

# What's keeping Arvind Kejriwal on the road, and away from Delhi?

**AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal has become a frequent visitor to Punjab. Gujarat seems to be his next favourite destination. Is this a result of the Delhi debacle, or an organisational rebuild behind the curtains?**

**New Delhi. (Agency)**

The last significant appearance of Arvind Kejriwal in Delhi was at the Vice President's residence. The Aam Aadmi Party chief's meeting with VP Jagdeep Dhankhar triggered both headlines and speculation.

**► Arvind Kejriwal absent from Delhi politics, focus on Punjab, Gujarat, Goa**  
**► Frequent visits to Punjab to support Mann government and anti-drug campaign.**  
**► Gujarat bypoll win boosts AAP's challenge to BJP and Congress**

However, days later, Dhankhar resigned as the Vice President of India. Kejriwal had also paid a courtesy visit to the Soren family in the national capital while

Jharkhand Mukti Morcha patriarch Shibu Soren was still critical at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital. Kejriwal has stayed away from the day-to-day politics of the national capital—at least in terms of physical presence, protests, or taking on the BJP-led Delhi government. Questions around his "absence" have gained momentum as AAP seeks to galvanise the anger of Delhi's working class and lower-income voters. Interestingly, Kejriwal has chosen social media as his primary, and often sole, tool to take on the BJP's "4-engine sarkar," voicing concerns on issues ranging from demolition drives and street vendor evictions to private school fee hikes and law and order. This too, is part of AAP's Delhi strategy. But what exactly is keeping the AAP



**chief so busy outside Delhi?**

**PROJECT PUNJAB 2027**

Soon after the Delhi drubbing, AAP went into huddle mode. Kejriwal quickly convened a meeting of the Political Affairs Committee (PAC). A roadmap till the end of 2027 was drawn, responsibilities reassigned, and reshuffles made. With eyes on the 2027 elections in Punjab, Goa and Gujarat,

AAP believes the time is now to cement its organisation. Kejriwal, in particular, cannot afford to lose his party's fortress in Punjab. Ever since PAC cleared the 2027 blueprint, the party's top boss has become a regular flyer to Punjab. On July 31, Kejriwal launched a slew of projects with Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann in Sunam.

This was just one of about a dozen public appearances in the state, including campaign launches, project inaugurations, and public meetings—almost always accompanied by Mann. In May-June alone, the AAP supremo visited the border state nearly four times. These visits are set to intensify as AAP looks to consolidate its position ahead of the 2027 Assembly elections.

**Development of JJ Colonies and Rehabilitation of Slums is a Govt Priority: Ravinder Indraj**

**The Sikh Times**  
**Sourabh Sharma**

**New Delhi.** August 7, 2025

Delhi Government's Social Welfare Minister Ravinder Indraj Singh on Thursday dedicated the completed construction works of drains and roads in New A Block, Shahbad Daulatpur Dairy, part of the Bawana Assembly constituency, to the local residents.

During his interaction with the residents, the Cabinet Minister stated that the government's objective is to ensure timely provision of basic amenities in all colonies of Delhi, particularly in underdeveloped and Scheduled Caste-dominated areas.

The Minister said that under the vision of Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the welfare of the poor, Hon'ble Chief Minister Rekha Gupta has given clear directives for the development of basic facilities in JJ colonies and the rehabilitation of slum areas. For the first time, comprehensive efforts are being undertaken in Delhi for these objectives. Ravinder Indraj emphasized that cleanliness, health, and dignity are the rights of every citizen. The Delhi Government, driven by this belief, is constructing paved roads, proper drainage, and clean lanes in every settlement. The ongoing development in the Shahbad Dairy area is a significant step in this direction. He directed officials to prepare plans for pending works where required and ensure that ongoing works are completed with high quality.

**Continued news page 2**

## "Trump Making Mockery Of Our Country": Uddhav Thackeray On 50% US Tariffs

**Mumbai. (Agency)**

The Opposition is trying to corner the government over hefty US tariffs imposed on India, with former Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray claiming that US President Donald Trump is making a mockery of the country. "Trump is making fun of our country. Who is running our country?" said the Shiv Sena (UBT) chief, adding that India needs a "stronger Prime Minister and Defence Minister."

The outrage follows Trump's announcement of 25% additional tariffs on Indian exports yesterday, which effectively raises the reciprocal tariff rate to over 50% for buying oil from Russia. Russian oil imports is helping sustain Moscow's war against Ukraine, Trump had claimed, singling out India and overlooking Europe and the US's own imports from Russia. India has defended its Russian oil imports and called the US tariffs "unfair and unreasonable".

Mr Thackeray also questioned PM Modi's upcoming China visit, pointing out that Beijing is an all-weather ally of Pakistan. "It should be decided who the enemy is and who the friend is. He has no friends left. China is helping Pakistan. China products were boycotted, now why is Modi going to China?" he said. Mr Thackeray is among the 12-odd INDIA alliance leaders, alongside Sharad Pawar, Akhilesh Yadav, and Tejashwi Yadav, who would attend

a mega opposition gathering hosted by Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi this evening. Earlier this morning, Mr Gandhi had called the US tariffs an "economic blackmail" that Trump is using to try and bully India into an unfair trade deal. "

Asked if his cousin Raj Thackeray would also



attend the INDIA alliance meeting in Delhi, the Sena leader refused to give a straight answer. "Both the brothers are capable enough. We will do whatever we have to do. There is no need for any third person," he said. The Thackeray cousins, who had parted ways two decades ago over succession issues, had reunited recently, aiming to work on the Marathi pride cause that had been championed by Shiv Sena patriarch Bal Thackeray. Speaking about the Marathi language controversy that has been a burning issue in Maharashtra, he said, "We do not hate any language, but do not force us."

## Duplicate voters, fake addresses: Rahul Gandhi claims fraud in Karnataka rolls

**Rahul Gandhi alleged that fake people were being added to voter lists by the ECI in collusion with the BJP and attempted to validate his point by showing the Karnataka electoral rolls.**

**New Delhi. (Agency)**

In a no-holds-barred attack on the Election Commission (ECI), Congress MP Rahul Gandhi alleged that the poll watchdog colluded with the BJP to rig the Lok Sabha elections in the country. Addressing a press conference, Gandhi alleged that fake people were being added to voter lists and attempted to validate his point by showing the Karnataka electoral rolls. The Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha claimed there was "bhayanak chor" (massive theft) of votes in the Mahadevapura assembly segment of Bangalore Central Lok Sabha seat. Gandhi claimed that out of 6.5 lakh votes in the Mahadevapura assembly segment, there was a "vote chor" of over 1 lakh votes.

"An internal research by Congress found over one lakh duplicate voters, invalid addresses, bulk voters in Mahadevapura constituency in Karnataka," he said. Bangalore Central saw a close contest in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. While Congress candidate Mansoor Ali Khan maintained a lead for most of the counting, the final results saw BJP's PC Mohan securing a narrow victory margin of 32,707 votes. The Raebareli MP also cast doubts over the Election Commission not giving the voter lists in electronic format, suggesting that doing so would expose its "fraud" within 30 seconds. "This

is a challenge here. This is seven feet of paper. If I want to find out if you have voted twice or if your name occurs twice in the voter list, I have to take your picture, and then I have to compare it to every single bit of paper. It is a very tedious process," he said. He further alleged that the poll watchdog was deliberately

providing "non-machine-readable papers" to prevent the parties from scrutinising the voter data. "This task took us six months (M a h a d e v a p u r a claim). If the Election Commission gave us electronic data, it would take us 30 seconds. Why are we being given data like this? So, that is it not analysed... These papers do not allow for optical character recognition," Gandhi further said. The allegations come ahead of a massive Congress protest march against the ECI in Karnataka over alleged voter fraud. The march will be led by Gandhi.

## CM Rekha Gupta's Scathing Attack on Opposition in Assembly

**The Sikh Times**  
**Simmi Kaur Babbar**

**New Delhi. 7 August 2025**

Delhi Chief Minister Mrs Rekha Gupta launched a sharp attack on the former government during her address in the Delhi Legislative Assembly yesterday. She accused the previous administration of deceiving the public by portraying free schemes as if they were offering them from their own pockets, when in reality, the money used belonged to the people. "The public had hoped that their tax money would be used for

building roads, schools, and hospitals. Instead, their hard-earned income was diverted towards so-called free schemes," the Chief Minister stated. She further added that the former government deliberately neglected development works and focused entirely on publicity and propaganda.

CM Rekha Gupta also pointed out that the reason the previous regime avoided implementing several key development schemes was because they were associated with the Prime Minister. "Such was the extent of their malice," she remarked. The Chief Minister concluded by

demanding that the findings of the CAG report be handed over to the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) for a thorough investigation.

The Chief Minister said she had already anticipated that once the CAG report was tabled, the opposition would either walk out of the House or try to shift the entire blame to the Central Government. They would claim that they received neither financial assistance nor grants from the Centre. However, the truth is that the Central Government had provided a grant of Rs 4,800 crore to Delhi.

**Continued news page 2**



## Poll body issues notice for Vice President's election after Jagdeep Dhankar quits

**The latest notice details the specific dates for filing the nomination papers and candidature withdrawals.**

**New Delhi. (Agency)**

The Election Commission of India has issued a notice regarding the elections that will take place to appoint the new Vice President of India on September 9. The latest notice details the specific dates for filing the nomination papers and candidature withdrawals.

According to the notice, the nomination papers are to be filed on the first floor of Parliament no later than August 21, 2025. Additionally, a deposit of rupees 15,000 will also need to be submitted to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) or to a Government Treasury.

The notice also mentions additional documents needed, along with the nomination papers like the receipt of making the said deposit. Furthermore, the date and time assigned for the scrutiny of the nomination papers is at 11 a.m. on August 22.

The notice also confirmed the timing of the vice-presidential polls: between 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. This comes after the abrupt resignation of the former Vice President Jagdeep Dhankar on July 22.

"To prioritise health care and abide by medical advice, I hereby resign as the Vice President of India, effective immediately, in accordance with Article 67(a) of the Constitution," Dhankar wrote in a letter addressed to President Droupadi Murmu.

Following his resignation, the Ministry of Home Affairs confirmed the vacancy through a notification issued on July 22, 2025. The planned election to fill the vacancy is in accordance with what the Constitution of India dictates in the case of a sudden vacancy of the vice-presidential chair.

Meaning, Article 66 of the Indian Constitution will be implemented, allowing a secret ballot exclusively participated in by members of Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha.



**Congress MP Shashi Tharoor criticises US tariff hike on Indian exports citing unfair targeting. He urges Modi government to impose reciprocal duties and explore alternative trade markets.**

**New Delhi. (Agency)**  
 Congress MP Shashi Tharoor on Thursday called on the Modi government to stand up to US President Donald Trump's tariff offensive by imposing reciprocal duties on American goods and exploring alternative markets. Tharoor's remarks came after Trump signed an executive order announcing an extra 25 per cent tariff on Indian exports, on top of an existing 25 per cent, citing India's continued purchase of Russian crude oil as the reason for the penalty. "I think this is unjust and unfair in various ways," Tharoor said. "The allegation is it's because we are buying Russian oil and gas. Which we're doing in the open market within respect for the rules, and the price cap is being

observed by us." Calling the US move "uncalled for", Tharoor pointed out that Trump has not imposed similar punitive measures on China or the European Union, both of which maintain far greater energy trade with Moscow. He also noted with irony that the US itself buys uranium hexafluoride, palladium and other chemicals from Russia for its industries. The Congress leader urged the government to retaliate by matching the tariff level and expanding trade ties beyond the US. "We are not a nation that goes around issuing threats. But in my view, apart from diversifying to other markets, we should also make it very clear to our American friends that if they're going to apply 50 per cent [tariffs] to us, our current tariff on America, which is at an average of 17 per cent, will also go up to 50 per cent," Tharoor said. On Trump's threat of further sanctions, Tharoor said his belligerence could rupture India-US ties. "But that's fine. It's not like we are without friends, without resources, without markets."

## Tit for tat: Shashi Tharoor wants India to match Trump's 50% tariff hike

chemicals from Russia for its industries. The Congress leader urged the government to retaliate by matching the tariff level and expanding trade ties beyond the US. "We are not a nation that goes around issuing threats. But in my view, apart from diversifying to other markets, we should also make it very clear to our American friends that if they're going to apply 50 per cent [tariffs] to us, our current tariff on America, which is at an average of 17 per cent, will also go up to 50 per cent," Tharoor said. On Trump's threat of further sanctions, Tharoor said his belligerence could rupture India-US ties. "But that's fine. It's not like we are without friends, without resources, without markets."

# Fazilpuria link or unpaid loan All theories under scanner in Gurgaon murder

## Ghaziabad (Agency)

Days after a gangster claimed responsibility for shooting dead a property dealer linked to rapper Fazilpuria, police are investigating another angle involving an unpaid loan. Delhi-based property dealer Rohit Shokeen's friend, a witness in the case, has told cops that the 39-year-old was asked to come to Gurgaon to collect Rs 30 lakh that he had lent years ago to a friend, Deepak Nandal. Sources said on Wednesday the witness told police that Nandal had borrowed the money from Shokeen in 2023 and hadn't returned it despite repeated requests. Shokeen had even insulted Nandal over the debt to their common friends, and he was humiliated because of it, they said. The friendship between the two deteriorated after Shokeen's father last year filed a complaint with the Delhi commissioner's office, alleging that Nandal and his family were threatening them with

consequences. Nandal, he said, had borrowed money from Shokeen to make a music video. On Aug 4, Shokeen was standing near his car near Palm Hills society in Sector 77 when two motorcyclists with their faces covered struck him with around a dozen bullets. Shokeen's Delhi-based friend survived the attack unharmed as he had just crossed the road to buy cigarettes. "The friend who accompanied Shokeen to Gurgaon but survived the attack told us that Nandal, who lives abroad, had asked him to collect the loaned money from his aides here. But we are still verifying the same," a police officer said. So far, investigators have not concluded any motive for the attack. After the Aug 4 murder, gangster Sunil Sardhania on social media claimed responsibility for killing Shokeen. "I, Sunil Sardhania, got Rohit Shokeen



murdered at SPR Road in Gurgaon. Fazilpuria will have to pay our money or else many people will die in this fight," the post declared, mentioning even Deepak Nandal. The police officer told TOI cops are working to authenticate

Sardhania's claim made online. TOI reported earlier this week that the murder could be the result of a bitter fallout between Fazilpuria and Nandal, who had previously produced the rapper's songs. Sardhania, a member of the *Himanshu Bhai gang*, purportedly warned the singer to return Rs 5 crore to Nandal, who had invested in building the rapper's career. Fazilpuria, however, consistently denied any loan arrangements and said that only music labels invested in his career. Cops had briefly detained a food delivery executive who witnessed the murder but was not

linked to the shooting. The police officer said they have not found any evidence that indicates the involvement of Shokeen's friend who survived the attack in the murder plan.

## MCG & MCM now take AI route to boost property tax collection

### Gurgaon (Agency)

MCG and MCM have introduced artificial intelligence (AI) to boost revenue from property tax. MCG has so far generated a revenue of Rs 200 crore, which is around 72% of its target set for FY26, and MCM's has already crossed the Rs 29 crore mark, the revenue it generated in the last fiscal year. Using AI, residents with outstanding dues are being identified and approached and their queries resolved. AI also assists them in paying their property tax dues.

"We are using AI to boost our property tax collection. We have so far collected a revenue of Rs 200 crore in this financial year so far. Using AI, we generated a revenue of Rs 95 crore in July alone," MCG additional commissioner Yash Jaluka told TOI.

"We took the data of self-certified properties with the highest dues and used generative AI, which is a bot, to call the owners. This bot answers in real time. If you did not pay property tax, it will ask you what difficulties you faced and subsequently address your concerns. Before reaching out to people, we segregated the data into categories of those who promised to pay or refused to pay the taxes and those who faced difficulties in paying them. Most of the people contacted ended up paying the taxes," he added.

Using AI for property tax collection was started as a pilot project in Yamunanagar, where Sinha served as the civic body commissioner before heading MCM. "We were successful in replicating the AI model here in Manesar and Gurgaon. We have collected Rs 29 crore so far, which is our income from property tax for the entire last fiscal," Sinha said. Meanwhile, residents pointed out that since MCG was generating so much revenue, it should invest money in the city's development. "The city is clearly lacking the kind of manpower and machinery it needs to function. MCG should learn from other municipal corporations and invest in the right kind of machinery," said Gauri Sarin, convener of the group Making Model Gurugram.

