their systems and stole sensitive financial data, and siphoned off funds. The money passed through a maze of more than 200 bank accounts. It was routed abroad and later channelled back to India. Searches

led to the recovery of incriminating documents, digital evidence, and the recording of statements from several individuals linked to the racket. The agency froze 30 bank accounts associated

with the accused. Additionally, eight luxury cars, high-end watches, and other valuables were seized. Officials said the accused had been leading lavish lifestyles, residing in posh houses and acquiring assets worth over Rs 100 crore from the proceeds of crime.

An ED spokesperson confirmed that further investigation is underway to identify additional beneficiaries, trace foreign money trails, and dismantle the larger network. "The crackdown is part of our continued efforts to curb cyber-enabled financial crimes and ensure that proceeds of crime are confiscated," the official added. The operation has shed light on the modus operandi of cyber fraudsters who exploit cross-border vulnerabilities in financial systems to target unsuspecting foreign citizens. By posing as technical support providers, the scammers not only drained personal bank accounts but also masked their trail through complex banking networks.

## Lights, tracks & sidewalks: Gurgaon to get a new 'model road' soon

## Gurgaon (Agency)

MCG is set to develop a 1.5km "model road" from Sai Chowk to Shriram Chowk in New Palam Vihar at an estimated cost of Rs 1.5 crore. The stretch will feature sidewalks, cycle tracks, streetlights, greenery, and benches for seating. Officials said they had started the process of appointing agencies for the project, which is part of the civic body's larger plan to develop 100km of city roads.

MCG executive engineer Sundar Sheoran confirmed that the tender process has been initiated for the road.

"We have initiated the tender process, which will be completed in one month. After we issue a work order to an agency, the stretch will be completed in five months," he said. The road is currently in a dilapidated state. After numerous complaints from residents about its poor condition and encroachments, the corporation is now rebuilding it. It has been chosen to be developed into a "model road" as a pilot project. If this trial is successful, the civic body plans to upgrade other roads across the city in a similar manner.

"This road is in a severely damaged condition, and the situation becomes even worse during the rains when the risk of accidents is extremely high," said Sandeep Kumar, a commuter. "The stretch is full of large craters. The authorities should waste no time in fixing it," he added. Sunil Yadav, a resident of New Palam Vihar, echoed Kumar's sentiments and said that MCG should prioritise repairing and reconstructing all the damaged roads across the city before investing in model roads. "We don't have unrealistic expectations from the corporation—if they simply reconstruct the road using good-quality material that won't wash away after the first rainfall, that would be satisfactory. Of course, if they wish to transform it into a model road, that would be a welcome step," said Yadav.

As per the proposal, a separate bicycle track will be made for the convenience of cyclists using this road. Benches will be installed at various locations for the comfort of pedestrians.



investigation. Subsequently, Tushar was arrested on June 12, Krishna on June 15, Dinesh on June 18, and Pankaj and Sushil on July 7 in Gurgaon. Investigations revealed that Dinesh worked as a property dealer while the others were unemployed. Krishna posed as Brahmprakash, the landowner. Tushar and Dinesh prepared fake ID documents for the landowner and

opened a fake bank account in his name in Maharashtra.

Then, they hired a lawyer to file a compensation claim in court and fraudulently obtained a total of Rs 4.97 crore with an interest amount of Rs 15.19 lakh, which was released to their bogus bank account and subsequently distributed among the accused. "So far, the police have recovered a total of Rs 69.65 lakh in cash, three mobile phones, one Aadhaar card, two Election Commission letters, and one car from the accused," said a police spokesperson. They have been remanded to judicial custody as per the court's orders, and the investigation is ongoing, he added.

Investigations have revealed that all the accused had previous criminal records. Tushar had a case under the POCSO Act in Delhi, Dinesh had forgery cases in Delhi and Rajasthan, Pankaj had three forgery cases in Gurgaon, and Sushil had a forgery case in Gurgaon.

## Online love turns tragic in Gurgaon: She met him on Instagram and got married; 8 months later, he killed her

## Gurgaon (Agency)

A 34-year-old woman from Uttarakhand, who met her husband on Instagram and married him in Dec last year, was allegedly murdered by him just eight months later. The couple's relationship, police said, was marked by frequent arguments and discord over trivial matters. The husband, who worked with a private company in the city, was arrested on Saturday. Police said he had admitted to having committed the murder. Originally from Almora district, Nisha connected with Rajendra (26), who was from the same district, on Instagram sometime in the middle of last year. Their online courtship blossomed into marriage a few months later in Dec. On Friday morning, the couple's landlord dialled the Manesar police station and informed cops about the murder at his house in Naharpur village.

A team led by inspector Satendra reached the spot, and found Nisha dead in her

room, with a scarf tied around her neck and a deep wound on the head. Rajendra was arrested after their landlord told police his tenant had confessed to him that he had killed Nisha in a fit of rage. During

questioning, Rajendra – who studied till Class 12 in his village in Almora's Kapli Khet – told police he had met Nisha on Instagram and married her in Dec after she claimed to have no family. But ties between them became testy soon. The

couple's relationship was fraught with frequent arguments over trivial matters, with Nisha often threatening to leave or divorce Rajendra. On Thursday, a heated argument escalated when Nisha brandished tongs. Rajendra struck her with a rolling pin, causing her to bleed.

In a futile attempt to stop the bleeding, Rajendra tied a scarf around her head, inadvertently strangling her in anger and causing her death. After the incident, Rajendra visited his brother's room and even went to work – as if nothing had happened. The following day, he informed his landlord about the murder. "Based on a complaint filed by Nisha's uncle Dhirendra, a case was registered for murder and other relevant charges. Rajendra was taken into custody and is being questioned as part of investigation," said a police spokesperson.



Rajendra – who studied till Class 12 in his village in Almora's Kapli Khet – told police he had met Nisha on Instagram and married her in Dec after she claimed to have no family. But ties between them became testy soon. The

## Why your off-peak rides are choke near NCR schools

## Noida (Agency)

Traffic is leanest in the afternoon, but on NCR roads, the likelihood of getting caught in a jam is almost as high between 1pm and 3pm as it would be at 9am or 10am. Primary triggers for these jams are school exits, where buses line up to pick up students. Without adequate holding areas that have the capacity to accommodate all their buses within campuses, most schools summon these vehicles to wait on the roadside and reach the gate just before classes break for the day. What follows is predictable – congestion, honking and frayed tempers. Noida has nearly 1,950 buses, serving about 100 schools. With each school engaging anywhere between 50 and 80 vehicles, the strain is visible on roads because all these buses are plying at the same time. It's not just buses. Private vehicles hired by parents, autos, e-rickshaws, etc all park at the school gates to pick up students, creating major bottlenecks. Outside Delhi Public School, Noida, buses can be seen parked along the roadside near the Super Speciality Paediatric Hospital. The buses occupy a lane from morning until afternoon, forcing motorists from Golf Course Road to squeeze into a single carriageway. As the final bell rings, the buses move into the campus to pick up students, in the process slowing down traffic in the area further. DPS principal Kamini Bhasin said the school does have a holding area on its campus. "The school buses drop off and



pick up students inside the campus," she told TOI. "It appears some vendors park their vehicles outside on the road when they should use the designated parking. Police should act against unauthorised parking." But vendors point the finger back at the management. "The school does not have enough space to park all the buses, and hence some are on the roadside," said Satish Kumar, manager of travel company Mannco that provides school buses to the school. The story repeats itself elsewhere. Outside Cambridge School in Sector 27, buses are routinely parked in multiple rows along Maharaja Agrasen Marg, the road that links Atta Market and Sector 18 with sectors 60, 62 and Greater Noida West. During dispersal hours, only a narrow strip remains for commuters to squeeze

through. Suraj Kumar, a supervisor of Skyline Motors, which provides buses to the school, claimed the Cambridge management has asked them to park the buses outside. "There is no suitable parking space inside the school. So, we park vehicles on the roadside. Once classes are over, we drop off students and then park the buses in Transport Nagar in Sector 67," he said.

The result is a series of afternoon choke points. At Sector 51, resident Sanjeev Kumar says his neighbourhood clogs up every day. "There are two schools here, and both park their buses outside the campus along the sector's internal roads from morning to afternoon. This has been happening for years, but no one acts. The buses are parked, the road is blocked, and we keep waiting in jams," he said. Snarls

are particularly painful for those working in Film City where roads are jammed daily as buses occupy most of the road near Apeejay School for nearly four hours until classes end.

The school management said the buses are not directly under its control. An official of Prabhat Tour and Travels, which operates some of these buses, told TOI, "Three-four of our buses have been engaged by parents to ferry students to Apeejay School.

These buses are parked outside as the school does not allow us to park inside." Gaurav Kumar, a corporate executive, said buses line up on both sides and choke the road in Sector 30. "One has to spend 15 minutes just covering a few hundred metres.

But it is not just about snarls. Children climb into buses while cars try to squeeze past. This is happening for years, but no one acts. The buses are parked, the road is blocked, and we keep waiting in jams," he said.

## THE SIKH TIMES

Edited, Printed, Published  
Owned by Simmi Babbar  
N-31, Dr. Mukherjee Nagar  
Delhi-110099

Printed at Qaumi Patrika Printing  
Press, A4/A144, Tronica City  
(Loni), Ghaziabad (Uttar Pradesh)

Corporate Office:  
5, Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg,  
Press Area, ITO, New Delhi

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RNI No. DELENG/2008/25465

# Shri Sunil Shastri, has contended that his father died in mysterious conditions as he could not have suffered heart attack

## The Sikh Times

New Delhi, 20 August: The son of Late Prime Minister, Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri, Shri Sunil Shastri, has contended that his father died in mysterious conditions as he could not have suffered heart attack, contrary to the popular official version, but rather was 'eliminated'. He spoke about this aspect while delivering his speech during the book release function held in Delhi on the work, "Subhas Chandra Bose Formosa Plane Crash 1945 Investigation". Shri Sunil Shastri added that while talking to him and his family from Tashkent over phone, Lal Bahadur Shastri ji had stated that after his return to India, he would be revealing some startling facts that would change entire scenario back here. He remarked that Shastri ji had put condition before the then Russian Prime Minister, Shri Kosigin, that he would sign the Pact only when he will meet Netaji. This was the reason behind the publication of related photos on the subject. Shri Sunil Shastri ji requested the author of the book, Shri Deepak Kumar, to investigate on this topic also. The function was presided by Lieutenant General Vishnu Kant Chaturvedi

(Retd.). He commented that the details given in the book are very authentic. He praised the courage of the author and said that when the latter had gone to Russia, an atmosphere of fear prevailed although the KGB had been disbanded. He extolled the chronology of events given in the book adding that the book holds significant value for the investigation agencies. The chief guest of the function, Lieutenant Colonel Manavendra Singh, said that other than the death of Netaji, three other incidents in mysterious conditions are vitally concerned with our national security. In this connection, he mentioned the three cases as the death of Dr. Homi Jehangir Bhabha in plane crash in 1966 on his way to Vienna, heart attack of Dr. Vikram Sarabhai in 1971 and disappearance of AN-32 Helicopter in 1986 while coming from Kiev. He referred the book to be a repository of informative

facts. The Editor of the periodical, Organiser, Shri Prafulla Ketkar, compared

an Expert in Russian political affairs, considered the book more to be a research work rather than being a mere diary of events. The author of the book, Shri Deepak Kumar, brought some new facts about Netaji. According to him, Netaji was alive in 1966. To buttress his claim, he showed some papers of the Russian Prime Minister Office as per which Netaji was detained in Saransk Prison of the Central Volga Region. The publisher of the book who also happens to be the CEO of Prabhat Prakashan, Shri Pawan Aggarwal, managed the stage (march sanchalan kiya) and gave a vote of thanks (dhanyawad gyanpan) to all the participants in the end. The Forward of the book has been written by Shri Rajeev Kumar, Additional Secretary (Retd.), who has been associated with the prestigious R&AW. The book has 416 pages and carries a price tag of Rs. 1200 and is written in English language only. The function ended with the national anthem. Sandeep K. Jha.

## Students protest increase in curbs, barricading at Ambedkar university

### The Sikh Times

New Delhi: Over 70 students on Thursday gathered in front of the main gate of Dr BR Ambedkar University (AUD) to protest the "increase in restrictions and the barricading of the campus". The protest was triggered by a case of sexual harassment that occurred in broad daylight on August 5 on the Madrasa road — deemed very unsafe by area residents. "Instead of addressing the genuine demands of students, the administration responded by erecting even more barricades and deploying additional guards, shutting down the campus fur-

ther and curtailing students' movement," the All India Students' Association (AISA) said. During the protest, AISA councillors addressed the crowd, with one stating: "The administration, under the garb of security, has systematically restricted democratic spaces. The so-called 'security measures' have only served to shield the administration from accountability while isolating students from their own campus. Shockingly, a notice has been pasted on the main gate of the AUD, restricting student entry — a move reminiscent of colo-

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, VADAJANNA LALITKUMAR ARJANBHAI S/O ARJANBHAI MOHANBHAI VADAJANBHAI R/O 21/201, FLOOR/SHUBHAM DDA FLAT/OPP/KV SCHOOL, SECTOR-13/POCKET-4, DWARKA, DIST-SOUTH WEST DELHI, DELHI-110078, have changed the name of my minor daughter PRUTHVI aged 14 years and she shall hereafter be known as PRUTHVI VADAJANBHAI.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, BINIT KUMAR S/O BANARASI PRASAD R/O FLAT NO-B-1003, GAURI GANESH APARTMENT, PLOT NO-8/CT-DWARKA SECTOR-3, P.O-N.S.T. DWARKA, DIST-SOUTH WEST DELHI, DELHI-110078, have changed the name of my minor son SIDDHARTH aged 8 years and he shall hereafter be known as SIDHARTH CHOURASHIYA.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, NARENDR KU JUGAL R/O VILAGE POST BANIPUR PO BAWALI REWARI-123501, HARYANA, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO NARENDR KUMAR FOR ALL PURPOSE

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, ANUP KUMAR MEENA S/O NATHU RAM MEENA R/O FLAT NO-256, SECTOR-13, POCKET-1A, ROSEWOOD APARTMENT, N.S.T. DWARKA, SOUTH WEST DELHI, DELHI-110078, have changed the name of my minor son SIDDHARTH aged 8 years and he shall hereafter be known as SIDHARTH CHOURASHIYA.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, RAHEESA alias RAHISA W/O MEEMU R/O A-214, Phase-2, Madanpur Khadar J.J. Colony, Santa Vihar, South Delhi, Delhi-110076, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as RAHEESA.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, BHAVANI PRASHAD S/O GOPAL R/O G-284, Shaheed Nagar VTC, Chikampur, PO Chikampur, Distt. Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh-201006, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as DEEPAK.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, Hitherto known as VEENU CHAUDHARY alias Km Binu Chaudhary D/O Satya narayan chaudhary W/O Ganga Prasad R/O 203, DLF Phase IV, Galleria DLF-IV, Gurgaon Haryana-122009, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as VEENU CHAUDHARY.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, ALKA LATHA KUMARI SPOUSE OF NOGS R-183777 F. RAKH-1/1, NAME-RAJESH KUMAR UNIT NO-1 NAME-RAJESH KUMAR HOD DBGR NARAYANA RING ROAD DELHI CANTT DELHI 110010 R/O VILL. SANGAWASIN- 2 PO BERTHIN TEH JHANDUTA DISTT BILASPUR STATE HIMACHAL PRADESH PIN-174029, have changed my name from ALKA LATHA KUMARI TO ALKA KUMARI for all future purposes. Vide affidavit dated 22/08/2025 before Sub Divisional Magistrate Delhi.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, POOJA is legally wedded spouse of No. 2808945M Rank-NK NAME- SHETE TUSHAR ASHOK, presently resident AT-JUNI MARATHABHAI BUS STOP POST-BHONGVALI, BHONGVALI DIST-PUNESTATE-MAHARASHTRA PIN-412205, have changed my name from POOJA TO POOJA TUSHAR SHETE for all future purposes. Vide affidavit dated 11.08.2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, ASHOK is legally father of No. 2808945M Rank-NK NAME- SHETE TUSHAR ASHOK, presently resident AT-PBHONGVALI, BHONGVALI DIST- PUNE, STATE MAHARASHTRA PIN-412205, have changed my name from ASHOK TO ASHOK JAGANNATH SHETE for all future purposes. Vide affidavit dated 11.08.2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, NO. 1571468 R/O KARH-1 NAME-THANGAM ROMESH SINGH residing at LAMDING KHUMANTHEM LEIKAI, WANGJING THOUBLA, MANIPUR-795148, have changed my mother name from THANGAM KUMARI DEVI TO THANGAM ONGBI KUMARI DEVI for all future purposes vide affidavit dated 23/08/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, NO. 1571468 R/O KARH-1 NAME-THANGAM ROMESH SINGH residing at LAMDING KHUMANTHEM LEIKAI, WANGJING THOUBLA, MANIPUR-795148, have changed my mother name from THANGAM KUMARI DEVI TO THANGAM ONGBI KUMARI DEVI for all future purposes vide affidavit dated 23/08/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, NO. 1571468 R/O KARH-1 NAME-THANGAM ROMESH SINGH residing at LAMDING KHUMANTHEM LEIKAI, WANGJING THOUBLA, MANIPUR-795148, have changed my mother name from THANGAM KUMARI DEVI TO THANGAM ONGBI KUMARI DEVI for all future purposes vide affidavit dated 23/08/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, HARSH K.GAUTAM Advocate Chamber No. G-511, Karkardooma Courts, Delhi-110032

facts. The Editor of the periodical, Organiser, Shri Prafulla Ketkar, compared

an Expert in Russian political affairs, considered the book more to be a research work rather than being a mere diary of events. The author of the book, Shri Deepak Kumar, brought some new facts about Netaji. According to him, Netaji was alive in 1966. To buttress his claim, he showed some papers of the Russian Prime Minister Office as per which Netaji was detained in Saransk Prison of the Central Volga Region. The publisher of the book who also happens to be the CEO of Prabhat Prakashan, Shri Pawan Aggarwal, managed the stage (march sanchalan kiya) and gave a vote of thanks (dhanyawad gyanpan) to all the participants in the end. The Forward of the book has been written by Shri Rajeev Kumar, Additional Secretary (Retd.), who has been associated with the prestigious R&AW. The book has 416 pages and carries a price tag of Rs. 1200 and is written in English language only. The function ended with the national anthem. Sandeep K. Jha.

