

## BJP's 'Pehle Tolo, Phir Bolo' Swipe At Rahul Gandhi's 'Dead' Economy Claim

In a post on X, BJP National Spokesperson Jaiveer Shergill said the Indian economy is "alive & kicking" and asked the Congress MP to assess the country's financial situation before making such remarks.

### New Delhi . (Agency)

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi appears to have confused the Indian economy with that of Pakistan, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) said on Friday, as it took a swipe at the Lok Sabha MP over his remarks that the country's economy is "dead".

In a post on X, BJP National Spokesperson Jaiveer Shergill said the Indian economy is "alive & kicking" and asked the Congress MP to assess the country's financial situation before making such remarks.

"Rahul Gandhi says 'India is a dead economy'. Rahul Gandhi seems to be confusing Indian economy with Pakistan's. Economy is 'Alive & Kicking', Rahul Gandhi's logic is 'Dead': India: > 4<sup>th</sup> Largest Economy > 2<sup>nd</sup> Largest Mobile Phone Manufacturer > 3<sup>rd</sup> Largest Automobile Manufacturer > 4<sup>th</sup> Strongest Stock Market. Pehle Tolo, Phir Bolo," he said.

It is not for the first time that the BJP has attacked Mr Gandhi over Pakistan or accused him of promoting the neighbouring country's propaganda. Last month, the ruling party at the Centre accused him of peddling Pakistan's fake narrative with his charge that no country supported India in its action following the Pahalgam terror attack. On Thursday, Mr Gandhi stoked controversy after he echoed US President Donald Trump's criticism of the Indian economy and said everyone, except Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharam, knows that the country's economy is "dead". The Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha also alleged that the BJP-led Centre has destroyed the country's economic,

defence and foreign policies, and is "running the country to the ground".

"He (Mr Trump) is right, everybody knows this except the prime minister and the

not aware of it," he told reporters.

His remarks came hours after the US President announced a 25% additional import duty plus penalty on goods imported from India. Subsequently, he hit out at India and Russia and said the two countries "can take their dead economies down together".

The BJP paled the Congress leader for "echoing" Mr Trump's "dead economy" jibe at India, calling it a "shameful" insult to the aspirations, achievements, and well-being of the people of the country.

Rajya Sabha MP Rajiv Shukla said Mr Trump's statement was "completely wrong". "Our economic condition is not at all weak. If someone claims they can finish us economically, it's likely due to a misunderstanding. Trump is living in a delusion," he told news agency.



finance minister. Everybody knows that the Indian economy is a dead economy. I am glad that President Trump has stated a fact. It is a dead economy, are you people

## Vice Presidential poll scheduled for September 9 after Jagdeep Dhankhar's exit

The Election Commission has scheduled the 17th Vice-Presidential election for September 9, following Jagdeep Dhankhar's resignation due to health reasons.

### New Delhi . (Agency)

The Election Commission of India has announced that the election to choose the next Vice-President of India will be held on September 9, following the resignation of Jagdeep Dhankhar.

According to the schedule, the last date for filing nominations is August 21, while polling will take place on September 9. The votes will be counted on the same day as the polling.

The Ministry of Home Affairs confirmed the vacancy through a notification issued on July 22, 2025. According to the law, the election to fill such a vacancy must be held as soon as possible. The person elected will serve a full five-year term from the date they take office. The 17th Vice-Presidential Election will be held according to the rules set

out in the Presidential and Vice-Presidential Elections Act, 1952.

Meanwhile, Congress leader Manish Tewari took a jibe at the Election Commission of India over the Vice Presidential election, citing the Special Intensive Survey. He posted on X saying, "With the schedule for Vice President announced, MPs should perhaps be ready with their 11 documents to prove their citizenship. God forbid, the Election Commission decides to carry out an SIR Special Intensive Revision of the Electoral Roll even after announcing the election schedule. With this Election Commission, anything is

possible!"

Jagdeep Dhankhar resigned as the Vice President of India on July 22 "to prioritise healthcare".

Having served in the role since

abide by medical advice, I hereby resign as the Vice President of India, effective immediately, in accordance with Article 67(a) of the Constitution," Dhankhar said in a letter addressed to President Droupadi Murmu. The letter was released by the Vice President's Office.

According to Article 66 of the Indian Constitution, the Vice President is chosen by an electoral college consisting exclusively of members of both Houses of Parliament, Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. Members vote through a secret ballot using the single transferable vote system.



2022, the 74-year-old made the announcement after chairing the first day of the Monsoon Session as Rajya Sabha Chairman.

"To prioritise health care and

## Punjab Congress MP claims son threatened by gangster, government seeks details

### New Delhi . (Agency)

Punjab witnessed a fresh controversy as former Jail Minister and current Gurdaspur MP, Congress leader Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa, alleged that his son has received threats from gangster Jaggu Bhagwanpuri, who is currently lodged in an Assam jail. The Punjab government has responded by asking the MP to provide detailed information about the threats for further investigation.

Randhawa said that one of his associates met his son earlier in the day, and within an hour, a firing incident took place. Speaking from Delhi during the Parliament session, he said, "No gangster can shake me."

He further accused the Aam Aadmi Party government of turning

Punjab into a gangster's paradise, adding that law and order in the state has collapsed under their rule.

AAP leader Neel Garg hit back, urging Randhawa to reflect on his own party's past. Garg said, "Congress is a dead economy, apparently countering fellow Congress leader Rahul Gandhi who had supported the statement a day earlier."

governments have supported gangsters like Jaggu Bhagwanpuri and even hired expensive lawyers for criminals like Mukhtar Ansari." He claimed, "The AAP government has zero tolerance for gangsters and is taking strict action. If Randhawa has received a threat, he should share the details with the police."

Shiromani Akali Dal's chief spokesperson, Arshdeep Singh Kler, condemned the threats but questioned why no action was taken during Randhawa's tenure as Jail Minister. Kler pointed out that Jaggu Bhagwanpuri had openly threatened people even then and alleged that Congress leaders allowed such gangsters to operate with impunity.



## Madras High Court restrains Tamil Nadu from naming schemes after MK Stalin

The Madras High Court has said that Tamil Nadu government welfare schemes cannot bear the name or image of Chief Minister Stalin, emphasising that public programmes must remain politically neutral.

### Tamil Nadu . (Agency)

The Madras High Court has directed the Tamil Nadu government not to use the name of the Chief Minister or his photograph in publicity material related to government welfare schemes, pulling up the DMK administration over its choice of nomenclature for publicly funded initiatives.

The court was hearing a petition filed by AIADMK MP CV Shammugam, who sought a ban on the use of former Chief Minister M Karunanidhi's image and the name



'Ungaludan Stalin' (translated as 'Stalin with You') in government schemes and their advertisements.

The petitioner contended that naming the scheme after the incumbent Chief Minister was in violation of Supreme Court rulings and the Government Advertisements (Content Regulation) Guidelines, 2014. Citing schemes such as 'Ungaludan Stalin' and 'Nalam Kaakum Stalin Thittam', which carry the Chief Minister's name, the petition argued that such branding created undue political mileage at the expense of the public exchequer.

"Mentioning the name of the incumbent Chief Minister in the nomenclature of the scheme and all such pictorial representations is in violation of various judicial pronouncements of the Hon'ble Supreme Court as also violative of Government Advertisement (Content Regulation) Guidelines, 2014," the petition stated.

Appearing on behalf of the Tamil Nadu government, senior advocate and Rajya Sabha MP P Wilson termed the petition politically motivated and ill-founded, aimed at tarnishing the image of the ruling party and its leadership.

## Not the case: Shashi Tharoor differs with Rahul Gandhi's stance on Trump remarks

### New Delhi . (Agency)

Congress MP Shashi Tharoor on Friday joined the political pushback against US President Donald Trump's remarks describing India as a "dead economy", asserting that the claim was untrue. His response came a day after Congress leader Rahul Gandhi backed Trump's statement, saying he was glad the US President had stated the facts.

Responding to a question about Trump's remark, the Thiruvananthapuram MP told reporters, "This is not the case, and we all know it." Earlier this week, slamming India's ties with Russia and New Delhi's defiance of US warnings over its relationship with Moscow, Trump referred to both countries as "dead economies" and brazenly declared that he "does not care" what India does with Russia. "I don't care what India does with Russia. They can take

their dead economies down together, for all I care," the US President posted on social media, just hours after slapping 25 per cent



duties, effective August 1. Rahul Gandhi, the Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha, endorsed the scathing remarks on the Indian economy, as he accused the PM Modi-led NDA government of its alleged mismanagement. "Yes, he is right, everybody knows this except the Prime

Minister and the Finance Minister. Everybody knows that the Indian economy is a dead economy. I am glad that President Trump has stated a fact. The entire world knows that the Indian economy is a dead economy. The BJP has finished the economy to help Adani," Gandhi said. However, Tharoor did not echo Gandhi's criticism of the government, as he dismissed the US President's statement. Meanwhile, the government strongly rejected Trump's remarks. Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal told Parliament that India remains the world's fastest-growing major economy and is widely expected to become the third-largest economy in the coming years. He added that India will take all necessary measures to safeguard and advance its national interests, and that the implications of the US tariffs are currently under review.

## Delhi Govt will sensitise DTC drivers and conductors on ethics

The Sikh Times  
Sourabh Sharma

**New Delhi.** You may soon notice a significant change in the behaviour, communication style, and ethical conduct of Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) bus drivers and conductors. Aiming to improve DTC's public image, Delhi Transport Minister Dr. Pankaj Kumar Singh has directed the corporation to launch a new initiative focused on comprehensive training for drivers and conductors.

Dr. Singh stated that the Delhi Transport Department will soon begin special training sessions for all DTC drivers and conductors, focusing on ethical conduct and mental awareness. These sessions will emphasize ethical values, customer service, and safe driving techniques. The Transport Minister instructed that if DTC drivers fail to halt the bus properly at designated stops, engage in overspeeding or rash driving, fail to drive within their lanes, operate buses with open doors, jump red lights, or violate zebra crossings, strict departmental action will be taken. Commuters can lodge complaints based on the bus number through the transport department's helpline.

High-tech CCTV cameras installed in DTC buses will be used to monitor both the actions and behaviour of drivers and conductors. Regular counselling will also be part of this awareness drive. In addition to theoretical training, drivers will undergo practical exercises to ensure they fully understand proper conduct and safe driving techniques.

Dr. Singh highlighted that the primary objective of this initiative is to raise awareness among drivers and conductors about road safety and to enhance DTC's operational standards. By improving ethical conduct and driving practices, the government aims to ensure a safer and more pleasant travel experience for passengers. He added that trained DTC personnel will engage with commuters more respectfully and professionally, setting a new benchmark in public transport service. [continued news page 2](#)

# Punjab and Haryana Bar Council warns lawyers against advertising legal services via social media, influencer collabs

## Chandigarh.(Agency)

The Bar Council of Punjab and Haryana (BCPH) has issued a warning to all advocates and Bar Associations against the unethical and increasingly common practice of advertising legal services through social media platforms, promotional videos, and influencer collaborations. The Council has emphasised that such conduct violates Rule 36 of Chapter II, Part VI of the Bar Council of India (BCI) Rules. It warned that violations will be treated as professional misconduct under Section 35 of the Advocates Act, 1961, which may lead to suspension or cancellation of an advocate's licence.

It has also made it clear that office bearers of Bar Associations in Punjab, Haryana, and Chandigarh will be held accountable if such practices continue under their watch.

In a detailed communication addressed to presidents and secretaries of various Bar Associations, including those of tribunals, tax

bars, and consumer forums, BCPH chairman Rakesh Gupta stated that the legal profession is a noble service, deeply rooted in public trust and distinct from commercial business ventures.

sanctity of the legal practice.

The communication also noted that despite previous directives, a growing number of advocates have been found soliciting work through indirect advertisements, online promotions, and even publicising favourable court outcomes with client photographs in newspapers in a clear violation of ethical standards.

Rule 36 of the BCI Rules explicitly prohibits advocates from soliciting work through any form of advertisement or public endorsement, including via digital platforms. It also forbids personal publicity or associating oneself with any particular cause, organisation, or past designation to gain legal work.

The Bar Council further highlighted recent concerns over "legal influencers" spreading misleading information online, regardless of their credentials.

The Council has urged all presidents and secretaries of Bar Associations to immediately disseminate the circular among their members and ensure strict compliance.