## Harassed while waiting for cab, says woman, goes to police in Gurgaon

### Gurgaon (Agency)

A woman has lodged a police complaint alleging she was sexually harassed by a passerby while she was waiting for a cab near Rajiv Chowk last week. While there was no response from the woman's helpline number, police also refused to lodge her complaint online, she alleged. The incident occurred around 11am on Aug 2. On Wednesday, police registered a case after a video went viral in which the woman said the unidentified man "unzipped" his pants and began "masturbating" in front of her. Police spokesperson Sandeep Kumar (ASI) said, "We have taken suo motu cognisance and registered a complaint." The case has been registered at Civil Lines police station under sections 75(2) (sexual harassment) and 78 (stalking). The woman has also been called to join the investigation. Probe is underway to identify the



accused," the officer said. Narrating the incident in the video, the woman said she was travelling from Jaipur to Gurgaon in a bus. The bus had

he literally kept staring and started masturbating in front of me. He was very aware of what he was doing. He was just making me feel very uncomfortable and I felt very, very disgusted," the woman said.

She said she had booked a cab, but the driver was not answering her calls. "I had to book another ride just to avoid this creep man. Initially, I froze. I didn't record. I didn't hit him," she said. The woman said as soon as she reached home, she posted about the incident on social media and tagged local authorities. "But there was no response, not even an automated message ... I also tried 1090 (women helpline number), but nobody answered. The call disconnected," she said. She tried to get an FIR lodged by calling the police. "But they said, 'You have to come to the station for the FIR and all. We can't register your complaint online!'"

## Funds unused, compensatory afforestation falls short in state, green cover remains static

### Gurgaon (Agency)

Haryana, the state with lowest forest cover in India, sanctioned Rs 1,000 crore for compensatory afforestation, but utilised just 55% of the amount in the five years between 2019 and 2024. That leaves Rs 450 crore — money that was meant to carry out plantation drives — unused. This discrepancy was reported by the Haryana forest department in a July 11 submission to the central empowered committee (CEC) of the Supreme Court, which is scrutinising the efficacy of compensatory afforestation (CA) drives and the use of CA funds across all states and Union territories. These drives, which involve planting saplings or seeds, are mandatory under the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA) whenever forest land is given to carry out development work such as construction of industries and roads. The scheme, introduced by the central govt in 2004, is critical for a project's green clearance. More importantly, it is meant to

help sustain the percentage of green cover in areas that are rapidly being concretised and make up for ecological damages. The forest department said in its submission to CEC that it carried out plantation drives over 5,000 hectares in five years. It did not specify where the drives were carried out. Activists and experts on Wednesday said that while plantation funds remain unutilised, the state has seen little change in its forest cover. A study of satellite imagery by the Forest Survey of India (FSI) shows that forest cover in the state increased 28sqm, or 2,800 hectares, between 2019 and 2023. "Haryana's forest cover is merely 3.5% of the state's geographical area. At such a time, when the state has critically low forest cover, nearly Rs 450 crore remains unutilised under CAMPA," said Gaurav Bansal, a Supreme Court advocate who frequently takes up cases related to violations of environmental laws. Vaishali Rana, an environmentalist, said, "The data points to a fundamental disconnect between plantation targets and actual forest growth. Without ecological

planning, site selection, and post-plantation care, you can spend crores and still not get a forest." Rana added that the state govt should form a committee to audit compensatory afforestation drives. Principal chief conservator of forests (PCCF) Vineet Kumar Garg told TOI that the recent FSI figures don't fully reflect Haryana's plantation efforts. "First, FSI uses satellite imagery that isn't high-resolution. As a result, plantations carried out last year or this year may not show up in the data. The latest FSI report is based on satellite images from Oct 2022 — so, it misses most recent plantations. Moreover, even current plantations need three to four years to grow enough to register as canopy cover," Garg said. On funds, he said data submitted to CEC highlights "fund allocation, not actual spending". "For example, in 2024-25, the annual plan of operation (APO) proposed Rs 250 crore. Of this, only Rs 110 crore was approved, and that too after the monsoon, which delayed plantation work. Actual

## Airport, manufacturing clusters, data centre, but Noida waits for passport office



he said. Noida Authority CEO Lokesh M confirmed that multiple locations are available for such a facility. "We have space at the new Sector 82 bus terminal, which is designed to house govt offices. Commercial complexes across the city can also be considered. If the RPO formally applies, we'll take it up seriously," he said. The demand is not new. Resident groups have been lobbying for years. Rajiva Singh, President of NOFAA (Noida Federation of Apartment Owners' Associations), called it "long overdue". "Most of Noida's working population travels frequently. Getting an appointment at Sector 19 is almost

impossible and travelling through potholed and congested Ghaziabad streets is a nightmare, especially if one forgets a document." Dipankar Kumar, vice-president of NEFOWA (Noida Extension Flat Owners' Welfare Association), said the demand isn't limited to Noida alone. "Greater Noida West is also a major residential hub. We plan to petition the ministry of external affairs for a dedicated passport office," he said. Deepak Kumar, legal advisor to the Federation of RWAs in Greater Noida, said the lack of a local passport office was a gap in essential public infrastructure. "Travelling 30-35 km for a basic service

like passport issuance is unreasonable. Noida and Greater Noida are no longer outskirts, they are modern cities. A passport office is not a luxury, it is a necessity." Under the Ghaziabad RPO, 13 districts, including Meerut, Agra, Aligarh, Noida, Hathras, Bulandshahr, Hapur, Baghpat, Mathura, Shamli, Muzaffarnagar and Saharanpur, have their own passport seva kendras, but with limited daily capacity. Most processes just 50 to 100 applications per day.

The pent-up demand is reflected in a growing backlog. As of May 2025, the pendency at Sahibabad and other centres had reached nearly 4,000 applications. THE SIKH TIMES

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## News box

### Front continued news

## Development of JJ Colonies and Rehabilitation of Slums is a Govt Priority: Ravinder Indraj

The Cabinet Minister also noted that, in view of the upcoming Independence Day celebrations, the state government has launched the "Freedom from Garbage — Cleanliness Campaign." He stated that this is not just a government initiative, but a people's movement. He urged residents to volunteer their efforts and keep their neighborhoods, colonies, and parks clean. He further said that cleanliness is not just a habit, but a cultural value, and the best tribute to our great leaders is to contribute towards building a clean, beautiful, and developed India.

Indraj also informed that the Delhi Government's Swachhata (Cleanliness) Portal is now open to every Resident Welfare Association (RWA). These committees can upload photos and details of cleanliness-related activities such as cleaning drives, volunteering efforts, awareness rallies, etc., so that their work can be recognized and appreciated.

## CM Rekha Gupta's Scathing Attack on Opposition in Assembly

The Chief Minister stressed the need to understand how this amount was utilised: Rs 463 crore was spent on water supply, Rs 482 crore on free bus services, and Rs 3,250 crore on the free electricity scheme. In this way, the entire grant was consumed by so-called freebie schemes.

Chief Minister Mrs Rekha Gupta, while continuing her remarks in the Delhi Legislative Assembly on the CAG report, further stated that the opposition had portrayed these free schemes as if they were offering them from their own pockets, whereas in reality, all the money belonged to the public. Referring to the CAG report, the Chief Minister said that the entire revenue of the previous government was consumed by expenses — salaries, interest payments, and other such expenditures that do not create any permanent assets. Concluding her address, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta formally requested that the CAG report be referred to the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) for a comprehensive investigation, so that the public may know how their money was truly spent.

## Man found dead on campus had no link with school: Police

### Gurgaon (Agency)

Days after the body of a man was found inside the washroom of a govt school in Jatauli village in Pataudi, police have identified the victim, saying he had "no connection with the school". The assailants had "dragged" 20-year-old Karn alias Tinda, a resident of Jatauli, into the school compound and hid his body inside the washroom, police said.

Police said the body was found with injuries on the head and forehead and his body had visible marks of being dragged. According to sources, the unknown accused scaled the rear wall of the school premises.

## Women's SHGs to stitch 1L flags for Har Ghar Tiranga campaign in Noida



### Noida (Agency)

Over 10 self-help groups (SHGs) from the district have been entrusted by the administration to stitch one lakh flags for this year's Har Ghar Tiranga campaign.

The move is part of an ongoing effort to link the campaign with local livelihoods, especially those run by women in rural areas. SHGs from Bisrakh, Dadri, and Dankaur blocks will be engaged in stitching the flags and compensated by the state govt under the National Rural Livelihood Mission. The target was assigned during a review meeting by district magistrate Medha Roopam. She directed all departments to coordinate efforts and complete preparations on time to ensure the campaign is impactful. "The idea is to make this a people-driven movement that builds a deeper sense of pride and unity," she said. According to officials, each group, consisting of at least 10 women, is expected to earn around Rs 5,000 a day, contributing significantly to both the campaign and the household income of participating women. "These targets have been given every year since 2022 to women-led SHGs in the district. It's a way to ensure the campaign remains rooted in local participation while directly supporting livelihoods," said Shiv Pratap Parmesh, district development officer. The groups will start making the flags by the end of this week, after procuring cloth from wholesale markets in Delhi. Saraswati Bhati, part of Suryodaya SHG in Dadri, told TOI that the women have started preparing for the task at hand. She added that last year, they produced around 1,000 flags for the campaign in a span of a week. The Har Ghar Tiranga campaign is being held in three phases. The first phase includes school exhibitions, rangoli-making competitions, and art installations. The second phase features a Tiranga Mahotsav with a cultural fair, musical concert, and flag rally. The final phase involves flag hoisting at public buildings, tricolour lighting at landmarks.

## Teen guns down gardener over closed gate, arrested

The Sikh Times

New Delhi: A 37-year-old gardener and caretaker was allegedly shot dead by a teenager following a heated argument over closing the gate of a property in South Delhi's Fatehpur Beri early on Monday morning, the police said. The gardener, identified as Santal, was shot in the chest. He died on the spot, they said. The police arrested the accused, Piyush Yadav (19), and recovered the weapon used in the crime from his residence. Piyush was working as a real estate agent in Chhatarpur, Phase 2, here, an official said. According to the police, the incident took place around 2 am near Shamshain Ghat in Dera village here. They received information that some women were crying loudly in the neighborhood, following which they reached the spot. Upon reaching, the police found a man with a gunshot injury near the cremation ground. A forensic and crime team reached the spot and collected evidence. The police recovered an empty cartridge from the crime scene. The body was sent to Safdarjung Hospital for post-mortem examination. Prima facie, it was revealed that the accused had an argument with the gardener over the closing of gate of the property. In a fit of rage, the accused allegedly shot Santal, the cop said.

## Two Gurugram cops killed in collision on Bundelkhand E-way

Gurugram: A Sub-Inspector (SI) and Constable of the Sector 40 crime unit team were killed while two other police personnel were injured after their SUV collided with a tractor-trailer loaded with iron pipes near Dhanauri village on Bundelkhand Expressway in Uttar Pradesh on Sunday night. The Gurugram police have paid tributes to the deceased personnel. According to the police, the deceased were identified as SI Sanjay Kumar (45), a resident of Tumbaheri village in Haryana's Jhajjar district, and Constable Amit (34), a resident of Sitaram Gate, Jhajjar. The accident took place on the expressway when all four officials were on their way to Chhattisgarh as part of an ongoing investigation. According to the police, SI Kumar was born on June 1 in 1980 at his residence in Tumbaheri village of Jhajjar district. He joined the Haryana Police as a constable on November 20, 1998. He had been serving in the police in Gurugram from May 25 in 2019 and was posted in Sector 40 crime unit on March 22, 2021.

### NAME CHANGE

I, hitherto known as RAJESH, S/O DHIRUP, RAI R/o 33147, BAZAR MOHD ALI, MORN GATE DELHI, G/P O NORTH DELHI, DELHI-110006 changed my name and shall hereafter be known as RAJESH SINGH.

### NAME CHANGE

I hitherto known as FATMA (VEENU) D/o SARAFAT R/o 27-24. Navjeevan Camp Govindpuri, Kalkaji, South Delhi - 110019, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as VEENU.

### NAME CHANGE

I hitherto known as CHANDNI D/o MUKESH SINGH RANA R/o C-9, JHANPUR, GHAZIABAD, L.E. SAHIBABAD, L.E. SAHIBABAD, DIST. HAPUR, UTTAR PRADESH-201010 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as RANJEET MANDAL.

### NAME CHANGE

I, Vijay Kumar s/o Shyam Singh R/o 1178, Galli No.2, New Extension Colony, Palwali-12102, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as RAKESH JAIN.

### NAME CHANGE

I, hitherto known as RANJEET KAPAR, alias RANJEET MANDAL S/O DINESH MANDAL R/O H No. 26, Malik Pur Village, Kingsway Camp, GTB Nagar, North West Delhi, Delhi-110009, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as RANJEET MANDAL.

### NAME CHANGE

I, Samreen Yusuf, W/o Yusuf Ashfaq Hashmi R/o Flat No. 1, Tower-4, Utech Horizon, Plot No. 6, Sector-PL2, Greater Noida, G.B Nagar, U.P. have changed the name of my minor daughter namely Simrah Khan aged 14 years and she shall hereafter be known as TANNU RANA.

### NAME CHANGE

I, MOHD. UMAR, S/o MOHD SARIF R/o 12A-15-B, Galli No.1, Bagrang Bell Mohalla, Majupur Seelampur, PO Seelampur, Dist. North East Delhi, Delhi-110053, have changed the name of my minor daughter NASHFA aged 13 years and she shall hereafter be known as NOSABA.

### PUBLIC NOTICE

It is for general information that I, Mohmmad Nabeel S/o Mohd Yakub R/O House No-23, Galli No.1, Near Dilshad Masjid, Old Mustafabad, Gokal Pur, PO: Gokal Pur, Dist: North East Delhi, Delhi, Delhi -110094, declare that name of mine and my father has been wrongly written as Nabeel and Yaqub in my in my 10th and 12th educational documents. The actual name of mine and my father are Mohmmad Nabeel and Mohd Yakub.

### PUBLIC NOTICE

It is for general information that I, MOHAMMAD DILSHAD ALAM son of MOHAMMAD JALAM, residing at J-4/56-K, Upper Ground Floor, Khirki Extension, Malviya Nagar, PO: Malviya Nagar, Dist: South Delhi, Delhi-110017, declare that name of mine has been wrongly written as MOHD DILSHAD ALAM in my minor daughter KHUSHNOOR ALAM aged 15 years in her 10th Class Educational Documents. The actual name of mine is MOHAMMAD DILSHAD ALAM, which may be amended accordingly.

### PUBLIC NOTICE

This is for general information that I, Deepak son of Shibu Rajak, resident of House No.-210, Street No-10, Karkardooma, Karkardooma, East Delhi, Delhi-110092 declare that in my 10th and 12th class educational documents the name of my father and my mother have been wrongly written as Sidhu and Anita. The actual name of my father and my mother are Shibu Rajak and Saroj Rani respectively, which may be modified accordingly.

### PUBLIC NOTICE

It is for general information that I RAVI S/O SHIBU RAJAK R/O H.NO. 210 STREET NO-10, Karkardooma EAST DELHI, DELHI-110092 declare that name of my FATHER and MY MOTHER has been wrongly written as SIDDHU and ANITA in my 10TH & 12TH CLASS EDUCATIONAL DOCUMENTS. The actual name of my Father and my Mother are SHIBU Rajak and SAROJ RANI respectively which may be amended accordingly.

### PUBLIC NOTICE

Information is given to general public at large that our client Mrs. Rani is the owner of Residential Freehold Residential House of land area measuring 48 Sq. Yds., i.e., 40.13 Sq. Meters, out of total area measuring 157 Sq. Yds., out of Khasra No. 566. Situated at Dauli Ram Colony, Town Dauli, Pargana & Tehsil Dauli, District Gurdaspur, Punjab, India. By virtue of Sale Deed dated 10.05.2024, registered as Doc. No. 24919, in Book 1, Vol. no. 27349, on pages No. 1-18, on dated 10.05.2024, in SRO-Dadri, in the chain document below, mentioned documents are not available i.e. Guardianship Order passed by competent court in favour of Mrs. Parmeshwari Devi regarding sell of Minors in respect of entire property, now our client is declaring that any other Person does not have any right over the said property. And same property currently financed by Hinduja Housing Finance Ltd. and now same is going to be re-financed by Tata Capital Housing Finance Ltd. Branch- Preet Vihar Delhi. If any person(s) have any objection(s) or claim(s) with respect to the right, title or interest in the Said Property then contact us within 07 days from the date of Publication of this notice and or the same to the undersigned if found by anyone. Thereafter no claim shall be entertained.

### [NAVEEN KUMAR VERMA]

Advocate

F-211, sector-3 Vaishali Ghaziab

Utar Pradesh-201010, Contact at 0995871432

# Age no bar, seniors return to Delhi University for learning

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## NEWS BOX

## Apple To Expand US Manufacturing Base, To Use Only US-Made Rare Earth Magnets

### Washington. (Agency)

Technology giant Apple has announced a major push to expand its manufacturing base in the United States, including a decision to exclusively use rare-earth magnets made in the country. The announcement came during a press conference held on Wednesday (US time), where Apple CEO Tim Cook appeared alongside US President Donald Trump. Cook stated that Apple will now source only American-made rare-earth magnets for its devices. These magnets will be developed by MP Materials, the only fully integrated rare-earth producer in the United States.