## EC vs Congress: The loss of constitutionality

New Delhi: The stand-off between the Election Commission and the Congress has reached a crescendo, with the Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar just falling short of actually taking Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi's name while rejecting his allegations of "vote theft". Rather the poll body has sought an apology from the Congress, if it fails to prove its allegations on oath. While Rahul seems to have pinned the Election Commission (EC) to a corner with his allegations of "vote theft", the entire "back and forth" is looking like a slanging match. The confrontation came to a head when Rahul alleged large-scale vote theft in the 2024 general election, citing case studies from the Mahadevapura Assembly segment within Bangalore Central Lok Sabha constituency. In response, the EC demanded a signed affidavit from the Leader of Opposition to support his claims, further challenging the party to apologise to the nation should it fail to provide

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, ASHUTOSH KUMAR SINGH S/O SHAMBHU NATH SINGH R/O FLAT NO 4096, TOWER D, ZARA ROSSA, SECTOR-112, GURGAON HARYANA-122001, I HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO ASHUTOSH SINGH FOR ALL FUTURE PURPOSES

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, hitherto known as CHAND ALIAS CHAND RANI Sehan Alias CHAND RANI D/O JAGAN NATH Sehan W/O PREM Nath, HOUSE NO-101, MOURYA ENCLAVE, BLOCK-RP PITAMPURA, North West Delhi, Delhi-110034, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as CHAND RANI.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, NARENDR KU JUGAL R/O VILAGE POST BANIPUR PO BAWALI REWARI-123501, HARYANA, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO ASHUTOSH KUMHAR FOR ALL PURPOSES

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, SONAM ARORA R/O FLAT NO-A-145 G F, BPTP AMSTORIA, DWARKA EXPRESSWAY, SECTOR-102, DWARAKA, GURGAON HARYANA-122006, I HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO SONAM ARORA FOR ALL FUTURE PURPOSES

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, TILOK Patel S/O, Girdhar Lal Patel, R/O Flat No 10-A, 1st Floor, SS Almeria, Sector-4, Gurgaon-122004, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as TILOK Patel.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, hitherto known as TRIBHUVAN S/O FIKKAN R/O E-61A-24, D-1, Block, Noida Sector-10, Noida, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as TRIBHUVAN.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, hitherto known as TRIBHUVAN S/O FIKKAN R/O E-61A-24, D-1, Block, Noida Sector-10, Noida, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as TRIBHUVAN.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, hitherto known as TRIBHUVAN S/O FIKKAN R/O E-61A-24, D-1, Block, Noida Sector-10, Noida, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as TRIBHUVAN.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, hitherto known as INDER PAL KAUR alias BABITA BALI, D/O Bhopinder Singh, R/o LATE SANDEEP RAJ SINGH, R/O PLOT NO-C-66, U/G/F, FRONT SIDE, BLOCK-C, ANOOP NAGAR, Uttam Nagar, PO, D-2 Mohan Garden, DIST- West Delhi, Delhi-110059, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as INDER PAL KAUR, for all future purposes.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, hitherto known as INDER PAL KAUR alias BABITA BALI, D/O Bhopinder Singh, R/o LATE SANDEEP RAJ SINGH, R/O PLOT NO-C-66, U/G/F, FRONT SIDE, BLOCK-C, ANOOP NAGAR, Uttam Nagar, PO, D-2 Mohan Garden, DIST- West Delhi, Delhi-110059, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as INDER PAL KAUR, for all future purposes.

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I, hitherto known as INDER PAL KAUR alias BABITA BALI, D/O Bhopinder Singh, R/o LATE SANDEEP RAJ SINGH, R/O PLOT NO-C-66, U/G/F, FRONT SIDE, BLOCK-C, ANOOP NAGAR, Uttam Nagar, PO, D-2 Mohan Garden, DIST- West Delhi, Delhi-110059, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as INDER PAL KAUR, for all future purposes.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, hitherto known as KIRAN W/O SHAMBHU NATH SINGH R/O FLAT NO-83, AULINA TAHSIL-BULANDSHAHAR UTTAR PRADESH-243001have changed my name to RAMZANI KHAN for all future purpose.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, hitherto known as KIRAN W/O SHAMBHU NATH SINGH R/O FLAT NO-83, AULINA TAHSIL-BULANDSHAHAR UTTAR PRADESH-243001have changed my name to RAMZANI KHAN for all future purpose.

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## NEWS BOX

**Nepal joins India-led International Big Cat Alliance, officially****KATHMANDU. (Agency)**

Nepal has officially joined the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA), an India-led global initiative to protect seven species of big cats. IBCA is a multi-country, multi-agency coalition of over 90 big cat range countries and non-range countries with an interest in big cat conservation. Nepal has formally joined the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) by signing the Framework Agreement, announced the IBCA on Saturday. With snow leopard, tiger and common leopard in its landscape, Nepal's joining the IBCA will strengthen global collaboration for big cat conservation, the IBCA said. The IBCA has congratulated the Government of Nepal for this significant step towards shared ecologically significant step towards shared ecological security. Nepal succeeded to almost triple its tiger



population to 355 in 2022 (the latest census carried out so far) from a mere 121 in 2009. Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) for global conservation of seven big cats namely Tiger, Lion, Leopard, Snow Leopard, Cheetah, Jaguar and Puma on April 09, 2023, in Mysuru, Karnataka. India has a long-standing experience on tiger agenda and exemplary conservation models for other big cats like lion, snow leopard and leopard. With the help of this platform Big Cat Range Countries can share their experiences and mobilize resources in order to find solutions to conserve big cats.

**Canadian PM Mark Carney arrives in Kyiv on the occasion of Ukrainian Independence Day****KYIV. (Agency)**

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney arrived in Kyiv on Sunday to mark Ukrainian independence day as world leaders push for an end to the war between Ukraine and Russia. "On this Ukrainian Independence Day, and at this critical moment in their nation's history, Canada is stepping up our support and our efforts towards a just and lasting peace for Ukraine," Carney wrote on X as he touched down in the capital. Carney was invited to Kyiv as a "special guest," to mark the occasion, Canadian broadcaster CBC reported. "Canada's support for Ukraine is unwavering and we are with you every step of the way, in your fight to defend your sovereignty, and to realize your dreams for your country," Carney said in a video posted on his X account shortly after arrival in Kyiv. His visit to the war-torn country came as Russian forces continue to make slow gains in the withering three-year conflict, with Moscow announcing Saturday that it had taken two villages in eastern Ukraine's Donetsk region. Carney's visit also comes as prospects fade for a summit between the Russian and Ukrainian presidents -- a solution championed by US President Donald Trump as part of his efforts to end the war. Most recently, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa joined the chorus calling for a meeting between Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelensky.

**'Far too late': Palestinians despair after UN declares famine in Gaza****GAZA CITY. (Agency)**

Desperate Palestinians clutching pots and plastic buckets scrambled for rice at a charity kitchen in Gaza City on Saturday, a day after the United Nations declared a famine in the war-battered territory. AFP footage from Gaza's largest city, which Israel plans to seize as part of an expanded military offensive, showed women and young children among the chaotic jostle of dozens clamouring and shouting for food. One young boy used his hands to scrape a few leftover grains from the inside of a cooking vat. Another young girl sat on the edge of a tent and scooped rice from a plastic bag on the ground. "We have no home left, no food, no income... so we are forced to turn to charity kitchens, but they do not satisfy our hunger," said Yousef Hamad, 58, who was displaced from the northern city of Beit Hanoun.

Further south at a charity kitchen in Deir el-Balah, 34-year-old Umm Mohammad said the UN's declaration of a famine had come "far too late". The children are "staggering from dizziness, unable to wake up because of the lack of food and water," she said.

The UN officially declared a famine in Gaza on Friday, blaming the "systematic obstruction" of aid by Israel during more than 22 months of war. The Rome-based Integrated Food Security Phase Classification Initiative (IPC) said famine was affecting 500,000 people in Gaza governorate, which covers about a fifth of the Palestinian territory including Gaza City. Moral duty

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu rejected the report as "an outright lie".

**Following US aid cuts, South Africa struggles for life-saving HIV drugs and medication****One HIV-positive sex worker and mother of three said she was off medication for almost four months after being turned away from public hospitals****JOHANNESBURG. (Agency)**

On a warm evening in Johannesburg, the news spread like wildfire among sex workers: Within 24 hours, several nonprofit clinics providing free HIV services would be closing as President Donald Trump announced the United States was slashing foreign aid. Some South Africans living with, or at risk of, HIV secured supplies of life-saving drugs just in time. Others did not. Half a year later, the country with more people living with HIV than any other is struggling to treat its most vulnerable. Over 63,000 people were being treated in the 12 clinics across the nation that shut down. Up to 220,000

people have faced disruption to their daily HIV medication. South Africa's government has vowed it won't let the U.S. withdrawal of about \$427 million in support collapse its HIV program, the largest in the world. Sex workers, among the most vulnerable South Africans as their work is illegal, and transgender people spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity for fear of retaliation from families or communities. They described a new world of difficulty in obtaining HIV medication or the preventive medicine for people at risk of HIV. One HIV-positive sex worker and mother of three said she was off medication for almost four months after being turned away from public hospitals, which the government's health department says should not be happening. "The only thing that I could think of was my kids, and that I am going to die, and how am I going to explain to my kids that I am sick because of the line of work that I chose?" she said. The 37-year-old said she finally obtained a month's supply of medication in June from

a mobile clinic that was introduced after the funding cuts. She didn't know what she would do after that. Another HIV-positive sex worker said she had resorted to illegally buying medication on the black market, where the pills have nearly doubled in price. The U.S. has since issued a limited waiver allowing the resumption of certain life-saving HIV services globally, but the dismantling of much of U.S. foreign aid has created chaos. And for many people affected, harm is already done. Overall, experts warn of hundreds of thousands of new infections in the next few years in South Africa, and tens of thousands of additional deaths, if the cuts in aid aren't restored or covered by other means. Turned away from hospitals, a major challenge for those who lost access to the U.S.-funded nonprofit clinics is finding help elsewhere, including public hospitals. "I have tried local clinics, three of them, and I have been refused treatment because I don't have a referral letter from my previous clinic," the 37-year-old sex worker said. Kate Rees, a public health

specialist at Anova Health Institute in Johannesburg, said while it's ideal to have a transfer letter, it's not needed and people can't be turned away. "But people at the clinic, whether it's nurses, security guards, doctors, whoever actually, do turn them away," Rees said. In response to AP questions, Foste Mohale, a spokesperson for South Africa's health department, said they were not aware of anyone who had been turned away and encouraged people to go to the nearest public health facility. Another challenge at public hospitals and clinics is discrimination, especially for sex workers and transgender people. "In hospital, they said they only give PrEP to people who are in a relationship with someone who's HIV-positive and trying to have a baby," one transgender woman said. She decided to buy medication privately, moving in with her mother to save money to afford it. "I am not going back to the clinic, with people who are going to make fun of me, like I'm a clown," she said. The health department didn't respond to questions on that issue.

**Three former presidents of Sri Lanka back jailed leader Ranil Wickremesinghe****COLOMBO. (Agency)**

Three former presidents of Sri Lanka expressed solidarity with jailed ex-leader Ranil Wickremesinghe on Sunday and condemned his incarceration as a "calculated assault" on democracy. The trio, former political rivals of Wickremesinghe — president between July 2022 and September 2024 — said the charges against him were frivolous. He has been accused of using \$55,000 in state funds for a stopover in Britain while returning home after a G77 summit in Havana and the UN General Assembly in New York in September 2023.

Wickremesinghe, 76, was rushed to the intensive care unit of the main state-run hospital in Colombo on Saturday, a day after being remanded in custody. Doctors said he was suffering from severe dehydration on top of acute diabetes and high blood pressure. "What we are witnessing is a calculated onslaught on the very essence of our

democratic values," former president Chandrika Kumaratunga said in a statement. The 80-year-old Kumaratunga said the consequences of



Wickremesinghe's jailing would go beyond the fate of an individual and could affect the rights of all citizens. "I join wholeheartedly in expressing my unreserved opposition to these initiatives, which all political leaders are duty-bound to resist," Kumaratunga added. Her successor Mahinda Rajapaksa, 79, also expressed solidarity with Wickremesinghe and visited him in

prison on Saturday, shortly before he was moved to intensive care. Maithripala Sirisena, 73, who sacked Wickremesinghe from the prime minister's post in October 2018 before being forced by the Supreme Court to reinstate him 52 days later, described the jailing as a witch hunt. What we are seeing is a systematic campaign to silence opponents of the new government, Sirisena said. "They are polishing the lid of a coffin to bury democracy." Wickremesinghe's own United National Party (UNP) said on Saturday it believed he was being prosecuted out of fear that he could stage a comeback. He lost the presidential election in September to Anura Kumara Dissanayake, but has remained politically active despite holding no elected office. Wickremesinghe was arrested as part of Dissanayake's campaign against endemic corruption in the island nation, which is emerging from its worst economic meltdown in 2022.

**UK's mass facial-recognition roll-out alarms rights groups****LONDON. (Agency)**

Outside supermarkets or in festival crowds, millions are now having their features scanned by real-time facial-recognition systems in the UK — the only European country to deploy the technology on a large scale. At London's Notting Hill Carnival, where two million people are expected to celebrate Afro-Caribbean culture over Sunday and Monday, facial-recognition cameras are being deployed near entrances and exits. The police said their objective was to identify and intercept wanted individuals by scanning faces in large crowds and comparing them with thousands of suspects already in the police database. The technology is "an effective policing tool which has already been successfully used to locate offenders at crime hotspots resulting in well over 1,000 arrests since the start of 2024," said

Metropolitan Police chief Mark Rowley. The technology was first tested in 2016 and its use has increased considerably over the past three years in the United Kingdom. Some 4.7 million faces were scanned in 2024 alone, according to the NGO Liberty. UK police have deployed the live facial-recognition system around 100 times since late January, compared to only 10 between 2016 and 2019. Nation of suspects Examples include before two Six Nations rugby games and outside two Oasis concerts in Cardiff in July. When a person on a police "watchlist" passes near the cameras, the AI-powered system, often set up in a police van, triggers an alert. The suspect can then be immediately detained once police checks confirm their identity. But such mass data capture on the streets of London, also seen during the coronation of King Charles III in 2023, "treats us like a

nation of suspects", said the Big Brother Watch organisation.

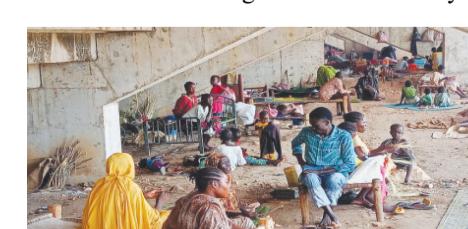
"There is no legislative basis, so we have no safeguards to protect our rights, and the police is left to write its own rules," Rebecca Vincent, its interim director, told AFP. Its private use by supermarkets and clothing stores to combat the sharp rise in shoplifting has also raised concerns, with "very little information" available about how the data is being used, she added. Most use Facewatch, a service provider that compiles a list of suspected offenders in the stores it monitors and raises an alert if one of them enters the premises. "It transforms what it is to live in a city, because it removes the possibility of living anonymously," said Daragh Murray, a lecturer in human rights law at Queen Mary University of London. "That can have really big implications for protests but also participation in political and cultural life," he added.