Citing multiple judicial pronouncements, including a recent landmark ruling by the Madras High Court dated July 3, 2024, the Council reiterated that commercialisation of legal services undermines public faith and the

# No end to poll season in Punjab, state now set for panchayat samiti, zila parishad elections

## Chandigarh.(Agency)

The Punjab government Thursday initiated the process to hold the long-overdue elections to panchayat samitis and zila parishads, the move coming a day after the state Cabinet approved the restructuring of rural development blocks to align them with district boundaries.

The zila parishad and panchayat samiti polls were last held in September 2018. The government is now planning to complete the election process by October 5.

The Department of Rural Development and Panchayats, through a letter, directed all district administrations to begin preparations for the elections, which were last held in September 2018. It also instructed Additional Deputy Commissioners (Development) to finalize ward divisions and election constituencies based on the newly restructured blocks.

The elections to these rural bodies were to be held alongside panchayat polls last year, but were delayed as restructuring of the blocks was not carried out. Announcing the restructuring of the rural development blocks, a government spokesperson Wednesday said that it was



official gazette, the spokesperson said. The Rural Development and Panchayats Department has now urged all Additional Deputy Commissioners to coordinate with stakeholders, prepare the revised election constituencies, and submit complete proposals, including Gram Sabha names and Hadbast numbers, by August 4. Officials have also been asked to certify that no village is excluded from any proposed constituency.

undertaken to bring their jurisdiction in line with existing district boundaries, especially benefiting Sangrur, Malerkotla, Fazilka, Ferozepur, SAS Nagar and Patiala districts. The realignment is intended to ensure better coordination between block-level and district-level administrations, streamline the planning and implementation of rural development schemes, and eliminate administrative overlaps that often led to delays and inefficiencies, the spokesperson said. It is also expected to facilitate easier access to services for citizens and panchayati raj institutions. The restructured development blocks will come into effect upon publication of the notification in the

official gazette, the spokesperson said. The Rural Development and Panchayats Department has now urged all Additional Deputy Commissioners to coordinate with stakeholders, prepare the revised election constituencies, and submit complete proposals, including Gram Sabha names and Hadbast numbers, by August 4. Officials have also been asked to certify that no village is excluded from any proposed constituency.

# Solving Crime: When Mumbai cops stumbled upon a love story that turned a school headmaster into a contract killer

## MUMBAI.(Agency)

In 2010, acting on a crucial tip-off from a police informer, a Mumbai Crime Branch team nabbed a 36-year-old suspect in a murder case. It was an expected end to a routine case—or so the investigators believed. When the suspect was subjected to sustained interrogation, his revelations left the officers stunned, as the story that unfolded was nothing short of a Bollywood thriller.

In August 2010, Mumbai Crime Branch Unit-5 officers arrested Shailesh Pandya, alias Sanjay Rabadi, from the Kurla area, suspecting his involvement in a murder case in Gujarat. Pandya was accused of killing a high-profile RTI activist, who was campaigning against illegal mining, by opening fire at him outside the Ahmedabad High Court.

The Gujarat Police had arrested five key accused in the case, but Pandya had managed to dodge the police and flee the state. Crime Branch sources said that Pandya showed no remorse for his actions, but what shocked them was his origin story: how a twist of fate had turned an ordinary school headmaster into a contract killer.

During the investigation, the police learnt that Pandya, who hails from Baspa village in Gujarat's Patan district, used to work as a headmaster in a primary school a few years before his arrest. Here, he allegedly fell in love with a fellow teacher. However, Pandya's affair with the teacher did not go down well with the villagers, as he was already married with two kids. Pandya and



the teacher also hailed from different castes. According to the police, Pandya eloped to Bengaluru with the teacher. However, two months later, after her family filed a complaint, the Gujarat Police traced the

couple and brought them back. Pandya was allegedly put behind bars in a fake case, and this upset the teacher, who allegedly died by suicide.

It was when he walked out on bail that Pandya learnt about her death. Suspecting that she was murdered by her family members, in November 2008, Pandya allegedly opened fire on four people—two relatives of the teacher, his relative, and a villager. Later, one of these victims succumbed to their injuries, the police said.

Running away from the police, Pandya went to Rajasthan, returned to Gujarat, and later arrived in Mumbai. Here, he allegedly got addicted to gambling, lost whatever money he had left, and returned to his hometown.

# Now, auto drivers must follow meter in Bengaluru: Users

## BENGALURU.(Agency)

With the revised auto fares coming into effect from August 1, commuters only demand is that autos abide by the law and go by meter. They have demanded that the traffic police and transport department enforce the revised fares and take strict action against those autos which do not fall in line.

Auto fares have been revised from the existing Rs 30 to Rs 36 for 2 km and for every subsequent km from the existing Rs 15 to Rs 18.

Autos have been given time till October 31 to recalibrate their auto meters to the revised fares. "We hardly find autos that go by the meter in the city. Sometimes we are also fine with paying Rs 20 extra from the meter. But auto drivers

demand nearly three-four times the meter fares," said Banumathy, a senior citizen.

A majority of auto users said auto drivers have zero fear of the law of the land.

One auto user said in cities like Pune,

every single auto follows the meter.

"Even an outsider can go and hire an auto without any bargaining as they go the meter. A single complaint of charging extra will cost them their permit. In contrast,

here, we hardly see any crackdown and autos charge

as per their whims and fancies," the user said.

Sources from the traffic police department said they will start a special drive against autos not following the

meter and refusing to take rides.



# Rs 107-crore GST fraud case: Punjab and Haryana HC grants bail to accused, slams prosecution for focusing only on arrests

## Chandigarh.(Agency)

The Punjab and Haryana High Court on July 28 granted regular bail to Manish Kumar, accused of defrauding the State Exchequer of Rs 107 crore in a 2024 case involving fraudulent Input Tax Credit (ITC) claims through fake GST invoices and shell firms.

In a sharp indictment of the prosecuting agencies under the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime, Justice Harpreet Singh Brar questioned their priorities, noting that despite repeated arrests, trials were rarely concluded.

Manish Kumar and his brother Amit Kumar Goyal

were accused of creating 27 fake

firms and generating invoices

amounting to Rs 700 crore,

leading to fraudulent ITC claims

worth Rs 107 crore. The court noted that the final investigation report had already been filed against the petitioners, and the case had been pending pre-charge evidence for the past six months. While opposing the bail, the prosecution argued that the investigation was still ongoing against another co-accused and expressed apprehensions about the possibility of destroying evidence and influencing witnesses.

The court rejected these concerns and observed that the evidence was documentary and electronic, and all prosecution witnesses were officials of the Directorate General of GST Intelligence (DGGI). Justice Brar said, "It remains unclear as to why the

arrest process has not been initiated against the co-accused qua whom an investigation is pending... While the possibility of evidence tampering has been flagged, the entire case is based on documentary and electronic evidence, which are already available... and all of the prosecution witnesses are officials of the respondent."

Calling it unreasonable to keep the petitioners in custody merely because another accused was under investigation, the court noted that "nothing has been brought to the fore to suggest that the release of the petitioners would derail the investigation; therefore, this cannot be used as a reason to keep them under custody indefinitely."

# Train blasts, Malegaon: Two attacks, multiple investigations, and how the cases fell

## Mumbai.(Agency)

In a span of 10 days, the Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) and National Investigation Agency (NIA) have received major blows in two big terrorism cases, with courts junking their investigation and finding no substance in their theories, leading to the accused being let off.

Pointing to lapses in the Malegaon investigation, the Special NIA Court Thursday said: "Though there was strong suspicion against the accused persons, the investigating agencies failed to establish their guilt beyond reasonable doubt to convict them."

The September 2008 Malegaon blasts had left six people dead and over a hundred injured. All the seven accused, including former BJP MP Sadhvi Pragya Singh Thakur, were acquitted by the court Thursday.

The ATS's case was that the blasts were carried out by people with radical Hindutva leanings, with the communally sensitive Malegaon chosen deliberately for an attack during the month of Ramzan and on the eve of Navaratri. The ATS's case was that the blasts were carried out by people with radical Hindutva leanings, with the communally sensitive Malegaon chosen deliberately for an attack during the month of Ramzan and on the eve of Navaratri.

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Both these cases happened under Congress-led governments in the state and at the Centre—and were

first investigated by the state ATS. Both had communal and political overtones; hence, amid allegations from political parties, different probe agencies were roped in at different stages of the case, impacting the overall investigation.

In the Mumbai train blasts case, the ATS built a case blaming individuals linked to members of the Students' Islamic Movement of India, backed by Pakistani terror outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT). The Special MCOCA Court validated

the ATS's investigation and, in October 2015, awarded the death penalty to five of the convicts and life terms to seven others. The accused kept claiming that they were subjected to torture during the custodial interrogation.

On July 21, the Bombay High Court set aside this verdict, putting a big question mark on the ATS's theory that individuals linked to SIMI had orchestrated the blasts. This is important as, two years after the train blasts, the Mumbai Crime Branch, then headed by Joint Commissioner of Police Rakesh Maria, had claimed that when they busted the Indian Mujahideen (IM) module that had carried out blasts in Ahmedabad and other parts of the country, their members had admitted to also having carried out the Mumbai train blasts. In the Malegaon case, in

October-November 2008, the ATS under its then chief Hemant Karkare made arrests of several alleged Hindu fundamentalists, including Thakur, and invoked MCOCA.

However, soon after, Karkare was killed during the November 26, 2008, Mumbai attack, a terror which claimed the lives of former ATS chief K. P. Raghuvanshi. Raghuvanshi was roped in to investigate the Malegaon case. The SIKH TIMES

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Editor-in-Chief  
Gurcharan Singh Babbar  
Mob: 965407232, 9971359517  
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# 13-year-old boy kidnapped, killed for Rs 5 lakh in Bengaluru

## BENGALURU.(Agency)

A 13-year-old boy was kidnapped and murdered on the outskirts of the city, in Anekal police station limits. After killing the boy, the miscreants poured petrol on the body and set it on fire.

The boy was kidnapped between 7.30pm and 8pm Wednesday, from Shantinikethan Layout in Arakere in Hulimavu police station limits, while returning home from tuition classes. The charred body was found around 4.15pm on Thursday, in an isolated spot on the Bannerghatta-Kaggalipura main road.

The boy has been identified as Nischith, a Class 7 student. He is said to have known the accused, and reportedly went along with them on their bike, a Bajaj Pulsar.

# NFR boosts passenger satisfaction through 24x7 support and Grievance Redressal

## The Sikh Times

Malgao, 1st August: With a strong commitment to passenger satisfaction and service excellence, Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has been making spirited efforts at real time resolution of issues faced by passengers on board trains and at railway stations reported through the 24x7 Railway Helpline Number 139 and the RailMadad Portal. Recognizing the importance of timely resolution of passenger issues, Indian Railways launched the 'RAILMADAD' platform in 2019. It is a centralized system that consolidates complaints from multiple channels for prompt, transparent redressal. Passengers can access support via the website (<https://railmadad.indianrailways.gov.in>) the mobile App or Helpline 139 reflecting Indian Railways commitment to responsive, passenger friendly service. In NFR, robust systems have been set up for timely response & resolution of RailMadad complaints. War rooms have been set up at NFR Headquarters & divisional offices, which are manned round the clock by concerned

officials of all departments, who carry out real time redressal of

ness & toilets, electrical equipments, bed roll or complaint of

is visible from the fact that record number of 1.79 lakh complaints

have been successfully resolved by NFR during the year 2024-25. This also includes medical assistance extended to 4,487 passengers through the RailMadad platform with prompt and professional care delivered by dedicated doctors and compassionate nursing staff. This reflects NFR's robust response mechanism and unwavering commitment to passenger wellbeing. NFR is dedicated to creating a more responsive, inclusive and passenger friendly railway system. By focusing on essential services like medical assistance and transparent grievance redressal, NFR continues to uphold its core values of care, connectivity and continuous

improvement for the millions who depend on its network.



various complaints including issues pertaining to coach cleanli-

overcharging of food & beverages. The success of these efforts

improvement for the millions who depend on its network.