He stated, "This year alone, the American manufacturers are on track to make 19 billion chips for Apple in 24 factories across 12 different states. Second, we're committed to buying American-made and advanced rare-earth magnets developed by MP Materials, which will become part of Apple's devices shipped around the world". With this partnership, MP Materials will significantly expand its flagship facility in Fort Worth, Texas. Apple also plans to collaborate on building a cutting-edge rare earth recycling line in Mountain View, California.

He also highlighted that Apple has worked with its partner Corning to build the world's largest and most advanced smartphone glass production line in the state. "In Kentucky, we've worked with our partners at Corning to build the world's largest and most advanced smartphone glass production line. And I'm pleased to announce that very soon, this is for the first time ever, every single new iPhone and every single new Apple Watch sold anywhere in the world will contain cover glass made in Kentucky," Cook added.

Apple's total investment commitment in the United States has now been raised to USD 600 billion over the next four years. This includes an additional USD 100 billion announced on Wednesday. Earlier this year, the company had committed USD 500 billion and announced plans to hire 20,000 workers across the country over the same period. The move is also seen as a strategic decision that could help Apple sidestep potential tariffs on iPhones and other products amid rising tariffs by the US President on imports to the US.

## 2025 Had Earth's Third-Hottest July On Earth: Scientists

### Brussels. (Agency)

Last month was Earth's third warmest July since records began and included a record national temperature in Turkey of 50.5 degrees Celsius (122.9 Fahrenheit), scientists said on Thursday.

Last month continued a trend of extreme climate conditions that scientists attribute to man-made global warming, even though there was a pause in record-breaking temperatures for the planet.

According to the EU's Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S), the average global surface air temperature reached 16.68 C in July, which is 0.45 C above the 1991-2020 average for the month.

"Two years after the hottest July on record, the recent streak of global temperature records is over – for now," said Carlo Buontempo, director of C3S.

"But this doesn't mean climate change has stopped. We continued to witness the effects of a warming world in events such as extreme heat and catastrophic floods in July." While not as hot as the record-setting July 2023 and second-warmest July 2024, Earth's average surface temperature last month was still 1.25 C above the 1850-1900 pre-industrial period, when humans began burning fossil fuels on an industrial scale. Moreover, the 12-month period from August 2024 to July 2025 was 1.53 C warmer than pre-industrial levels, exceeding the 1.5 C threshold that was set as a maximum in the Paris Agreement that sought to curb global warming and entered into force in 2016. The main cause of climate change is the release of greenhouse gases from burning fossil fuels.

Last year was the world's hottest year ever recorded.

The world has not yet officially surpassed the 1.5 C target, which refers to long-term global average temperature over several decades. However, some scientists argue that staying below this threshold is no longer realistically achievable. They are urging governments to accelerate cuts to CO2 emissions to reduce the extent of the overshoot and curb the rise in extreme weather events.

## United Airlines Grounds Flights In US Due To Technology Issue

### Los Angeles. (Agency)

Thousands of US passengers were facing delays Wednesday after United Airlines halted many departures in the wake of a systemwide problem.

"Due to a technology issue, we are holding United mainline flights at their departure airports," the carrier was reported as saying, referring to major routes. "We expect additional flight delays this evening as we work through this issue. Safety is our top priority, and we'll work with our customers to get them to their destinations." The Federal Aviation Authority, which regulates flying in the United States, issued ground stops at several major airports.

The orders affecting airports in Denver, Newark, Houston and Chicago only apply to United, the FAA's website said. The outage is the latest problem to afflict America's aviation sector. Last month Alaska Airlines suffered an IT problem that left its planes on the ground for several hours. That came after air traffic control systems went down at a Newark area airport on more than one occasion this year, shaking passengers' faith in the system. In January a mid-air collision near Washington's Reagan National Airport involving a passenger jet and a military helicopter claimed dozens of lives.

# Trump moves to shut down NASA missions that measure carbon dioxide and plant health

### Trump's budget request for fiscal year 2026 includes no money for the Orbiting Carbon Observatories, which can precisely show where carbon dioxide is being emitted and absorbed and how well crops are growing.

### WASHINGTON. (Agency)

The Trump administration is moving to shut down two NASA missions that monitor a potent greenhouse gas and plant health, potentially shutting off an important source of data for scientists, policymakers and farmers. President Donald Trump's budget request for fiscal year 2026 includes no money for the Orbiting Carbon Observatories, which can precisely show where carbon dioxide is being emitted and absorbed and how well crops are growing.



NASA said in an emailed statement Wednesday that the missions were "beyond their prime mission" and being terminated "to align with the President's agenda and budget priorities." But the missions — a free-flying satellite launched in 2014 and an instrument attached to the International Space Station in 2019 that include technology used in the Hubble Space Telescope — still are more sensitive and accurate than any other systems in the world, operating or planned, and a "national asset" that should be saved, said David Crisp, a retired NASA scientist who led their development.

They helped scientists discover, for example, that the Amazon rain forest emits more carbon dioxide than it absorbs, while boreal forests in Canada, Russia and places where permafrost is melting absorb more than they emit, Crisp said. They also can detect the "glow" of photosynthesis in plants, which helps monitor drought and predict food shortages that can lead to civil unrest and famine, he said. "This is really critical," Crisp said. "We're learning so much about

this rapidly changing planet." The decision to end the missions is "extremely shortsighted," said Jonathan Overpeck, a climate scientist at the University of Michigan. "The observations provided by these satellites ... (are) critical for managing growing climate change impacts around the planet, including in the U.S.," he said.

Looking to Congress Crisp and others hope Congress will vote to preserve funding for the missions, which are funded through the fiscal year that ends Sept. 30. A bill in the House closely aligns with the president's request and would eliminate the missions, while a Senate

## Going to see a lot more': Trump signals more sanctions after slapping 50 per cent tariff on India over Russian oil imports

### WORLD. (Agency)

US President Donald Trump on Thursday said a lot more 'secondary sanctions' are upcoming, after he was asked why India was singled out for penalties over doing business with Russia. "It has only been eight hours, so let us see what happens over the next... You are going to see a lot more. You are going to see so much secondary sanctions," Trump said during a White House event. President Donald Trump on Wednesday escalated trade tensions with India by imposing an additional 25 per cent ad valorem duty above the 25 per cent reciprocal tariffs announced on August 1, raising the total tariff burden to 50 per cent, the highest imposed on any

country, along with Brazil.

The move drew swift condemnation from New Delhi. In a sharply worded statement, the Ministry of External Affairs said, "It is extremely unfortunate that the US should choose to impose additional tariffs on India for actions that several other countries are also taking in their own national interest." The MEA also described the tariffs as "unfair, unjustified and unreasonable," and warned it would take "all actions necessary to protect its national interests." Trump, however, dismissed claims of selective enforcement when asked why countries such as China and Turkey, which also import large quantities of Russian oil, had not faced equivalent

penalties. "It may happen, I do not know, I cannot tell you yet," he said. "We did it with India. We are doing it probably with a couple of others. One of them could be China." When asked on whether the new sanctions might be reversed in the event of a peace deal between Russia and Ukraine, Trump said, "We will determine that later, but right now, they are paying a 50 per cent tariff." In the executive order, Trump said he has determined that "it is necessary and appropriate to impose an additional ad valorem duty on imports of articles of India, which is directly or indirectly importing Russian Federation oil." I find that the Government of India is currently directly or indirectly.

## US In Race With China To Claim "Best" Part Of Moon: NASA Chief

### The NASA administrator also said that there is a specific region on the moon that is especially valuable, and that both the US and China are eyeing it.

### Washington. (Agency)

The United States is in a new space race with China to claim the most resource-rich part of the moon, NASA's interim administrator Sean Duffy said while announcing plans to install a nuclear reactor on the lunar surface by 2030.

"We're in a race to the moon, in a race with China to the moon. And to have a base on the moon, we need energy," he said. Addressing a press conference on Tuesday (local time) titled "Unleashing American Drone Dominance" held by the US Department of Transportation, which Duffy also leads. Duffy explained that energy is the key to setting up a permanent base, and that's why he wants a 100-kilowatt nuclear reactor



placed on the moon within the next five years. He said such a reactor would generate about the same amount of electricity that a typical US household uses in 3.5 days. The NASA administrator also said that there is a specific region on the moon that is especially valuable, and that both the US and China are eyeing it.

"There's a certain part of the moon that everyone knows is the best," he said.

"We have ice there. We have sunlight there. We want to get there first and claim that for America" he said.

Water ice and continuous sunlight make certain parts of the moon, especially near the south pole, ideal for setting up a permanent base. These conditions are important for both sustaining human life and generating power. Duffy also addressed concerns about launching nuclear material into space. He made it clear that the reactor would not be active when launched from Earth.

"We're not launching this live. That's obviously if you have any questions about that, no, we're not launching it live," he said. While

comparing the Artemis lunar program to the historic Apollo missions of the 1960s and 70s, Duffy admitted that NASA's current efforts haven't captured public attention in the same way. "A lot of people don't know even what Artemis is. Everyone knew what Apollo was. We all knew. The whole world knew what Apollo was. We were going to the moon, Artemis is, we're going back," Duffy said.

## Global plastics treaty: First draft text by Friday, 'scope' remains contentious in closed-door talks

### DHAKA. (Agency)

A first consolidated draft text of the global plastics treaty is expected to emerge by Friday as the contact groups work around the clock to bridge entrenched differences. But behind closed doors, the definition of the treaty's "scope" — particularly the interpretation of the "full life cycle of plastics" — remains a flashpoint in negotiations, according to sources privy to Contact Group 1 (CG1) discussions.

Speaking to this newspaper on the sidelines of an informal meeting with Indian industry representatives on Wednesday, Ambassador Luis Vayas Valdivieso, Chair of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC), maintained a diplomatic stand when asked whether the definition of the full life cycle was being revisited amid mounting tensions. He replied: "Negotiations are going. You have seen what's happening in the contact group... My job as Chair is to keep the negotiations on track... What the text will say on August 14 is up to the members." The Chair said he

had requested a compiled text by Friday to serve as a working draft, while maintaining momentum in the contact groups. "We are still negotiating. The idea is to assemble a text with provisions that have a high level of convergence, while continuing informal work on the more difficult issues," he said, emphasising that the treaty must be forward-looking, credible, and flexible.

The stocktake, expected after the release of the draft, will help negotiators assess how far they have come and identify the remaining areas of divergence. The ambiguity over the scope of the treaty stems from a fundamental disagreement: what constitutes the full life cycle of plastics? 14% of oil demand caters to manufacture of polymers. While UNEA Resolution 5/14 — the original mandate for the treaty — calls for addressing plastic pollution "through a comprehensive approach that addresses the full life cycle", negotiators have diverged sharply over its interpretation. A briefing by the Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL)

says that the lack of a legally defined scope has allowed some countries (petro countries) to push for a narrower definition — focusing mainly on downstream waste management — while excluding the



upstream stages of raw material extraction, monomer production, and polymerization. However, scientific consensus affirms that the plastics life cycle begins with fossil fuel extraction and runs through polymer production, use, disposal, and environmental leakage. Plastic polymers, which form the backbone of all plastic materials, are

produced through highly polluting processes. According to the CIEL brief, 99% of plastic polymers are fossil-based, and their production already accounts for up to 14% of oil demand — a number set to rise in coming years. Moreover, these polymers are directly linked to the release of toxic chemicals and microplastics that affect both environmental and human health.

Critically, many of these polymers — especially polyethylene, polypropylene, PET, and polystyrene — are derived from a small group of monomers like ethylene and propylene, over 90% of which are used solely for plastics. Excluding these from the treaty's control mechanisms could undermine the goal of ending plastic pollution altogether. The Chair's insistence on "credible rules" and a "flexible" treaty reflects the difficult balancing act between ambition and consensus. Whether the compiled draft on Friday can help close this gap remains to be seen.

## "Punched, Hair Pulled": Racist Attack On Indian-Origin Girl, 6, In Ireland

### Dublin. (Agency)

A six-year-old Indian-origin girl is the latest victim of racist attacks in Ireland. Nia Naveen, whose family hails from Kottayam in Kerala, was playing outside her house in Waterford City in southeast Ireland when a gang of children aged 12 to 14 attacked her, calling her "dirty" and asking her to "go back to India."

Ms Naveen's mother, Anupa Achuthan, told the Irish Mirror that the gang punched her daughter in the face, hit her private parts with a bicycle, punched her on the neck and twisted her hair. Ms Achuthan, a nurse, has lived in Ireland for eight years with her husband and recently got Irish citizenship. Her children were born in the country. The family moved into the house in January, and everything was going well until Monday's incident. "It was around 7.30 pm and she was playing inside the house. She wanted to play outside and go cycling. I let her outside for a few seconds. My husband was at work on night duty. He was off to work,



and I was alone with my 10-month-old and my six-year-old. She went out with her friends. I was supervising them just in front of the house. They were playing together and I knew they were safe," the mother said, recalling the event. Ms Achuthan said she went inside the house for a few minutes to feed her crying son, but her Irish-born little girl soon followed her in after around a minute -- upset. She started crying. She couldn't even talk, she was so scared. I had never seen my daughter like that. I just asked her friends what happened, and they were all so upset, they couldn't talk. One of her friends said a gang of boys older than them hit her on the private parts with a cycle, and five of them punched her on her face," the mother said. "She told me five of them punched her in the face. One of the boys pushed the bicycle wheel onto her private parts, and it was really sore. They said the F word and "Dirty Indian, go back to India. She told me today they punched her neck and pulled her hair," she added. Ms Achuthan soon went out, and she saw the gang of children involved in the incident afterwards. She said they stared her down. "I saw the gang after. They were staring at me. They know I am her parent. They were roaming around here."

**Inter-state insurance 'scam' in Sambhal: 1 more held**



**Lucknow . (Agency)**

As part of the crackdown on an inter-state insurance fraud network, the Sambhal Police on Wednesday arrested another key member of the so-called "insurance mafia," taking the total number of arrests in the past six months to 67.

Addressing a press conference, Sambhal Superintendent of Police (SP) Krishna Kumar Vishnoi said the arrested person, identified as Pankaj Kumar Dhali, 37, who was involved in orchestrating fraudulent personal loans and insurance claims using forged documents and identities.

The police also recovered one laptop, two mobile phones, 39 cheque books from various banks, seven debit cards and several Aadhaar and PAN cards which are believed to be connected to individuals residing in Delhi, Uttarakhand, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh.

Additional Superintendent of Police, Sambhal, Anukriti Sharma said that Dhali's involvement came to light after the police arrested two accused, identified as Shahrukh Khan and Hiren Kumar, in February.

"In the process we had also recovered several documents from their possession including 51 insurance policy claim forms, 31 death certificates, 17 insurance policy bonds and 12 photo copies of insurance policies.

"It was this case that hinted us that fake documents could be created" said Additional SP Sharma. "We recovered the death certificate issued by Delhi MCD for a person named Dharmendra, a resident of Delhi from Shahrukh's possession. Going through his WhatsApp conversations, the name of Pankaj Kumar Dhali came to our notice," added the officer.

**Days after his release, Sambhal mosque panel chief booked for 'celebratory rally'**

**Noida . (Agency)**

A CASE was registered on Wednesday against the chairman of the Shahi Jama Masjid Management Committee, Zafar Ali, and around 60 others for allegedly taking out a celebratory procession in Sambhal following his release from jail, police said on Wednesday.

The move comes days after Ali was released after spending four months and 13 days at the Moradabad jail. He was earlier arrested after the police accused him of playing a role in inciting the violence in Sambhal in November last year. Four civilians were killed in firing as the police confronted the protesters and 29 police personnel were also injured. The violence erupted during a court-mandated survey of the Mughal-era mosque in Sambhal town. Ali is also the main lawyer representing the Shahi Jama Mosque committee.

A day after the violence, Ali had alleged during a press conference on November 25 last year that the deaths happened as a result of police firing. Ali was released on bail around 9:30 am on August 1 and as soon as he came out, a group of around 60 supporters were waiting for him to celebrate his release. A video of the purported celebration surfaced on social media. According to the police, the case was filed at Sambhal Kotwali police station on the basis of a complaint by a sub-inspector, Ashish Tomar. "As per information provided by Tomar, we learnt that around 9:30 am on Friday, Zafar Ali, three advocates, Sarfaraz, Tahir, Haider, along with 50-60 unidentified supporters, allegedly violated the prohibitory orders given by the public servant concerned.