**War-displaced Sudanese return to Khartoum, hopeful of not just rebuilding homes but their lives too****KHARTOUM. (Agency)**

All that remains of Afaf al-Tayeb's home in Sudan's Khartoum province is a charred, windowless structure with peeling paint — yet in June, she eagerly returned, feeling safe again for the first time since the Sudanese army said it retook the capital from the rival Rapid Support Forces. Al-Tayeb had been displaced with her son Mohamed al-Khadr and their family at least four times since the civil war in the North African nation broke out over two years ago. They were displaced in different areas in Khartoum, yet nothing has ever felt as comforting as their house in the Al-Qawz district of Khartoum City. She misses the photographs of her parents and late husband which were lost when her home was damaged by fire in March, along with all her other possessions. The loss of her home left her in tears and deep sorrow, she told The Associated Press. The family was first displaced to the Hilaliya area, in Gezira province, taking nothing but the clothes they were wearing, until the RSF

made advances in the province and forced them to return to Al-Qawz. Al-Tayeb said RSF fighters then expelled her and her family, and they had to flee to east Khartoum onto Shendi and then Omdurman city. "They looked very strange — indescribable — and their appearance was frightening," she said of the RSF fighters who raided her home. Al-Tayeb and her son are among roughly 1.2 million people who returned to Sudan between December 2024 and May this year, according to the latest estimates by the International Organization for Migration. Dismantling of the infrastructure The U.N.'s refugee agency says more than 12 million people have been forcibly displaced since the current conflict began in April 2023, with 3.2 million Sudanese seeking refuge in neighboring countries. The conflict has killed more than 40,000 people, pushed many to the brink of famine, and caused several disease outbreaks. Khartoum was the epicenter of fighting at the start of the war, but the army said it had recaptured the capital earlier this

year, including important landmarks such as the airport and ministerial buildings. Army chief Gen. Abdel-Fattah Burhan returned to the capital in March for the first time since the war began when his military



led government had fled Khartoum for the Red Sea city of Port Sudan. Mohanad Elbalal, cofounder of Khartoum Aid Kitchen, said that in areas recaptured by the military in Khartoum province people are returning to find their homes destroyed, neighborhoods shattered, often with no electricity and scarce food, water and

**North Korean leader Kim Jong Un supervises new anti-air missiles test****SEOUL. (Agency)**

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un supervised the test-firing of two types of new anti-air missiles, state media said Sunday, displaying his expanding military capabilities as the South Korean and U.S. militaries carry out joint drills. The North's official Korean Central News Agency said the test Saturday proved the missiles effective in countering aerial threats such as drones and cruise missiles, and that Kim assigned unspecified "important" tasks to defense scientists ahead of a major political conference expected early next year. The report did not specify the missiles that were tested or where the event took place. It did not mention any remarks by Kim directed at Washington or Seoul. The test coincided with new South Korean President Lee Jae Myung's trip to Tokyo for a summit with Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba, where they vowed to strengthen bilateral cooperation and their trilateral partnership with the United States to address common challenges, including North Korea's nuclear ambitions. Lee was to depart for Washington

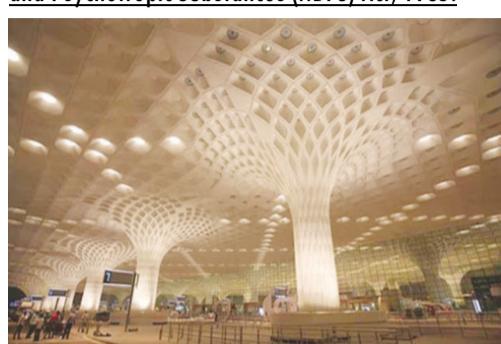


on Sunday for a summit with U.S. President Donald Trump. Kim's government has repeatedly dismissed calls by Seoul and Washington to restart long-stalled negotiations aimed at winding down his nuclear weapons and missiles programs, as he continues to prioritize Russia as part of a foreign policy aimed at expanding ties with nations confronting the United States. Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Kim has sent thousands of troops and large shipments of weapons, including artillery and ballistic missiles, to help fuel President Vladimir Putin's warfighting. That has raised concerns Moscow could provide technology that strengthens Kim's nuclear-armed military, with experts pointing to North Korea's aging anti-air and radar systems as a likely area of cooperation. South Korea's previous conservative government said in November that Russia supplied missiles and other equipment to help strengthen air defenses of the North Korean capital of Pyongyang, but did not specify which systems were provided.

services, but they're returning to rebuild their homes. In Khartoum City, electric substations have been destroyed and cables have been torn from the ground. "In some areas in the Khartoum locality, there's been a complete dismantling of the infrastructure," Elbalal told AP. "Hospitals have even had their beds shipped out and stolen, along with mattresses." Of the more than 60 electricity and water facilities that have been partially or fully damaged as a result of the conflict, 16 served Khartoum, according to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data monitoring organization. Altyeb Saad, spokesperson for the Khartoum province government, said 77 power transfer stations across the province have been looted and destroyed along with generators that distribute electricity to residential areas. "Khartoum took serious steps towards repairment despite this destruction to rebuild the province," he said, adding that the first phase of rebuilding is nearing completion.

## 2 passengers held with hydroponic weed worth Rs 11.78 crore at Mumbai airport

Both the passengers were arrested in separate cases under the provisions of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985.



### Mumbai . (Agency)

The Air Intelligence Unit (AIU) of the customs department in separate cases arrested two persons at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport on Friday after they arrived from Bangkok and allegedly seized contraband worth Rs 11.78 crore from them. In the first case, on the basis of profiling, the AIU officials intercepted a passenger identified as Bilal Rais Ahmed Sayyad on suspicion that he was carrying some contraband. During his personal search, nothing was found but while checking his trolley bag, 12 single-layered transparent plastic packets were found in the clothes. When plastic packets were opened, hydroponic weed with a net weight of 5,782 grams and worth Rs 5.78 crore was found. Sayyad's statement was recorded and a case was registered under the NDPS Act against him.

In the second case, another team of AIU officials laid a trap based on specific information and nabbed one Kais Shaikh who was coming from Bangkok. While checking his sky-blue colour trolley bag, the official found several plastic bags wrapped in the clothes. After cutting one plastic bag, the fruit and flowering top of the plant, purported to be hydroponic weed having a strong pungent smell was found. The officer tested the contraband using a field testing kit and got a positive result of the hydroponic weed. The officer then weighed the total plant and found a net weight of 6006 grams worth Rs 6 crore. Both the passengers were arrested in separate cases under the provisions of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985.

## BSF apprehends 15 Pakistani fishermen near border in Gujarat's Kutch

**A mobile phone and Rs 200 in Pakistani currency were also seized from their possession, the BSF said.**

### Bhuj . (Agency)

The Border Security Force has apprehended 15 Pakistani fishermen and also seized an engine-fitted country boat near the Indo-Pak border in



Gujarat's Kutch district, the BSF said on Sunday. The BSF carried out a search operation on Saturday

## Legal conclave in Surat: Alternate Dispute Resolution crucial for justice, says Gujarat HC Chief Justice

**In his welcome address, SGCCI president Nikhil Madrasi said, "For businesses, law is not just about compliance; it's the foundation stone of trust"**

### Surat . (Agency)

Gujarat High Court Chief Justice Sunita Agarwal emphasised upon the crucial role of "Alternate Dispute Resolution" in ensuring justice for the people during her address at the Legal Conclave 2025 in Surat on Saturday. The event was jointly organised by the Southern Gujarat Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SGCCI) and the Surat City Advocate Association at the Platinum Hall of SGCCI, in Sarsana. Justice Agarwal was joined by fellow Gujarat High Court judges, Justice Pranab Trivedi and Justice D N Rai, as chief guests. In his welcome address, SGCCI president Nikhil Madrasi said, "For businesses, law is not just about compliance; it's the foundation stone of trust".

He highlighted the economic costs of pending cases, noting that over 1,70,000 cases are currently pending in the Gujarat High Court, with more than 50,000 of those cases in family courts alone. "Every delay affects

families, businesses and the entire society. A strong economy depends on a legal system where disputes are resolved fairly and efficiently," he added.

During the event, Chief Justice Sunita Agarwal said, "The Gujarat High Court utilises Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) to bring justice to the people, rather than requiring them to come to court. While people have faith in the court, delays can lead to disappointment. As a hub for significant domestic and foreign investment, Gujarat's commercial courts play a crucial role in instilling investor confidence by ensuring legal protection for capital and contractual rights". The commercial disputes can also be resolved quickly, saving both time and cost for industrialists, she said. The presence of commercial courts in Gujarat's business hubs such as Surat, Ahmedabad, Vadodara and Rajkot provides a strong base for local as



well as international business, she added. "The rate of settlement of cases through arbitration in Gujarat is 55%. In small cases, if internal dialogue does not resolve the issue, citizens can get justice through mediators instead of coming to the court. After providing training as mediators to 96

advocates in the state, they are working to provide mediation services in various areas of the state and ensure that people get justice in a timely manner. For people of Gujarat, two things are most important in life—first, family and second, business," added the Chief Justice.

Meanwhile, Gujarat High Court Justice Pranab Trivedi said, "ADR is an easy way to get justice without having to fight a long battle in court. In business, if justice is not done for years in any dispute, then there is loss. Therefore, if the business community supports ADR, then the justice process will definitely be faster."

Justice D N Rai said, "In 2001, about two crore cases were pending in the district courts in the country.

Currently, about 4 crore 72 lakh cases are pending. ADR can play an important role in bringing about speedy resolution of these cases."

## Visakhapatnam Central Jail blends discipline with livelihood training

### VISAKHAPATNAM . (Agency)

For Visakhapatnam Central Jail, the approach is straightforward, 'teach a trade, test for quality, and pay for work. Whether in a field, a workshop or a bindery, each shift is intended to add up to something an inmate can carry forward, a habit of work, and a skill that can earn.' From farming to steel furniture, bookbinding and bakery, Visakhapatnam Central Jail is turning custody time into skills that can sustain life after release. Between 7 and 13 acres inside the jail are under cultivation at any time, with 22 convicts rotating crops by season. Tomatoes, brinjal, okra, cucumber and a range of leafy vegetables are grown regularly, and dragon fruit is on trial. A nursery has also been proposed to raise saplings for supply outside wherever there is demand.

Industrial work runs alongside farming. The steel-fabrication unit, which has, for the past two years, been making school benches for Larsen & Toubro's CSR programme, led the jail's production units in 2024-25, posting Rs 1.35 crore in income and Rs 17 lakh in profit. The bookbinding section supplies registers to about 60% of prisons and several other departments across AP, giving inmates steady practice in a trade that finds buyers year-round.

Other units include weaving and dyeing, tailoring, dry cleaning, phenyl production, bakery, printing, agriculture and dairy. Five of these recorded profits last year. Weaving and dyeing produced goods worth Rs 15 lakh (Rs 1.6 lakh profit), the bakery turned out Rs 15.3 lakh in products (Rs 2 lakh profit), agriculture added Rs 5.8 lakh in produce (Rs 76,000 profit), and the dairy logged Rs 44 lakh in output (Rs 3.2 lakh profit). Officials describe these numbers as indicators that revenue generation and rehabilitation can move together.

Opportunities are matched to inmates after assessing interest and conduct. Those who show consistent, positive behaviour are placed in roles that carry more responsibility, such as agriculture. Many nearing release are engaged in farm work while some have received sentence remissions on account of good conduct.



Express. The GRP was alerted, and a police team reached the crime scene." According to Surat police, Durgawati, in her complaint, said that on August 21, she left her house with two elder children to drop them at school, leaving behind Akash with her elder sister Rabdi Kumar Shah and her son Vikash Shah. When Durgawati returned home, she found Aarav and Vikash missing. After

checking CCTV cameras, Amroli police had confirmed that Vikash took a train with the boy from the Surat railway station. Amroli police had on Friday night lodged an abduction case against Vikash, who also took Durgawati's mobile phone from her house. Amroli Police Inspector J B Vanar said, "We kept the mobile phone of Durgawati under surveillance and found that it was in Mumbai. We sent our team to Mumbai on Friday evening. On Saturday, early morning, the body of Akash was found."

He added, "On Saturday morning, Durgawati reached Mumbai and confirmed the body of her son Aarav. The body was handed over to her after the postmortem on Saturday afternoon. Once we get papers from Lokmanya Tilak Terminus GRP officials, we will register a murder case." Vanar added, "Vikash is still on the run. His father stays in Nasik, so we have sent our team there too. Vikash, with her mother Rabdi Shah, came to Surat seven days ago from Siwan in Bihar."

## Panjab University to establish pre-incubation Fab Lab

### Chandigarh . (Agency)

The Panjab University (PU) is all set to provide its students with a powerful new platform for innovation through the launch of a Pre-Incubation Fab Lab under RUSA 2.0. With an investment of about Rs 1.6 crore, the proposed facility will offer hands-on access to cutting-edge tools, enabling students to turn ideas into working prototypes, industry-ready projects, and even startups. The Fab Lab will focus on skill development, employability, and entrepreneurship. Students from diverse disciplines will be able to design and fabricate their own Printed Circuit Boards (PCBs), integrate hardware and software systems, and work with advanced technologies like IoT, robotics, AI, and embedded systems. By reducing dependence on external vendors, the facility will save time and cost while giving students practical exposure to real-world processes. The lab will feature a PCB design and fabrication unit capable of producing single, double, and multilayer boards, supported by advanced machinery such as automated soldering stations, UV exposure units, reflow ovens, and a complete assembly and testing setup. A dedicated Cyber-Physical Systems (CPS) lab will offer IoT gateways,

robotics kits, embedded platforms like Arduino and Raspberry Pi, GPUs for AI applications, and testing equipment. Licensed PCB design software and high-performance workstations will be available for students to design, simulate, and execute projects. For students, the benefits include faster turnaround for academic projects, hands-on training in modern prototyping tools, improved placement opportunities through demonstrable skills, and pathways into entrepreneurship. Research scholars will be able to quickly test prototypes, while undergraduate students can gain valuable project experience.

The facility will also support student competitions, workshops, and certifications, enhancing both learning outcomes and career readiness. Beyond academics, the lab will strengthen collaboration with startups and industries in the Tricity region, giving students opportunities for internships, live projects, and mentorship.

By combining education, research, and industry services, the university aims to create a sustainable ecosystem where students can learn, innovate, and launch ventures directly from campus.

## No faculty, no classrooms: Visually impaired prof fights lone battle at Punjabi University, Patiala for her students

### Patiala . (Agency)

Sans any space to move their elbows or legs, a motley group of around 20 students sit crammed in a small, makeshift classroom at Punjabi University campus, a reputed state-run university in Punjab's Patiala. A technical assistant keeps them engaged with some slides displayed on a projector as there's no qualified faculty for their course. Established more than three years ago, the Patiala campus's Centre for the Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities is currently crippled, and at the receiving end are a group of 20 students who have taken admission in its newly launched course — now forced to "attend classes" without any proper classroom space to sit or faculty to teach.

It has been over a month now that classes have commenced for the newly launched four-year integrated course — BA-BEd HIFS (Bachelors of Arts and Education in Hearing Impairment Foundation Stage) —



Sociology and the brain behind the creation of the centre to empower disabled students, is waiting for the varsity authorities to fulfil their "promise" and hire special faculty for the course.

Remembering her struggles of the past seven years, Sharma shares how she had to run from pillar to post, first to get the centre established in 2021 and then to get RCI

approval to start the course.

Appointed as the coordinator of the centre, Sharma tells The Indian Express: "We had started the course only after I was promised that special faculty will be hired and classrooms will be allotted. I know it is disheartening for students too as they took admission in the new course with high hopes. The university has promised us that we will get classrooms soon and faculty will also be made available to teach course subjects. Till then, I am trying to teach the students about disabilities to the best of my own knowledge."

The Panjab University, Patiala, claims to be the only state varsity in Punjab to offer such a course, which includes graduation in Arts and Education, but with special training to teach hearing impaired children in future. "Along with the faculty to teach basic arts subjects such as economics, languages etc, we also need two assistant professors specialised in hearing

impairment (to teach sign language) and who should have postgraduate degree in special education. We might engage guest faculty if regular ones are not hired," Sharma adds.

The professor's life is a textbook example of why the persons with disabilities should be provided ample opportunities to pursue higher education and given the required guidance. After losing vision in both eyes at the age of 19 due to an accident, she had to leave her BSc (nursing) degree midway. But she refused to give up on life. She then pursued English Stenography in Braille and went on to complete her graduation (BA) from Panjab University (PU), Chandigarh. She then pursued Masters in Sociology from PU and stood second in the university. She did not stop there as she further cleared UGC-NET to become an assistant professor and then earned her PhD with specialisation on Studies on Visual Impairment, also from PU.

## Utopian dreams in dystopian times

Back in the USSR, they had a formula for staying out of trouble: "Don't think. If you must think, don't speak. If you must speak, don't write. If you must write, don't sign. If you must sign, be prepared."