## Transport Minister inspected the arrangements for the CET exam at Ambala Cantt bus stand

Chandigarh: Haryana Transport Minister, Sh. Anil Vij said that the successful conduct of the Common Entrance Test (CET) exam has been possible due to the cooperative spirit of officers, employees of all departments, and the candidates. Early in the morning, he appreciated the roadways bus drivers who were on duty from 5 a.m. Sh. Anil Vij also interacted with media persons after inspecting the arrangements made by the Transport Department at Ambala Cantt bus stand for the conduct of the CET exam. The Transport Minister said that providing safe and timely bus services to CET candidates along with ensuring transport facilities for the general public was a big task. As it is the Teej festival and also a weekend (Saturday and Sunday), most people prefer to travel to and from their homes using public transport. We ensured that besides CET candidates, common passengers were also taken care of. He added that he personally interacted with several candidates, and their happy faces reflected that they were fully satisfied with the transport arrangements. The Minister said that the Transport Department staff had been on duty since 5 a.m. and had done commendable work. All officers and employees are sincerely performing their duties to successfully conduct the CET exam. Later, he boarded a bus to interact with the candidates and enquired about their exam experience. After this, the Transport Minister also went to the reception of the Ambala Cantt bus stand, checked the staff attendance register, and found everything satisfactory.

# 'Clay Model' from Belgium finds its Place at Khalsa College's Museum

Amritsar, July 19: A 'clay model' from Belgium has found its place at the historic Sikh History Research Centre (SHRC) of Khalsa College Amritsar (KCA). A specimen in remembrance of those Sikh soldiers who fought during the world wars, the model, brought from Europe, was handed over to the College Principal Dr. Atam Singh Randhawa recently at the campus. Belgium city Ypres' Mayor Katrien Desomer presented the clay model to Dr Davinder Singh Chhina, Khalsa College Governing Council (KCGC) Member and College alumni who visited the city last month. The historic memento, as he called it, is one of the

thousands carved by the people of Belgium in memory of the brave soldiers who lost lives in the battlefields of the First World War. He said the model is the 'mark of respect' to the brave soldiers who sacrificed their lives for humanity and democratic rights. "Made from clay from the battlefields, the very soil on which the soldiers, especially Sikh bravehearts fought and died. The figure in the model is designed by world-famous Belgian artist Koen Vanmechelen. It represents a bent and crouching figure. A human being in its most vulnerable state", said Chhina. He further said that the crouching figure gives the impression of a Sikh sol-

dier wearing a turban. He said the renowned Belgian historian, Dr. Dominiek Dendooven who visited Khalsa College twice in 2015 and 2023 was also present when the model was presented to him. Principal Dr. Randhawa said it is a matter of honour to receive the model which is being placed at SHRC for the public view. The figure was also part of the installation of 'Coming World Remember Me (CWRM)', a new project in Europe that aims to produce 6,00,000 small clay statues, one for every soldier killed on Belgian soil during WW1. These statues were made by the public, aided by international workshops. At the end of the project, they were all

part of a land art installation in the Palingbeek domain in Ypres, on what was no man's land during the First World War, said Chhina. Dr. Randhawa also said that only a handful of statues found their way to India. One is at the Belgian Embassy, and United Service Institution of India in Delhi and Sikhiya Seekers in Chandigarh and now this one is at Khalsa College. "It is only right that one of these sculptures finds a new home in Khalsa College today", said he. Dr. Chhina earlier said that Mayor Desomer was all praise for the Sikhs from India and Sikh soldiers and recalled the memories of her grandfather who had seen Sikhs fighting in

wars. KCGC honorary secretary Rajinder Mohan Singh Chhina meanwhile extended gratitude to Mayor Desomer for globally recognising the

## 20th installment of Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi to be released on August 2, Shyam Singh Rana

Chandigarh: Haryana Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Minister, Sh. Shyam Singh Rana, informed that Prime Minister Sh. Narendra Modi will release the next installment of the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi on August 2. He said that a special programme for farmers will be organized in Varanasi under the leadership of the Prime Minister, during which the 20th installment of the scheme will be released. The Agriculture Minister said that under the leadership of the Prime Minister, an amount of Rs 6,000 is provided in three installments every year, with one installment released every four months. Through this initiative, the government ensures that farmers receive direct benefits. He also highlighted the important role of Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) in this entire process and said that their strong involvement is expected this time as well. The event will not only directly benefit farmers but also serve as a medium for public awareness, and hence should be celebrated as both a festival and a mission. Sh. Shyam Singh Rana urged farmers to participate in large numbers in the programme on August 2, when the installment will be released. He informed that since the launch of the scheme in 2019, a total of Rs. 3.69 lakh crore has been transferred into farmers' accounts through 19 installments across the country. In the upcoming 20th installment, around 9.7 crore farmers will receive approximately Rs. 20,500 crore.

# Haryana's Bold Climate Action Plan Puts Villages at the Heart of Resilience

Chandigarh: Haryana is redefining its response to climate change with a revamped State Action Plan on Climate Change (SAPCC) that places villages at the centre of its strategy. The new plan aims to empower rural communities, strengthen grassroots resilience, and align climate goals with the state's plan blends ambition with practicality. It also integrates climate priorities into existing schemes like MGNREGA and the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchay Yojana, ensuring coherence between policy and funding. A defining feature of this plan is its emphasis on localization. "Climate change isn't just a global challenge—it's a local reality impacting our farmers, families, and fields," Sharan stated. With erratic rainfall, intensifying heatwaves, and depleting groundwater threatening Haryana's agriculture-driven economy, the urgency is clear. Over half of the state's population relies on farming, and increasing

water scarcity is pushing rural communities to the brink. "Resilience isn't a choice; it's a necessity," he added. The revised SAPCC serves as Haryana's comprehensive blueprint for climate action. It focuses on critical sectors—agriculture, water, biodiversity, forests, and health—with clear, measurable targets. From encouraging crop diversification and promoting natural farming to launching community-led water budgeting initiatives, the plan blends ambition with practicality. It also integrates climate priorities into existing schemes like MGNREGA and the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchay Yojana, ensuring coherence between policy and funding. A defining feature of this plan is its

emphasis on localization. "Climate impacts are felt first in villages, so solutions must begin there," Sharan emphasized. The strategy empowers Gram Panchayats to incorporate climate action into their development plans, access dedicated funding, and build local capacity for sustainable transformation. District and block-level officials will receive training to apply a "climate lens" to their operations, ensuring that every decision—from irrigation management to livelihood support—considers climate

### NAME CHANGE

I, QAISSER JAHAN W/O MEHFIZ AHMED residing at HOUSE NO-64, GALI NO-1, RAMGHAT, WAZIRABAD, DELHI-110084 have changed my name to QAISSAR JAHAN for all future purpose.

### NAME CHANGE

I, MEHFIZQAHMAD /MEFIZQAHMAD S/O ABDUL AZIZ residing at HOUSE NO-64, GALI NO-1, RAMGHAT, WAZIRABAD, DELHI-110084 have changed my name to MEHFIZ AHMED for all future purpose.

### NAME CHANGE

I, NAMER KUMAR Name RAM LAKHAN residing at WARD NO-2, MAHANT, JANIGIR-CHAMPA, CHAT-TISGARH-496668, have changed my name from NAMER KUMAR to NAMER KUMAR RATHORE for all future purposes in my son's service record my date of birth wrongly mentioned as 01/01/1967 instead of my correct date of birth as 01/01/1968 Vide Affidavit dated 01/08/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

### NAME CHANGE

I, RAGHU NATH S/O Rejinder R/O B-522, Gauram Puri-II, Badar Pur South Delhi-110044. Have changed my name to Raghu Nath Diwakar for all the future purposes.

### NAME CHANGE

I, MOHAMMAD JAVED S/O Irshad Ahmed R/O 160 14, Tiryazivat, Khan (R), Bareilly Uttar Pradesh - 243123 Have changed my name to Mohd Javed for all future purposes.

### NAME CHANGE

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### NAME CHANGE

I, ISHWARI BAI mother of No-4588063K Rank-UNK Name RAM LAKHAN residing at WARD NO-2, MAHANT, JANIGIR-CHAMPA, CHAT-TISGARH-496668, have changed my name from ISHWARI BAI to ISHWARI BAI RATHORE for all future purposes in my son's service record my date of birth wrongly mentioned as 02/01/1968 instead of my correct date of birth as 01/01/1968 Vide Affidavit dated 01/08/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

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### NAME CHANGE

I, RANI Shilpee (Advocate) Office Add: H. No. 247, Ground Floor, Vipin Garden, Uttam Nagar New Delhi-110059 Mobile no. 9717780057.

### NAME CHANGE

I, NARINDER KUMAR S/O KAMLESH KAPOOR W/O AMARISH AVINASH HIRALIKAR R/O B1/405 G21 AVENUE VATIKA INDIA, NEXT, SECTOR-83, GURGAON, HARYANA-122004. HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO AKANSHAMISH HIRALIKAR AND DAULATIYA DEVI respectively, which may be amended accordingly.

### PUBLIC NOTICE

I herewith know as Pukuluri Mahi C/o K Koresh R/o C-1, B-270, 1 B-T-Hut, I.P. Depot, Anna Nagar, VTC Indraprashta, PO Indraprashta, District, Central Delhi, State, Delhi-110002 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as K. Mahi. It is certified that I have complied with other legal requirements in this connection

### PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the general public at large that Mr. Tanuj Nayanan, our client, has approached IDBI Bank Ltd. for a home loan against the property bearing Residential Society Built-up No. 406, Fourth Floor, admeasuring 157.94 Sq. Mtrs., situated in the layout plan of Indian Airlines Officers & Engineers CGHS Ltd., known as Matni Apartments, built on Plot No. 17, Sector 10, Dwarka, New Delhi - 110075. At present, the said property stands in the name of Mrs. Poonam Bhardwaj. It is further brought to the notice of the public that the Original Sale Deed dated 03.07.2007, executed by Mr. Jai Deep Singh in favour of Ms. Sangeeta Bhowal in respect of the aforementioned property, and registered as Document No. 7223, Book No. 1, Volume No. 3799, Pages 154-168 at the office of Sub-Registrar IX, Delhi, is reported to be lost/missing. The said property is proposed to be mortgaged with IDBI Bank Ltd. for the purpose of availing the home loan. Any person, including banks, financial institutions or any other individual having any claim, right, title, interest, objection, demand or encumbrance of any nature whatsoever (whether by inheritance, mortgagage, charge, lien, possession, lease, assignment or otherwise) in respect of the said property or any part thereof, are hereby requested to notify the same in writing along with documentary evidence to the undersigned within 7 (seven) days from the date of publication of this notice. Failing which, it shall be presumed that there are no such claims or objections, and the same shall be deemed to have been waived and forfeited for all intents and purposes.

### PUBLIC NOTICE

Dy. Chief Materials Manager, New Jalpaiguri

### NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY

Serving Customers with a smile

### E-PROCUREMENT

### E-procurement Tender Notice No. S/66/004/25-26 Dated: 30-07-2025

### for Supply of Materials. E-tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works.

### SN.1. Tender No. NJ255156

### Closing/Opening date: 20-08-2025

### Brief Description: Auxiliary Generator to EMD pt. No. 22088986, DLW, PT. No. 18040020. Consignee: SSE/IC/Mech/Siliguri Jn. NFR Qty: 10 Nos.

### Note: For full details of tender notice and tender documents, tenderer may log on to the website ([www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in)). Prospective bidder who intend to participate in above tender are required to log on themselves with the above website and submit their offer electronically, if they are already registered with IREPS. In case they are not registered with IREPS, they are advised to obtain class-III Digital Signature Certificate from the certifying agencies under Govt. of India IT Act 2000 and participate in the above tenders.

### Dy. Chief Materials Manager, New Jalpaiguri

### NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY

Serving Customers with a smile

### E-TENDER NOTICE

### Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer/Traction Distribution, DRM's Office, State Entry Road, New Delhi for on behalf of President of India, invites open e-tender for the undivided work:

### 1. Name of Work with its location

### 2. Approx. Cost of work

### Rs. 33,62,205.4/-

### 3. Earnest Money Deposit

### Rs. 67,300/-

### 4. E-Tender Bid Online Submission Period

### 11.08.2025 (00.00 Hrs.) to 25.08.2025 (15.00 Hrs.)

### 5. E-Tender Bid Submission End Date & E-Tender Open Date & Time

### 25.08.2025 (15.00 hrs.)

### 6. Website particulars where complete details of tender documents can be seen

### [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in)

### E-Tender No.: 14-TRD-NDLS-2025-26 Dated 30.07.2025

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### 2345/25

### THE SIKH TIMES

## NEWS BOX

## US FDA Vaccine Chief Vinay Prasad Leaves Agency 3 Months After Appointment

**Washington . (Agency)**

The Food and Drug Administration's polarizing vaccine chief is leaving the agency after a brief tenure that drew the ire of biotech executives, patient groups and conservative allies of President Donald Trump.