# No strikes at PGI, Chandigarh, high court reiterates

**The dispute stems from protests by central government hospital employees against recent changes in service conditions, following the lapse of certain central notifications.**

**Chandigarh .(Agency)**

The Punjab and Haryana High Court on Thursday disposed of a petition challenging protests by employee unions at the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER), Chandigarh, while reiterating that no union would be allowed to obstruct patient care or disrupt the functioning of the hospital.

A division bench comprising Chief Justice Sheel Nagu and Justice Sanjiv Berry clarified that the unions "shall not enter the premises of the PGI" in a manner that causes "obstruction to the movement of the patients or the employees or officers".

The bench was hearing a batch of petitions, including CWP No. 162 of 2024 and CWP No. 24 of 2024, which had challenged protests, strikes and alleged service disruptions at the premier medical institution. "162 is being disposed, 24 is the same," the bench noted, indicating that both were being considered together.

During the hearing, counsel for the Union of India, Additional Solicitor General Satya Pal Jain, informed the court that issues relating to the validity of the central government notifications—central to the dispute—were currently under conciliation proceedings before the labour commissioner (central).

# NGT launches suo motu proceedings over toxic waste at Dadumajra dump in Chandigarh

**An NGT inspection team comprising experts from the Central Pollution Control Board and other technical agencies is expected to visit Chandigarh in the third or fourth week of August.**

**Chandigarh .(Agency)**

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) recently initiated suo motu proceedings following alarming media reports about hazardous waste mismanagement at Chandigarh's Dadumajra landfill. The case centres on a dangerous build-up of toxic leachate, especially during the monsoon, which has reportedly been flowing into nearby fields, homes, and the Patiala-ki-Rao Choe, contaminating the air, soil, and water. A Public Interest Litigation (PIL) related to the Dadumajra dump is already pending before the Punjab and Haryana High Court, with the next hearing scheduled for September.

The NGT has now summoned several authorities, including the Municipal Corporation Chandigarh, Chandigarh Pollution Control Committee (CPCC), deputy commissioner, and Central Pollution

Control Board (CPCB), to file affidavits and responses at least one week before the next hearing, scheduled for November 3, 2025. Meanwhile, ahead of the separate hearing planned in mid-September, an NGT inspection team comprising experts from the CPCB and other technical agencies is expected to visit Chandigarh in the third or fourth week of August. They will assess key sites, including the Dadumajra dump, sewage treatment plants, and stormwater drains. Residents of the surrounding neighbourhoods have reported rising cases of respiratory illnesses, skin infections, and tuberculosis, attributing these to toxic runoff mixing with rainwater and seeping into residential areas. One local activist described the contaminated leachate as a "cream of poison," underlining the grave environmental threat.

MP Manish Tewari said that when the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Housing and Urban Affairs visited Chandigarh, the municipal corporation had

subject to weather conditions. Authorities had earlier committed to clearing the dump by May 31, but that deadline passed amid a large-scale fire at the site, which took over 1.25 lakh litres of water to extinguish. The revised July 31 target was also missed, with officials blaming persistent monsoon rains. Municipal Corporation officials maintain that accelerated bioremediation is in progress and that around 70-75 per cent of the third and final mound, amounting to nearly 2.4 lakh metric tonnes of legacy waste, has already been processed.

Yet, visible heaps of waste remain, and the delay has contributed to Chandigarh slipping from the targeted 7-star rating in the Swachh Survekshan "Garbage-Free City" rankings to just 3 stars.



## 'Sugar levels were high, but he still operated upon my eye': What complaint that led to FIR against Vashi doctors says

**A complaint by Rajendra Gupta and four others led to an FIR being lodged against ophthalmologists D V Pandit and Chandan Pandit.**

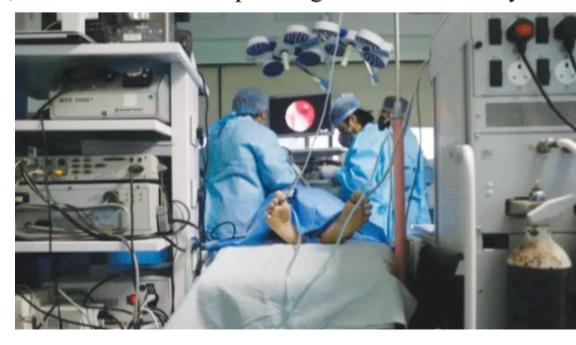
**Mumbai .(Agency)**

A 67-year-old Navi Mumbai man whose police complaint led to a First Information Report (FIR) being lodged against ophthalmologists D V Pandit and Chandan Pandit, a father-son duo, has alleged that his eyes were operated upon even though his sugar levels were high. In his complaint, Rajendra Gupta, whose eyes allegedly got infected after the operation, told the police that during a second operation, the Pandits asked him to get a sugar test done, but went ahead with the surgery before the report arrived.

It was based on a complaint given by Gupta and four others that the Navi Mumbai police registered an FIR against the Pandits earlier this week. So far, no arrests have been made.

In his complaint to the police, Gupta said that in December 2024, since his eyes were hurting, he went to Dr Pandit Eye Surgery and Laser Hospital in Vashi. Dr Chandan allegedly charged Rs 75,000 and carried out a surgery on his right eye. Gupta said in his complaint that

when he asked for the medical papers, Dr Chandan did not provide them. Later, when the vision in his right eye allegedly worsened, Gupta went to Dr Chandan again, who advised operating on his left eye.



According to Gupta's complaint, he kept getting phone calls from the hospital asking when he would come in for the second surgery. Gupta returned to the hospital in February. Dr Chandan allegedly referred him to a lab for a

sugar test and charged him Rs 30,000. However, before the report came in, the doctor operated on his left eye. Gupta said in his police complaint. During the operation, the doctor allegedly asked Gupta's daughter for an extra Rs 10,000, saying there was a boil near Gupta's eye. According to Gupta's complaint, when he returned home, he felt a lot of pain in his eye and could not see anything. In a follow-up session, he was allegedly charged Rs 30,000 again. Later, Dr Chandan allegedly took them to another doctor in Jogeshwari. The discharge from his eye was sent for testing, following which it was revealed that he had been infected with a virus, Gupta said in his complaint.

Gupta later found that while his operation was conducted by Dr Chandan, the medical documents were on letterheads in his father's name. Later, he allegedly learnt that the Pandits were not registered with the Maharashtra Medical Council.

## Govt to give additional Narmada water, agriculture power for Saurashtra districts

**The decision has been taken considering representations made by people of Saurashtra region, an official release, quoting spokesperson of the government and senior minister Rushikesh Patel, said.**



**Gandhinagar .(Agency)**

To meet the increased demand of people of Saurashtra for water and power owing to delayed rain after initial spells, the Gujarat government has decided to provide additional Narmada water and agriculture power for 10 hours for 11 districts of the Saurashtra region. A decision in this regard was taken in the weekly cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel.

The decision has been taken considering representations made by people of Saurashtra region, an official release, quoting spokesperson of the government and senior minister Rushikesh Patel, said.

The release stated that the excess Narmada water will be provided through SAUNI Yojana (Saurashtra Narmada Avtaran Irrigation Yojana) of the state government. Similarly, the 11 districts of Saurashtra, which get power supply for agriculture purposes for eight hours, will be getting the same for 10 hours. The 11 districts of Saurashtra include Jamnagar, Devbhumi Dwarka, Porbandar, Rajkot, Surendranagar, Morbi, Amreli, Bhavnagar, Botad, Junagadh and Gir Somnath.

The release also stated that a similar situation is prevailing in some parts of north Gujarat and if the people of the region demand, the government will provide them Narmada water through Sujalam Suflam Yojana considering the available stock of water.



The yatra will kick off on August 17 from Patiala, and pass through villages in Malwa, Majha, and Doaba regions affected by the land pooling plan, culminating in Pathankot on September 5, he

pooling scheme, the government seeks to hand over farmers' land to land mafias through backdoor means—which is completely unacceptable, they said.

They stated, "BJP stands like a rock with the farmers. Until the AAP government withdraws the land pooling policy, the BJP will continue to fight at all levels in solidarity with the farmers."

Meanwhile, BJP's state president Sunil Jakhar in a post on X wrote: "The Punjab and Haryana High Court has granted a stay on Punjab government's land pooling policy. Although this stay is currently limited to a single day, considering the government's authority of unsuccessful litigation regarding policies detrimental to the public interest, it is likely that this initiative to acquire farmers' land will not withstand legal scrutiny. Consequently, the government is poised to face defeat in this

case as well. Therefore it would be prudent for the Chief Minister to relinquish the interests of Delhi and acknowledge the sentiments of Punjab by withdrawing this policy."



the advice of the Central Advisory Contract Labour Board (CACLB). PGIMER, however, subsequently sought and obtained exemptions under Section 31 of the Act. These were conditional upon the institute paying contract workers wages and benefits on par with the lowest-paid regular employees. These exemptions were renewed periodically—in 2018,

2020, and 2023—but the latest exemption expired on January 12, 2024. The institute applied for an extension, citing its continued need for contractual staff. However, the CACLB deferred a decision during its July 2024 meeting, as the matter was pending before the high court.

According to minutes of a November 5, 2024, meeting placed on record in court, PGIMER stated it had cleared wage arrears for contract workers in compliance with the exemption conditions up to January 13, 2024. Officials from the ministries of Labour and Health, as well as PGIMER, acknowledged that under Rule 25(2)(v)(a) of the Contract Labour Rules, contract workers performing similar duties must be granted the same wages and working conditions as regular employees. In an interim order dated November 22, 2024, the high court had issued a writ of prohibition, restraining all PGIMER employees—regular or contractual—from striking during the pendency of conciliation proceedings. It had also directed the deputy chief labour commissioner (central), who is presiding over the conciliation process, to endeavour to conclude it within two months.

## Embedding trust in India Inc's course to resilience

Building trust is a powerful asset for Indian industry, enabling companies to thrive in a competitive and globalised environment. In the current geo-economic and geopolitical environment, the responsibility of building trust needs to be ideally shared between businesses, the government and various stakeholders, with focused efforts towards public-private partnerships, robust global value chains and cross-functional collaborations to lead towards collective trust. On the governance side, this will enhance stakeholder engagement, build brand value, deepen customer loyalty, inspire employees and strengthen resilience during crises. As stakeholders increasingly seek transparency and accountability, businesses that invest in trust can meet these expectations more effectively. Building trust can encourage regulators to adopt more supportive and streamlined policies, reducing compliance burdens and fostering a more business-friendly environment. Trust is a business enabler, thus, companies known for integrity and good governance gain a competitive edge by attracting talent, investors and global partnerships—fuelling innovation and long-term success. This entails taking actionable steps towards conservation and sustainability, digital transformation and responsible use of AI, equity, inclusivity and welfare, community engagement, education and upskilling, R&D and innovation, leadership commitment and financial integrity among others. Values such as transparency, empathy, authenticity, fairness, reliability must be inculcated and promoted to strengthen trust in the whole ecosystem. In its study titled 'The shared responsibility of building and strengthening trust', CII has explored trust-building practices among leading companies and prescribes a roadmap to help businesses enhance trust in line with global trends. The roadmap is based on 15 action points.

One, establish a clearly defined corporate purpose grounded in ethics, sustainability and long-term value creation. This must reflect both the organisation's vision and stakeholder aspirations. It should act as a reference point for strategic decisions, fostering alignment, accountability, and transparency across the enterprise. Two, develop a robust risk and crisis management framework. Trust is tested during uncertainty. Indian businesses must identify areas of vulnerability—whether geopolitical, financial, operational, or technological—and implement comprehensive risk mitigation plans. Companies can reinforce stakeholders' confidence by demonstrating preparedness and responsiveness during crises. Three, ensure regulatory compliance and financial integrity. Clear policies, internal controls, and early corrective mechanisms should be institutionalised. Transparent financial reporting and timely statutory disclosures affirm the company's integrity and commitment to ethical governance, which in turn fosters regulatory trust and investor confidence.

Four, embrace technology and innovation responsibly. Adopting AI, blockchain and automation tools can enhance transparency, efficiency and data protection. Companies must be explicit about technological integration, train employees accordingly, prevent misuse and ensure that innovation aligns with ethical standards. Five, optimise supply chain management. A reliable and ethical supply chain enhances both operational efficiency and stakeholder trust. Businesses should use technology for transparency, predictive analytics to foresee disruptions and ensure fair and timely payments to suppliers. Strong relationships across the value chain promote resilience and shared accountability. Six, assign clear roles for trust stewardship. Titular designation or appointing an existing senior executive to lead trust-building initiatives highlights the strategic priority.

Truth is the complex, indispensable foundation in individual litigations, including matrimonial disputes. Yet, it is not easy to unravel the realities involved in a case. British scholar Terry Eagleton said, "Courts, like novels, blur the distinction between fact and fiction... The jury judge not on the facts, but between rival versions of them." However, what is presented to the court by way of evidence matters, for knowing the truth. Recently, the Supreme Court, in a judgement authored by Justice B V Nagarathna, held that even secretly recorded telephonic communications of a spouse are admissible in evidence in a matrimonial dispute. The court held that such conversations cannot claim immunity from judicial scanning on privacy grounds. The court emphasised a litigant's right to a fair trial, which is a facet of Article 21, while negating the privacy arguments, also based on Article 21.

The case has a curious trajectory. The husband filed a divorce petition with allegations of cruelty in the family court in Bathinda, Punjab. Among other materials, the husband placed memory cards/ chips of mobile phones, compact discs, and conversation transcripts as evidence before the court. He claimed that he had recorded certain conversations between the wife and the husband between 2010 and 2016, which were contained in these materials, and he sought their admission as evidence. The family court accepted the request. Aggrieved by this, the wife moved the Punjab and Haryana High Court, which allowed the petition and set aside the family court order. The husband challenged the High Court order before the Supreme Court. The top court has now reversed the High Court's order and revived the permission granted by the family court.

Collection of evidence by snooping is like a 'sting operation' in matrimony. Its ethical aspects could always be debatable. In the real world, no genuine intimate relationship would involve a secret recording of conversations to use it as evidence in a future litigation. This is particularly true in a husband-wife relationship. As Justice Nagarathna rightly notes, "snooping between partners is an effect and not a cause of marital disharmony". This was the court's answer to the apprehension expressed by the amicus curiae that the indulgence to such evidence might unsettle spousal harmony. The court was examining the scope of Section

122 of the Indian Evidence Act, which says that one cannot be compelled to disclose any communication to his or her spouse, and it is impermissible to reveal such communication, when there is no consent. The exception to this general stipulation is also in the very same provision. It says that in suits between the spouses or prosecution against one of them, this embargo does not apply. The Supreme Court decoded the section and held that the exception carved out in Section 122 makes it clear that matrimonial conversations could be adduced as evidence in support of the plea by a party to dispute, even if those are recorded clandestinely.

The privacy concerns raised in the case are unacceptable.

guaranteed cannot be taken away "except according to procedure established by law". Thus, a fair trial is an essential component of Article 21 rights. Though in the Puttaswamy verdict (2017) the Supreme Court held that the right to privacy is part of Article 21, it did not say that such a right is absolute. It remains a qualified right. Section 122 of the Evidence Act permits adducing the relevant evidence. This scheme of the Evidence Act is followed verbatim in the Bharatiya Sakhyam Adhiniyam, 2023, which was enacted long after the Puttaswamy judgement. Parliament reiterated Section 122 of the old Act as Section 128 in the new one, endorsing the provision's pragmatism and realism on evidence. The

morality of the method employed in the collection of evidence is different from the value of the evidence so collected. If the element of deception is so severe that it nullifies the value of evidence, that too can be suggested by way of cross-examination or counter-evidence in the case. For example, if one were made to act in a certain way or to speak certain things, it can very well be explained. The Supreme Court judgement does not foreclose such procedural courses available for the other party. Again, if a person wants an in-camera trial, the courts are empowered to do so, by which the content of oral evidence can be kept away from public gaze. The court can also withhold the identity of the contesting parties even in a published judgement, in appropriate cases. The Supreme Court judgement is comprehensive. It quoted the view of the Madras High Court in Ayyanar Padayachi case (1970), which said that the provision in the Evidence Act "protects the individuals and not the communication". The Supreme Court has analysed the law by contextualising it appropriately. It relied on the earlier verdict in Yusufali Esmail Nagree vs Maharashtra (1967), which held that in the absence of duress, coercion or compulsion, a tape-recorded conversation is admissible in evidence to prove the allegation of corruption.

The recent judgement offers significant lessons for the public as well. An unfortunate matrimony leads to unpleasant litigation with equally unpleasant procedures. The wiser course in such a situation will be to settle the dispute amicably, except when there are compelling circumstances like blatant violation of rights, to carry on the fight.