That's practical advice for several contemporary democracies that are giving the least awful form of government a bad name. It's a dangerous trend because if the gap between democracy and absolutism narrows, people may no longer see the point of the endless struggle to gain and retain freedoms. The upshots over four recent developments say that we are far from that nadir of apathy. The first is the update to income tax law that allows the agencies to breach citizens' digital privacy on the basis of suspicions alone—yet another instance of the time-honoured Indian tradition of making the process the punishment. And since digital accounts will be examined, it is yet another nail in the coffin of internet privacy and social media. Moving on, no one knows how many assets were downed in the brief India-Pakistan aerial conflict, but we know for certain that Siddharth Varadarajan and Karan Thapar, prominent journalists with The Wire, are collateral damage. A BJP functionary accused The Wire's coverage of undermining "sovereignty, unity, and integrity", which conveniently attracted the attention of Section 152 of the decolonised Bharatiya Nyaya Sahita, which is the sedition law. The three trigger words are of such variable meaning that the law could be used to Kafkaesque effect to target almost anyone. The third development is the crisis of confidence in the Election Commission. Over the years, we have become accustomed to pitched battles over the integrity of electronic voting machines. Now it has become part of the public discourse, the subject of memes and jokes like, "The Election Commission has launched a new app: tap once to vote, twice to vanish from the rolls." Finally, the joke is on the idea of democracy. The fourth development concerns the right to recall, which is available in some South American nations, the US and Japan, but its use is limited to removing local officials. Very rarely are top legislators vulnerable to this terrific weapon, the voter's brahmastra. Before the BJP had a stable government at the Centre, the idea was current in some sections of the party. But they wanted a weapon that targeted the highest elected politicians and could force regime change.

Home Minister Amit Shah has introduced an amendment in parliament that sounds both like recall at the top, and also Lord Dalhousie's Doctrine of Lapse, by which Awadh and Jhansi became East India Company properties on the charge that they were misgoverned or ungoverned. The new legislation would allow the Centre to dismiss chief ministers accused of serious crimes who have been behind bars for 30 days—even if it's detention without trial. This is arbitrary, because politicians routinely face false charges. It ignores due process and would give the Centre the power to remove the heads of states, decapitating federalism. In dystopian times, utopian dreams have a tonic effect. But as the label suggests, they are mostly impractical or bring on problems of their own. Here are two examples: one, the right to recall looks attractive when people lose patience for their government. The Congress went into the wilderness following the charge of "policy paralysis" against Manmohan Singh, but because it followed from a lost election, it was clearly the people's will. Recall would not have been half as convincing. Two, when the sanctity of elections is compromised, as it is in India, Turkey and Hungary, among other nations, the voter muses wistfully upon high-minded things, like a perfectly independent Election Commission in an ivory tower with a tunnel leading to its very own bank vault that contains a fixed remittance from the government. Not answerable to any authority, its staffers, chosen on the basis of ability alone, have the power to make and apply election law and set budgets, and are so large-hearted that they do all this transparently.

## China envy got us nowhere. Now it's time to shed our America complex too. Rather than pretending to be a world-beater, India should be mending fences

Indians simply cannot get enough of Donald Trump. Throughout his immensely fractious and intensely vituperative election campaign back to the White House, many Indians, especially from the so-called right wing, supported him vociferously, even raucously. Even though the other contender, Kamala Harris, was a lady, that too half-Indian. Now, it would seem, the pendulum has swung to the other extreme. There is scarcely a member of India's ever-expanding commentator and influencer set who has a kind word to say about the US president. He has become not only the favourite whipping boy, but also the butt of ridicule among the same lot who, until just the other day, were singing hosannas to him. Today, faced with stiff tariffs and possibly even harsher measures to come, isn't it time we take a re-look—not just at Trump, but our relationship with the US? First things first: we must understand that Trump, far from being a statesman, is not even a conventional politician. A notoriously self-proclaimed outsider to Washington politics, he is the greatest disrupter that certainly the US, and possibly the world, has known in the past half-century.

What this means is that he doesn't really care about what we in India think or say about him. Why, not just us, he doesn't care about what the US mainstream media spews against him either. CBS, NBC, ABC, CNN, CNBC, Reuters, Bloomberg, Al Jazeera, New York Times, Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, Time magazine, The Atlantic and so on, to name some

## India has to play along with China

THE GREAT GAME: PM Modi understands that as the weaker nation with fewer cards, he must bide his time

BREAKFAST in Delhi, lunch in Lahore and dinner in Kabul, anyone? Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's much-vaunted slogan about dissolving boundaries between the peoples of South Asia is alive and well—except it is being implemented by Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi. This is what happened earlier this week. As India grappled with the controversy over the revised voter lists in Bihar as well as the "stolen votes" accusation made by Opposition Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, the Chinese leader visited Delhi for another round of boundary talks with National Security Advisor Ajit Doval. Wang also invited PM Modi to attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit in Tianjin, China, later this month—the PM has agreed. Then Wang Yi flew to Kabul to meet the Taliban and participate in a trilateral with his Pakistani and Afghan counterparts. From there he flew to Pakistan to reiterate China's strategic partnership with its "time-tested iron brothers" in the Islamic republic. All in a day's work—a leaf out of Manmohan Singh's book, so what if some of the itinerary was reversed. Wang Yi's visit allowed the Pakistani interior minister to say that his country has video footage of Indian planes being downed by the Pakistani air force during Operation Sindoors. Is this an outright lie by the Pakistanis? Indians certainly hope so. The Indian Air Force Chief, Air Chief Marshal AP Singh, has told us that the IAF downed five Pakistani jets during the operation. Chief of Defence Staff Gen Anil Chauhan had earlier admitted that India had experienced some losses in the air, but didn't say how many. There is silence on the subject till today, more than three months down the line. It would certainly be nice to know. But back to Emperor Wang Yi's South Asian diplomacy. In Kabul, he made it crystal clear to the Taliban that China would not invest if the Afghans did not stop terror raids into Pakistan. In Islamabad, as the red carpet was rolled out, he "commended Pakistan's tireless efforts in combatting terrorism."

Earlier in July, the Chinese air chief had praised the Pakistani air force's action against India as a "textbook example" of modern warfare. Make no mistake, India is up against a formidable foreign policy challenge—the deepening and intensification of the China-Pakistan relationship—across its northern and western frontiers. Then there is the growing bonhomie between Pakistan and the US—as India battles serious US tariffs of 50 per cent, Pakistan has been slapped with only 19 per cent tariffs. Trump's manifest pique at India's refusal to admit that he—the US—played a role in brokering the India-Pakistan May conflict has sent



senior US officials to accuse India, and Indian companies, of "profiteering" from its purchase of Russian oil. The darkening of the sky has sent External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar to Russia, and although Russia may have proposed a further cut in the cost of its oil to India, the good news is that a rebalancing is taking place in the heart of New Delhi. For too long, over the past decade, India's outreach in favour of the US has been made at the cost of its other, serious relationships. Such an accusation is not new—India's elite has long wined and dined at the best restaurants in New York and Washington DC and its children studied at its Ivy League universities; the Modi years have hardly been very different. What has been different is the consequent absence of care and respect, an ignoring of other key powers on the international high table. India's extraordinary interest in the US had led New Delhi to look at its other relationships via the American prism. In a world that moves at the speed of light, where the warmest ties grow cold by dinner-time, that was becoming counter-productive to the national interest. Make no mistake, the US remains India's most important foreign policy relationship. But there are other stars in the sky too—in a sense the long overdue penny has dropped with Trump's recent bad behaviour. PM Modi has certainly put a halt to the obsequiousness in

the heart of New Delhi by refusing to cater to Trump's grandiose self-obsession, that he is the arbiter of the world's several conflicts. But that is just one part of the shift. Another is that Delhi has to bite its tongue and play the game with its toughest opponents—China. That is why the conversation with the Chinese Foreign Minister earlier this week, and why the PM will go to China later this month. Modi understands that as the weaker nation with fewer cards, he must bide his time—that the wheel will turn again. A fascinating part of this rejig is that India will continue to reach out to the US. America is far too powerful a nation to deny and a deadly enemy to oppose; you certainly want the Americans on your side, as Field Marshal Asim Munir knows. (The Pakistanis have found a powerful lobbyist in the US, including a former bodyguard for Trump who later served in the White House.) And as the galaxy of European leaders found when they showed up at Trump's table to shore up the Ukrainian President—flattery for the US President was the order of the morning. That is why Modi is looking to meet Trump when he goes to New York next month to participate in the UN General Assembly. And why India has suspended an 11 per cent import duty on American cotton—on the eve of his trip, hoping to assuage US anger on its refusal to further open up its agricultural market.

## Level playing field while parsing bills on unseating netas

There is merit in the argument that the present framework offers the Centre sweeping powers to destabilise opposition-ruled state governments without a fair trial, given that the lower judiciary is not quite forthcoming on granting bail

Amid allegations of legislative overreach, a basket of three Bills barring legislators from running governments while in prison went to a joint parliamentary committee (JPC) for vetting upon introduction in parliament. However, the proposed legal framework to cast out corrupt politicians, right from the position of the prime minister, ran into an avalanche of protests. If the Bills were to be enacted in their present form, prime ministers, chief ministers and ministers in custody for 30 days or more on charges that attract at least five years of imprisonment would automatically lose office on the 31st day. They can, however, claw their way back on the saddle upon securing bail. Though the stated purpose is to address political corruption, the sting apparently is for the opposition, as the central law enforcement agencies usually see no wrong in dispensations run by the ruling coalition. As it is, the Enforcement Directorate has drawn judicial scorn on various counts, including hyperactive intrusion in opposition-ruled states without a convincing conviction



rate. The Bills revived memories of the Delhi administration going to seed in the run-up to the 2024 general elections as AAP convenor Arvind Kejriwal continued as chief minister for months while in Tihar jail in connection with a multicore excise policy scam that was first broken by this newspaper. Yesteryear politicos

takoh onus for failings under their watch, as Lal Bahadur Shastri did in 1956 by resigning as railway minister following a major train tragedy in Tamil Nadu. That benchmark of morality and integrity in public office is completely missing in this time and age, accentuated as they are by the perceived selective enforcement of penal laws. There is merit in the argument that the present framework offers the Centre sweeping powers to destabilise opposition-ruled state governments without a fair trial, given that the lower judiciary is not quite forthcoming on granting bail. The Representation of the People Act, 1951 mandates disqualification and punishment of elected representatives based on convictions by courts, not merely on charges or arrests. The proposed summary dismissals appear to fly in the face of both federal and judicial powers guaranteed by the Constitution. NDA allies JD(U) and TDP are already circumspect about the double-edged sword. To create a level playing field, the JPC will have to address these issues head-on.

## Time to cut our dress according to our cloth

detractors, carried out a relentless crusade against him during the presidential race, which shows no signs of abating to this day. But Trump has survived, even thrived. For he is not only a disrupter, but also a fighter, as his famous attempted assassination photograph, now immortalised as a painting in the White House, so vividly symbolises. The narrative that Trump is an egomaniac who wants the Nobel Peace Prize shouldn't bother us. If it is true, why didn't we massage his ego? Or, for that matter, be the first ones to nominate him for the Nobel—something we can still do? Are megalomania or credit-hogging solely Trump's follies? After all, isn't it true that strong men—whether Trump, Xi, Putin, or those closer home—share similar qualities and characteristics? However much we may dislike Trump, the reality that we, as a nation, are far less powerful militarily and economically than the US, China or, for that matter, Russia cannot be wished away. We are quick to take offence, something that I have called 'thin-skinned nationalism', as opposed to our neighbour to the east's 'thick-skinned' variety. If Trump doesn't really care what we think, what good will it do to rail against him as an unruly bully? We should, instead, calculate how much we lose by acting exaggeratedly defiant or deeply hurt in turns. No matter how much we deny it, tariffs can and will hurt us. Just this evening, at a 'chai pe charcha' at one of the capital's still-popular watering holes, I heard a publisher lamenting that even sending out small parcels of books to fulfil US orders is going to be unprofitable. The forecast for India's forward earnings has already been reduced by 1.2 percent by agencies such as the London Stock Exchange. Small or big, our exports to the US will be hit. If, in addition to goods, services come under the purview of Trump's tariffs, the biggest casualty will be our number

one export—software and IT services. In addition, of course, to pharma, gems, and textiles.

The argument that India is protecting its farmers and consumers from genetically modified crops or 'non-vegetarian milk' is also not entirely convincing. We can certainly work out a deal that doesn't include these two.

Rather, what is needed is an acknowledgement that we



might have misread the US and Trump. Perhaps, the real issue lies elsewhere, including our trade surplus of over \$40 billion with the US and our import of cheap oil from Russia. My point is simple: there is a limit to our playing the swing game, the special advantage in being the world's major balancing state and rising power. This may be a great position to occupy, but only as long as you don't over-game, let alone abuse, its privileges. For, there is every likelihood of the big boys—whether it is the US, China, or Russia—making deals with each other at our expense. We need to tread carefully in these dangerous waters rather than upping the ante.

Many months ago, I coined the phrase 'China envy' to describe how the Indian leadership sometimes functions. It seems as if they long for the one-party-one-leader absolutist style of governance so alien to India's immense regional and cultural diversity. The obsession to control not only mainstream politics but also civil society, like China, would not, I argued, serve the Indian democratic system well. Instead, good ideas, including constructive criticism with an ever-widening range of expertise and consultation might produce better results. As would the cultivation, rather than subversion, of second and third-tier leadership in the ruling party. You cannot talk about India's diversity dividend while simultaneously wanting to impose uniformity in the name of unity across the country and society. If China envy is one of our problems, then I think it is time to coin another phrase to describe our difficulties, especially exacerbated under Trump. Let us call this our 'America complex'. What do I mean by that? Simply speaking, we are a parliamentary democracy whose leadership longs for presidential-style powers. But in the present context, it simply means that the US president commands authority unimaginable in other democracies. India, therefore, needs not only to acknowledge him but also the powers—whether economic, military, technological, or otherwise—of the country he represents, the US.

After all, isn't humility a virtue according to sanatana dharma—"vidya dadati vinayam"? It is in India's interest to climb down a few notches and eat humble pie if necessary. Instead of pretending to be a world-beater, entirely self-sufficient, isn't it time to sing a different tune and mend fences? In the present context, conciliation signals strength, not loss of sovereignty.

# From paddy to poplar: How a Ludhiana farmer built a 50-lakh-a-year model

Jalandhar . (Agency)

"We were just surviving, not progressing," recalls a 32-year-old farmer from Machhiwara, Ludhiana, as he watched his family's 16 acres of land remain trapped in the mostly wheat-paddy cycle for about three decades. The yield was only a little more than a hand-to-mouth existence, the soil was tiring, water levels kept dipping and there was no rise in income, despite working round the clock. That was when Gurjeet Singh Mithewalia of Mithewalia village, Samrala Tehsil, decided to take a bold bet. He scaled up his father's experiment with poplar trees — though had continued for years but on a very small scale. Today, just one-fourth of his land earns him nearly 50 lakh annually through the sale of poplar trees and saplings.

Seven years on, that gamble has transformed his fortunes. Gurjeet has not freed his fields from stubble-burning pollution and saved volumes of groundwater, he has also built a robust business that added five more acres to his farm. "In the past two years alone, I have purchased over five acres of farmland, expanding my family's 35-year-old farming legacy into a modern, commercial-scale venture." With the income, Gurjeet also runs a successful distribution business in agricultural implements, including



'hoe to combine harvester'.

Armed with a BBA degree, Gurjeet could have chosen a conventional career. Instead, he followed his father, Baldev Singh, into farming but with a diversification model. Initially, like most farmers in the region, Gurjeet grew wheat and paddy while only three acres were dedicated for poplar plantation and nursery. But starting 2018, he gradually increased his poplar plantation to 16 acres and adopted a chain system, where four acres are planted every year. This staggered method ensures a steady harvest and a regular income cycle every year. Gurjeet is confident about the crop's future and says: "Poplar demand will never go

down." Pointing towards his lush plantations spread across 16 acres, he adds: "It is the backbone of the plywood industry, and with demand for plywood rising every year, the returns are assured." Talking about the economics of poplar farming, Gurjeet explains that it is not just profitable but also comparatively low-maintenance.

Around 340 trees can be grown on an acre of land, planted at a spacing of 16x16 feet row distance and 8x8 feet plant distance. At a 12x12 feet spacing, around 280 trees fit on one acre. Each tree yields an average of 3.5 quintals of wood at maturity, with about 1.25 quintals as fuelwood — fetching around Rs 500 per quintal — while 2.25 quintals as the main stem — sold to the plywood industry at rates ranging from Rs 1,400 to Rs 1,700 per quintal.

"Every tree brings around Rs 3,500 after four years... On a well-managed acre, you can earn around Rs 12 lakh in four years," says Gurjeet, adding that under his plantation chain system, he harvests trees from four acres every four years. Even after accounting for a 5 to 10 per cent loss due to strong winds or natural damage, the returns remain robust — between Rs 35 lakh and Rs 40 lakh from four acres. "With this chain, I harvest trees on four acres every year, and in the same year I replant saplings on the same fields," he explains.

## Gujarat: Man kidnapped from garment store, thrashed to death by rival gang



Ahmedabad . (Agency)

Days after he was booked in a case of attempt to murder, a man was kidnapped from the garment store where he was working and thrashed to death allegedly by the rival gang on a road at Meghanagar in Ahmedabad on Friday. Nitin Patni was kidnapped from the garment store in Kaggadipat area, taken to Meghanagar and thrashed with pipes and sticks by the rival gang, police said. He died during treatment at a hospital. The video of the gang thrashing the man has gone viral on social media. The accused had fled in two auto rickshaws by the time police reached the spot. Kaggadipat police registered an FIR for abduction and murder against six persons based on a complaint filed by his brother, Akshay. Of the six accused, three persons — Vijay alias Battu Prema Vaghela, Sailesh Ramsingha Gautam and Punam Virchand Patni — were arrested, K' Division ACP Y A Gohil said, adding that two auto rickshaws had also been seized. Nitin was booked for attempt to murder in an FIR filed three days ago by Meghanagar police after he and his co-accused had allegedly thrashed a member of the other group.