Dr. Vinay Prasad "did not want to be a distraction" and was stepping down from his role as the FDA's top vaccine regulator "to spend more time with his family," a spokesperson for the Department of Health and Human Services said in a statement late Tuesday.

Two people familiar with the situation told The Associated Press that Prasad was ousted following several recent controversies. They spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss internal personnel matters.

Prasad did not immediately respond to requests for comment Wednesday morning. FDA's drug center director, Dr. George Tidmarsh, will take over Prasad's job in an acting role, according to an agency email shared with the AP. Tidmarsh started at the FDA last week after a decades-long career as a pharmaceutical executive and adjunct professor. Prasad joined the FDA in May from the University of California San Francisco, where he frequently criticized the FDA's approach to drug approvals and COVID-19 vaccines.

His contrarian approach appeared to match that of his boss, FDA Commissioner Marty Makary, who

repeatedly praised Prasad's work and intellect.

But in recent weeks Prasad became a target of right-wing activists, including Laura Loomer, who flagged

Prasad's past statements criticizing Trump and praising liberal independent Senator Bernie Sanders.

"How did this Trump-hating Bernie Bro get into the Trump admin???" Loomer posted on X last week. Trump previously fired several national security officials a day after Loomer raised concerns about their loyalty.

## Kamala Harris To Detail 2024 US Presidential Run In New Book

**Washington. (Agency)**

Former US vice president Kamala Harris on Thursday announced she will provide an inside look at her unsuccessful 2024 presidential run against Donald Trump in a book titled "107 Days." The memoir, published by Simon & Schuster, will be released on September 23 in the United States. "Just over a year ago, I launched my campaign for president of the United States, 107 days -- traveling the country, fighting for our future -- the shortest presidential campaign in modern history," Harris said in a video posted on social media. The first woman to serve as vice president of the United States, Harris became the Democratic Party's presidential nominee after Joe Biden withdrew from the race in July amid concerns about his cognitive health. Harris said she wrote the book with "candor and reflection" and promised a "behind-the-scenes account" of the campaign.

The former US senator representing California had announced Wednesday that she would not run for governor of the state in 2026, but according to US media, a 2028 White House run is not out of the question. In her video, Harris says that one truth kept coming back to her: "Sometimes, the fight takes a while" -- a statement that is likely to fuel rumors about her political future. After having virtually disappeared from public following her defeat by Trump, Harris is now mounting a return. The Democrat will make an appearance Thursday's "The Late Show with Stephen Colbert," a flagship late-night talk show on US television that CBS recently canceled. CBS cited financial reasons for its decision to axe the show hosted by the well-known critic of the president.

## US Secretary Of State Marco Rubio Slams India Over Russian Oil Purchases, Calls It "Point Of Irritation" In Ties

**World. (Agency)**

Speaking to Fox Radio's Brian Kilmeade, Rubio said, "India is an ally. It's a strategic partner. Like anything in foreign policy, you're not going to align a hundred percent of the time on everything."

"India has huge energy needs and that includes the ability to buy oil, coal and gas and things that it needs to power its economy like every country does, and it buys it from Russia, because Russian oil is sanctioned and cheap and - meaning they have to - in many cases, they're selling it under the global price. The US State Secretary underlined the impact of this trade on the ongoing war in Ukraine. "That - unfortunately that is helping to sustain the Russian war effort. So it is most certainly a point of irritation in our relationship with India - not the only point of irritation. We also have many other points of cooperation with them," he said. But I think what you're seeing the President express is the very clear frustration that with so many other oil vendors available, India continues to buy so much from Russia, which in essence is helping to fund the war effort -- and allowing this war to continue in Ukraine," he added. Rubio's comments came in the backdrop of President Donald Trump's post on Truth Social, where he announced a 25% tariff and additional penalties on India starting August 1, citing its Russian oil imports making up 35% of its overall supply in the first half of the year. Rubio also detailed the broader context of US engagement with Russia and possible punitive options, saying, "The President has waited over six months now and given the best efforts possible... We've not seen any progress." He added that Trump has options like "secondary sanctions on oil sales of Russia oil" and "sectoral banking sanctions" if there's no sincere interest in peace from Moscow.

## El Salvador approves indefinite presidential reelection, extends presidential terms to six years

**Bukele overwhelmingly won reelection last year despite a constitutional ban, after Supreme Court justices selected by his party ruled in 2021 to allow reelection to a second five-year term.**

**SAN SALVADOR . (Agency)**

The party of El Salvador President Nayib Bukele approved constitutional changes in the country's Legislative Assembly on Thursday that will allow indefinite presidential reelection and extend presidential terms to six years. Lawmaker Ana Figueroa from the New Ideas party had proposed the changes to five articles of the constitution. The proposal also included eliminating the second round of the election where the two top vote-getters from the first round face off. New Ideas and its allies in the Legislative Assembly

quickly approved the proposals with the supermajority they hold. The vote passed with 57 in favor and three opposed. Bukele overwhelmingly won reelection last year despite a constitutional ban, after Supreme Court justices selected by his party ruled in 2021 to allow reelection to a second five-year term. Observers have worried that Bukele had a plan to consolidate power since at least 2021, when a newly elected Congress with a strong governing party majority voted to remove the magistrates of the constitutional chamber of the Supreme Court. Those justices had been seen as the last check on the popular president.

Since then, Bukele has only grown more popular. The Biden administration's initial expressions of concern gave way to quiet acceptance as Bukele announced his run for reelection. With the return of Donald Trump to the White House in January, Bukele had a new powerful ally and quickly offered Trump help by taking more than 200 deportees from other countries into a newly built prison for gang members. Figueroa argued Thursday that federal



lawmakers and mayors can already seek reelection as many times as they want. "All of them have had the possibility of reelection through popular vote, the only exception until now has been the presidency," Figueroa said. She also proposed that Bukele's current term, scheduled to end June 1, 2029, instead finish June 1, 2027, to put presidential and congressional elections on the same schedule. It would also allow Bukele to seek reelection to a longer term two years earlier. Marcela Villatoro of the Nationalist Republican Alliance (Arena), one of three votes against the proposals, told her fellow lawmakers that "Democracy in El Salvador

has died!" "You don't realize what indefinite reelection brings: It brings an accumulation of power and weakens democracy... there's corruption and clientelism because nepotism grows and halts democracy and political participation," she said.

Suecy Callejas, the assembly's vice president, said that "power has returned to the only place that it truly belongs ... to the Salvadoran people."

Bukele did not immediately comment.

Bukele, who once dubbed himself "the world's coolest dictator," is highly popular, largely because of his heavy-handed fight against the country's powerful street gangs. Voters have been willing to overlook evidence that his administration, like others before it, had negotiated with the gangs before seeking a state of emergency that suspended some constitutional rights and allowed authorities to arrest and jail tens of thousands of people. His success with security and politically has inspired imitators in the region who seek to replicate his style.

## US court blocks Trump administration from ending protections for 60,000 from Nepal, Central America

**SAN FRANCISCO . (Agency)**

A federal judge ruled on Thursday against the Trump administration's plans and extended Temporary Protected Status for 60,000 people from Central America and Asia, including people from Nepal, Honduras and Nicaragua. Temporary Protected Status is a protection that can be granted by the Homeland Security secretary to people of various nationalities who are in the United States, preventing from being deported and allowing them to work. The Trump administration has aggressively been seeking to remove the protection, thus making more people eligible for removal. It's part of a wider effort by the administration to carry out mass deportations of immigrants. Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem can extend Temporary Protected Status to immigrants in the US if conditions in their homelands are deemed unsafe to return due to a natural disaster.

political instability or other dangerous conditions. Noem had ruled to end protections for tens of thousands of Hondurans and Nicaraguans after



determining that conditions in their homelands no longer warranted them. The secretary said the two countries had made "significant progress" in recovering from 1998's Hurricane Mitch, one of the deadliest Atlantic storms in history.

The designation for an estimated 7,000 from Nepal was scheduled to end Aug. 5 while protections allowing 51,000 Hondurans and nearly 3,000

Nicaraguans who have been in the US for more than 25 years were set to expire Sept. 8. US District Judge Trina L. Thompson in San Francisco did not set an expiration date but rather ruled to keep the protections in place while the case proceeds. The next hearing is Nov. 18. In a sharply written order, Thompson said the administration ended the migrant status protections without an "objective review of the country conditions" such as political violence in Honduras and the impact of recent hurricanes and storms in Nicaragua. If the protections were not extended, immigrants could suffer from loss of employment, health insurance, be separated from their families, and risk being deported to other countries where they have no ties, she wrote, adding that the termination of Temporary Protection Status for people from Nepal, Honduras, and Nicaragua would result in a \$1.4 billion loss to the economy.

A range of new tariffs are expected to take effect Friday on most US trading partners, with separate sector specific duties -- on copper -- also coming into place. As the countdown began towards his deadline, President Donald Trump unveiled a flurry of trade announcements including a deal with South Korea to avert higher levies, and postponement of a planned tariff hike on Mexican goods. AFP takes a look at the most recent developments:

Trump said Thursday he would delay imposing higher tariffs on Mexican imports, pushing back their rollout by 90 days. The decision came after he spoke with Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum.

The US leader had originally threatened to raise tariffs on Mexican products from 25 percent to 30 percent come August 1, citing a lack of progress in flows of illicit fentanyl. Goods entering the United States under an existing North American trade deal -- covering a wide swath of items -- have been spared. South Korea Just days before the tariff deadline, Washington and Seoul reached a deal to avert a 25 percent duty on



South Korean goods, bringing the level down to 15 percent instead. In making the announcement Wednesday, Trump said the country also committed to \$350 billion in investments and to purchase \$100 billion worth of liquefied natural gas (LNG) or other energy resources. The 15 percent rate matches levels determined from US accords with Japan and the European Union. Tariffs on automobiles will also stay at 15 percent, Seoul said. Trump warned of trade consequences for Canada after Prime Minister Mark Carney announced plans to recognize a Palestinian state at the UN General Assembly in September. Canada faces a tariff threat of 35 percent from August 1, up from 25 percent currently with key exemptions. "Wow! Canada has just announced that it is backing statehood for Palestine," Trump wrote on Truth Social.

## Superintelligence Will Create A New Era For Humanity And Empowerment, Mark Zuckerberg Says

**Meta is investing billions in AI development, with CEO Mark Zuckerberg claiming that achieving "superintelligence" is now within reach.**

**World. (Agency)**

Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg has revealed that the company is making major strides toward developing "superintelligent" AI, calling it a transformative goal for the future. In a memo shared ahead of Meta's quarterly earnings, Zuckerberg said the tech giant is pouring billions into AI research-recruiting top talent, acquiring startups, and building massive data centers. He told investors that this investment is already showing promising results, positioning Meta at the forefront of the global race to advance powerful artificial intelligence. "In some ways this will be a new era for humanity, but in others it's just a continuation of historical

trends," he shared in the memo. "As recently as 200 years ago, 90% of people were farmers growing food to survive. Advances in technology have steadily freed much of humanity to focus less on subsistence and more on



the pursuits we choose. At each step, people have used our newfound productivity to achieve more than was previously possible, pushing the frontiers of science and health, as well as spending more time on creativity, culture, relationships, and enjoying life," he said. "I am extremely optimistic that superintelligence will help humanity accelerate our pace of progress. But perhaps even more important is that superintelligence has

the potential to begin a new era of personal empowerment where people will have greater agency to improve the world in the directions they choose," he added. According to The New York Times, Mark Zuckerberg told investors that superintelligence is more advanced than the human brain and will enhance nearly every aspect of daily life. He explained that AI is already helping Meta's advertising by making social media feeds more engaging, keeping users on the platform longer. Additionally, he said AI will act as a personal assistant for users, ushering in "a new era of individual empowerment."

The main way people will interact with superintelligence will be through Meta's smart glasses, which have cameras and software that can shoot and process videos, Mr. Zuckerberg said. "I think that if history is a guide, then an even more important role will be how superintelligence empowers people to be more creative, develop culture and communities, connect with each other, and lead more fulfilling lives," he said.