In a private litigation, any evidence will have certain traits of privacy. A private litigation rests upon private materials. Shutting off such materials would forestall a full-fledged judicial investigation into the dispute. That is why Section 122 provides for the exception to its disclosure ban. It states explicitly that there is no impediment in looking into the spousal conversations "in suits between married persons, or proceedings in which one married person is prosecuted for any crime committed against the other". The exception reflects the imaginative intelligence of the lawmaker.

The rationale of the law is clear and simple. In a dispute between husband and wife, no spouse should be disarmed on account of the provision when they want to rely on the personal communication between them to prove a point. According to Article 21 of the Constitution, the right to life and personal liberty

## Onus to ensure decorum on passengers and airlines

A statement from the army headquarters stressed that the Indian Army was "fully committed to maintaining discipline and mutual respect in all civil spaces across the country".

The shocking incident of a senior army officer assaulting four SpiceJet staffers at Srinagar airport deserves to be condemned. The episode refocuses the nation's attention on passenger rage as well as airline staff behaviour. The incident was reportedly triggered by a pre-boarding argument between SpiceJet staffers and an officer carrying more than twice the weight allowed for cabin baggage. The officer, Lt Col Ritesh Kumar Singh, posted at the High Altitude Warfare School in Gulmarg, was on his way to Delhi on flight SG-386 on emergency leave when the incident took place. It has been alleged that after assaulting the staff, Singh rushed through the boarding gate without completing the formalities mandated by regulations—a gross violation of aviation safety protocols. While a first information report has been registered against Singh at the Budgam police station under various sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sahita for what SpiceJet described as a "murderous assault", he too filed a complaint against the airline, alleging mistreatment by the airlines staff that caused him to miss his flight. When incidents like these occur, it is easier to blame the person who has caused



grievous injuries to others—in this case, the army officer. But what is shocking is that Singh belongs to a force that boasts of high discipline in civil spaces. The Indian Army has acknowledged the incident, promising full cooperation with the authorities investigating the case. A

statement from the army headquarters stressed that the Indian Army was "fully committed to maintaining discipline and mutual respect in all civil spaces across the country".

However, it must also be noted that as the number of air passengers shoots up, so will the frequency of heated interactions with the airline staffers serving them. According to the Directorate General of Civil Aviation, India's domestic passenger traffic grew 6.12 percent to 161.3 million in 2024 from the previous year. While passengers—whatever be their backgrounds—need to realise that rules and regulations pertaining to air travel are of utmost importance for the overall safety of flights, airline staffers too must understand that among the hordes of flyers there may be many who could be high-strung while travelling. The need is for the latter to interact with the former in a manner that avoids violent flashpoints like this unfortunate incident.

## What the PM didn't say about Cholas

### Rajendra's Gangetic expedition was no Kashi Tamil Sangamam — it was loot and plunder all the way



aspirations in the Indian Ocean, is clearly the BJP's idea of Hindutva with a Tamil script ahead of the elections. But... it's complicated. For one, Rajendra's Gangetic expedition was not the medieval forerunner

to the BJP's Kashi Tamil Sangamam, nor was it a king's personal meditative pilgrimage. Rajendra I was out to prove that he was a super-king, a king of kings, and that nothing could stand in his way. He had already conquered the Deccan, the Cheras and the Pallavas. He had completed his father's conquest of Lanka. Now he was looking for ritual confirmation of his status as emperor. In latching on to the Chola king for its Ganga-Kaveri trope, Modi and the BJP have dismantled, perhaps unintentionally, their own assiduously propagated myth of a past in which Hindus lived peacefully with each other in a golden idyll before the Muslims came and spoilt it all.

Between 1022 and 1023, as Aniruddh Kanisetti shows in his work on the Cholas, Lords of Earth and Sea, Rajendra's massive army killed, raped and plundered its way north for what was to be a "raids on the Ganga" to bring its water so that he could consecrate himself as "king of kings". Along the way, they destroyed the Chalukya confederation and left the Pala dynasty of Eastern India teetering. Muslim invaders were still far away in the northwest, parts of which are now Pakistan. Along the way, Rajendra's soldiers sacked temples and stole their idols, while he waited for them to return with the water collected from the Ganga on the southern bank of the Godavari. Kanisetti writes that it is "difficult to believe that these idols were obtained without extreme violence against the lords that derived power from them, to say nothing of the population displaced and brutalised by roving armed men". Back in Chola territory, the idols were placed in much less respectable places than the royal temples from where they had been stolen. As for the Ganga, its waters were brought in urns by soldiers and poured into

a huge reservoir, three times the size of Gangaikonda Cholapuram, created by diverting water from the Kaveri. It was interesting to see the Prime Minister fitting himself into this frame. "He expressed his delight that, in memory of this historic episode, Ganga water has once again been brought from Kashi to Tamil Nadu, noting that a formal ritual was conducted at the site," the PIB release aid. India's neighbours will have their own take on Modi's remark at "the coincidence of having returned from the Maldives just yesterday and today being part of this programme [commemorating Rajendra Chola] in Tamil Nadu". Rajaraja claimed to have conquered "the thousand islands of the ancient sea", which some historian believe is a reference to the Maldives. In Sri Lanka, the present-day wariness about India is at least partly due to the historical memory of Tamil invasions by the Chola father and son. In 1017, Rajendra sacked Polonnaruwa and carted off Mahinda V over the sea to his kingdom, where the Lankan king was jailed, and died a dozen years later, inaugurating a 50-year era of Chola rule in Lanka. In 1025, Rajaraja would storm Kedah in Sumatra, leading to chaos in the Srivijaya empire for the next 100 years.

How many political points the BJP might gain from its Chola discovery is not immediately apparent. But it's safe to say that Modi's announcement that statues will be built to Rajaraja and Rajendra has not taken Tamil Nadu by storm. After all, what statue can equal the majesty of the two Brihadeeswara temples — now UNESCO world heritage sites — that Rajaraja and Rajendra built, as much to celebrate themselves as their god. Moreover, the Cholas are already spoken for. It was the DMK, for all its Dravidianism, that began in 2022 the practice of holding the Aadi Thiruvadai festival to commemorate Rajendra's birth anniversary, which Modi attended this year.

## NEWS BOX

**GHMC proposes Rs 960 crore road network near AOC Centre to ease traffic in Secunderabad**



**HYDERABAD.** To ease traffic congestion caused by the closure of military roads in Secunderabad, the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) has proposed an alternative road network near the Army Ordnance Corps (AOC) Centre. The project involves constructing three flyovers, one Road over Bridge (RoB), and at-grade roads at three locations. The flyovers will connect Wellington Road to the Elevated Rotary, East Marredpally to the Elevated Rotary and from there to Safiulga. A six-lane RoB is planned over the Secunderabad Military Siding lines, along with at-grade roads at Wellington Road, East Marredpally Road, and from Mahindra Hills to the RKK Puram RoB.

**GM NFR inspects location of proposed wagon workshop at Basbari in Kokrajhar District**

**The Sikh Times**

Maligaon, 07th August: Chetan Kumar Srivastava, General Manager of Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR), conducted an inspection of the proposed site for the Wagon Periodic Overhauling (POH) Workshop at Basbari in Alipurdur Division, Kokrajhar district, Assam. During the visit Shri Uttam Hajowary, Chairman of T.C.L.C.C, Bodoland Territorial Council was also present along with senior railway officials. The workshop is proposed to be set up with a total capacity of 250 wagons per month, with Phase-I operations targeting 75 wagons per month. The project, with an estimated Phase-I cost of Rs 256.35 crore, will play an important role in providing wide range of employment opportunities, stimulate skill development, encourage growth of local allied industries and help transform the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) of Assam into significant logistics and industrial hub in Northeast India. Covering an area of approximately 2500 Bighas Basbari POH workshop is located at strategic location just 1 km from Basbari station and 17 km from Rupsi Airport offering strong multimodal connectivity. During the visit, the General Manager emphasized the significance of this project in view of the anticipated growth in freight traffic following the execution of multiple sanctioned rail infrastructure projects including new line, doubling and multimodal projects. He noted that the Basbari POH workshop will be pivotal in enhancing operational efficiency and supporting regional economic growth. The workshop is designed with modern facilities including specialized shops for stripping, body repair, painting, ancillary works and quality control, with a planned phased ramp-up to its full overhaul capacity. The General Manager emphasized timely completion of infrastructure projects with a focus on safety, quality and sustainability. These inspections underscore the N.F. Railway's commitment to upgrading infrastructure to meet the growing demands of passengers and freight customers in the region.

**'They are all safe': 24 Pune tourists stranded in Uttarakhand set to return home**

**PUNE.** All 24 pilgrims from Maharashtra's Pune district who were stranded in Uttarakhand are safe and are being airlifted from Gangotri to Uttarkashi, one of their relatives in Pune said on Thursday.

"My father, Ashok Bhor, made a video call as soon mobile network was available. He told me that they are all safe," Aditya Bhor, a resident of Bhosari, said.

The 24 tourists from Awasari Khurd village, which is around 10 km away from Manchar city, had left for Uttarakhand on a 12-day trip. The group had assembled for a reunion of their 1990 school batch from Awasari Khurd and decided to go to Uttarakhand on a pilgrimage on August 1.

After flash floods and mudslides swept through Dharali village in Uttarakhand's Uttarkashi district on Tuesday, there had been no contact with the 24 tourists. "My father had told me that they would proceed to Gangotri. However, after the flash floods hit the region, there was no contact with the tourists. We all got worried and tried to call the authorities. Till last evening, there was no news, but this morning, my father said in a video call that they were all safe and would soon return to Pune," Aditya said.

Local officials in Uttarakhand told The Indian Express that the Army and Indo Tibetan Border Police were providing food and shelter to those rescued in Gangotri. "As many as 274 rescued people from Gangotri and nearby areas have been brought to Harshil. All of them are safe. Of these, there are 131 tourists from Gujarat, 123 from Maharashtra, 21 from Madhya Pradesh, 12 from UP, seven from Delhi, six from Rajasthan, five from Assam and Karnataka, three from Telangana and one from Punjab. All of them are completely safe and are being brought to Dehradun and Uttarkashi," a local official said.

## LBA system in primary schools across Karnataka must go: Experts

**BENGALURU.** A growing number of teachers and educationists across Karnataka are raising serious concerns about the newly introduced Lesson-based Assessment (LBA) system in primary schools, terming it "unscientific, burdensome, and a violation of the Right to Education Act".

Prominent educationists have strongly opposed the policy and called for its immediate withdrawal, urging the government to reinstate the Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) method instead.

According to experts, LBA requires students to appear for a test after each lesson, amounting to nearly 350-360 tests a year.

"This is not only overwhelming for students but is also severely burdening teachers, who are now forced to spend more time preparing, conducting, evaluating, and uploading data for assessments than actually teaching," said Baraguru Ramachandrapuram, noted writer and educationist. "Teachers are not machines. The classroom must be a space for learning, not non-stop testing," he added. The LBA system, introduced this year by the Department of School Education and Literacy, has drawn

criticism not only for increasing the workload of teachers but also for allegedly violating Section 29(2)(h) of the Right to Education (RTE) Act, which mandates a Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation system for student assessment, according to educationists.

LBA violates the very essence of what the RTE Act stands for," said Niranjanaradhy, VP, an educationist. "CCE was introduced after years of discussions and is now part of law. LBA, on the other hand, forces frequent testing, leaves little time for teaching, and narrows the focus to rote memorisation." He added that the decision to implement LBA was taken without

consulting educators, teachers, or academic experts. "It is a unilateral move. Policies that directly affect children and teachers should go through democratic processes and expert consultation. This has not happened," he said.

The issue, according to several teachers, is not merely about extra workload. Many feel that LBA reduces the classroom to a test centre and disrupts the natural rhythm of learning. "Instead of fostering creativity, critical thinking, and understanding, students are pushed into a cycle of repetitive testing," said a government school teacher. Educationists argue that well-trained teachers are capable of assessing students effectively through classroom observation, assignments, and regular interactions, without the need for formal tests after every lesson.

They stress that empowering teachers with better training and resources, rather than burdening them with rigid assessment systems like LBA, is crucial for meaningful education. "If you trust teachers, they will deliver," said Niranjanaradhy, adding that the LBA model reflects a lack of trust and disconnect from ground realities.



## SEP report is comprehensive, says Higher Education Minister Dr MC Sudhakar

**The minister directed officials to address these issues and provide non-vegetarian meals weekly.**

**BENGALURU.** Higher Education Minister Dr MC Sudhakar on Wednesday announced that the comprehensive State Education Policy (SEP) report for Karnataka is ready, and will be submitted to the state government soon.

The minister was speaking at the foundation laying ceremony of Sri Jayachamarajendra Polytechnic (SJP) campus on Wednesday, where he also laid the foundation stone for a new Government Women's Polytechnic building. Sudhakar said a preliminary review of the report will be held with the School Education Minister and senior department officials before it is presented to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah. He added that the SEP is detailed, covering both school and higher education, and will be implemented in a phased

and thoughtful manner. He criticised the previous government's approach to the

Government First Grade colleges, the minister hoped the issue would be resolved by the end of August. During his visit to the SJP campus, Sudhakar inspected the women's hostel and expressed displeasure over overcrowded rooms, unhygienic toilets, and the use of poor construction materials.

He ordered immediate repairs and pulled up officials for negligence. Students raised concerns about food quality, lack of hot water, and cleanliness. The minister directed officials to address these issues and provide non-vegetarian meals weekly.

He also announced that ten new hostels will be built across the state, in partnership with Visvesvaraya Technological University (VTU) and the Backward Classes Welfare department, including one at SJP campus.



### Kochi police arrest two, seize Rs 2.5 crore worth ambergris

**KOCHI.** The Kochi city police seized approximately one-and-a-half kilograms of ambergris (whale vomit), which was smuggled to Kochi from Lakshadweep for illegal sale. Suhail, a resident of Fort Kochi, and Suhail, of Kalpeni in Lakshadweep, were arrested in connection with the seizure. The seized substance is highly valuable and rare, with an estimated price of around Rs 2.5 crore in the international market, said a police officer with the DANSAF squad.

A team led by Mattancherry sub-inspector Jimmy Jose seized the ambergris, based on a confidential tip-off received by city police commissioner Putta Vimaladitya. Fort Kochi resident Suhail was apprehended near the Fort Kochi Jetty. During the interrogation, he attempted to assault the officers and flee. However, he was overpowered after a brief struggle, and 35 g of ambergris, which he had intended to sell as a sample, was recovered from his possession, said the official.

Further interrogation led to another major seizure, about 1 kg of ambergris, from Thoppumpady on Wednesday morning.

**They are all safe': 24 Pune tourists stranded in Uttarakhand set to return home**

National Education Policy (NEP-2020), claiming it was rushed and implemented only in the higher education sector. Responding to concerns over delays in hiring guest faculty for

## 'Denial discriminatory': HC directs CRPF to promote HIV/AIDS +ve woman staffer

**A division bench of Chief Justice Sunita Agarwal and Justice DN Ray, in its August 5 order, noted that the denial or discontinuation or unfair treatment in relation to employment is "clearly prohibited" under the HIV/AIDS (Prevention & Control) Act, 2017.**

**VADODARA.** Stating that the denial of promotion to an HIV/AIDS positive woman employee of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) was "discriminatory", the Gujarat High Court has directed the CRPF to promote the petitioner to the post of Inspector (Ministerial), while also declaring as "ultra vires" the provisions of a 2008 Standing Order and the 2011 CRPF Assistant Commandant Recruitment Rules that were cited in denying promotion to the petitioner.

A division bench of Chief Justice Sunita Agarwal and Justice DN Ray, in its August 5 order, noted that the denial or discontinuation or unfair treatment in relation to employment is "clearly prohibited" under the HIV/AIDS (Prevention & Control) Act, 2017. While stating that the Act has been enacted to ensure equal opportunity of employment and with the need to protect and secure the human rights of

persons who are HIV/AIDS positive, the court directed the CRPF to grant promotion to the petitioner with effect from the date her juniors were promoted.

The court said, "The petitioner shall be

Commandant (Ministerial) by placing her in the gradation list along with her juniors and a special DPC (Departmental Promotional Committee) be conducted to consider the candidature of the petitioner to the said post..."

Granting time of two months, the court said, "Upon consideration, if the petitioner is found fit on all other aspects, she shall be given promotion to the post of Assistant Commandant (Ministerial) from the date the junior(s) to her have been promoted against the vacancies of the year 2024-25... (The respondent is) required to revise pay and re-fix the pay-scale of the petitioner from the date of her entitlement to promotion on the post of Inspector (Ministerial) and further on the post of Assistant Commandant (Ministerial) and shall pay the arrears including all consequential benefits to the said post."