The entire incident is part of a circle of violence between the two gangs, said police officials. Police launched a hunt to apprehend the remaining accused.

## Hathiramji Mutt building not to be razed, assures Andhra government



TIRUPATI. (Agency)

Tirupati District Collector Dr S Venkateswar on Saturday dismissed rumours that the Hathiramji Mutt building on Gandhi Road in the temple city would be completely demolished. He clarified that only portions of the dilapidated structure with cracks and sagging would be addressed to ensure public safety.

The Collector, along with Tirupati MLA Arani Srinivasulu and Municipal Commissioner Maurya, inspected the Mutt and interacted with Banjara leaders who had arrived from Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and parts of North India to protest. Explaining the Mutt's significance, Dr Venkateswar said the 120-year-old structure once accommodated devotees, monks and sadhus, besides hosting food donation programmes. It later housed the Regional Endowments Office and a court, while for the past 30-40 years it was rented out for more than 60 shops.

He noted that lack of maintenance had left the building in a dangerous condition, with inspections going on for the past seven years. The Endowments Department had also been alerted about possible risks to life. Assuring the Banjara community, the Collector emphasised that the government values temples and mutts and would not hurt religious sentiments. He said that only alternative measures for the damaged portions would be taken.

# Mumbai: Police book four for duping 77-year-old of Rs 2.26 crore, sold her property, stole ornaments, transferred funds

Mumbai . (Agency)

The Nehru Nagar police have booked four persons for allegedly cheating a 77-year-old woman of Rs 2.26 crore by fraudulently selling her properties and stealing gold ornaments from her home. According to police, the victim, who lived alone and suffered from age-related health issues, including cataract, was manipulated by the accused into signing documents.

Police said one of the accused convinced the woman to sign an affidavit, claiming it was required for a passport application. Using those documents, the accused allegedly sold not only her flat but also the flat owned by her younger sister, who passed away in 2018. No arrests have been made in the case yet. The case was registered by the victim's 49-year-old cousin, Aparna Warekar, a

resident of Mahalaxmi. She discovered the fraud in March during a visit to the victim's residence, where she noticed that gold ornaments were missing. Upon further investigation, she found that the accused had also sold properties belonging to the victim located in Virar, Thane, and Belapur.

The complainant stated that her two maternal cousins Jayashree Chavan (77) and Ashalata Chavan were both unmarried and lived together in Nehru Nagar, Kurla (East). Ashalata, who had worked as a clerk in a private firm, passed away in 2018. Jayashree, a retired telephone operator from Mazgaon Dock, lived alone after her sister's death.

The complainant said she was aware that both sisters had invested in real estate and had

## Badal demands Rs 1-lakh per acre compensation for kinnow growers in visit to flood-hit villages

Ludhiana . (Agency)

Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) president Sukhbir Singh Badal on Saturday demanded compensation for farmers who have faced crop losses due to the month-long flooding in Abohar and Balluana assembly constituencies in Fazilka. Badal, who visited around fifty villages, said that horticulturists whose kinnow orchards have been destroyed, be awarded a compensation of Rs 1 lakh per acre, and Rs 40,000 per acre for those whose paddy crops have been hit. The SAD president also distributed three to four pumps besides hundreds of metres of plastic pipes in each of the villages. He also requested the Shiromani committee to hold medical camps wherever necessary besides asking the party cadre to arrange fodder for milch animals and supplying food packets to the affected persons.

Badal, while interacting with kinnow farmers, said it was shocking that orchards had been allowed to wither away in hundreds of acres with the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government failing to arrange for facilities to clear water from the flooded fields.

"Farmers told me that their kinnow orchards had been flooded for one month but no one from the drainage department took any

effort to drain out the water. Village women also lamented that they were being denied even basic relief facilities by the AAP government," he added.

Badal said it was even more shocking that AAP convener, who was staying put in Mohali and was even inaugurating even one room projects, has refused to visit the flood hit areas in both districts. "Even



Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann has failed to give any solace to those whose fields had been inundated with flood waters." He also asked why the Chief Minister had not released any interim relief for the flood victims as promised by him prior to the 2022 assembly elections. "As much as Rs 5,000 to Rs 6,000 crore is lying with the Punjab government under the Natural Disaster Relief fund but no money is being released to the flood-hit people," he added.

## YSRCP indulging in poisonous propaganda & fake politics: CM Chandrababu Naidu

Kakinada . (Agency)

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu launched a scathing attack on the YSRCP, accusing it of engaging in 'criminal politics' and spreading misinformation. Addressing the gathering at Prajavedika in Peddapuram of Kakinada district as part of the Swarnandhra-Swachhandhra programme on Saturday, Naidu criticised the previous YSRCP government for imposing garbage tax without effective waste management, alleging it left the State burdened with 85 lakh metric tonnes of refuse. Naidu outlined plans to transform waste into wealth through composting, plastic control, and e-waste recycling, including deploying specialised vehicles for collection and monetisation. He announced the presentation of Swachhandhra Awards in 16 categories, such as clean municipalities, and green ambassadors, to be presented on October 2, aligning with the programme's goal of achieving Swarna Andhra by 2047.

He accused the YSRCP of indulging in

"poisonous propaganda" and "fake politics," listing 10 specific instances to substantiate his claims. These included the Vivekananda murder case as a 'case study in criminal politics', 'Kodi kathi drama' during opposition days, 'Gulakaraya stunt' while in power, damage to the Polavaram project's diaphragm wall blamed on his administration, halting pensions during elections leading to 16 elderly people's death pinned on him, the death of worker Singayya allegedly covered up, video morphing to exaggerate crowds, false claims of Amaravati flooding, writing letters to deter investments, and misleading propaganda pension verifications. Naidu urged the public to recognise YSRCP's tactics, stating, "We are doing good work for the people, but the YSRCP is spewing venom." He contrasted his TDP 'vision politics' with YSRCP's alleged 'criminal politics,' warning that such parties have no place in society, and highlighting the YSRCP's ownership of media outlets for spreading falsehoods.



also purchased gold and silver, which was stored in a cupboard at home. She mentioned that a neighbor, Arif Solanki, used to visit and assist Jayashree with daily needs. Suspicion arose during Aparna's March visit

## Zimbabwe Vice President welcomes Sumul and Amul to his country

Chandigarh . (Agency)

Welcoming the products of Sumul and Amul into Zimbabwe, its Vice President Constantino Chiwenga on Saturday said that trade between India and the African country is possible in the areas of animal husbandry, dairy and technology transfer. "Our government has many good incentive schemes for the dairy, animal husbandry, agriculture and agri-technology industry. You should take advantage of them. No one needs to worry about security as Zimbabwe has a safe and capable government," Chiwenga said. He was speaking after meeting representatives of Sumul Dairy and Surat Agriculture Produce Marketing Committee on Saturday. A Zimbabwe delegation, led by Chiwenga, had Cabinet



Ministers Raj Modi (Deputy Minister – Minister of Industry and Commerce), Tongai Mafidi Mnangagwa (Deputy Minister – Ministry of Tourism and Hospitality Industry), Ambassador of Zimbabwe Stella Nkombo and top secretaries. On Friday, the delegation visited

Hari Krishna Exports, a diamond firm at Bhatpore.

Later in the afternoon, the delegates visited Aishwarya Dyeing and Printing Mill at Kadodara in Surat. The Chamber of Commerce had organised the 'Chalo Zimbabwe' programme in Surat on Saturday.

# Maharashtra: Mandatory registration, fee and curriculum norms soon for pre-primary schools

**According to the draft, once the Act is implemented, it will be mandatory for all existing pre-schools in Maharashtra to register with the school education department**

Mumbai . (Agency)

All pre-schools in Maharashtra including nurseries and kindergartens which are typically privately run will soon be required to obtain a registration certificate in order to operate. This registration will be granted only to institutions adhering to prescribed infrastructural and curriculum standards, as well as regulations related to fee structure, admission processes and teacher qualifications.

These provisions are part of the draft Maharashtra Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Act, 2025, which aims to empower the state's school education department to regulate the rapidly growing pre-primary education sector. According to the draft, once the Act is implemented, it will be mandatory for all existing pre-schools in Maharashtra to register with the school education department. Any new pre-school will also need to secure a registration certificate, which will only be granted if it

meets all eligibility criteria. A senior official from the department noted, "The number of pre-primary schools is constantly on rise without any monitoring on their operations. Some are even operating out of residential properties. The monitoring will ensure standardisation in pre-primary education imparted in all such schools." Pre-primary institutions, which cater to children aged 3 to 6 years, have so far remained largely unregulated. However, following the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 — which identifies this age group as the foundational stage of learning — pre-schools are now being brought under the school education department's jurisdiction. While voluntary registration is already underway in the state, the proposed legislation has been in development for some time. The first draft was recently circulated among department officials for feedback.

Beyond registration, the draft Act outlines



curriculum guidelines mandating all pre-schools to follow syllabi from MSCERT, NCERT, SCERT or NIPCCD. The curriculum is expected to promote foundational literacy and numeracy, alongside play-based and experiential learning to foster holistic cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development.

The draft defines a pre-primary school as any institution — including Early Childhood Care and Education Centres, Play Groups, Nursery, Junior Kindergarten, or Senior Kindergarten — that offers education to children below the age of six. This definition applies irrespective of the name, medium of instruction, or whether the institution is standalone or attached to a primary school. Crèches, however, are excluded. Infrastructural standards outlined in the draft include requirements for safe buildings, gender-separated child-friendly toilets, and adequate indoor and outdoor learning spaces. Teacher qualification requirements will align with those prescribed by the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE). Existing teachers will be given five years from the implementation of the Act to meet the required qualifications. For government-run pre-schools and anganwadis, the state will be responsible for providing necessary training.

# 7 killed, 15 hurt as LPG tanker explodes after collision in Punjab's Mandiala

Seven people were killed and 15 injured after an LPG tanker exploded following a collision near Mandiala in Hoshiarpur, Punjab.

#### Agency New Delhi.

Seven people died and 15 sustained burn injuries after an LPG tanker exploded following a collision with a pickup vehicle near Mandiala Adda on the Hoshiarpur-Jalandhar road late Saturday night. Police confirmed the victims as Sukhjeet Singh (driver), Balwant Rai, Dharmender Verma, Manjit Singh, Vijay, Jaswinder Kaur, and Aradhna Verma. Verma, 28, succumbed to injuries while being shifted to Amritsar.

## India Conducts Maiden Flight Tests of Integrated Air Defence Weapon System

#### Agency New Delhi.

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully carried out the maiden flight tests of the Integrated Air Defence Weapon System (IADWS), Defence Minister Rajnath Singh announced on Sunday. The tests were conducted at 12.30 p.m. on Saturday (August 23) off the coast of Odisha.

Sharing the achievement on X, Rajnath Singh said, "IADWS is a multi-layered air defence system comprising of all indigenous Quick Reaction Surface to Air Missile (QRSAM), Advanced Very Short Range Air Defence System (VSHORADS) missiles and a high power laser-based Directed Energy Weapon (DEW)." Congratulating the DRDO, the Armed Forces and the defence industry, the Defence Minister added, "This unique flight test has established the multi-layered air defence capability of our country and is going to strengthen area defence for important facilities against enemy aerial threats."

The Integrated Air Defence Weapon System is designed to counter a wide spectrum of aerial threats. The system incorporates radar, launchers, targeting and guidance systems, missiles, and command-and-control units to provide comprehensive air defence. Unlike imported systems, it is indigenously developed and integrates multiple layers of defence, including QRSAM, VSHORADS, and DEW to protect strategic assets.

This successful test comes close on the heels of another milestone achieved by India's missile programme. On August 20, the nuclear-capable Agni-5 intermediate-range ballistic missile was test-fired from the Integrated Test Range (ITR) at Chandipur in Odisha. In a statement, the Ministry of Defence said, "The intermediate-range ballistic missile Agni-5 was successfully test-fired from Chandipur on August 20. The launch validated all operational and technical parameters and was conducted under the aegis of the Strategic Forces Command."

## Delhi Court Orders Prioritising Cases Of Armed Forces, Paramilitary Personnel

#### Agency New Delhi.

The Delhi High Court has directed all lower courts in the national capital to prioritise hearing cases related to the three armed forces - the Army, Navy, and Air Force, as well as paramilitary forces. The circular, issued by Registrar General Arun Bhardwaj on August 7, on the directions of the Chief Justice, cites provisions under the Army Act, 1950, Navy Act, 1957, and Air Force Act, 1950, which provide for special treatment in litigation involving armed forces personnel. The Indian Soldiers (Litigation) Act, 1925, amended in 2018, also provides additional protection for serving soldiers. The Chief Justice instructed all district and sessions courts in Delhi to ensure early hearings and expeditious disposal of civil, revenue, and criminal cases related to members of the armed forces. Further, the directive extended to cases involving paramilitary personnel, ensuring their matters are heard on priority.

Copies of the circular have been forwarded to all Principal District and Sessions Judges across Delhi, including Tis Hazari, Rohini, Saket, Dwarka, Karkardooma, and Patiala House Courts.

Justice Surya Kant, while talking exclusively to NDTV, welcomed the Delhi High Court's decision. He said he wishes that the rest of the High Courts of the country also take similar steps and resolve the legal problems of the soldiers engaged in protecting the country as soon as possible. The decision comes after National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) led by Executive Chairman and the next in line to become Chief Justice of India, Justice Surya Kant launched 'NALSA Veer Parivar Sahayata Yojana' in Srinagar to relieve soldiers from domestic legal burdens by ensuring they get the best possible legal representation even if they don't get leave and can't appear for court proceedings.

Justice Surya Kant, who conceived and spearheaded the initiative, told that NALSA is coordinating with the defence department to ensure Army soldiers are given legal help and can focus on their jobs, which is critical for national security.

"Verma, who had sustained severe burn injuries, was referred to the Government Medical College, Amritsar, but he succumbed on the way," Civil Surgeon Dr Pawan Kumar said.

The injured include Balwant Singh (55), Harbans Lal (60), Amarjeet Kaur (50), Sukhjeet Kaur, Jyoti, Suman, Gurmuik Singh, Harpreet Kaur, Kusum, Bhagwan Das, Lally Verma, Sita, Ajay, Sanjay, Raghav, and Pooja. Some of them have already been discharged from hospital.

Hoshiarpur Superintendent of Police (Investigation) Mukesh Kumar confirmed the casualties. Sub-Inspector Maninder Singh, SHO of Bullock Police Station, said an FIR has been registered under sections 105 (culpable homicide not amounting to murder) and 324(4) (mischief causing damage to property) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sahita.

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann announced financial assistance of Rs 2 lakh each for the families of the victims and assured free medical treatment for the

injured. Punjab Governor and Chandigarh Administrator Gulab Chand Kataria expressed grief, saying, "I am deeply pained to learn about the tragedy that has taken away innocent lives and caused



injuries to many. My heartfelt condolences go out to the families who have lost their loved ones in this devastating mishap." Residents of Mandiala and adjoining villages staged a dharna, blocking traffic for over three hours, demanding compensation and strict action. The protest ended after SDM Gursimranjeet Kaur assured them that

compensation would be given and those responsible would face action. Cabinet Minister Dr Rayjot Singh, MLA Bram Shanker Jimpa, MP Raj Kumar Chabbewal, and Deputy Commissioner Aashika Jain visited the area and expressed solidarity with the families.

Punjab Congress chief Amrinder Singh Raja Warring, accompanied by MP Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa, demanded a thorough probe. Warring said, "Families who lost loved ones should receive at least Rs 1 crore in relief, along with full compensation for damaged houses and shops." Recounting the horrifying moments, Mandiala resident Gurmuik Singh (56) said, "I was taking a bath when I heard a blast. Suddenly, flames surrounded us. My wife, daughter, and daughter-in-law sustained burn injuries. Somehow, I managed to save my grandson by wrapping him in a blanket." According to police, the tanker was turning towards the Ram Nagar Dheha link road when it collided with the pickup, triggering the deadly blast.

West Bengal Governor CV Ananda Bose attends screening of Bengali film 'Goodbye Mountain', praises starcast

#### Agency New Delhi.

West Bengal Governor CV Ananda Bose attended a special screening of the Bengali movie, 'Goodbye Mountain' on Saturday, August 23. The Governor attended the screening along with the lead stars of the film. He had all praises for the crew members and the storyline of the film. West Bengal Governor C Ananda Bose showed enthusiasm in attending the premier of Bengali film, 'Goodbye Mountain'. After the premier the office of the Governor posted about it on his official social media handle. They informed that a special screening of the film was held in Raj Bhavan.

#### Governor praises film

After watching the premier, Bose said, "The movie was an eye-feast and mind-feast. Smt. Rituparna Sengupta, as the heroine, showed her talent at its best in the film. Others also gave a matching performance and made the movie memorable and inspiring." The Governor was all praises for the actors and crew members of the film. He also felicitated the cast and crew after watching the movie. Pictures of the felicitation ceremony were shared on 'X' by the office of the Governor.