## New peace plan increases pressure on Israel and US as momentum grows for Palestinian statehood

**In the short term, there is little prospect of the Netanyahu government giving way with its mass killing, let alone entering talks for two states. Notably, neither Israel nor the US took part in the conference.**

**world . (Agency)**

A new vision for Middle East peace emerged this week which proposes the withdrawal of Israel from Gaza and the West Bank, the disarming and disbanding of Hamas and the creation of a unified Palestinian state. The plan emerged from a "high-level conference" in New York on July 29, which assembled representatives of 17 states, the European Union and the Arab League. The resulting proposal is "a comprehensive and actionable framework for the

implementation of the two-state solution and the achievement of peace and security for all." Signatories include Turkey and the Middle Eastern states of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Egypt and Jordan. Europe was represented by France, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Spain and the UK. Indonesia was there for Asia, Senegal for Africa, and Brazil, Canada and Mexico for the Americas. Neither the US nor Israel were present. Significantly, it is the first time the Arab states have called for Hamas to disarm and disband. But, while condemning Hamas's attack on Israel of October 7, 2023, and recalling that the taking of hostages is a violation of international law, the document is unsparring in its connection between a state of Palestine and an end to Israel's assault on Gaza's civilians. It says: "Absent decisive measures toward the two-state solution and robust international guarantees, the conflict will deepen and regional peace will remain elusive." A plan for the

reconstruction of Gaza will be developed by the Arab states and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation - a Jeddah-based group which aims to be the collective voice of the Muslim world - supported by an international fund. The details will be hammered out at a Gaza Reconstruction and Recovery Conference, to be held in Cairo. It is a bold initiative. In theory, it could end the Israeli mass killing in Gaza, remove Hamas from power and begin the implementation of a process for a state of Palestine. The question is whether it has any chance of success. First, there appears

to be growing momentum to press ahead with recognition of the state of Palestine as part of a comprehensive peace plan leading to a two-state solution. France, the UK and, most recently, Canada have announced they would take that step at the UN general assembly in September. The UK stated that it would do so unless Israel agreed to a ceasefire and the commencement of a substantive peace process. These announcements follow those made in May 2024 by Spain, Ireland and Norway, three of the other European signatories. By the end of September at least 150 of the UN's 193 members will recognise Palestinian statehood. Recognition is largely symbolic without a ceasefire and Israeli withdrawal from both Gaza and the West Bank. But it is essential symbolism. For years, many European countries, Canada, Australia and the US have said that recognition could not be declared if there was the prospect of Israel-Palestine negotiations.

Days after row over mobile game, Kokate stripped of Agri portfolio, moved to Sports

**Mumbai .(Agency)**

Days after a purported video of Agriculture Minister Manikrao Kokate playing a card game on his mobile phone during a Legislative Council session triggered political uproar, he was stripped of his portfolio on Thursday.

Kokane, a senior leader of the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), has now been assigned the Youth Welfare, Sports and Minority Development department, while NCP minister Dattatraya Bharni, who previously held it has been appointed agriculture minister.

The reshuffle came following mounting pressure from the Opposition, which had demanded Kokate's resignation over the viral video. Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar submitted the reshuffle proposal to Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis Thursday morning. Sources said the decision was expedited to contain further damage to the government's image.

The controversy also found a mention in Tuesday's state cabinet meeting, where CM Fadnavis issued a stern warning to his council of ministers. Without naming Kokate, he cautioned ministers against "indulging in conduct that embarrasses the government" and added that repeated controversies were providing unnecessary ammunition to the Opposition and distracting from the administration's achievements.

On July 20, the purported video of Kokate playing an online card game on his phone in the Legislative Assembly was put out on social media by Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader Rohit Pawar.

However, Kokate denied the allegation and said, "I was not playing Rummy... I was trying to watch YouTube to find out what was happening in the Lower House. Someone had downloaded the game on the phone, and I was just trying to skip it. The video might be from when I was trying to close it."

**Two dead after water tanker runs amok in Chennai**



**CHENNAI .(Agency)**

Two people, including a pedestrian and a pillion rider, were killed after an allegedly drunk driver of a Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board water tanker (CMWSSB) lost control of the tanker and crashed into multiple vehicles on Thursday morning.

Azhagu Raja (30), who was drunk, lost control of the lorry around 7.30am near Sennerkuppan when traveling from Avadi to Poomamallee. The lorry ran over a pedestrian, Dhanapal (23) of Salem, a construction labourer and 40-year-old Devi of Thiruverkadu who was riding pillion. The biker escaped unhurt, the police said.

The lorry crashed into multiple parked vehicles, and was forced to a halt after hitting an electric pole on the roadside. Over three bikes were damaged, the police said. The police was alerted and Dhanapal and Devi were sent to a nearby government hospital. While Dhanapal was declared dead on arrival, Devi succumbed to her injuries a few hours later. A crowd gathered and thrashed Azhagu Raja before handing him over to the police.

Last month, a 10-year-old girl died near Perambur after a lorry ran over her when she fell off her mother's two-wheeler. Subsequently, the police enforced a rigorous ban on heavy vehicles plying on city roads during peak hours (8-11 am and 3-9 pm), near schools.

**Andhra Pradesh police boost tech-driven traffic control with drones, new patrol vehicles**

**Threat emails to Zeeshan Siddique: prankster held at Mumbai airport on return from Trinidad and Tobago**

**Mumbai .(Agency)**

The Crime Branch of the Mumbai police on Friday morning arrested a man returning from Trinidad and Tobago for allegedly sending threatening emails to former MLA Zeeshan Siddique, the son of the late Maharashtra minister Baba Siddique.

The accused, identified as Bihar native Mohammad Dilshad Naved, was held at the international airport in Mumbai. A police officer said that soon after the threatening emails were received last year, the police had identified Naved as the culprit and issued a Look Out Circular against him.

Naved had gone to the Caribbean island nation to work at his uncle's shop there, a senior officer revealed. "He saw some videos on social media regarding the murder of Baba Siddique. As a prank, he sent several emails to Zeeshan Siddique, threatening him. Naved thought that since he was so far away, law enforcement agencies would not apprehend him," the senior officer said.

Baba Siddique was shot dead by members of



the Lawrence Bishnoi gang on October 12 last year. Officers said that the email threats were sent to Zeeshan's official email ID on

April 19 this year, followed by several more over the next two days. The sender allegedly demanded Rs 10 crore and mentioned the

Dawood Ibrahim gang.

Investigators said the accused probably believed that he might earn some money in this manner. Subsequently, Zeeshan filed a complaint at the Bandra police station.

Last year, threat emails sent to actor Salman Khan were found to have originated in the United Kingdom. In that case, the police allegedly found that the accused was an Indian student who had gone to the UK to study and sent the email as a prank, following which a Look Out Circular (LOC) was issued against him. The person will be arrested when he lands in India.

The officer said that people based abroad, especially those of Indian origin, feel that if they send a threatening email from another country, they will not land in trouble. "That is, however, not true. We take proper legal action to ensure that whenever such a person tries to move out of that country, they are detained at the airport," he added.

**Infosys Foundation renews funding for diabetes centre; 'Dixit Lifestyle' aids HbA1c control**

**Pune .(Agency)**

Eat twice a day when you are really hungry, increase proteins, reduce carbohydrates and finish the meal in a maximum time of 55 minutes, Dr Jagannath Dixit who is well known for advocating a diet plan aimed at reversing obesity and type 2 diabetes said. With the prevalence of Type 2 diabetes rising rapidly in the country— 101 million as per the recent ICMR-INDIAB study- Dr Dixit explained that lifestyle modification is quite simple: reducing the frequency of eating lowers insulin levels, which leads to four key benefits — weight loss, reduced abdominal fat, and the prevention or reversal of diabetes.

At the Pune based Association for Diabetes and Obesity Reversal (ADORE) Dr Dixit and his team guide individuals on how to lose weight and control diabetes without medication by following the 'Dixit lifestyle'. As per data from ADORE's Diabetes Reversal Counselling Center, 3,500 patients have registered to lose weight or control diabetes, with an average weight loss of 6.2 kg over six months.

"Out of these, 3000 patients are from Pune city and its surrounding areas. Approximately 398 diabetic patients have been able to reduce their HbA1c levels(These levels reflect average blood glucose levels over the past 2-3 months) to below 6.5 without medication for at least three months, with 365 of them from the city and around 'Infosys Foundation had given funds to the tune of Rs 2.4 crore and we had launched the 'Infosys Foundation Diabetes Care Program' centres in Pune and Nagpur in November-December 2022. A centre in Nashik, funded by CTR Company, runs daily. ADORE also has centres in Thane, Kalyan, Sangli, Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar, Kolhapur, Solapur, Vile Parle, Surat, Belgaum, and Madgaon, operating one to three days a week. We have also set up new centers Badlapur and Bhayandar," Dr Dixit added.

With Infosys Foundation extending financial support for ADORE's efforts, Dr Dixit has set up the centre at a larger space in Pune.

The police at Shirur station filed a First Information Report (FIR) against one Sandeep Dubey, reportedly the operator of the jaggery unit, under sections of the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976, and the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

In the last week of June, DLSA rescued 14 family members belonging to the Bhil tribe from a private farm in Ranjangaon – Sandas village in Shirur.

Hailing from Jalgaon and Dhule districts, the victims came to Pune for work in December 2023, but were later forced to

work in extremely bad conditions for about 18 months at the farm, where they were each paid just Rs 50 for 14 hours of daily work.

**Railway Board gives 'in principle' approval to merge MRTS with CMRL**

**The development comes in the backdrop of completion of a critical infrastructure project and the finalisation of a broad framework for asset transfer.**

**CHENNAI .(Agency)**

The long-pending merger of Chennai's Mass Rapid Transit System (MRTS) with the city's metro rail network (CMRL) may see some progress soon, as official sources said that the Railway Board has agreed 'in principle' to the proposal. However, a formal decision is awaited. The development comes in the backdrop of completion of a critical infrastructure project and the finalisation of a broad framework for asset transfer.

In a written response to questions raised in Parliament by DMK MP Kanimozhi Karunanidhi, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav said that while the Indian Railways and the Tamil Nadu

government have jointly prepared the principles for a formal memorandum of

related to train operations, asset maintenance, and safety. The proposal to transfer MRTS operations to CMRL was put on hold pending the completion of the fourth railway line between Chennai Beach and Chennai Egmore. This project was sanctioned in March 2022 at a cost of Rs 279.8 crore and commissioned earlier this year.

A special committee comprising officials from Indian Railways and the Chennai Unified Metropolitan Transport Authority (CUMTA) has since prepared the broad contours of the MoU, according to the minister.



understanding (MoU), the operational merger would be depend on resolving challenges

**12 bonded labourers, including 7 children, rescued from Pune jaggery unit**

**Pune .(Agency)**

Twelve workers, including seven children, were rescued from a jaggery-making unit in Pune

district on Wednesday, July 30, during a bonded labour rescue operation. The raid was conducted jointly by the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Pune, the district administration's labour department, and Pune Rural Police.

The victims, including seven children, were found to be natives of Paithan in Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar district. Their movements were restricted, and they had been facing physical abuse at the jaggery unit for the past two years, stated the DLSA officials. Sonal Patil, secretary of DLSA, Pune, said the raid was carried out at the unit in Alegaon Paga in Shirur Taluka of Pune district based on a complaint from an NGO, Indian Labourline. Patil said that release certificates were issued to

the 12 labourers as per the directions of Principal District and Session Judge M K Mahajan. The district administration arranged

Operating Procedure," said Patil, adding that the raid coincided with World Day against Trafficking in Persons, which is July 30.

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for the safe transportation of the victims to their village in Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar. "Action was taken as per the Bonded Labour Standard



district into a national model in technology-driven policing. He praised the NTR police for effectively integrating advanced tools into their daily operations, including the AI-based AsTram system, which was recently used during the International Yoga Day celebrations in Visakhapatnam.

"All successful initiatives from the NTR district will be implemented across the state to transform the functioning of the police department," DGP Gupta announced. He also acknowledged the demanding nature of traffic duty and commended the dedication of personnel who serve long hours under harsh conditions, including heat, pollution, and rain.

Commissioner Rajashekhar Babu expressed gratitude to donors who contributed CCTV cameras, drones, and other critical equipment.

"All police stations in the district now have at least one drone for surveillance and emergency purposes," he noted. "We are leveraging technology to identify traffic violators and criminals in record time."