**Too many halts hamper train speed upgrade on Thiruvananthapuram-Ernakulam stretch: Railways**

**MPs and MLAs continue to press for additional halts, undermining the efforts of the Thiruvananthapuram railway division, according to sources with Southern Railways.**

**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM.** Excessive stops of several trains are posing a hindrance to increasing the top speed on the Thiruvananthapuram-Ernakulam stretch to 110 kmph. MPs and MLAs continue to press for additional halts, undermining the efforts of the Thiruvananthapuram railway division, according to sources with Southern Railways.

While trains like Vande Bharat to Kasaragod and Mangaluru have the advantage of higher speeds, others such as Venad Express, with 19 halts, Thiruvananthapuram-Guruvayur Intercity, with 14 halts, and Vanchinad Express, with 17, run at an average speed of just 45-50 kmph between Thiruvananthapuram and Ernakulam. Other trains with over 10 stops on the stretch also struggle to cross this speed range.

"Reducing stops is not feasible, as it would spark protests by elected representatives and local associations. Our engineering team in Thiruvananthapuram is working on ways to

increase the speed of trains with over 10 stops without cutting down the number of halts," a senior railway official said.

Many senior officials admitted that political leaders often view new stops as a matter of pride, especially ahead of elections. A retired divisional railway manager echoed the concern, noting that Vande Bharat trains can currently run at a speed of 100-110 kmph only because they have fewer stops. "If more halts are added, those trains will lose their edge. Allocation of more stoppages remains a chronic issue in Southern Railways," he said.

Adding a passenger's perspective, P K Krishnankutty, a senior citizen and retired state revenue official, urged politicians to rethink their approach. "Our politicians have to stop demanding more stoppages.



MLAs or MPs may be doing this due to the request from constituents, but they fail to understand the reason for it — that the railways offers convenient and cheap transportation. Instead of pressuring the

**Rain turns Batasingaram fruit market into slushy mess; exposes lack of basic infrastructure**



**BATASINGARAM.** If it were not for the muddy mess and resultant inconvenience, the state of affairs at Batasingaram on Wednesday can only be described as a bold attempt to rebrand a fruit market into a rural water theme park. The state's largest fruit trading hub transformed into a fine mixture of slush, stink and bovine leisure courtesy of some rain — not a cyclone, not a flood, just regular rain.

Situated a mere 35 km from Hyderabad, the market resembled anything but a centre of commerce on Wednesday. Vendors were seen wading through knee-deep water while cattle were enjoying their impromptu spa day. If fruit traders were looking for a tropical experience, they got it, albeit without tourists, hygiene or any functional infrastructure.

"This happens every time it rains," shrugged a trader, gesturing to the cows wallowing beside his crates of mangoes. "We can't unload fruits properly," he said, indicating that who needs dry ground when you have murky puddles or garbage piles large enough to deserve their own PIN code, alongside ankle-breaking potholes.

Inside, the so-called 'roads' functioned more as obstacle courses. Traders played a game of strategic placement to avoid sinking into the mud, while two-wheelers did their best impression of boats. Stalls sat half-empty as workers refused to wrestle with slush just to do their jobs. Meanwhile, fruit waste lay strewn around like modern art installations no one asked for, hinting at a sanitation plan that possibly doesn't exist. One trader offered insight into this aquatic wonderland. "The market sits lower than the main road. Naturally, water collects here."

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# Delhi Assembly's mysterious chamber really a phansi ghar for executions?

## Agency New Delhi.

Controversy around the Delhi Assembly building is hanging like a hangman's noose, literally. For two days in a row in the ongoing monsoon session, the ruling BJP and the opposition AAP have been locked in a heated showdown. Over what? A secret tunnel and two mysterious chambers. Such heated were the exchanges that on Wednesday, former CM and AAP leader Atishi along with other MLAs had to be marshalled out. What are the mysterious chambers and the secret tunnel really? This is all about the controversy, and what archeologists and historians have to say.

The BJP government, led by Rekha Gupta, has dismissed the claim of the former AAP-era government that the underground chambers beneath the Delhi Assembly were once gallows linked to the Red Fort, asserting instead that the space merely housed a service staircase used for

delivering tiffins during the British Raj. So, were those two chambers really gallows, and did the tunnel truly lead to the Red Fort? Does the Delhi Assembly building have a spooky past? Historians and archaeologists suggest otherwise.

## HOW DELHI ASSEMBLY'S 'PHANSI GHAR' CAME TO LIFE

Back in 2021, during the AAP regime, the then Speaker of the Delhi Assembly, Ram Niwas Goel, claimed that the chambers beneath the Assembly once served as a phansi ghar (gallows) during British rule. According to him, the underground tunnel connected to the Red Fort and was likely used by the British to transport convicts on death row for execution.

Goel even showed the tunnel's entrance to the media and made claims about its

history and possible use. "Tunnel connects Vidhan Sabha to Red Fort," Goel said in 2021. However, he added that because of modern-day construction, the tunnel's

were revamped for public viewing, with images of freedom fighters displayed on the walls.

## KEJRIWAL'S FALSE CLAIM, TAMPERING OF HISTORY, SAYS BJP GOVT

However, now, the newly formed BJP government, led by Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, has dismissed these claims as historically unsound.

According to them, the space originally housed a service staircase used to deliver tiffins, not prisoners. Claiming that the Kejriwal government spent Rs 1 crore to make the chambers resemble a jail, by erecting symbolic prison bars, placing a couple of nooses, and installing murals of freedom fighters, Gupta on Wednesday called it "a gross distortion of history, an insult to martyrs, and a betrayal of public trust".

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"The tunnel and the phansi ghar (hanging arena) will be opened for tourists by January 26, 2022, or next Independence Day," Goel had said. In 2002, the chambers

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## NEWS BOX

## Rejuvenated Arjun Erigaisi sets sights on spot in Candidates 2026

**New Delhi. (Agency)**

Arjun Erigaisi's 2025 has been nothing short of a rollercoaster. The Indian Grandmaster began the year with disappointment in Wijk Aan Zee, missing a key opportunity to cross the 2800 ELO mark. But in the months that followed, the 20-year-old showed glimpses of resurgence—particularly in the fast-paced freestyle and rapid chess formats, impressing with consistent performances in Las Vegas and the Esports World Cup. While those formats brought him into the spotlight again, Arjun remains grounded about his achievements and is firmly focused on what lies ahead. With key events like the Grand Swiss and the FIDE World Cup fast approaching, Erigaisi is determined to turn his year around and secure a coveted spot in the 2026 Candidates Tournament. On the eve of the OneBox Chennai Grandmasters, Arjun, in an exclusive interaction with India Today, sat down to talk about his year so far, the growing landscape of Indian chess, his reflections on Divya Deshmukh's historic win, and how he's preparing mentally and physically for what could be the most crucial phase of his chess career.

Q&A with Arjun Erigaisi



Q: You've had a strong showing in freestyle and rapid formats this year. How do you view your performance in events like the Esports World Cup? Arjun: To be honest, I think it would be an overstatement to call my performance in freestyle as well as Esports any success because they're decent. But, I think it's nothing to be particularly proud of, and maybe it gets a bit of limelight because I have done a bit better than the other Indians. But I still wouldn't take credit for it because it's not something too impressive.

Q: You spoke highly of chess being part of the Esports World Cup. Why do you think that's important for the sport?

Arjun: Yeah, I have always thought—and also mentioned it in a few interviews—that, like, with such long time controls and, like, players going into, like, half-an-hour-long thing on one move sometimes, it's, like, hard for the players to be... hard for the spectators to be completely engaged in the sport. So, like, it needs to be quick and more excitement-based.

## Delighted for what Gautam Gambhir has achieved with Test team in England: Gary Kirsten

**New Delhi. (Agency)**

Former South Africa cricketer and India head coach Gary Kirsten is delighted with Gautam Gambhir for guiding India to a drawn series in England. The Shubman Gill-led side managed to level the five-match series 2-2, following their thrilling six-wicket win in the fifth Test at the Oval. Mohammed Siraj played a pivotal role in the team's sensational victory as he registered his career-best match figures of 9/190 to help India successfully defend the target of 374 runs in the fourth innings. It's the second successive time that India has drawn the series in England 2-2 as they earlier also finished at 2-2 level in the 2021-22 rubber under the leadership of Virat Kohli and



Jasprit Bumrah. Following India's marvellous win, Kirsten praised head coach Gautam Gambhir as well, I know him well. Really delighted and pleased for what he's achieved with the team. They're doing really well at the moment. We all get excited by the success of the Indian team. I certainly do and they've got a great bunch of young players coming through now and it's really exciting to be supporting them," said Kirsten at an event organized by Yugen Infra in Delhi. Furthermore, he also recalled an incident from his coaching days with team India when he helped fast bowler Ishant Sharma to improve his batting, which helped the team win a thrilling Test match against Australia in Mohali in 2010.

# ENG vs IND: Washington Sundar snubbed from Aakash Chopra's combined XI

## Sundar's quiet all-round performance stood out in the series

### Chopra picked Jadeja and Stokes picked as all rounders in his team

### India managed to draw the five-match series 2-2 by winning at Oval

**New Delhi. (Agency)**

Former India cricketer turned commentator Aakash Chopra has revealed his combined India-England XI of the recently concluded Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy. The team picked on his YouTube channel features a mix of top-performing players from both sides over the course of the five-match Test series. One of the notable exclusions from the

lineup was India's all-rounder Washington Sundar, who delivered consistent performances with both bat and ball throughout the series. Sundar, known for his disciplined off-spin and lower-order resilience, was overlooked in favour of Ravindra Jadeja and Ben Stokes for the all-rounder slots. "I was thinking about Washington Sundar also here, but I will have Ravindra Jadeja here, Jaddu has scored runs consistently. Of course, he hasn't taken too many wickets. He got fewer opportunities to take wickets as well, and spin hasn't done that well," Chopra said. Washington Sundar had a strong all-round performance in the Test series. He scored 284 runs in 4 matches at an average of 47.33, often helping the team with important runs when needed. With the ball, he took 7 wickets at an economy of just 3.64. His steady bowling and useful batting made him one of India's most dependable players in the series. Jadeja's greater experience and history of match-winning performances were key factors in his selection over Sundar in Chopra's combined



XI. The former India opener named Yashasvi Jaiswal and KL Rahul as his openers, both of whom were commended for their consistency and hunger for runs. "Yashasvi, I felt, has done well. He scored hundreds in the first and last matches and had two half-centuries in between. He has scored more than 500 runs and batted extremely well,"

Chopra said. If Stokes played last match, result might've been different: Chopra Joe Root and Shubman Gill were placed at No. 3 and No. 4, though Chopra noted the order could be interchangeable. "Just like this team can't be made without Joe Root, it can't be made without Gill either. He has scored more than 750 runs. He is the highest run-scorer of the series, and by a considerable margin," he said. The middle order comprised Rishabh Pant and Harry Brook. Chopra praised Pant for his aggressive batting and ability to perform under pressure. "My keeper-batter is, of course, Rishabh Pant, who bats even with a broken foot. He is someone who has been outstanding," he said.

Ben Stokes was slotted at No. 7 and Jadeja at No. 8, completing the lower-middle order. "Ben Stokes He has been outstanding. If he had played the last match, the result might have been different. He has scored runs, but the highlight was his bowling," Chopra said. The pace attack featured Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Siraj, and England's Josh Tongue.

## Montreal Open 2025: Khachanov stuns Zverev, Shelton dominates Fritz to reach final

**New Delhi. (Agency)**

Ben Shelton breezed past Taylor Fritz in the second semi-final of the Montreal Open 2025 on Thursday, August 7 to set up a final clash with Karen Khachanov. Shelton beat his fellow countryman in straight sets 6-4, 6-3 to become the youngest American to reach an ATP Masters 1000 final since Andy Roddick in Toronto in 2004, in the final. Shelton, 22, will be playing his first ATP Masters 1000 final when he takes on Khachanov. Following his dominating win, Shelton revealed that he's delighted with the big improvements he's made in his game in recent times. For me it's the level—100%. I'm just looking for things in my game to just kind of improve, and I've seen so many big improvements this week. So, that's what I'm most happy about—the way I'm playing, how I'm executing, how little I'm hesitating," Shelton said. In the first semi-final, Karen Khachanov stunned the top seed Alexander Zverev and beat him in three sets 6-3, 4-6, 7-6 (7-4). Khachanov saved a match point to reach his second ATP Masters 1000 final, with the previous coming at Paris

## Canadian teen Mboko reaches Montreal final, beating Rybakina in 3rd-set tiebreaker

### On Thursday night, she'll face Japanese star Naomi Osaka, a 6-2, 7-6 (7) winner over 16th-seeded Clara Tauson of Denmark in the second semifinal.

**MONTREAL. (Agency)**

Canadian teenager Victoria Mboko rallied to reach the National Bank Open final, beating ninth-seeded Elena Rybakina 1-6, 7-5, 7-6 (4) on Wednesday night. The 18-year-old Mboko dropped to the court after Rybakina's shot sailed long on match point as the crowd—lined with "Allez Vicky"—erupted. Mboko saved a match point in the third set and broke Rybakina twice to force the tiebreaker. "Incredible match, thank you to everyone for supporting me," Mboko told the crowd in French. "It was really difficult, but anything can happen." On Thursday night, she'll face Japanese star Naomi Osaka, a 6-2, 7-6 (7) winner over 16th-seeded Clara Tauson of Denmark in the second semifinal. Mboko, ranked 85th in the world, is seeking her first WTA Tour title and trying to join Faye Urban (1969) and Bianca Andreescu (2019) as the only

Canadians to win the home event in the open era. "Playing in front of the home crowd, obviously, has its advantages," Mboko said. "You always have everyone pumping you up as much as they can. It really pulls me through in the tough moments where I'm maybe not as positive.

Really blessed to have that kind of support." Born in Charlotte, North Carolina, to Congolese parents, Mboko grew up in Toronto. She upset top-seeded Coco Gauff 6-1, 6-4 on Saturday to reach the quarterfinals, then topped Jessica Bouzas Maneiro 6-4, 6-2 on Monday. At 2 hours, 46 minutes, the match Wednesday was the longest of Mboko's short tour career. From Kazakhstan, Rybakina won at Wimbledon in 2022. She has nine career WTA Tour victories, winning in May on

clay at Strasbourg. Rybakina beat Mboko 6-3, 7-5 last month in Washington. "I knew that she was a tough opponent," Rybakina said. "She served really well in these important moments. It was a very close match, like a big fight. So it could go any way, but it went hers." Mboko overcame 11 double-faults and battled through a wrist injury after stumbling awkwardly to the ground in the second game of the third set. She'll will move up to at least 34th in the world after starting the year outside the top 300. Mboko said her wrist felt "a lot better" after the match, but in the moment, the fall almost crushed her spirits. "She was playing really great tennis on top of that, but I'm happy that I kept my composure," Mboko said. "I was patient in the right moments. I just feel really happy that I was able to bounce back after being down, even a match point, I think." Osaka, the four-time Grand Slam champion who reached No. 1 in the world, continued her best performance in a WTA 1000 tournament since reaching the Miami final in 2022. She stepped for 15 months toward the end of that season and had daughter Shai in July 2023. She's seeking her eighth title and her first since the 2021 Australian Open.

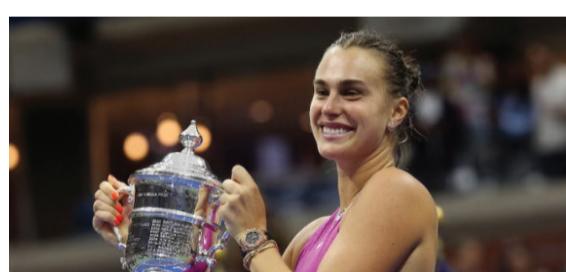
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## US Open announces record 90 million dollar prize money for 2025 edition

**New Delhi. (Agency)**

The US Open has unveiled a record-setting 90 million dollars prize money fund for its 2025 edition—the largest in tennis history and a 20 percent increase over the 75 million dollars awarded in 2024. The men's and women's singles champions will each receive 5 million dollars, a 39 percent jump from the previous year's 3.6 million dollars payout. Runners-up will be awarded 2.5 million dollars, while semifinalists earn 1.26 million dollars—another notable rise compared to 2024. The increases extend across all categories. The newly introduced mixed doubles event will pay its winning team 1 million dollars, a dramatic increase from the prior 200,000



dollars level. Men's and women's doubles champions will also each collect 1 million dollars per team. Prize money for qualifying rounds will rise by 10 percent, with total qualifying funds reaching 8 million dollars.

The wheelchair events receive enhanced support too, contributing to the overall payout totalling nearly 90 million dollars across singles, doubles, qualifying, and wheelchair draws.

This expansion reflects ongoing player advocacy for greater revenue share—prominent athletes like Aryna Sabalenka and Jannik Sinner actively lobbied for widened compensation.