#### Know all about the Bengali film 'Goodbye Mountain'

The film 'Goodbye Mountain' has been directed by Indrasis Acharya. The film's starcast comprises Jayashree Adhikary, Indraneil Sengupta and Rituparna Sengupta among others. The film was released around a month back and it opened to good reviews in film theatres. The film has a good rating of 7.5 on IMDB. The screening of the film at the Raj Bhavan was a matter of pride for the cast and crew. The film's actors and the director were present at Raj Bhavan for the screening.

## Nation must come first, CM Rekha Gupta calls upon SRCC students

#### Agency New Delhi.

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, addressing the 99th Annual Day of Shri Ram College of Commerce (SRCC) today, urged students to dedicate a part of their lives to the country. She emphasised that while career, family, and personal growth are important, every young citizen must commit at least one responsibility to the nation, society, and city. The CM said India's youth are its greatest asset and their creativity and vision can transform the country's future. "Every individual has their own identity and potential. While you pursue your career and personal goals, keep a portion reserved for your nation," said the Chief Minister.

She added, "If something wrong is happening around you, react and work towards setting it right." Stressing the need to strengthen India's self-reliance, she said, "Your vision, your hard work, and your creativity will decide the country's progress. The 140 crore people of India are not a liability, but a strength."

Sharing her personal journey, Gupta recalled her days as a student leader at Delhi University. "When I was president, I once faced a severe injury during a protest, but I never stopped. Even at a young age, I believed one must keep moving forward. Today, with the strength and blessings of the people of Delhi, I face challenges with courage," she said.

Reflecting on her long association with Delhi University, she spoke warmly about student life, friendships, and memories that last a lifetime. "SRCC has always been one of the finest colleges, not just in Delhi University but in Asia. Wherever its alumni go, they carry this proud legacy," the chief minister said, adding that her own long association with the university continues to inspire her in public life.

## Pak woman, who came to India in 1956, found on Bihar voter list amid SIR

A Pakistani woman's name has appeared on Bihar's voter list, prompting its removal process. The discovery came during a Home Ministry probe into foreign nationals overstaying visas.

#### Agency New Delhi.

The Special Intensive Revision (SIR) in poll-bound Bihar has thrown up a surprise, as a Pakistani woman who came to India in 1956 has been included in the state's voter list and was even verified during the recently concluded exercise by the Election Commission of India. The discovery came during a Home Ministry probe into foreign nationals overstaying visas, which revealed the case of Imrana Khanam from Bhagalpur. "She was not in a condition to talk; she is old and unwell. As per the orders of the



department, I filled out the form and began the process of removing her name. Her passport is of 1956, and she got her visa in 1958. She is from Pakistan... The next step of the

investigation will be carried out by the department... I had received a notice from the Home Ministry on 11 August,"

This list, published after a Supreme Court order on August 14, is accessible to the public on the Election Commission's official website.

Voters can now verify their names in the electoral roll through a new link on the Election Commission of Bihar's website. The Supreme Court instructed that district-wise lists of removed names be published, specifying reasons such as death, migration, or duplicate registration.

The top court also directed Election Officers to display these lists at District Offices and use social media for broader dissemination. Booth Level Offices and Panchayat offices are tasked with publicising these lists.

## UP Woman Kills Self, 2 Children As Husband Refuses To Give Money For 'Gutkha'

#### Agency New Delhi.

A woman in Uttar Pradesh's Chitrakoot killed herself and two children with poison after a fight with her husband over 'gutkha' (tobacco). Her third child, who was also poisoned, is currently in a critical condition in a hospital. Jyoti Yadav, 26, was reportedly addicted to 'gutkha' and asked her husband, Babu Yadav, a driver by profession, for money to buy it on Saturday morning. The fight escalated when he refused to give the money. Later that evening, she allegedly consumed poison and also fed it to her children.

When Babu returned home after work, he found his four-year-old son writhing in pain, crying that his mother had given him something bitter. The

youngest, one-year-old girl, had already stopped breathing, and Jyoti herself was in critical condition inside



the house. The family rushed them to Majhgawan Community Health Centre, where doctors declared the infant, Bulbul, dead. The others were referred to Satna

District Hospital due to their worsening condition. However, Jyoti and her four-year-old daughter, Chandrama, died on the way. Five-year-old Deepchand survived and is undergoing treatment, though his condition remains critical.

Relatives and villagers said that disputes over Jyoti's 'gutkha' consumption had become a regular affair. Her husband had often tried to stop her, concerned about the impact on the children and their future. Doctors and police confirmed that poison had been ingested. Majhgawan Block Medical Officer Rupesh Soni said that when the family arrived, the signs of poisoning were evident, and immediate referrals had to be made due to the severity of the cases.

## Paramilitary Force CRPF's Former Chief Named Ajit Doval's Deputy

Anish Dayal Singh, a 1988-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer from the Manipur cadre, retired from service in December 2024.

#### Agency New Delhi.

Former CRPF and ITBP director general Anish Dayal Singh has been appointed the new deputy National Security Advisor (NSA), with a mandate to handle internal affairs, official sources said. Mr Singh, a 1988-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer from the Manipur cadre, retired from service in December 2024.

He brings extensive experience to the role, having served for nearly 30 years in the Intelligence Bureau (IB) before heading the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), and most recently, the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF).

According to officials, Mr Singh will be in charge of internal affairs of the country, including Jammu and Kashmir, and Naxal and Northeastern insurgency, as the deputy NSA. Former RAW chief Rajinder Khanna is the Additional NSA, while retired IPS officer TV

Ravichandran and former IFS officer Pawan Kapoor are the two serving deputy NSAs.

During his tenure as CRPF chief, Mr Singh was instrumental in a number of key initiatives, such as CRPF's strides in combating Naxalism, establishing over three dozen forward operating bases, and introducing four new battalions in the Left-Wing Extremism-affected areas.

He also oversaw the CRPF's role in ensuring security during the 2024 Lok Sabha elections and the first Assembly elections in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. Internally, Mr Singh initiated a comprehensive realignment of over 130 CRPF battalions — the first such

restructuring in eight years, which is aimed at improving operational efficiency and providing troops with more "family time," reducing the

gather feedback, a move widely appreciated within the force.

The appointment comes alongside the Union government's approval of granting honorary ranks to retiring personnel of the central armed forces, a policy Mr Singh championed. Earlier this year, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) issued an order approving a policy aimed at boosting the morale of subordinate officers in the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) and Assam Rifles.

The proposal for this policy was originally moved by Mr Singh himself with a reasoning to overcome the long-standing issue of stagnation in promotional avenues, with some constables waiting as long as 20 years for their first promotion.



average distance between units and their parent centres from 1,200 km to 500 km. He also introduced "samvaad" (dialogue) sessions with company commanders to

## NEWS BOX

**Arsenal signs Eze in reported \$80 million move in a homecoming for the England forward, a blow to Spurs**

**New Delhi. (Agency)**

Arsenal pulled off a big move late in the summer transfer window by signing England forward Eberechi Eze, who was a reported target of north London rival Tottenham. Eze joined from Crystal Palace on Saturday for a reported initial fee of 60 million pounds (\$80 million). That took Arsenal's spending in this summer transfer window to around 250 million pounds (\$335 million), second only to Liverpool across the whole of European soccer. For the 27-year-old Eze, it marks a return to the club where he spent some years as a youth-team player being released at the age of 13.

Fans chanted "one of our own" and gave Eze a standing ovation when he walked out onto the field before kickoff at Arsenal's Premier



League home match against Leeds, wearing his new team jersey with the No. 10 on the back and blowing kisses to the crowd.

The move had been confirmed only minutes before by Arsenal. "His journey, his mentality, and his ambition are exactly what we want in our team, and we love how much it means to him and his family to be joining our club," Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta said. "We all look forward to start working with Eberechi soon." Eze started his professional career at second-tier Queens Park Rangers before moving to Palace in 2020, where he became one of the most exciting attacking midfielders in the league and a regular in the England squad. Last season, Eze scored the winning goal in the FA Cup final as Palace beat Manchester City 1-0 to qualify for European competition for the first time. Palace played its first ever European fixture on Thursday — a Conference League playoff against Fredrikstad of Norway — but Eze didn't play in it so he could complete his move to Arsenal. Tottenham, which has lost attacking midfielders James Maddison and Dejan Kulusevski to long-term injuries

## Asia Cup: Rashid Khan to lead spin-heavy Afghanistan squad as Ghazanfar returns

**New Delhi. (Agency)**

Rashid Khan will lead a spin-dominant Afghanistan squad at the 2025 Men's T20 Asia Cup, set to be held in the United Arab Emirates from 9 to 28 September 2025. The 17-member squad, announced by the Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) on Sunday (August 24), sees the return of mystery spinner Allah Mohammad Ghazanfar and experienced campaigner Mujeeb Ur Rahman, both of whom missed the Champions Trophy earlier this year. The spin arsenal will be spearheaded by Rashid himself, with support from veteran all-rounder Mohammad Nabi, left-arm wrist-spinner Noor Ahmad, off-spinner Mujeeb, and the 17-year-old Ghazanfar. Together, they form one of the most formidable spin attacks in the tournament. Afghanistan, who were the second-best-performing Asian side at the last Men's T20 World Cup behind champions India, come into the Asia Cup with limited recent T20I experience. They've played only three T20Is in the past



12 months - a December 2024 series against Zimbabwe in Harare, which they won 2-1. Several changes have been made since that Zimbabwe tour. Top-order batter Hazratullah Zazai and batting allrounder Zubaid Akbari have been left out, while left-arm spinner Nangayalia Kharote has been named among the reserves. Returning to the fold are opener Ibrahim Zadran, allrounder Sharafuddin Ashraf, and Ghazanfar, who adds variety with his mystery spin. Darwish Rasooli and Sediqullah Atal will anchor the batting unit, while Rahmanullah Gurbaz and Mohammad Ishaq are the designated wicketkeeper-batters.

# Cheteshwar Pujara retires: The man who never relaxed, but was always at peace

**Cheteshwar Pujara retires as one of India's most successful Test batters with 7,195 runs in 103 Tests. But numbers alone don't define his greatness. It was his patience, resilience, and quiet defiance that turned time itself into his greatest innings.**

**NEW YORK. (Agency)**

In her book The Diary of a Cricketer's Wife: A Very Unusual Memoir, Puja Pujara wrote a line that could easily serve as her husband's epitaph. A paradox, a truth, and perhaps the clearest portrait of a man who has built both a cricketing career and a way of life on patience, quietude, and discipline. The sentence lingered with me long after I first read it. And when I eventually met Cheteshwar Pujara in person, I realised it wasn't just a wife's affectionate indulgence — it was the truest thing that could be said about a

man who, in an era that seemed to have moved past him, fought on quietly and still finished as India's eighth-highest run-getter, with 7,195 runs across 103 Tests. The day itself was unremarkable. A hot summer afternoon in Noida, a string of back-to-back interviews at the India Today office, where the couple were promoting Puja's book. By the end of it, they looked weary. Their smiles were intact, but they had become the polite smiles of people who had answered the same questions too many times. As they made their way to the car park, my colleague and I hovered, hoping for a chance. We had asked earlier about an interview and hadn't been denied, but neither had we been promised one. The window was closing fast. Disappointment weighed heavy as we turned back toward our desks, already rehearsing the apology we would have to make to our editor. And then, Pujara stopped. He turned, looked back, and spoke gently. Not today, he said, but he would make time. He promised. It would have been easy, even understandable, if he had forgotten. But three days later, amidst a packed broadcasting schedule, Pujara kept his word. A virtual conversation, Puja by his side, unfolded with honesty and warmth. In that moment, I

understood what his wife had meant in her author's note when she wrote: "Despite his reserve, he never says no to anyone, even if the request is made by a stranger; he will always go that extra mile, sometimes at great



personal cost."

**PUJARA: BUILT ON FOCUS**

If there is one word that keeps circling back to Pujara's life, it is peace. Not the kind found in stillness, but the kind earned through practice. "My father made sure that my practice had purpose," Pujara told IndiaToday in May. "No distractions were allowed during sessions. No conversations either. Even if I wanted to speak to the bowler, he ensured I didn't. My entire focus had to be on the game." What began as silence

in the nets became a way of life. Prayer, too, became routine, a gift from his late mother. "She taught me to pray every day, whether I was playing or not. That helped me channel my energy." Later, yoga and breathing exercises entered his routine. His batting is an extension of that inner discipline. For every hundred he scored, there were hours of leaving the ball outside off stump, hours of trusting that patience is not passive but active resistance.

**THE ROCKATNO.3**

From the outside, Pujara's legacy is defined by moments that have already entered Indian cricketing folklore: the 1,258 balls he faced in the 2018-19

Australia tour, where India won their first series on Australian soil; the body blows he absorbed at the Gabba in 2021, where his bruises were as much a part of the victory as Rishabh Pant's swashbuckling strokes. But to dwell only on those moments is to miss the deeper truth. Pujara's greatness lies not in one series or another, but in the cumulative patience of a man who was willing to spend entire afternoons defending-unhurried, unbothered, unmoved by the temptations of the modern game.

## CPL: Tim David's controversial dismissal mars Knight Riders' win over St Lucia

**New Delhi. (Agency)**

The match 10 of the Caribbean Premier League (CPL) between Trinbago Knight Riders and Saint Lucia Kings at Daren Sammy National Cricket Stadium, Gros Islet, St Lucia was marred by the controversial dismissal of Tim David. The Australia batter was dismissed for 10 (8) at a crucial juncture of the game as Saint Lucia required 71 runs to win from 33 balls.

In the 15th over of the innings, David tried to swing hard at a full delivery by Mohammad Amir. However, the bowler felt he had heard something and captain Nicholas Pooran immediately went up for review. The replays showed that there was a clear gap between bat and ball, but much to everyone's surprise, the Snicko showed a spike. As a result, David had to walk back to the pavilion, leaving his team in disarray, chasing a target of 184. Following



but Maddy Darke and Anika Learoyd quickly shut the door with a decisive stand. Darke scored a fluent 68, while Learoyd's composed 72 anchored the chase. The duo rotated the strike smartly, punished loose deliveries, and built a 136-run partnership that effectively put the result beyond doubt, despite India A rotating their bowlers in search of a breakthrough. Darke fell to Tanusree Sarkar and Learoyd was dismissed by VJ Jositha shortly before the finish, but the outcome was already settled. Nicole Faltum (16\*) and Ella Hayward (4\*) completed the formalities with ease. For India A, Thakor was the most effective bowler with 2/63, while Sarkar and Jositha picked up one wicket each. However, the attack lacked bite on a benign final-day surface, with the spinners in particular struggling to trouble the set batters. The victory showcased Australia A's batting depth, highlighted earlier by Sianna Ginger's first-innings century. For India A, Raghvi Bist's twin half-centuries stood out, but the visitors were left to rue missed opportunities across the four days.

**Australia A Women chased down 281, defeating India A Women by six wickets in the unofficial Test in Brisbane. Anchored by strong partnerships from Rachel Trenaman, Tahlia Wilson, Maddy Darke, and Anika Learoyd, the hosts sealed the one-off contest.**

**New Delhi. (Agency)**

Australia A Women produced a complete performance to beat India A Women by six wickets on the fourth and final day of the unofficial Test in Brisbane, sealing the one-off contest in convincing fashion. Chasing 281 for victory, the hosts paced their innings superbly to reach 283/4 in 85.3 overs, with consistent contributions from the top order ensuring India A could never

## Novak Djokovic battles time and rivals: Can his US Open glory still be realistic

**Novak Djokovic enters the 2025 US Open chasing a record 25th Grand Slam, battling not only Carlos Alcaraz and Jannik Sinner but also the inevitability of time at the age of 38.**

**New Delhi. (Agency)**

Novak Djokovic steps into the 2025 US Open carrying more than just his racquet — he carries history, hope, and the weight of time. He stands on the brink of a record-breaking 25th Grand Slam title, a milestone that would take him beyond Margaret Court's long-standing tally of 24. Yet, at 38, he confronts the harshest opponent of all — age. No man of his years has ever lifted a major singles trophy in the Open Era; Ken Rosewall's 1972 Australian Open triumph at 37 remains the distant benchmark. For Djokovic, the memories of New York still



linger. It was here, in 2023, that he conquered the US Open to become the oldest men's champion in Open Era history. That victory was more than a title — it was a testament to resilience, a defiance of limits. Now, two years on, the fire within him still rages. Every match could be a farewell, every set a reminder that time waits for no champion. Yet, Djokovic's story has always been about rewriting destiny. Can this unyielding spirit defy the years once more, turning the twilight of his

career into the dawn of immortality?