The event marked a significant leap in Andhra Pradesh Police's tech-driven governance, with plans to expand such models statewide.

**VIJAYAWADA .(Agency)**

In a significant step toward enhancing technology-driven traffic policing, Director General of Police (DGP) Harish Kumar Gupta distributed drones, patrol vehicles, and traffic equipment to the Vijayawada city traffic police on Thursday. Attending the ceremony as chief guest, DGP Gupta praised the efforts of the Vijayawada city police for their effective implementation of helmet drives, reduction of traffic congestion, and maintenance of law and order.

During the programme, the DGP formally handed over 14 drone cameras, 350 baton lights, and 720 police caps to the traffic department. These tools and equipment are expected to bolster surveillance, improve monitoring, and streamline traffic regulation across the city. Following the distribution, DGP Gupta flagged off 40 newly assigned traffic patrol motor vehicles, officially inducting them into service. He personally flew one of the drones to inspect its functionality and performance. Speaking to mediapersons, the DGP lauded NTR Police Commissioner SV Rajashekhar Babu for turning the

## Warming up to outlanders the Sangh way

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) might celebrate its overtures to communities and individuals outside its ideological perimeter—the latest being Sarsanghachalak Mohanrao Bhagwat's session with a congregation of Islamic clerics, ostensibly to mitigate Muslim alienation and antipathy to the Sangh fraternity, especially the BJP. But make no mistake. When it comes to inducting and accommodating heavyhitters from outside the saffron clan's circumference, the RSS freezes. The BJP's spectacular success in electoral politics doubtless forced the Sangh to try and assimilate parivar outsiders who came with a cachet that could enhance the BJP's appeal and possibly its votes, like a celebrity from the cinema world or an individual belonging to a caste outside the BJP's purview. The Sangh's—and, by extension, the BJP's—net to snag trophies is spread across a vast expanse.

However, the welcome carries a quid pro quo—it is not one-sided, marked with a profusion of garlands and warm words. The red lines drawn by the Sangh are firmly etched beneath the ceremonial trappings. A lateral entrant must adhere to the precepts and practices laid down by the family head, and no dodging is brooked. Insubordination, even from the faithful, is never tolerated. Over time, some lateral entrants stayed the course, willingly or unwillingly; but those who ostensibly felt suffocated by the rigours of schoolmasterly discipline strayed away, quit and at times disappeared into oblivion. The exit of Jagdeep Dhankhar, who last week resigned as the Vice President and chairman of the Rajya Sabha, is still riddled with unanswered questions, although his resignation letter maintained the departure was prompted by health concerns. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's belated expression of commiseration with Dhankhar revealed how angry the PM was. Dhankhar was ushered into the BJP in 2003 as a prize catch from the opposition (he had served the Congress and the Janata Dal) and a peasant leader from the powerful Jat community. Arifical Intelligence uses Arifical Intelligence uses

The subsequent events were grist to the rumour mill, but did no favour to Dhankhar. Did he try to upstage the ruling NDA coalition by being nice to the opposition in admitting the Congress's motion and starting the impeachment process against Justice Yashwant Varma in the Upper House before taking cognisance of the treasury bench's motion? Did his mild censure of the government's alleged inability to sort out farmers' issues anger the high-ups? Did he expect more perks than what are officially sanctioned to a VP? Unless and until Dhankhar opens up like another fellow Jat discard of the Modi regime, former Governor Satya Pal Malik, or spills all in a memoir, the speculations will swirl. But the BJP and the government couldn't care less. They are sanguine in the belief that such episodes are glitches in the life of a dispensation and will not hurt electorally.

The real test lies in who succeeds Dhankhar: a BJP/Sangh faithful or an outlander. Among the names which surfaced, that of Ram Nath Thakur is being repeated persistently. The son of Karpoori Thakur—the former Bihar chief minister who was reviled by the upper castes in his lifetime and iconised after death—Thakur junior is from the nowsought-after extremely backward caste of Nayi (barbers). Karpoori Thakur pioneered moves for OBC reservation, but couldn't take them forward because of upper caste pressure in the pre-Mandal era. The NDA government posthumously awarded him the Bharat Ratna when Mandalism became kosher. While Thakur junior's pedigree sits well with the BJP's goal in Bihar, which votes later this year, he is from the Janata Dal (United), an ally, which doesn't qualify him as a faithful. Dhankhar had to leave despite being a BJP member. The BJP-JD(U) alliance has had as many downs as ups, and CM Nitish Kumar is not wholly trusted by Modi.

IN 2018, when I was Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs, in charge of the Arab world and Israel, a high-level Israeli official came to meet me in Delhi. Since India and Israel have such excellent bilateral relations, he said, it is time this got reflected in the "Palestinian track" of our relations as well—India and Israel had always differed on this track, with India standing for a separate Palestinian state. I explained to him that India-Israel relations had grown by leaps and bounds since we had established diplomatic ties in 1991, precisely because we had kept the two "tracks" separate and had agreed to disagree on the Palestine issue. If we were to now combine the two and something adverse were to happen on the Palestinian track, it would surely impact our relations with Israel as well. This zero-sum situation was not desirable for either of us, I added.

This, in a nutshell, is the problem today in India-Israel relations. After India merged the two tracks a few years ago, the Palestinian track began to get diluted. This happened as the bonhomie grew between India and Israel, and positive regional developments took place in the Gulf, such as the Abraham Accords and the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC). Even if India still supported a two-state solution (for both Palestine and Israel), it abstained on some Palestinian-related UN resolutions, where it had traditionally voted with Palestine. This is, once again, changing. As the world watches the impunity and brutality with which Israel has treated Palestinians, India's pro-Israel tilt is becoming increasingly difficult to sustain.

New Delhi had also perceived the stand of several Gulf and Arab countries on the Gaza war as a vindication of its own pro-Israel tilt. Countries like Saudi Arabia and UAE remained on the sidelines of the Gaza war, since their larger interest was to remove the threat of Iran and its proxies from the region. But once those objectives were achieved—as Iranian nuclear reactors were bombed and powerful Iranian leaders assassinated—the same Gulf and Arab states have now begun to take a more vocal position on Gaza. Realising that we need to be vocal, if not assertive, on Palestine, India called for a ceasefire in Gaza, though we abstained on a similar UNGA resolution less than two months ago. On July 28, Saudi Arabia and France convened a UN high-level international conference with the goal of recognising Palestinian statehood. Even if all these measures are a case of "too little, too late," considering there is hardly anything left of Gaza after nearly 60,000 people, mostly women and children, have been killed and infrastructure

and livelihood destroyed, the meeting looked more like a collective catharsis for the international community, which has stood by silently for over a decade ignoring the Palestinian issue. The world waits with "bated breath" for a handful of European countries to "recognise" a Palestinian state, when most countries have done so decades ago—India being among the first. I still remember how, when India was in the UN Security Council in 2021-22, UNSC member states would line up every month inside the Council to strike all the right notes on Palestine. They did exactly the



opposite outside the Council—like pushing for normalisation of relations with Israel without giving the Palestinian issue even a footnote in those agreements. Meanwhile, the level of violence in the West Bank is increasing by the day. Illegal Israeli settlements are growing, creating new tensions on the ground. Since October 2023, at least 964 Palestinians have been killed in the West Bank (including East Jerusalem), by Israeli forces or Israeli settlers. In West Bank cities like Jenin, Tulkarem and Taybeh, military operations, air strikes, and Israeli settler attacks have uprooted people from their homes. Christians, too, have been targeted—the oldest church in Gaza, the Church of Saint Porphyrius, was attacked, killing 18 Palestinians. Even Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity in Gaza was attacked. The Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem had said that the "greatest existential threat" to Christian community has come from Israeli settlers. In fact, the big disservice Hamas has done is to redefine the Palestinian cause as one between Muslims and Jews rather than between Palestinians and Israelis. The goal of the Palestinians has always been a Palestinian state—a nation which belongs to Muslims, Christians and Jews. The

Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO), before and after Yasser Arafat, encompassed factions from one end of the ideological spectrum to the other. The rise of Hamas had suited Israel, because it helped it to oppose the PLO and President Arafat and discredit them as the genuine voice of the Palestinians. The fundamental question remains: Is Israel prepared to accept a Palestinian state, whether it comprises just Gaza or all Occupied Territories? The answer is "No" since even the Israeli public does not support it after the October 7, 2023, attack by Hamas. Ironically, the Israeli defence minister has proposed a ghetto for Palestinians in Gaza—he calls it a "humanitarian city"—except that he misses the irony of a Jew proposing a ghetto for non-Jews. Meanwhile, PM Netanyahu's far-right coalition leaders have said that the West Bank, which they call by the Biblical name, Judea and Samaria, will be annexed by the end of 2025. And so the Israeli Knesset voted last week, 71-13, in favour of a non-binding resolution to annex "Judea, Samaria and the Jordan Valley." And what will come out of the rubble called Gaza? Once again, it is clear that the world will become engrossed with the process rather than substance—a ceasefire, return of hostages, humanitarian aid, disarming Hamas, rebuilding infrastructure and livelihood. All this will receive the highest priority and precedence. Any talk of simultaneously starting negotiations for statehood, for an independent Palestine, will be firmly put on the back-burner. In any case, nothing can be done without the US on board. The US holds the view that any recognition of a Palestinian state will be a vindication of October 7 Hamas attacks. As for Gaza, it will be years before it returns to the pre-October 2023 situation, when it was still occupied and there was no pathway for a Palestinian state. This may well satisfy the world. After all, it was good enough for the world, less than two years ago. The Israelis are threatening to go back to an era when there were Israeli settlements in Gaza. The International Court of Justice's recent ruling on the borders for a future Palestinian state goes back to an even earlier era i.e. pre-1967—before Israel, inter alia, occupied Gaza Strip, West Bank, East Jerusalem and Syrian Golan Heights! So, how far in history does the world want to go? In the meantime, even if Israel has not annexed the West Bank, Israeli settlements would have covered a major part of the West Bank and changed the ground realities irreversibly. In effect, a two-state solution, both Palestine and Israel co-existing side by side, will soon become impossible.

## Avoid politics over water between AP and Telangana

**Whether the project is feasible or not is for the Centre to determine after taking into account the concerns of the riparian states. For themselves, the states are duty-bound to protect their people**

Sharing of river water between states continues to be contentious even though tribunals and institutional mechanisms are in place. One of the borders across which such difficulties continue to persist is the one between Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, where the concern over water allocation was a powerful catalyst in the rise of the statehood movement. With this backdrop, the AP government's proposal to take up the Polavaram-Banakacherla link project and divert 200 thousand million cubic feet of Godavari floodwaters annually to help Rayalaseema has triggered a controversy in Telangana. The concerns are legitimate and the fears expressed by politicians and farmers' groups about risking Telangana's interests warrant serious attention. AP insists it is making use of floodwaters otherwise lost to the sea. But experts argue the concept of 'floodwaters' is not recognised under the current legal framework. It has to be kept in mind that AP's Rayalaseema region has been woefully short of water for generations.



Arifical Intelligence uses Arifical Intelligence uses It is laudable that the Union water ministry brought the chief ministers of the two states together to amicably resolve the contentious issues. Though the July 16 meeting was not for specifically discussing Banakacherla, the four key decisions taken included the constitution of a committee

of officials and experts from both states to identify issues related to the sharing of Godavari and Krishna river waters. Progress lies in this direction, not in pitting farmers of the two states against each other. We strongly oppose attempts by some quarters to make it an Andhra Pradesh versus Telangana battle once again by igniting regional sentiments. After all, the issue remains so sensitive that even a decade after Telangana's formation, something as basic as the sharing of river waters have not been finalised yet. It is imperative this is resolved soon.

Whether the project is feasible or not is for the Centre to determine after taking into account the concerns of the riparian states. For themselves, the states are duty-bound to protect their people. But that responsibility should be balanced with compassion for farmers across the border. Parties in both states must desist from politicising this sensitive matter because farmers in both Telangana and Andhra Pradesh deserve all the support and empathy we can muster—in the larger interest of the states as well as the nation.