The tournament also sees an expanded 15-day schedule, starting August 24, and coincides with an 800 million dollars renovation of Arthur Ashe Stadium, underscoring the USTA's commitment to growth and equity.



in 2018, where he upset Novak Djokovic. It was the first win for the Russian against the three-time Grand Slam runner-up after losing the last three encounters. After a gruelling three-hour fixture, Khachanov admitted that he had to dig deep to lift his game to stun Zverev. "I had to dig deep and lift my level. It was a very demanding, very mental, very physical match. So I'm very happy to get the win after losing some easy ones to him in recent years. Today was a real close one. I was match point down, if the ball touches the net and drops over we wouldn't be talking now," said Khachanov.

## I never considered not going out to bat against India: Chris Woakes

### Woakes said he felt it was his "duty to do it for everyone" and that he is still gutted that England lost the game.

**LONDON. (Agency)**

England all-rounder Chris Woakes says not going out to bat due to a dislocated shoulder against India on the final day of the fifth Test was something he never considered, even as he wondered if his career was at risk when he suffered the injury.

Woakes came out with his left hand wrapped in a sling and tucked inside his sweater at the fall of the penultimate wicket with the fifth Test? which India won narrowly? tantalisingly placed. Woakes said he felt it was his "duty to do it for everyone" and that he is still gutted that England lost the game. "I don't know what it is. You just know you're part of something bigger. It's not just you that

you're playing for out there," Woakes, awaiting further scans, told The Guardian. "It's your team and your teammates, all the hard work and the sacrifices they put in, the people watching at home and in the ground. You just feel a duty to do it for everyone." "I'm still gutted, devastated really, that we couldn't get the fairytale. But I never considered not going out there, even if it had been 100 runs still to win or whatever," he added. Woakes said it felt nice to walk out to a standing ovation but does not read much into his heroic act. "It was nice to have the ovation and some of the Indian players came over to show their respect. But any other player would have done the same. You couldn't just call it off at nine wickets down," he said. Woakes revealed he began practising batting one-handed from the fourth day onwards with England assistant coach Marcus Trescothick. "I defended one normally and, oh mate, it was agony," he said. "We soon worked out that a left-hander's stance would shield the shoulder and at least allow me to sort of block with my

top hand in control. I hit a few, missed a few, but it felt like the only way to survive," he added. The senior England player also revealed the exchanges he had with India skipper Shubman Gill and his deputy



Rishabh Pant, who himself put on a similar act of bravery in the fourth Test when he batted with a broken foot. "Shubman said something like: 'That was incredibly brave,'" he said. "I told him: 'You've had an unbelievable series, well played, and credit to your team.' Both sets of players had been through the mill in the series and deserve credit for the show we put on. Both teams

wanted the win, of course, but it does kind of feel fair that it was drawn. "I saw Rishabh (Pant) had put an image of me on Instagram with a salute emoji, so I replied thanking him: 'Appreciate the love and hope the foot is OK,'" he added.

"He then sent me a voice note saying: 'I hope all is OK, good luck with the recovery and I hope we meet again out there some day.' I obviously said sorry for the broken foot." Woakes, who did not get to face a ball, said running between the wickets was the toughest. "The first one was the worst. All I had taken was codeine and it was just so sore. Instinct took over here? even with my arm strapped down I tried to run as you naturally do," he said. "I genuinely worried my shoulder had popped back out again, hence you saw me throw my helmet off, rip the glove off with my teeth, and check it was OK." "It was bittersweet in the end. (A) part of me wondered what it might be like, to see if I could have defended the ball, seen out an over maybe, squeezed a run or carved a four."

## TCS hikes salaries for 80% staff amid layoffs: Report

MUMBAI (Agency)

Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) has rolled out salary hikes for most of its junior and mid-level employees, reported The Times of India. This comes even as the company plans to lay off nearly 12,000 staff members over the next few months. In a message sent to employees, the company confirmed that the salary increase will apply to around 80% of the workforce and will take effect from September 1, 2025. These hikes will cover employees in grades up to C3A and equivalent levels. While the exact percentage of the raise has not been shared, the company's top HR officials expressed gratitude to employees for their commitment. "We would like to thank each one of you for your dedication and hard work, as we build the future of TCS together," as per the email reviewed by PTI.

### LAYOFFS STILL ON TRACK

Despite the positive news on salaries, TCS has not changed its plans to reduce its global headcount. The IT giant had earlier revealed that about 2% of its workforce, mainly in mid and senior roles, would be let go this year. This means around 12,000 employees may lose their jobs.

TCS says this move is part of its plan to become a "future-ready organisation." The company is focusing on new technology areas, expanding into fresh markets, using artificial intelligence (AI) at a large scale, and restructuring its team to meet future needs.

### WHY IT MATTERS

These decisions come at a time when the global tech industry is facing slow growth and economic uncertainty. Political tensions, like changing US trade policies, and the rapid rise of AI tools are forcing companies to rethink their strategies.

TCS, along with other leading Indian IT firms, reported only small revenue growth in the April-June quarter of FY26. Many clients are either delaying tech investments or reducing spending due to the shaky global economy. Meanwhile, as TCS balances between rewarding its employees and preparing for big changes, the larger IT sector is watching closely. With AI evolving fast and markets shifting, companies are under pressure to adapt, and quickly.

## Auto sales see mixed trend in July 2025; PV segment rises, two-wheelers flat

CHENNAI (Agency)

India's automobile industry witnessed a mixed trend in July 2025, with passenger vehicle (PV) sales registering modest growth, while two-wheelers remained largely flat and tractors posted a decline. The market dynamics reflected a combination of factors, including the monsoon's uneven progress, festive season pipeline adjustments, and base effect from last year.

According to data released by the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA), total vehicle retail sales in July 2025 rose marginally by 2.3% year-on-year (YoY) to 17.58 lakh units, compared to 17.18 lakh units sold in July 2024.

**Passenger Vehicles:** The PV segment saw 3.1% YoY growth, with 3.55 lakh units sold in July 2025, up from 3.44 lakh units in July 2024. The segment benefited from improved model availability, attractive financing, and pre-festive season demand, particularly in urban markets. However, high inventory levels remained a concern for dealers, especially in the entry and mid-size car segments. Maruti Suzuki, Hyundai, and Tata Motors retained their leadership positions, with Maruti reporting a 4.5% YoY increase in retail volumes. Meanwhile, Mahindra continued to see strong demand for its SUV lineup.

### Two-Wheelers:

The two-wheeler category remained nearly stagnant, with a 0.8% YoY increase, recording 11.24 lakh units sold in July 2025 versus 11.15 lakh units in July 2024. While urban demand held steady, rural markets showed signs of weakness due to delayed rainfall and concerns over agricultural income.

**Hero MotoCorp and Honda** reported flat sales, while TVS Motor showed marginal improvement driven by scooter and EV sales.

## HUL to demerge ice cream business into separate listed entity by Fy26

New Delhi (Agency)

Hindustan Unilever Ltd (HUL) has announced plans to demerge its ice cream division into a separate listed company by the end of financial year 2025-26. The move is part of a broader strategy by its parent company, Unilever Plc, to unlock value and sharpen the strategic focus of its diverse business segments.

The demerged unit, to be known as Kwality Wall's (India) Ltd (KWIL), will include popular brands such as Kwality Wall's, Cornetto, Magnum, Feast, and Creamy Delight. The business currently contributes around ₹1,800 crore to HUL's annual revenue, roughly 3% of its total turnover. The proposal, which received board approval in November 2024 and was formally cleared under a scheme of arrangement in January 2025, is now awaiting regulatory, shareholder, and National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) approvals. A shareholder vote on the scheme is scheduled for August 12. Under the proposed structure, HUL shareholders will receive one share in the new ice cream entity for every share held in HUL. Magnum HoldCo, an arm of Unilever's global ice cream business, will acquire approximately 61.9% stake in KWIL. As per SEBI norms, it will also make an open offer to public shareholders. The new entity will inherit all assets and liabilities of the ice cream business, including five manufacturing facilities, a workforce of 1,200 employees, and positive working capital. While KWIL will begin operations debt-free, it will have access to funding for future expansion, including freezer installations and capacity building.

## How Trump's 100% chip tariff plan has shaken the global semiconductor industry

**Speaking from the Oval Office, Trump said the move is aimed at boosting local manufacturing and reducing reliance on foreign-made chips. He added that companies like Apple, which recently committed an extra \$100 billion investment in the US, would not be charged the new tariffs.**

New Delhi (Agency)

US President Donald Trump has announced that the US will impose a 100% tariff on imported semiconductors. However, companies that are already manufacturing in the US or have promised to do so will

not be affected, reported Reuters. Speaking from the Oval Office, Trump said the move is aimed at boosting local manufacturing and reducing reliance on foreign-made chips. He added that companies like Apple, which recently committed an extra \$100 billion investment in the US, would not be charged the new tariffs. He made it clear that no duties would apply to businesses building their operations in America. "If, for some reason, you say you're building and you don't build, then we go back and we add it up, it accumulates, and we charge you at a later date, you have to pay, and that's a guarantee," Trump said. NOT A FORMAL ORDER YET, BUT GLOBAL REACTIONS POUR IN

While Trump's comments have not yet become official policy, they've already triggered strong reactions from around the world. South Korea quickly stepped in, saying its major chipmakers, Samsung and SK Hynix, will not be affected. The country's trade deal with the US will give

it the most favourable rates on semiconductors, according to its top trade envoy. Others, however, are worried. The head of the Philippine semiconductor



industry, Dan Lachica, called the plan "devastating" for his country's exports. Malaysia's trade minister warned that such a tariff could make Malaysian products too expensive and lead to lost business in the US.

**SOME COMPANIES MAY COME OUT STRONGER**

Not all companies are expected to suffer.

## Sensex tanks 500 points on 50% Trump's tariff blow: Should Investors worry

New Delhi (Agency)

Domestic stock markets opened Thursday's market session on a jittery note after US President Donald Trump announced an additional 25% tariff on certain Indian exports, citing India's continued imports of Russian oil. While the move was widely expected, it has added another layer of uncertainty for investors already grappling with global headwinds.

The Sensex slipped over 432.70 points to 80,111.29 around 10:34 am, while the Nifty50 fell 141.50 points to 24,432.70, reflecting broad-based caution and expectations of a volatile trading session.

### UNCERTAINTY REMAINS HIGH

Dr. VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services, noted that the 21-day window before the tariffs come into effect offers room for negotiation. However, the outlook remains clouded. "There is huge uncertainty surrounding the trade policy and to what extent both nations will be willing to make compromises," he said. "President Trump, fresh from

the successes he has extracted in deals with others, others, including the EU, is unlikely to budge significantly from his unjustified stand. Unfortunately for



India, the US is bargaining from a position of strength."

He praised India's "mature and measured" response so far but warned that the market could remain under pressure in the near term. "Export-oriented sectors will remain weak. Domestic consumption themes like banking and financials, telecom, hotels, cement, capital goods and segments of automobiles will remain resilient," Vijayakumar added.

### NOT CAUGHT OFF GUARD

According to Santosh Meena, Head of Research at Swastika Investmart, markets had already priced in this escalation to an extent. "This move was largely anticipated by the markets, as President Trump had earlier hinted at such a development. As a result, there is no fresh negative surprise," he said. He noted that India has so far resisted pressure from Washington, especially in protecting its politically sensitive agriculture and dairy sectors. He characterised the tariff hike as "part of Trump's aggressive negotiation strategy" and pointed to the upcoming US trade delegation visit on August 24 as a key moment to watch. Meena believes India's core economic strength lies in domestic demand, and that acts as a buffer. "India remains a domestic consumption-driven economy, with limited direct exposure to the US, except in key sectors like IT, pharmaceuticals, and electronics," he said, adding that these have been spared from the latest tariff list.

## Skipped your ITR for years? Here's how it can impact you legally and financially

New Delhi (Agency)

Skipping your income tax return (ITR) filing for a year may not seem like a big deal at first. But if you continue to miss it year after year, the consequences can be serious, legally and financially. From penalties and interest to even jail time in some cases, the cost of ignoring your tax duties can pile up quickly.

The deadline to file your ITR for the current financial year (Assessment Year 2025-26) is September 15, 2025. If you haven't filed in previous years either, now is the time to act and clean up your records before it's too late. **PENALTIES AND LEGAL ACTION AWAIT SERIAL DEFAULTERS**

The Income Tax Department has clear rules when it comes to missed filings. If you earn more than Rs 5 lakh a year and fail to file your return by the due date, you can be fined Rs 5,000. Those with income below Rs 5 lakh will still need to pay Rs 1,000 if they file late. And that's not all, if you owe any taxes, interest will be added to the unpaid amount. Under Section 234A of the Income Tax Act, interest of 1% is charged every month until the payment is made. So, the longer you delay, the more you'll have to pay. Things can turn even more serious if authorities believe you're intentionally avoiding taxes. In such cases, you may be prosecuted under Section 276CC. This could lead to jail time of at least three months and up to seven years, along with heavy fines.

### NOT FILING AFFECTS YOUR FINANCIAL PLANS TOO

Beyond penalties, non-filing affects your money matters in many ways. For instance, if you've made a loss in stocks or business during the year, you can't carry it forward to reduce taxes in future years unless you file your return. This means you lose out on possible tax savings. If your employer or bank has already deducted tax from your salary or investment income, the only way to claim a refund is by filing your ITR. Without doing so, that money is lost. Another issue is when you apply for loans or credit cards. Banks and financial institutions often ask for ITR documents to check your income. No ITR means a lower chance of approval. The same rule applies when applying for visas or starting a new business, as tax filings are considered proof of financial discipline.

### A SECOND CHANCE COMES AT A HIGH PRICE

The government now gives you a chance to fix past mistakes by allowing you to file Updated Returns (ITR-U) for up to four previous years.

## How India can turn Trump's tariffs into a strategic advantage

New Delhi (Agency)

US President Donald Trump has imposed an additional 25% tariff on Indian goods, citing India's continued purchase of oil from Russia. The new tariff, announced on Wednesday, will come into effect 21 days from August 7. This move takes the duty on some Indian exports to as high as 50%, making it one of the steepest tariffs faced by any American trading partner. This sharp increase in duties came at a time when trade talks between the two countries had already reached a dead end. The White House has not yet responded to questions about whether similar action will be taken against other countries, including China, which also imports oil from Russia.

While India is facing pressure and uncertainty, some voices from the

Indian business community are looking at the situation differently. Anand Mahindra, Chairman of the Mahindra Group, shared a detailed response on social media, urging the country to turn this moment into a long-term opportunity. In his post, Mahindra called attention to the "law of unintended consequences" and gave examples of how other countries are responding to global tensions in a way that may lead to future benefits. He pointed to the European Union, where countries like France and Germany have increased defence spending. "Germany has moderated its fiscal orthodoxy, which may well catalyse a resurgence in Europe's major economies. The world could gain a new engine for growth," Mahindra noted.

He also spoke about Canada, where internal trade barriers between

provinces have long been an issue. In response to global economic shifts, the country has started working to break down these barriers, which could make its economy more resilient and bring the provinces closer to a common market. Using these examples, Mahindra asked whether India could also use the current situation to make meaningful progress. "Just as the 1991 forex reserves crisis triggered liberalisation, can today's global 'Manthan' over tariffs yield some 'Amrit' for us?" he asked. He then laid out two specific areas where India could act right away. First, Mahindra said India must focus on improving the ease of doing business. He stressed that the country needs to go beyond slow and small reforms and create a true single-window system for all investment clearances.

## JSW Cement IPO opens for subscription. Should you apply or skip?

New Delhi (Agency)

The initial public offering (IPO) of JSW Cement opened for subscription on Thursday, August 7, with the Sajjan Jindal-led company aiming to raise Rs 3,600 crore through a mix of fresh issue and offer-for-sale. The price band has been set at Rs 139-147 per share, and the issue will remain open till Monday, August 11. Shares are scheduled to list on the BSE and NSE on August 14.

Founded in 2006, the Mumbai-based cement maker is part of the JSW Group and has positioned itself as a leader in green cement manufacturing. As of March 2025, it operated seven plants with a combined installed grinding capacity of 20.6 million metric tonnes per annum (MMTPA). The company plans to use proceeds from the fresh issue to set up a new integrated cement unit in Nagaur, Rajasthan, repay debt, and fund general corporate purposes. The IPO has already attracted strong institutional interest. JSW Cement raised Rs 1,080 crore from marquee anchor investors, including BlackRock,

Nomura, UBS, Amundi, Morgan Stanley, the Government of Singapore, and the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority, among others. For FY25, however, the company reported a net loss of Rs 163.77 crore on revenue of Rs 5,914.67 crore, following a profitable FY24 where it earned Rs 62.01 crore on Rs 6,114.60 crore in revenue. The company attributed the FY25 loss to one-off fair value adjustments, underperformance at certain subsidiaries, and investment-led cost pressures. Despite the loss, the IPO values JSW Cement at a market capitalisation of over Rs 20,000 crore, and the issue is priced at a premium valuation—an EV/Ebitda multiple of 31-32x, higher than most listed cement peers.