**Is Djokovic good enough for Sim-Caraz challenge?**

Djokovic's quest for another title at Flushing Meadows is nothing short of a battle against time — and two men who seem to have his number. Standing in his path are Carlos Alcaraz and Jannik Sinner, the two forces who have redefined men's tennis. Djokovic sits in Alcaraz's half and could face the Spaniard in the semi-finals, a clash that would revive one of the sport's fiercest rivalries. Djokovic still leads their head-to-head 5-3, with a crucial win over Alcaraz at the Australian Open earlier this year. Yet, on hard courts, Alcaraz's explosive game and youthful legs have proven lethal. But the bigger nightmare looms in the final: Jannik Sinner. The Italian has humiliated Djokovic in their last five encounters, not conceding a single set.

his dismissal, the remaining batters succumbed under pressure as St Lucia finished their innings on 165/6 in 20 overs, handing Trinbago Knight Riders an 18-run victory. Johnson Charles 47 (37) was the top scorer for St Lucia, while Andre Russell (2/38) and Usman Tariq (2/20) were the pick of the bowlers. Earlier, Kieron Pollard wreaked havoc on St Lucia with his thunderous innings of 65 (29) studded with four fours and six sixes. Apart from him, Colin Munro (43 off 30) and Nicholas Pooran (34 off 30) also made valuable contributions. Keon Gaston (2/38) emerged as the pick of the bowlers for St Lucia. Pollard was deservedly adjudged Player of the Match in his team's win. Meanwhile, following their win, Knight Riders climbed to third spot on the points table with four points from three matches, while St Lucia are ranked fifth with three points in as many matches.

## Eddie Howe insists Newcastle will definitely sign a striker if Alexander Isak leaves

**Newcastle United's owners will not leave the club without a recognised striker if the long-running transfer saga involving Alexander Isak ends with the Swede's departure, manager Eddie Howe said ahead of their Premier League clash with Liverpool.**

**NEW YORK. (Agency)**

Newcastle United manager Eddie Howe has made it clear that the club will not be left without a recognised striker, even if

Alexander Isak departs amid ongoing transfer speculation. Ahead of Newcastle's Premier League clash with Liverpool, Howe addressed the uncertainty surrounding the Swedish forward, who has been the subject of a reported 110 million bid from Liverpool earlier this month. Tensions escalated when Isak accused the club of breaking promises in a social media post on Tuesday. Newcastle responded by reaffirming that no commitment had been made to sell the 25-year-old, who remains under contract until 2028. Despite links to several strikers during the summer transfer window, no signings have materialised so far. With Callum Wilson already having left the club, Isak's potential exit could leave 22-year-old William Osula as the only senior forward available. "I don't think the club will allow that situation to happen. We certainly can't go through the season with no recognised striker at the football club," Howe told reporters. "And that's no disrespect to Will

Osula. I think he's doing really well and progressing, but he has limited experience in the Premier League. I'm really happy with



his development, but Alex is currently the only striker we have with a proven record in this league. We simply can't afford to be left in that position." While Howe admits that replacing Isak would be close to impossible, he believes Anthony Gordon could step up to the challenge if needed. Ideally, the Newcastle boss would have liked to keep Isak for Sunday's high-stakes match against the reigning champions and to have at least one new striker signed before kickoff at a packed St James' Park. Newcastle began their season with a goalless draw away at Aston Villa, adding weight to criticism that the team lacks firepower without their star striker. Still, Howe remains optimistic, particularly about Gordon's potential in a central role. "I don't think anyone can fill Alex's boots — and Anthony knows that," Howe said. "He's not trying to be Alex. He has to be himself. If he'd scored at Aston Villa, you'd say that was the perfect No. 9 performance. He had seven shots, looked dangerous, and forced a red card. He was using his strengths — his pace and dribbling. We missed a goal in that game, but hopefully that part will come." While Isak continues to train separately from the squad, Gordon has been undergoing intensive work to adapt to a central striker's role. "It's a bit different for him," Howe explained.

## Global Cues, Fed Rate Cut Signals Among Major Factors To Drive Indian Stock Market Next Week

MUMBAI.(Agency)

The coming week will be crucial for the Indian stock market as global developments, US interest rate signals, industrial output data, and foreign investment trends are expected to drive market sentiment. In his speech at the Jackson Hole symposium, US Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell hinted at a possible interest rate cut. This triggered a strong rally in US markets during the last trading session, and analysts believe the positive momentum could spill over into Indian equities when markets open on Monday.

Experts say that a rate cut in the US could help reduce foreign institutional investors' (FIIs) outflows from India. Lower US interest rates usually weaken bond yields and the dollar, making emerging markets like India more attractive for foreign investors. Last week, FIIs sold shares worth Rs 1,559.51 crore in the Indian market, while domestic institutional investors (DIIs) were net buyers with purchases worth Rs 10,388.23 crore. Adding to this, India's Index of Industrial Production (IIP) data will also be released next week, providing insights into the performance of the country's industrial sector. The figures are closely tracked by investors and have a direct impact on market sentiment. The previous week closed on a strong note for Indian markets. The Nifty rose 238.80 points, or 0.97 per cent, to end at 24,870.10, while the Sensex gained 709.19 points, or 0.88 per cent, to close at 81,306.85. The rally was broad-based, with gains seen across large-cap, mid-cap, and small-cap stocks. The Nifty Midcap 100 jumped 1.99 per cent or 1,125.50 points to 57,629.75, while the Nifty Smallcap 100 surged 2.12 per cent or 372.05 points to 17,919.50. Among sectoral indices, Nifty Auto emerged as the top gainer last week, climbing 5.02 per cent, realty rose 3.45 per cent, consumption 3.01 per cent, FMCG 1.98 per cent, IT 1.74 per cent and metal 1.73 per cent. Sudeep Shah, Head of Technical Research and Derivatives at SBI Securities, said that the recent rally was largely driven by S&P Global Ratings upgrading India's outlook, which boosted investor confidence. He added that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement of upcoming GST reforms before Diwali further strengthened market sentiment.

## Regulated pre-IPO trading platform to bring transparency, liquidity: Experts

New Delhi.(Agency)

Market regulator Sebi's plan to introduce a regulated pre-IPO trading platform could reshape how investors buy and sell unlisted shares, bringing transparency to a space long dominated by the opaque grey market and reducing risks for retail investors, market experts said. Moreover, for employees, especially those holding ESOPs (employee stock options), the framework could be a game-changer. Rajesh Singla, founder and CEO of Planify, which deals in buying and selling of unlisted shares, explained that a large portion of ESOPs remains unutilised today as employees lack access to liquidity options before an initial public offering (IPO). With Sebi's proposed system, they would finally have an avenue to monetise their holdings in a regulated environment. On Friday, Sebi chairman Tuhin Kanta Pandey hinted at introducing a regulated platform for pre-IPO share trading, potentially replacing existing grey market practices. The move, if implemented, may also allow investors to trade shares in a transparent environment during the three-day gap between allotment and listing. At present, this window is dominated by the unregulated grey market, which could be replaced by a formal mechanism. Currently, the grey market functions as an informal over-the-counter network, where brokers and investors negotiate deals based on the expected listing price. The Grey Market Premium (GMP) often emerges as the key sentiment indicator. While GMP doesn't guarantee outcomes, it frequently shapes retail investor decisions on whether to apply for an IPO, said Trivesh, COO of Tradejini.

## Personal loan: Is it possible to get more than one simultaneously

Kolkata.(Agency)

Personal loans are the most popular credit instrument in the market. Its popularity stems from the fact that it does not need an collateral asset to be offered to the lender by the borrower. Moreover, it is quickly disbursed. Many take personal loans to purchase gadgets such as phones, computers, white goods, TV sets etc. Now it may so happen that while you are servicing a personal loan taken to buy a fancy TV, you need to take another loan because of some medical emergency. A significant point about personal loans is that the end use of funds are not dictated by the lender. One can use it for almost anything from going on a vacation to picking up wedding expenses, from paying admission fees of an educational institution to paying a surgeon's fee. Therefore, the number of personal loan applications is far higher than any other category of loans. Significantly, there are no guidelines about lending institutions offering more than one personal loan to an individual. Banks, too, don't have any explicit policy limiting the number of personal loans one can apply for. Banks seem to be more concerned about the total amount one can service from one's monthly income.

### No bar on number of loans

The largest private sector lender in this country, HDFC Bank, has said that it is "technically possible to have two personal loans at the same time". However, the feasibility depends on a few factors such as creditworthiness, debt-to-income ratio etc.

## As growth stumbles, private sector needs to do more

A review of company results by business writers show listed companies, for the April-June quarter, witnessed only single-digit growth in revenue; and that is the story for 9 consecutive quarters.

New Delhi.(Agency)

The signals have been there. The economy has been slowing. But now the challenges of trade disruption, tepid consumer demand, and insufficient private corporate investment have begun to impact industry performance and corporate results. Things are likely to get worse before they get better if the 50% tariffs on exports to the US kick in by the month end. Earlier denials have been replaced by some panic. Perhaps the alarm has galvanized the government to announce a 15-August package of Goods and Services Tax (GST) reforms, hoping lower tax will generate higher consumer

demand.

### Slower growth, profits

A review of company results by business writers show listed companies, for the April-June quarter, witnessed only single-digit growth in revenue; and that is the story for 9 consecutive quarters. Their core profits (excluding other income and one-time gains) has followed the same trajectory, contracting for the second time in 4 quarters. Some companies have gained from the lower energy costs; but the growth leaders -- IT, banking, FMCG, automobiles and pharmaceuticals -- have all shown slowing growth in both turnover and profits. Combined net sales for these 3,000 or so companies for the April-June period this year rose just 6% from a year ago, the slowest since the June-September 2023 period. This means for the last 9 consecutive quarters, or over two years, the revenue growth has been averaging just 6.9%, slower than the average GDP growth. There is evidence of a sectoral slowdown too. Eight infrastructure sectors growth fell to a two-month low of 2% in July 2025 due to a dip in the production of coal, crude oil, natural gas, and refinery products. Growth in these

sectors had risen 6.3% in July last year. The production growth was 2.2% in the previous month of June.

Growth was dragged down by five key sectors of coal, crude oil, natural gas, and refinery products, which recorded a



decline in output in July. The production growth of fertilizer and electricity moderated to 2 per cent and 0.5 per cent in July from 5.3 per cent and 7.9 per cent in July 2024, respectively. The contraction in output was the sharpest for coal that fell 12.3% in July 2025 from 6.8% in June 2024, the steepest contraction in over five years.

### Companies are risk-averse

Unfortunately, the private sector has played

the victim card long; and it is time to call it

out for evading its responsibilities. Private enterprise is a large stakeholder in the Indian economy and, while government policies and global shifts impact its performance, the private sector must also invest in future growth rather than sit on its profits and wait for the weather to turn. This problem of aversion to risk has been underlined by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. At a recent business event she said though the government had committed two primary tools to stimulate investment: public spending and a dynamic policy to encourage industry, the anticipated acceleration in private sector investment had not materialized. Post

2019, private corporate entities had posted healthier balance sheets, but they continued to "sit on passive investible funds." In other words, these funds were not deployed to expand operations and capacity. A report by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) supports this assessment, showing that while private sector CAPEX (Capital Expenditure) reached a record high in FY 2024-25, it is projected to decline in FY 2025-26, though still exceeding pre-2023 levels.

## The hidden catch in 40-year term insurance policies and how to choose better

MUMBAI.(Agency)

Getting term insurance is a smart tool in financial planning. However, it can quietly turn protection into a burden. Buying a 40-year term insurance policy is like paying rent for a house you'll never live in that long. It feels safe, but often it's money that could be better used elsewhere. And here's the catch: not everyone needs it for 30-40 years. The real question is, how long should your protection last, and do you even need it in the first place?

### WHAT IS TERM INSURANCE?

Term insurance is a simple risk cover. It provides protection for a fixed period without any investment or savings component.

If the policyholder dies during the policy term, the nominee receives a lump sum payment. However, if the policyholder survives beyond the term, no money is paid out.

### WHO REALLY NEEDS TERM INSURANCE?

Abhishek Kumar, Sebi-registered investment adviser and founder of Sahaj Money, said that not everyone needs term insurance.

"Any earning member of the family who has financial dependents should buy term insurance. So that in the absence of the earning member, the dependents do not face financial hardship in managing expenses and meeting financial goals," he said. This means that salaried individuals or self-employed people supporting families should consider it, while those without dependents or with enough wealth may not require it.

### HOW TO DECIDE THE RIGHT COVERAGE AMOUNT

Experts suggest that the coverage amount should not be picked randomly. Kumar explained that it should be calculated based on Human Life Value, the financial worth of an individual in terms of income and responsibilities.

"As a thumb rule, a cover that is 10-20 times of annual income of the individual is a good starting point. Ideally, the cover should be enough to clear debts, manage major financial goals, and maintain the family's lifestyle," he said.

### IDEAL DURATION OF A TERM POLICY

The right duration is another important factor. A common mistake is choosing a very long policy period of 30-40 years. The ideal duration cover should match with the retirement year or till the family becomes financially independent, which is typically till age 60 to 65," Kumar noted.

### LONG-TERM POLICIES CAN BE COSTLY

Some insurers offer policies that cover people until the age of 80 or even 85.

## US tariff: Carpet exporters see business loss, labourer migration

New Delhi.(Agency)

India's carpet exporters fear that the 50% tariff imposed by the US could choke cash flows, stall production, and push lakhs of artisans and labourers out of work. Concerns have escalated since US President Donald Trump announced an additional 25% duty on Indian exports on August 6. Since then, most orders from the US — India's largest carpet market — have either been cancelled or indefinitely put on hold. Factories in carpet hubs such as Bhopal, Panipat, Jaipur, and Bikaner have slowed operations, with hundreds of workers already unemployed.

"Labourers are paid based on the square feet of carpet they knit. With shipments stalled, production has nearly stopped. Around 50% of the workers have already gone back home," said Inder Mohta of Bikaner Handloom Carpets. The US accounts for nearly 60% of India's carpet exports. Out of \$1.5 billion worth of carpets shipped in FY25, more than \$920 million went to the US. Exporters estimate that 70% of ongoing orders have been scrapped or

deferred since the tariff announcement. "If the tariff gets implemented, nearly 28-30 lakh lives will be impacted," said Piyush Baranwal, honorary secretary of the All India Carpet Manufacturers' Association. "Being a



labour-intensive sector with a large share of women workers, the shock will also hit farmers supplying wool and ancillary industries such as yarn, packaging, transport, and logistics."

Baranwal warned that prolonged unemployment could push artisans to migrate to other sectors, creating a long-term labour shortage even if a

market stabilises. The government's recent removal of import duty on cotton has offered little relief, as the carpet industry depends largely on wool. Exporters fear that if the tariff persists, competitors such as Turkey, Bangladesh, and Nepal will seize India's share of the lucrative US market. Some exporters are even considering shifting production to Nepal, where tariffs are only 10%.

"If the government can work out an arrangement with Nepal, we may relocate part of our operations there. Most of our labourers come from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, so mobility will not be a challenge," said a carpet exporter, requesting anonymity, who added that orders worth 23-4 crore have already been put on hold.

Industry bodies have urged the government to extend the interest equalisation scheme and revise the Remission of Duties and Taxes on Export Products (RoDTEP) to cushion the blow.

## Gold Gets A Festive Twist – Will GST Cut Slash Prices This September

New Delhi.(Agency)

The GST Council is expected to hold its 56th meeting in the first week of September, with speculation over possible tax cuts and consumer benefits. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has indicated a major overhaul of GST norms focusing on structural reforms, rate rationalisation, and ease of living. For the gems and jewellery sector, a 0.5 percent-1 percent GST cut on gold bars, coins, biscuits, and jewellery is being anticipated. A reduction in GST rates on gold could boost consumer demand and lower gold prices. This development is considered timely ahead of the festive

and wedding season, especially Diwali. Current GST on GoldThe GST rate on gold is currently 3 percent (1.5 percent CGST + 1.5 percent SGST), applicable



to jewellery, coins, and bars. This replaced the earlier 1% VAT and 1% service tax when GST was introduced

in July 2016. Example: On a gold purchase of Rs 1,00,000 ? GST = Rs 3,000 (3 percent). GST on Making Charges and Other ServicesGold

jewellery making charges attract a 5 percent GST rate, while custom-made jewellery carries both 3 percent on gold value and 5 percent on making charges. Gold worth Rs 1,00,000 ? GST = Rs 3,000 Making charges of Rs 15,000 ? GST = Rs 750

There is also a 5 percent GST on jewellery repair services. A one percentage point reduction in GST would make jewellery purchases more affordable for consumers, though it may create revenue challenges for the government.

## This is how New Income Tax Bill 2025 brings relief for salaried and small taxpayers

**Business owners say that despite nearly eight years of GST, bureaucratic hurdles – particularly at the state level – continue to weigh them down**

New Delhi.(Agency) Filing income tax returns has long been viewed as an annual headache. Dense jargon, scattered sections, and endless paperwork left many salaried individuals and small taxpayers overwhelmed. But the New Income Tax Bill, 2025 promises to change that, by making tax filing simpler, clearer, and less time-consuming. IndiaToday.in spoke to CA (Dr) Suresh Surana, and Sudhir Kaushik, Co-founder & CEO, Taxspanner, to determine how the new law will ease compliance for ordinary

### taxpayers. EASIER RETURN FILING FOR SALARIED INDIVIDUALS

One of the biggest reforms is the reorganisation of salary-related provisions. Previously, taxpayers had to hunt across multiple sections for allowances, deductions, or retirement benefits. Now, everything has been consolidated into a single chapter, presented in straightforward language and easy-to-read tables. "The simplification of the Income Tax Act aims to enhance clarity and ease of compliance, enabling taxpayers to independently understand and file their returns," said Dr Surana.