## Going beyond blame game to address fear of flying

**The govt must staff the top echelons of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation with technocrats, not IAS officers. If Isro and the Atomic Energy Commission are steered by scientists, why treat the DGCA differently? While upgrading airports, invest beyond terminal buildings—on runways, lighting and landing systems**

Not a day has passed since the Air India crash in Ahmedabad when there has not been an incident involving planes—takeoffs aborted, aircraft skidding off runways, engines catching fire, flights returning to base after takeoff, cancellations, and diversions to other airports due to technical glitches have almost become routine. We also had six helicopter crashes involving pilgrims in Uttarakhand in this period, out of which two were fatal accidents. No wonder a sense of foreboding pervades the public's mind. The vivid live video of the Boeing 787 Dreamliner fireball and images of its aftermath are still haunting the imagination of the nation and the world. Though more people die in road and train accidents in India than anywhere else in the world, people are asking, "Is it safe to fly?" This is why we have to look at the larger picture of Indian aviation today. First, of course, is Air India. The preliminary investigation report into its flight 171 crash has raised more questions than answers. It has stoked conspiracy theories and TV-presenters-on-steroids are working overtime sowing confusion. Aspersions are being cast by the pilots' association on the integrity and fairness of the probe agencies. Charges are being levelled that the truth has already been made a casualty.

Given the trepidation in the air, the aviation ministry and Directorate General of Civil Aviation must do everything to earn the confidence of the public and the aviation community. They must speedily conclude the full investigation and publish the report for public knowledge. The cause of the accident must be established without fear—to learn from and avoid future disasters. For itself, Air India has to get its act together fast and earn back the reputation of its glory days during JRD Tata's charismatic leadership in the pioneering phase before independence. The airline lost

its sheen and glamour after nationalisation and JRD's exit from the airline. It has had never-ending woes ever since.

Arifical Intelligence uses Arifical Intelligence uses

When the Tatas re-acquired the moribund airline from the government for an astronomical ₹18,000 crore, it was like getting back a family jewel out of nostalgia than for business needs or merits. The group already had two other airlines—Air Asia and Vistara, both incurring losses since inception. Now it's saddled with four—Air India, Air India Express, Air Asia and Vistara—and is in the midst of integrating the four boards of management, departments of flight operations, engineering, training, quality control, cabin crew, logistics, inventory management, finance, revenue management, reservation and airport operations.

It also has to work with multiple types of aircraft and differing training standards, HR and promotion policies, salary structures, and, most significantly, varying organisation cultures. It is a Herculean task for the Tatas to get it right and avoid future mishaps. The group, which has an enviable management history and capability, needs to accomplish it by whatever means and win back the trust of the public. To be fair, the other private airlines—IndiGo, which has a mammoth fleet of 400 aircraft, SpiceJet and Akasa—have a blemishless record of zero fatalities since their founding days, going back 20 years for Spice, 18 years



for IndiGo and 3 years for Akasa. But cracks are showing in their operations, too—there have been several scary incidents over the years, and it will be foolish to be complacent.

On the whole, things have been touch-and-go. It shows that safety cannot be ensured by mere regulatory oversight, but must come from within the airlines themselves through rigorous and continuous training, and adherence to standard operating procedures.

The government must turn its attention to the DGCA. Its cadre must be strengthened and they should undergo continuous refresher courses throughout their careers to upgrade their skills and keep up with ever-changing

aerospace technologies. The entire top management must be filled by technocrats and the ubiquitous IAS officers, even if brilliant in administration, must be replaced by highly accomplished employees from among the DGCA. That will motivate them. If the Space Research Organisation and Atomic Energy Commission are steered by scientists, why treat the DGCA differently? And finally, all airports must be thoroughly upgraded to the highest quality and safety standards. Not just the terminal buildings, where disproportionate investments are diverted vis-à-vis runways, lighting, state-of-the-art instruments, and landing systems that are critical for

safety. Most accidents occur globally during landing and takeoff. Land encroachments and dense conurbations with civilian populations along the approach and takeoff funnels must be surveyed and cleared, which would need political will. Had there been no buildings just outside the Ahmedabad airport perimeter, the Dreamliner pilots could have probably landed safely with minimal damage. Meanwhile, the public must refrain from panic, fretting whether to fly or not, or asking which is the safest seat in the plane. It would be sober of us to remember that more people die while driving to the airport than while flying.

# Rain wreaks havoc in Ghaziabad, floods offices, basements & underpasses

## Ghaziabad.(Agency)

Overnight rainfall affected normal life in parts of the city, inundating basements of residential societies and the Ghaziabad Development Authority (GDA) office. Morning rush hour traffic remained largely unaffected as the civic corporation deployed dewatering pumps at 60 waterlogging hotspots, including UP Gate and Lal Kuan. The basement of the GDA office on Hapur Road, which houses several official records, was submerged under several feet of water on Thursday. Though authorities rushed to deploy suction pumps, by the time the water was cleared, hundreds of files were reportedly damaged. "It took hours of effort. The water had already destroyed much of our records by then," a GDA official said.

Meanwhile, employees of the Ghaziabad Municipal Corporation (GMC) found themselves stranded outside the office building in Navyug Market as poor earthings and residual dampness from the waterlogging caused electric current to

pass through the office walls. "We had to stay outside in the garden and parking area as the building became too dangerous to enter," said Roshan, a GMC staffer. Civic officials suspect ongoing electrical repair work, following a fire in the basement last Friday, may have triggered the leak. While roads remained waterlogged in several parts of the city, including Pratap Vihar and Patel Nagar, the basement of a residential apartment in Kavi Nagar's KD Block was flooded to the ceiling, submerging 17 vehicles, including cars and two-wheelers. "The water started seeping in by midnight. By morning, it was touching the basement's ceiling," Shobhit Singh, a resident, told TOI. His neighbour, Sanjay Singh, said he used sandbags to stop water from entering his ground-floor home. "But they were no match. Rainwater entered our home and damaged furniture and electrical appliances. Will GMC take responsibility for our loss?" he said. In Siddharth Vihar's Prateek Grand City, the sub-basement



level was flooded, forcing the society's management to issue emergency advisories to residents to remove their vehicles. "We had to wade through ankle-deep water to move our vehicles," said Kamal Kumar, a resident. The society also suffered a nine-hour power outage that began around midnight and lasted well into Thursday afternoon, with only brief

diesel generator support. The Siddharth Vihar drain also overflowed and breached its retaining wall, leaving several under-construction buildings in the area flooded. At Gaushtala underpass, notorious for turning into a seasonal lake, commuters bore the brunt again. Throughout Thursday morning, the underpass remained heavily waterlogged, disrupting traffic movement. "Every year, they claim to have fixed it. Every year we face the same issue," said shopkeeper Rajpal Tyagi. "Waterlogging is a threat to life and livelihood. People have drowned here in the past." Despite deploying 60 pump sets across the city to clear choke points, including UP Gate, Lal Kuan, Bhopura, and Apsara borders, civic officials admitted the efforts were overwhelmed by the sheer volume of rain. Teams remained on night vigil, continuing de-watering operations throughout Thursday morning.

## Told to pay water connection bills, man loses Rs 1.3L to fraudsters posing as MCG officers

### Gurgaon.(Agency)

A 72-year-old city resident lost Rs 1.3 lakh to cyber fraudsters who posed as MCG officials and asked him to pay his pending water bill. When the victim, a resident of Palam Vihar, told them that he had already paid the bills through his credit card, the fraudsters forced him to pay again through the same card if he wanted his water connection to continue. The victim was asked to pay Rs 10 initially, following which Rs 1.3 lakh got deducted from his credit card.

In his complaint at cybercrime west police station, the victim, Dr Birender Kumar Jawa, said that on June 27, he received a call from the number 91-8653043084. The caller claimed to be an MCG official and said the victim's water bill hadn't been cleared. "I told him I had already paid the bill through my credit card and had the receipt. But he insisted that if I didn't pay again that day, my water supply would be disconnected. He asked me to make a Rs 10 payment using the same card. I tried, but the transaction failed," said Dr Jawa. Despite not sharing any OTP, two transactions—of Rs 1 lakh and Rs 30,000—were made from his account. After realising the fraud, the victim contacted the cybercrime helpline. His complaint was forwarded to the cybercrime west police station, where a case was registered under sections 318(4) (cheating) and 319 (cheating by personation) of BNS. A police officer said teams are working to trace the suspects using both technical and human intelligence. "It's surprising how even well-educated people are falling victim to these scams. The caller tricked the victim into thinking it was about KYC verification, even though he had already paid his bill," a police official said. In June, MCG had issued an advisory warning residents against such frauds. Scammers were reportedly using phone number 91-9022138476 to send fake WhatsApp messages and calls, pressuring people to pay their water bills.

## 2 plots of NRI sold with forged documents in Gurgaon, 7 handed 3 year jail term

### Gurgaon. (Agency)

Gurgaon: A city court has sentenced seven people to three years of imprisonment in a fraud case pertaining to two plots that belonged to an NRI. The plots in Palam Vihar Extension—each measuring 200 square yards and worth several crores—were fraudulently occupied and sold with the help of forged documents. The court said the accused were involved in a "deliberate and strategic fraud", manipulating legal documents to legitimise their possession of the plots.

Judicial Magistrate (First Class) Anjali Narwal on Wednesday termed the documents "forged and fabricated" and found Jagminder, Paramjeet Kaur, Sunil, Harikesh, Rajbir Singh, Kanta Ahlawat and Suresh guilty and convicted them under sections 467, 468, 417 and 120B of the Indian Penal Code (IPC).

The accused forged special power of

attorney and power of attorney documents for the property in Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh to sell the land to third parties.

Amarjeet Kaur, an NRI settled in the US, bought the plots in 1995. She was constantly monitoring the property directly or indirectly until 2005.

Between 2005 and 2010, she could not visit them. In 2010, she discovered one Paramjeet Kaur, a "leader of the neighbourhood", had grabbed her property. Later, she found more people were involved who forged her signature and prepared forged power of attorney documents to execute the transaction of the property. Based on these forged documents, they encroached on the land, constructed a house and started residing in the house in 2006. A case was registered against eight persons at Palam Vihar police station under sections 419, 420, 467, 468, 471 and 120B of the IPC.

The accused forged special power of

The eighth accused, Rajpal, could not be traced and was declared a proclaimed offender in 2016. The sections are related to cheating, forging documents and criminal conspiracy.

Public Prosecutor Poonam said during the investigation it was found that, on the basis of forged and fabricated special power of attorney and general power of attorney prepared in Jharkhand and MP, the plots were occupied by the accused.

Counsel for the accused Pradeep Yadav argued the accused are innocent and are falsely implicated but failed to provide any evidence in support of the argument.

Judicial Magistrate (1st Class) Anjali Narwal, in her order on Wednesday, pointed out the mere fact of the alleged registration of the alleged SPA and GPA in Jharkhand and MP raises serious doubts about the execution and genuineness of these documents.

## A break from humid spell, but 'navigating rivers': 51mm rain brings Gurgaon to a crawl

### Gurgaon .(Agency)

Overnight monsoon showers that continued into Thursday morning paralysed traffic across the city, forcing some commuters to abandon stalled cars on flooded roads and wade through knee-deep waters to get out of the spot. According to the district department, 51mm of rain was dumped over the city from Wednesday night till 5pm on Thursday. The heaviest bout of rainfall, at 122mm each, was recorded at Kadipur and Harsar tehsils, followed by 66mm at Gurgaon tehsil. Badshapur saw 50mm of rain, and Sohna, 40mm, in this timeframe. The traffic police control room received 60 distress calls, most of which involved vehicle breakdowns amid rain. Eight vehicles broke down on waterlogged stretches, including one near the IFFCO Chowk flyover and some in Sector 10. A van also stalled in the middle of Badshapur road, triggering a jam till traffic cops intervened. Police were also called in to remove a car that had overturned on the Faridabad-Gurgaon Road while it was being driven during the



downpour. Residents said traffic was hardest hit at Hero Honda Chowk, Subhash Chowk, Basai Chowk, IFFCO Chowk, Narsingpur along NH-8, and Golf Course Extension Road. Police said waterlogging was also reported near Sadar Bazaar, Railway Station Road, Rajiv Chowk, Shankar Chowk, Phase-2 metro station, Sheetla Mata Temple, Tulip Chowk, Malibu Towne, Badshapur bus stand, IMT Chowk, Signature Tower, Rampura Chowk, Sector 37, near Khandwa foot-over bridge, and CRPF Camp Chowk, among other areas. Waters rose rapidly on Sohna Road

near Subhash Chowk, bringing vehicles to a screeching halt there. "It was like navigating a river, not a road. My car stalled near Subhash Chowk, and no one from the authorities showed up. Locals helped push it aside," said Rakesh Yadav, who lives in Sector 47. "I left my car behind at a repair shop near Hero Honda Chowk and booked a cab. It was the only way to make it to the office without losing half the day," said Nitin Verma, an IT professional. Residential areas were flooded too. Kamal Dutta, who lives in Sector 37, said the city comes to a halt every year during monsoon. "It rains, and everything collapses. What's the point of 'smart city' talk," Dutta asked. Residents of Sector 38 said drains were overflowing in the area despite repairs being carried out.