### SHOULD YOU SUBSCRIBE OR NOT?

Brokerages are mostly positive, though some advise caution due to the stretched valuation and inconsistent profitability. Reliance Securities, Canara Bank Securities, Ventura Securities, and

SMIFS have all recommended a 'subscribe', highlighting JSW Cement's scale, ESG focus, and long-term positioning. Reliance called it a "differentiated, future-ready cement



player" with strong visibility for growth in India's infrastructure-led economy. Ventura believes the FY25 loss is transitory and expects a return to profitability in FY26, aided by scale and operational leverage. AUM Capital also backed the issue, citing its ground granulated blast furnace slag (GGBS) advantage and strong parentage, while

Lakshmisree Securities pointed to strategic raw material access and alignment with India's sustainability goals. Swastika Investmart, while recommending a 'subscribe', warned that "short-term returns could be volatile due to high valuation and current losses," suggesting it may suit high-risk investors seeking long-term potential or minor listing gains.

Arihant Capital was more circumspect, assigning a 'neutral' rating. It flagged the high EV/Ebitda valuation and uneven financial track record, though it acknowledged JSW Cement's cost efficiency and sustainability focus. On the sector front, Rahul Ahluwalia, Founder-Director of the Foundation for Economic Development, said the main impact will be felt in "labour-intensive areas like apparel, gems, and jewellery," especially if tariff pressures from the U.S. Intensify.

Bigg Boss 19: Salman Khan's Show Might See

# Hina Khan

Elvish Yadav In Premiere



With Salman Khan's controversial reality show Bigg Boss 19 nearing its launch, all eyes are on the list of celebrities who will step into the drama-filled house this season. The first promo of the Salman Khan-hosted reality show has already created a storm online, with fans eagerly awaiting the full contestant lineup, unpredictable twists, and non-stop entertainment. Amid the growing curiosity, social media has been set abuzz with rumours that popular TV actress Hina Khan and digital sensation Elvish Yadav may be part of the upcoming season. In an Instagram post going viral, the user sparked discussions among fans after hinting at their probable participation in Bigg Boss 19.

While neither Hina Khan nor Elvish Yadav has confirmed the news, it remains to be seen whether the duo will join Salman Khan during the grand premiere or make a dramatic appearance later in the season.

#### Salman Khan's Bigg Boss 19 Promo

Not long ago, the makers of the controversial reality show dropped the first promo on the channel's official social media handle. Featuring the host and actor Salman Khan, the video captured the superstar donning a traditional outfit and portraying a politician, hinting that this season is centred on politics.

In a statement, Salman shared, "I've been a part of Bigg Boss for a long time. As we all know, the game evolves every year, and it's gharwalo ki sarkar. And when too many people start pulling the threads, things will get nasty. That's when the cracks appear and the house transforms into a combat zone. After all these years, I can honestly say that I am as excited as you are to see how it all turns out."

#### Bigg Boss 19 Contestant List

While Hina Khan and Elvish Yadav are yet to confirm their speculated involvement in the show, here is the list of other probable contestants of the season. In Bigg Boss season 19, RJD supremo Lalu Prasad Yadav's elder son Tej Pratap Yadav, Taarak Mehta Ka Ooltah Chashmah's Gurucharan Singh and Shailesh Lodha, Apurva Mukhija, singer and rapper Raftaar, Mr Faisu aka Faisal Shaikh, Meera Deosthale, Dhanashree Verma, singer and music composer Amaal Malik and Gaurav Khanna, among others, are expected to participate.

# Divyanka Tripathi

## Sharad Malhotra To Reunite In Bigg Boss 19 10 Years After Breakup?

Exes are all set to reunite. If reports are to be believed, Divyanka Tripathi and Sharad Malhotra, who were previously in a romantic relationship, have been approached for Bigg Boss 19. Reportedly, the two actors are currently in talks with the makers of Salman Khan's controversial reality show and are likely to be confirmed soon. Interestingly, Divyanka Tripathi and Sharad Malhotra were a popular television couple. They met for the first time on the set of their show, *Baano Main Teri Dulhann* and fell in love with each other. Their on-screen

chemistry translated into a real-life romance, and the two dated for nearly eight years. However, they ended their relationship in 2015. While Divyanka later married actor Vivek Dahiya, Sharad is married to Ripci Bhatia.

#### Who All Are Participating In Bigg Boss 19?

Every year, fans remain glued to their screens on the Bigg Boss premiere date for the final list of contestants. The speculations, however, begin much earlier. Previously, reports claimed that around 45 celebrities have been approached so far. According to the fan page Bigg Boss Taza Khabar, several television personalities and digital influencers are in talks for the season. Some of the names include Rati Pandey (Miley Jai

Hum Tum), Hunar Hali, Apoorva Mukhija (aka The Rebel Kid), Mr Faisu, Dhanashree Verma, Sreeram Chandra, Meera Deosthale, and Bhavika Sharma. Reportedly, former *Tarak Mehta Ka Ooltah Chashmah* actors, Shailesh Lodha, Gurucharan Singh and Jennifer Mistry have also been approached for Bigg Boss 19. Rapper Raftaar is also likely to join the show.

#### What Else Do We Know About Bigg Boss 19?

The much-anticipated teaser for Bigg Boss 19 was also released recently. In the teaser, Salman Khan revealed a



big twist in this year's theme and shared that season 19 will have "Gharwalo ki Sarkar" – signalling a seismic shift in power inside the house. He also promised "too much fun" and urged everyone to brace themselves. Seen in a sharp Nehru jacket, flanked by black cat commandos, Salman brings his trademark mix of authority and charm to the teaser, embodying the power-play at the heart of this year's theme.

Rashmika Mandanna Turns Politician For A New Film? Viral Photo Grabs Attention



A photo featuring Rashmika Mandanna in a politician's avatar has gone viral on social media, sparking a wave of speculation. Dressed in a crisp handloom-style saree and exuding a commanding presence, the actress has left everyone wondering if a new project is on the horizon. The striking look has fuelled buzz about her possibly taking on a strong, authoritative role in an upcoming film or series. A picture of Rashmika is making waves online, and it's a major shift from her usual glamorous style. There's no official update yet on what the look is for, but it has sparked plenty of buzz. Speculations are rife that this could be from her next film—possibly a serious, intense role involving power and politics. The image gives off a strong, authoritative vibe, more suited to a cabinet meeting than a red-carpet event.

A source close to the development revealed to IANS, "This isn't just Rashmika switching things up or just another look; it is a bold and new statement everyone should look out for. This is something very different from Rashmika, there's something about the way she's carrying this look, poised and powerful. Wait for the big announcement about her latest project soon!"

On the professional front, the 'Animal' actress is gearing up for the release of her upcoming film "The Girlfriend," which is set to hit theatres on September 5 this year. Directed by Rahul Ravindran, the film also stars Deekshith Shetty in the lead role. Rashmika also has "Thama" lined up, where she will be seen opposite Ayushmann Khurrana for the first time. The film, directed by Muniya fame Aditya Sarpatdar, is said to be an intense love story set against a violent backdrop. It follows a dedicated historian who dives deep into old manuscripts and uncovers dark secrets about local vampire legends as mysterious forces begin to surface.

In addition, she will be seen in "Mysaa," an emotional action thriller where she plays a woman from the Gond community. The film is directed by Rawindra Pulle and produced by Ajay and Anil Sayyapureddy.

## Neelam Kothari Sends Love As Arti Singh Celebrates '2 Years As Mrs Chauhan'



It's Arti Singh's husband, Dipak Chauhan's birthday today, and the actress is pulling out all the stops to make it special. From surprise home celebrations to planning a romantic getaway to Lonavala, Arti ensured the day was packed with love, laughter and surprises. Adding to the birthday cheer, the actress has now treated her Instafam to a bunch of romantic pictures on social media that scream adorable. Dressed like a newlywed bride, Arti looked gorgeous in a vibrant yellow saree with heavy embroidery all over in the pictures. Elevating her look were traditional bridal accessories—mangalsutra, sindoor and chuda. Dipak, on the other hand, looked every bit the dashing companion in a white kurta-pyjama adorned with delicate floral patterns.

The couple served major relationship goals as they posed affectionately for the camera. From gazing at each other to giving some goofy moments, the pictures captured their impeccable chemistry beautifully. In one, Arti was also seen sitting on Dipak's lap as they shared a laugh. Dropping the pictures with her Instafam, she penned, "6th August 2023 se aaj 2025. From Yaucha meeting for the first time to here after 2 years as Mr and Mrs Chauhan. Love you."

#### Fans And Industry Friends' Reaction To Arti Singh's Post

Soon after Arti dropped the heartwarming picture, the comments section was flooded with sweet and love-filled reactions from fans and celebrities. Reacting to the post, a majority of users dropped red heart and evil-eyed emojis, while others praised their bond that was evident in every picture. Yuvika Chaudhary wrote, "Touchwood, Nazar na Lage, stay like this forever." "You guys are truly made for each other," read a comment. "Beautiful couple," echoed a few. A user commented, "Marrying this guy is Arti's best decision of life."

#### Arti Singh And Dipak Chauhan Marriage

After dating for some time, the couple tied the knot in April 2024 at the ISKCON Temple in Mumbai. The grand wedding ceremony, organised by Krushna Abhishek, was attended by several renowned faces, including her uncle and actor Govinda, Kapil Sharma, Archana Puran Singh, Sunil Grover and Rajiv Thakur.

There are more than one billion tourists in the world, but some destinations don't get quite as many visitors as you would expect. The beaches may be beautiful and the coastline inviting, but you can understand why Tuvalu doesn't get much through-traffic. It's tiny for a start; one of the smallest nations in the world, and not much bigger than Vatican City. It's also about as far from the beaten track as possible—right out in the middle of the South Pacific. So the 1,200 international arrivals recorded there in 2011—according to the World Bank—had to make quite an effort. It had the least number of recorded visitors for all countries where data was available (and no, there were no figures for North Korea). Incidentally, if you are curious about Tuvalu, the official tourism website is surprisingly enticing.

Low tourism to other nations is less easy to explain. Here we round up some of the places where visitor numbers are surprisingly low.

# Ten countries that deserve more Tourists

## India



### India

The world's most populous democracy ought to be a huge hitter when it comes to tourism. Right in the centre of Asia, with strong historical links to Britain, it has some amazing attractions, from the Taj Mahal to tigers. But

with less than seven million foreign arrivals last year, it is hardly setting the world alight with its visitor numbers. To put that into context, that's less than a third of Thailand's 22.4m during the same year.

#### Why are numbers low?

The difficult visa process is one problem—one that tourist

authorities are apparently trying to address, with a drive to reduce bureaucracy. The recent spate of bad publicity about attitudes towards women—including some recent attacks on tourists—has also done little to boost the country's image.



## Zimbabwe

With vast landscapes, natural wonders, and mesmerising wildlife, Zimbabwe should be a rival to South Africa. Once upon a time it was, but visitor numbers have declined in recent years—it now registers around 1.8m visitors (compared to South Africa's 9.2m), and many more head to the mighty Victoria Falls from the Zambian side nowadays.

#### Why are numbers low?

Robert Mugabe.

## Bosnia and Herzegovina

At the intersection of two great empires—the Austro-Hungarian and the Ottoman—this region has huge historic appeal, perhaps most notably in its capital city, Sarajevo. With its rivers and mountains, it is also being touted as a future adventure capital of Eastern Europe. Yet, of all the countries belonging to the former Yugoslavia, only Croatia has been a true success with its tourist industry (10.4m in 2012), with only 439,000 going to Bosnia and Herzegovina in the same year.



#### Why are numbers low?

The shadow of the Balkans conflict has been hard to shake—and it lacks the magnificent coastline of Croatia, for example. There are also currently no direct flights from Britain either.

## Greece

2013. Not a disaster, but then, when you think Spain has almost 60m and Italy is at almost 50m.

For culture and history, few countries can compare with Greece. Often referred to as the birthplace of democracy, with ancient ruins dotting the landscape, it also has glorious beaches, and some wonderful islands—often at good value.

#### Why are numbers low?

Greece's recent travails have been well documented, and there was inevitably an effect on the country due to that. Signs are that tourism is on the rise again—with around 17 million people thought to have visited in



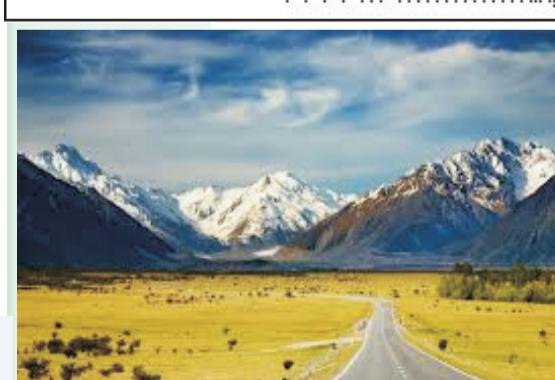
## Norway



For a country whose fjords and wooden clapboard houses are almost instantly recognisable, Norway is significantly behind its neighbour Sweden for international arrivals, which has more than double the number of visitors, at around 10m. In some respects, however, business is booming: more Britons went on a cruise to Norway in 2012 than to the Caribbean.

#### Why are numbers low?

Expense would be one reason; Norway is hardly a destination for the budget traveller. Sweden also has more neighbours, which would explain some of the discrepancy, with the country easily accessible across the bridge from Denmark.



## Japan

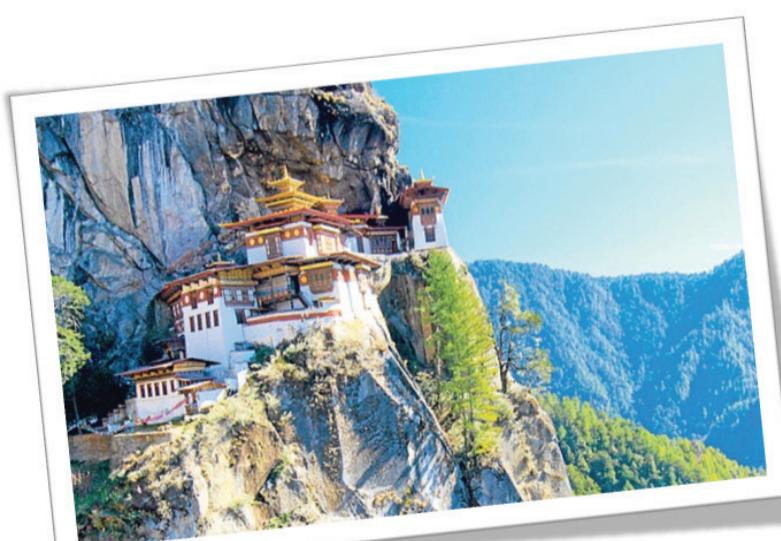
For a country that has given so much to the world culturally—from temples to the madness of Tokyo—Japan has a relative dearth of visitors (about 8.4m, only about a million more than for Taiwan).

#### Why are numbers low?

High prices are probably the main reason—although with the devalued yen, that is less of a problem than it used to be. The country's cultural complexity could be another—perhaps the writing and language are viewed as obstacles by novices. The 2020 Olympics could provide a boost, however.



## Bhutan



## Bhutan

This landlocked country in South Asia is a beautiful, mountainous nation. With a strongly Buddhist culture, wonderful treks, remote forests and Himalayan kingdoms, there is a wealth of visitor attractions—yet there were only around 44,000 to appreciate them in 2012.

#### Why are numbers low?

This is the country's own choice. Bhutan has long limited tourists: visitors have to pay a tariff of \$250 a day to enter, a fee that immediately excludes many of the backpackers that head to Thailand.



## New Zealand

With The Lord of the Rings and The Hobbit offering a giant marketing boost over the last few years, the number of tourists to this beautiful country is on the increase. But at just over 2.5m international arrivals at the last full count, it is still a long way behind Australia, its neighbour across the Tasman—it has only slightly more than a third of the visitors.

#### Why are numbers low?

It's a very long way away from almost everywhere, with a much smaller population than Australia (and hence fewer European relatives to visit). Australia also has more flight connections, and a reputation for its beaches.

## Brazil

It may be the most visited country in South America, but that continent as a whole remains relatively unexplored. For a country with such a reputation for its beaches, natural assets and football culture, Brazil is arguably still not punching its full weight. It's comfortably the biggest economy in the region, and its attractions vary from the beaches of Salvador, Rio's Carnival to the remote flora and fauna of the Amazon.

#### Why are numbers low?

5.7 million visitors isn't that bad, you might argue, considering the country is hardly positioned at the world's crossroads. But then, Australia gets more than six million, and it is further away from both Europe and the USA. Bolivia and Peru are two other countries where the visitor numbers don't seem to match the attractions on offer.