"There has been a significant reduction in length, with the words for 'Salaries' reduced from 4,401 to 3,420. The language has also been simplified, clarifying key terms such as perquisite, profit in lieu of salary, and standard deduction, with minimal legal and technical jargon," he added.

### LESS PAPERWORK FOR SMALL TAXPAYERS

For small taxpayers, compliance often meant producing heaps of documents for every income source or deduction. The

new rules ease this burden by shifting towards clarity and standardisation. "As the emphasis shifts from exhaustive documentation to compliance based on clearly defined statutory provisions, small taxpayers may face less paperwork,



fewer disputes, and greater certainty," Dr Surana noted. Adding to this, Sudhir Kaushik, pointed out that pre-populated data from employers and banks will further cut down the need for submitting multiple proofs. "This reduces manual entry errors and makes it easier for salaried individuals to file their returns accurately and quickly," he said.

### CLEARER DEDUCTIONS AND EXEMPTIONS

Tax planning has always been tricky because of scattered and complex provisions. The new law tries to fix this. Exemptions earlier listed under Section 10 have now been redrafted into six schedules, with information laid out in a tabular format. This not only improves readability but also removes outdated exemptions. "In the Income Tax Bill, 2025, complex provisions such as Section 80C have been streamlined, with detailed provisions shifted to a separate schedule for better clarity," said Dr Surana.

Kaushik added, "The law clearly specifies eligible deductions, exemptions, and limits under different sections such as 80C, 80D, and house rent allowances. This helps salaried employees make informed decisions on tax planning without ambiguity."

### SUPPORT FOR FIRST-TIME TAXPAYERS

For beginners, the tax system can feel overwhelming. The new Bill tries to make it more approachable by using simpler terms. For example, "previous year" and "assessment year" have now been replaced by the more direct "tax year."

# Kriti Sanon

**Left Stunned By Karan Sawhney's Magic Trick: Watch Her Hilarious Reaction**



Kriti Sanon, who attended CNN-News18's SheShakti Delhi Edition recently, has a long list of amazing films in her kitty, and for that she is prepping and making sure to hit the gym every day, but a latest video of her in a gym has everything except her doing a workout. In the video, Kriti Sanon can be seen with Karan Sawhney, the celebrity fitness coach. The video posted by Karan has him doing a magic trick with Kriti, leaving her totally stunned with the thought of how he did it. The clip has Karan asking Kriti to make fist bumps, then he did something to his left palm, and when she opened her right palm, there were ink traces, which amused Kriti.

As this video was released on Instagram, fans started reacting to it. One wrote, "Cheap thrills.... Someone has nuanced this over the years now." "Hath ki position change karte time mark kiya he," another fan shared. A third fan said, "He did it already at the very beginning when he touched your palm and told you to close your fist! So smart and quick." "He obviously did it when he touched ur hand and asked to place it like that," another fan said.

**Kriti Sanon attended CNN-News18's SheShakti Delhi**

Kriti Sanon recently attended CNN-News18's SheShakti Delhi Edition, where she spoke candidly about how she navigates social media in an age where celebrities are constantly under scrutiny. Addressing how she deals with the barrage of comments, Kriti admitted she has learned not to take them seriously. "I don't pay heed to comments or what people are saying because I feel like someone's taking their own life's 'bhadaas' on someone else. So I don't really take it seriously," she said, suggesting that trolling is more a reflection of the critic than the person targeted.

**Kriti Sanon on the work front**

On the work front, Kriti will soon appear opposite Dhanush in Aanand L. Rai's Tere Ishk Mein. Reports also hint at her joining the cast of Farhan Akhtar's highly anticipated Don 3. The actress will also star in Cocktail 2 alongside Rashmika Mandanna.



## Chahatt Khanna

**Reveals Director Saw 'Shades of Madhuri Dixit' In Her For Chandramukhi's Role**

Actress Chahatt Khanna is set to portray the character of Chandramukhi in her upcoming OTT film, a reimagining of Devdas. Taking on a role once immortalised by Madhuri Dixit, Chahatt acknowledges the intensity of the character. "It was an honour to play Chandramukhi. Of course, Madhuri ji is a legend, and I can't even compare myself to her. But the director felt I had a little resemblance to her, and that's how I was chosen for this part," she added.

The actress shot for the same under challenging weather conditions. Reflecting on the same, Chahatt shared, "We shot this at Shahpur last year in 60°. All we did was night shifts, and by 7 AM we used to pack up because it used to be so hot. I'm playing Chanda (Chandramukhi), as this is a tale of Devdas, but from the lens of Chanda."

Apparently, this adaptation unfolds through the eyes of Chanda (Chandramukhi), offering audiences a more intimate look at her journey, resilience, and untold emotions.

The show also stars Vishal Kotian and Krissann Barreto Karamchandani. Chahatt hopes to bring a fresh perspective to Chandramukhi with this project.

Chahatt, in the past has been a part of many notable projects include "Bade Achhe Lagte Hain," "Yatri," "Prassthanam," "Qubool Hai" and others. As much as her professional life has turned out to be good, her personal life had once hit the rock bottom after both her marriages failed.

Chahatt was only 19 when she tied the knot with her first husband. She fell in love with him at a tender age of 16. Within just four months of marriage, they parted ways and the relationship ended on a bitter note.

Chahatt's second marriage with Farhan Mirza, son of veteran actor, Shahrukh Mirza, lasted five years and the couple gave birth to two daughters. But the relationship too ended on a sour note, after Chahatt accused Farhan of sexual and mental harassment and also claimed that she was brainwashed into converting



to Islam.

**Kusha Kapila On Priyanka Chopra's Quick Wit: 'She Has Comebacks For Everything'**



Global icon Priyanka Chopra's no-nonsense attitude, razor-sharp comebacks, and unshakeable confidence are loved by all. Whether on a global stage or in a casual interview, Priyanka continues to prove that her personality is just as powerful as her performances. Just like every one of us, actress and digital content creator Kusha Kapila also has nothing but admiration for Priyanka. And if you're wondering what makes the Thank You For Coming star shower praise on her, Kusha Kapila revealed it's Priyanka Chopra's unscripted personality.

Sitting down for an interview, Kusha earlier shared her experience of working with Priyanka Chopra. Calling her an improv artist, social media influencer Kusha highlighted her ability to respond to any topic with ease and humour.

**Kusha Kapila's most memorable interview experience**

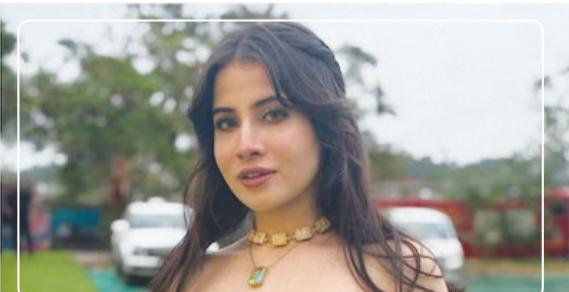
In a candid revelation during a past interview with Fever FM, Kusha Kapila shared that working with Priyanka was one of her most memorable experiences. Praising the actress for her sharp wit, confidence, and ability to speak unfiltered and unscripted, she explained how the Citadel star skipped all the pre-written answers for interviews and responded with ease, humour, and spontaneity.

Kusha stated, "Priyanka Chopra is an improv artist. Woh kisi bhi baat ka jawaab de sakti hai. Usually, when we write a script, we write our questions and also write answers for them, but she did not read any of the answers that we wrote for her. She answered all the questions herself. She said what she wanted to say. She is so quick, and she is so witty, and she has comebacks for everything."

**Priyanka offered to teach Kusha Hindi**

Describing the interview as her favourite, Kusha also expressed admiration for Priyanka's effortless command over both Hindi and English. When she praised her regarding the same, the actress even offered to teach her. "That is one of my favourite interviews because Priyanka Chopra is just fire. She has a great command over both languages (Hindi and English). She even said, 'Main Hindi aapko sikha dungi,'" Kusha shared.

## 'Faltu Lakho Waste Kar Diye': Uorfi Javed Realises She Never Needed Lip Fillers



Reality TV star Uorfi Javed hit the headlines in July after she shared a video of herself undergoing the process of getting her laugh lines and lip fillers dissolved. Her face was left swollen, and she admitted that the process was painful. Back then, she shared that she plans to get fillers again, in a more subtle way. Now, weeks later, Uorfi has shared her latest pictures, admitting that she has realised she never needed fillers in the first place! Reflecting on her past cosmetic decisions, she regretted wasting lakhs of rupees on the fillers over the years. On Saturday, Uorfi Javed shared a series of photos and videos from an event. She looks beautiful in a yellow off-shoulder mini-dress, accessorized with a dainty necklace, and paired with white heels. In her caption, she admitted that she now regrets getting lip fillers. "Ab face dekho k lagte hai lips pe kabhi filler ki zaroorat thi nahi, faltu lakho waste kar diye saalo tak! (Now when I look at my face, it seems like there was never any need for lip fillers—I ended up wasting lakhs for years for nothing!)," she wrote. Check out the post below!

Fans showered her with compliments, soon after she posted the pictures. "Urfa aap to phle se bhi jayada pretty ho gai ho sachii me," wrote one fan, while another one commented, "Sahi baat hai aap without Lip filler zyada beautiful lagre ho." Another fan commented, "Ur always beautiful."

Uorfi Javed has always been open about undergoing cosmetic procedures and often shares her journey with fans. In July, she shared an unfiltered video of herself undergoing the painful process of getting her fillers dissolved. Her face was left swollen after the removal procedure, and she warned fans to watch the video at their own risk.

In the video, the doctor was seen injecting her lips while Uorfi shut her eyes, clearly in pain. She then revealed her visibly swollen face and lips. "Please watch this video at your own risk. So mere jo fillers the, kaafi misplaced the. (My fillers were quite misplaced). So I decided to get my laugh lines and lip fillers dissolved. Main 2-3 hafte baad aaram se ache se naturally karwaungi. (After 2-3 weeks, I'll get them done again—properly and naturally). It was so painful. My lips immediately swelled up, my face swelled up. Main khud dekh ke has rahi thi. End tak aate heri bohot buri haalat ho gayi thi. (I was literally laughing at myself looking like that. By the end of it, my condition had become really bad)," said Uorfi, in the video.

# Putting the fun into Work

Getting back to work after a long vacation or after that relaxing weekend can be quite a task. Mondays are daunting, while mid-week blues are enough to make you want to crawl under the covers and not go to work. But what happens when going to work becomes something to look forward to? Of late, many employers are getting quirkier and more innovative with their team bonding activities, engaging their employees in a fun and interactive atmosphere and making offices an actual fun place to work. From themed potlucks and TGIFs to traditional games, it looks like corporate offices today are breaking out of the strictly professional tag, and are focusing more on the person who matters the most—the employee.

Shrinika Thanikachalam, who works in a media agency in the city, says that their agency had recently organised a corporate potluck contest among the employees. "It was a really huge deal. We were asked to draw lots and we were split into three teams. Each team had to come up with a team name, a logo and a menu in a stipulated period of time. It was fun because everyone, men included, had to cook. We even formed a WhatsApp group to plan the entire thing."

The actual potluck happened over a three-day period, and our team, Bite and Chew, dialled things up with a live barbecue and mocktail counter in office. We had someone from another agency be the judge and we were asked to plan things out carefully, ensuring that food did not go to waste. While our team did not follow a particular theme, one of the other teams chose Kerala cuisine as their theme, and served dishes pertaining to that cuisine alone. We plan to make this a regular activity going forward." Tarun Mishra, who works with an IT firm in the city adds, "Potlucks are the easiest way to bond, as food is the binding factor among most people.

They also add a personal touch as people

bring home-cooked meals. It involves a bit of self-pride, too, when people like your dishes. At our firm, we have potlucks on a regular basis, where people bring different kinds of dishes – it is like India on a platter. I remember once a girl had brought beetroot halwa and the dish was so tasty, it became a conversation starter for us. I had never spoken to this girl before. It does a lot in bringing out the best in people." There are other corporates which indulge in team bonding activities, which include team outings. Nomitha Nandakumar, who works at an MNC says, "We have regular team outings, not just within departments, but interdepartmental ones as well. These outings are usually fun, and packed with activities which include games you can play in groups such as treasure hunt and charades. At office, we have this break group and interchange policy, where employees are encouraged to come out of the comfort zone of their group and interact with new members of the team and work together. This ensures that there is no groupism of any sort. Then of course, there are the usual sports teams that each department has, and inter-department sports tournaments, too."

Festivals are also a time when team bonding activities are at their peak. What is fascinating to note is that this is also the time when employees themselves take the initiative to do something out-of-the-box and quirky, keeping up with the general good spirit and cheer of the season. From Secret Santas and Best Christmas Tree contests during Christmas, to dressing up in ethnic wear for Pongal, there are many activities that take place. Poornima Ranjit, who works with a multiplex chain in the city says, "We are over 200 employees, and during festival times, we have activities where

we have almost everyone participating in various games that are organised, depending on what festival it is. For instance, for Pongal, we had traditional games like lemon and spoon race. Apart from that, we also have activities in smaller groups like there was this game where we merged photos of two people in office and we had to identify who those people were. There was another game where we played only a video without the voice of a popular punch dialogue in a movie and the teams will have to enact and repeat the dialogue. Games like this is a great way to get to know people from other teams as well as take a break from the usual pressure you deal with at work." At Deepa and Arvind Athreya's event management company, there is no concept of employees — they are all family. "We have a number of activities in

place which take place on a regular basis — including TGIF, where we have book reading sessions and beer party on Fridays, flexi timings for ladies, movie nights once a month, fitness challenges for everyone (where we encourage people to walk 2 lakh steps every day).

We also babysit the children of our women employees from time to time, so they don't have to worry if they aren't able to find someone to look after their kids at any time," says Deepa, adding, "The concept is simple really. There is an environment of ownership and freedom here. We have witnessed people in our team walking that extra mile when in need. We build teams we love." Going that

extra mile to make employees, in fact, can indeed have tangible results. At Shrinika's firm, the employees got together to make an actual difference in their workspace. "We wanted to make the office a little more environment-friendly, so the employees got together and drafted a plan to convert our office balcony into a little green space. Once we got the approvals, we went all out and made a beautiful garden in the balcony, which we continue to nurture. We also converted our pantry into a sports-themed cafe. We painted the entire thing ourselves, and hung up posters of sportspersons...we went all out," shares Shrinika.



## When your ex becomes your co-worker

Office breakups are the toughest, especially because you have to see you're ex every day at work and if that is not enough you've to work with them as well. An office breakup can affect you in several ways and can be very demotivating. We give you a few tips on how to deal with your ex when he/she is a co-worker...

- Be professional. Don't bring your personal problems to work. As difficult as

it may seem, treat your ex as just another employee at work.

- What is the status of the relationship now? Is he/she your friend now or just a colleague or will you consider dating them again? If you have made up your mind about moving on in life, it is better to cut them out.

- Increase your non-work social life. It is better to hang out with friends who are not your colleagues. Avoid talking about the breakup, and distract yourself completely.

- If your ex is doing everything to sabotage you at work, take time and clear out the differences. If that doesn't work, take the issue to a higher official and discuss the matter.

- Let time heal you. It might take a while, but time certainly will help!

## Sharing personal information helps women get hired

A female applicant strongly raises her chances of getting hired if she gives out personal information, finds a new study, contradicting the conventional theory that if a woman wants equal footing professionally, she should not share any personal information.

The findings showed that female candidates who gave personal information clarifying her resume gaps raised their chance of being hired by 30 to 40 per cent, compared to a comparable female candidate who provided no personal information. "Our study provides the first-ever evidence that women who conceal personal information dramatically lower their hiring prospects," said Joni Hersch, a professor involved in the research.



Employers overwhelmingly preferred to hire female candidates who provided information to explain a resume gap, regardless of content.

"If we start to encourage honest conversations between employers and employees on an official level, it could lead to meaningful change in the quality of applicants, particularly in industries that have been so resistant to providing family-friendly work policies," added one of the researchers, Jennifer Bennett Shinall.

For the study, the team included 3,022 people who acted as potential employers and had to choose between two job candidates, described as mostly similar except for their openness about a 10-year gap in their job histories. The gap was explained with information such as taking time off to raise children or a recent divorce as the reason for leaving and wanting to re-enter the workforce.

## The link between grit and performance revealed



There are many paths to success, but the significance of grit in helping you reach that goal has been greatly overstated, according to a psychologist. Researcher Marcus Crede and his colleagues conducted a meta-analysis of all prior research on grit.

Their results found no evidence that grit is a good predictor of success. While some educators are working to enhance grit in students, Crede says there's no indication that it's possible to boost levels. And even if it was possible, it might not matter.

Grit is defined as perseverance and commitment to long-term goals. The research is relatively new compared to the decades of work on performance indicators such as conscientiousness and intelligence. "If you look at the questions on the grit measure, they're often almost identical to the questions that we ask when we measure conscientiousness. Many are almost word-for-word the same. It's really just a repackaging or relabeling of conscientiousness, which we've known about for over 50 years. It's perhaps a sexier title, but it's nothing new," Crede said.