"There go lakhs of rupees down the drain, which doesn't carry any rainwater," said Sunil Yadav, an engineer who has been living there for 20 years. But civic authorities said they took swift action to address any waterlogging complaints.

## Rescue to recovery: SWAMIH Fund helps ready ATS project in Gurgaon

### Noida .(Agency)

ATS Infrastructure has repaid Rs 190 crore to the govt-backed SWAMIH Investment Fund I, marking an early closure of the last-mile funding that rescued its ATS Marigold project in Gurgaon from construction delays.

The repayment, comprising Rs 133 crore in principal and Rs 57 crore in interest, comes as the project off-Dwarka Expressway has been completed, with all six towers receiving occupancy certificates. The development represents a successful intervention by the SWAMIH Fund, which was established in 2019 to revive stressed housing projects. The project's journey to recovery began in Feb 2021, when SWAMIH Fund stepped in during a critical phase. At that time, around 4.5 lakh sqft remained unsold, with prices hovering between Rs 6,000 and Rs 6,500 per sqft. The project had been struggling since the 2018 NBFC crisis and was further impacted by the Covid pandemic.

The turnaround, though, has been remarkable. Current market rates have more than doubled to Rs 13,500-15,000 per sqft, and over 150 families have already moved into the 422-unit



complex. The completion of the Dwarka Expressway, providing crucial connectivity to IGI Airport, Delhi, and key Gurgaon sectors, has been a

significant factor in this recovery. "The completion of ATS Marigold and the successful early repayment of the SWAMIH investment reflect the strong

execution capabilities of the ATS brand and the trust it enjoys among homebuyers. The project stands as a clear example of how effective the SWAMIH Fund has been in enabling the revival and completion of stressed mid-income housing projects," said Udaibir Anand, managing director of ATS.

The SWAMIH Fund, launched by the Centre with a corpus of Rs 15,530 crore, is managed by SBICAP Ventures Ltd, a State Bank of India subsidiary. "The fund's intervention in ATS Marigold demonstrates its effectiveness in reviving stalled projects and protecting homebuyers' interests in the middle-income segment," an official said.

Sources familiar with the transaction confirmed that multiple factors, including the significant appreciation in property values and timely delivery, contributed to the early loan repayment, making this one of the fund's success stories in the residential real estate sector.

### News box

## MCG likely to set up panel for finance & contracts on Aug 11 in Gurgaon

### Gurgaon.(Agency)

After months of delay, MCG House will constitute its finance and contracts committee (F&CC) on Aug 11. MCG House was constituted on March 12.

"A meeting will be convened as per the directions of the Haryana urban local bodies (ULB) department to form the F&CC," MCG commissioner Pradeep Dahiya said on Wednesday. Major development works of the city get their approvals at the F&CC meetings. Numerous development projects faced delays due to the absence of F&CCs in various municipalities, the ULB has maintained. Councillor of Ward Number 11 Kuldeep Yadav said, "Formation of the F&CC panel is significant since our works are suffering. Our ward-wise proposals and estimates require approvals from the panel."

Elections for the senior deputy mayor and deputy mayor posts are also pending. Recently, the ULB department wrote to the municipal bodies: "Due to the non-formation of F&CC, the development works and other works are not being executed timely. The govt — by exercising the powers of section 398 of the Haryana Municipal Corporation Act, 1994 and section 250 of the Haryana Municipal Act, 1973 — has decided to issue directions that the meetings of the elected body of municipalities, where F&CC has not yet been constituted, shall be convened on Aug 11 for constituting the F&CC." "Send the compliance report along with the proceedings of the meeting to this directorate by email on the same day positively," the letter added.

According to the Haryana Municipal Corporation Act, 1994, "There shall be a finance and contracts committee of the corporation comprising the mayor, two deputy mayors, two members elected by the members from amongst themselves and the commissioner and the committee shall exercise all the powers of the corporation in relation to contracts to be entered into for and on its behalf and the purchases to be made by it."

## Petition challenges 'unlawful' seizure and scrapping of old vehicles, calls it 'arbitrary'

### Gurgaon. (Agency)

A city-based lawyer has filed a petition at the additional sessions court, challenging what he claimed was the unlawful seizure and scrapping of end-of-life (EOL) vehicles by govt authorities over the past decade. The petition alleged systematic violation of motor vehicle laws under the guise of environmental protection.

Senior advocate Mukesh Kulthia's petition named Delhi chief minister Rekha Gupta, Union road transport minister Nitin Gadkari, and 10 other senior officials as respondents, accusing them of illegal confiscation of vehicles. Judge Jagdeep Singh scheduled a hearing of the case for Sept 2.

The petition contended that authorities had been forcibly seizing legally registered vehicles by "misrepresenting" directives from the Supreme Court, National Green Tribunal (NGT), and other institutions. This practice, Kulthia argued, violated the Central Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, and its subsequent amendments from 2019 to 2023.

"Citizens' vehicles — bought with hard-earned money — are being arbitrarily confiscated and handed over to scrapping agencies, while politicians enjoy free cars funded by taxpayers," Kulthia stated in petition, which was filed under sections 33 and 210 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023. The legal challenge claimed that specific provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act were being violated — including Section 41(7)(8)(9)(10), which stipulates a 15-year vehicle life with renewable extensions, and Section 46, ensuring validity of nationwide registration. The petition emphasised that even the govt's scrapping policy and guidelines for end-of-life vehicles didn't mandate the forced scrapping of 10-15-year-old vehicles, making the current seizures "unconstitutional and illegal". The petition comes at a time when the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) has issued an order banning the refuelling of diesel vehicles older than 10 years and petrol vehicles older than 15 years across NCR from July.

## Municipal Corporation Gurgaon set to form finance, contracts panel on Aug 11

### Gurgaon .(Agency)

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"A meeting will be convened as per the directions of the Haryana urban local bodies (ULB) department to form the F&CC," MCG commissioner Pradeep Dahiya said on Wednesday. Major development works of the city get their approvals at the F&CC meetings. Numerous development projects faced delays due to the absence of F&CCs in various municipalities, the ULB has maintained. Councillor of Ward Number 11 Kuldeep Yadav said, "Formation of the F&CC panel is significant since our works are suffering. Our ward-wise proposals and estimates require approvals from the panel." "Elections for the senior deputy mayor and deputy mayor posts are also pending. Recently, the ULB department wrote to the municipal bodies: "Due to the non-formation of F&CC, the development works and other works are not being executed timely. The govt — by exercising the powers of section 398 of the Haryana Municipal Corporation Act, 1994 and section 250 of the Haryana Municipal Act, 1973 — has decided to issue directions that the meetings of the elected body of municipalities, where F&CC has not yet been constituted, shall be convened on Aug 11 for constituting the F&CC." "Send the compliance report along with the proceedings of the meeting to this directorate by email on the same day positively," the letter added.

# Two siblings electrocuted to death in Delhi's Rohini, father critical; exposed wiring under probe

**Anju and Vivek were declared dead on arrival. Kalicharan remains in critical condition, said officials.**

**Agency New Delhi.**

A 26-year-old welding labourer and his 28-year-old sister died after suffering an electric shock at their home in Rohini's Begumpur area, while their 65-year-old father is in critical condition, police said on Thursday. The incident took place late on Wednesday night, around 10 pm, when the victims came into contact with exposed wiring inside their residence. Those dead have been identified as Vivek and Anju, while their father Kalicharan remains hospitalised. According to police, a PCR call was made around 10:56 pm, alerting authorities to the situation. The caller, Abhishek, a neighbour, reported that three people had been electrocuted. "Yahan light katwa do, 3 aadmi chipke huye hain" (Please cut the electricity, three people have struck due to electric shock), he said. A team from Begumpur Police Station was rushed to the scene at Rajeev

Nagar, but by the time they arrived, locals had already taken the victims to Agrasen Hospital in Rohini.

Anju and Vivek were declared dead on arrival. Kalicharan remains in critical condition, said officials. Preliminary investigations revealed open electrical wiring around the staircase area of the house, which had been wrapped around an iron grill. According to Deputy Commissioner of Police (Rohini) Rajeev Ranjan, around 10 pm, Vivek was heading upstairs when he came in contact with the iron gate, which was exposed to live wiring, and suffered an electric shock. Hearing Vivek's cries, his father Kalicharan rushed to help but he was also electrocuted. Anju, who was in the house,



tried to save them but was affected herself. "The house is built on a 50-square-yard plot and had extremely unsafe and exposed electrical connections," a senior police officer said. Vivek, a welding worker, was

unmarried, while Anju, recently married three months ago, was a homemaker. The bodies have been sent to Sanjay Gandhi Hospital for post-mortem, said police.

Preliminary probe revealed open electrical wiring. According to police, preliminary investigations revealed open electrical wiring around the staircase area of the house, which had been wrapped around an iron grill. "The house is built on a 50-square-yard plot and had extremely unsafe and exposed electrical connections," a senior police officer said. The bodies have been sent for post-mortem.

## Boy falls into open sewer in Delhi's Vasant Kunj; massive rescue operation underway



**Agency New Delhi.**

A rescue operation is underway in southwest Delhi's Vasant Kunj area after a minor boy fell into an open sewer while playing on Thursday afternoon, police said.

According to the police, a PCR call was received at Vasant Kunj South police station around 1.24 pm, alerting authorities about the incident. "Acting swiftly, a police team, along with other rescue agencies, rushed to the location," a police officer said. Preliminary inquiry revealed that some local children witnessed the incident and alerted nearby residents, who then contacted the police. "A JCB machine was deployed to remove sewage material and open up the chamber for search operations. A fire tender along with four personnel from the Vasant Kunj fire station arrived at the scene."

The District Disaster Management Authority team, including the in-charge officer and three trained divers, also joined the operation. MCD personnel and four sanitation workers were also pressed into service. "The incident occurred at Rajokri Village close to the MCD School. The sewer belongs to the MCD and was found open from the side," police added.

## CBSE caps number of sections based on school area to curb overcrowding, ensure NEP compliance

**Agency New Delhi.**

In a significant move to address overcrowding in classrooms and promote holistic education, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has revised its affiliation bye-laws to cap the number of sections a school can run, strictly based on the built-up carpet area of the school building. The changes, notified in a circular dated July 31, will be applicable to all existing and newly affiliated schools under the Board.

As per the revised norms, the number of sections a school can operate from Bal Vatika to Class XII will now depend entirely on its total built-up area. For instance, a school with 4,000 sqm can run a maximum of 33 sections, while one with 6,200 sqm is allowed up to 48 sections.

Many schools, it noted, currently run beyond their capacity, often forcing students to spend long hours in cramped classrooms with limited access to open spaces and extracurricular facilities—conditions contrary to the vision of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. At the senior secondary level, the number of sections for Classes XI and XII will be limited to one-fourteenth of the total number of sections from Bal Vatika to Class X, rounded up to the next even number, with equal distribution between the two classes. Moreover, schools are now required to maintain an equal number of sections in Classes IX and X, and similarly in XI and XII. CBSE has also updated its infrastructure requirements, including mandatory laboratories, indoor game rooms, and other activity rooms, beyond every 48 sections, infirmaries, libraries, and multipurpose halls. Importantly, all nursery and elementary sections must operate in buildings that comply with fire safety norms and structural codes.



## Delhi rains flood Safdarjung Hospital; patients wade through knee-deep water

**The corridor remained inundated through much of the day, creating difficulties for patients, especially the elderly and those with mobility issues.**

**Agency New Delhi.**

Persistent rain lashing the capital has put healthcare facilities under added strain. At Safdarjung Hospital, one of the largest government-run facilities in Delhi, waterlogging disrupted patient movement, forcing some to wade barefoot through knee-deep water to access treatment.

Videos surfaced on social media showing flooded corridors inside the hospital, where patients and attendants were seen clutching walls for balance while navigating submerged passageways.

One such video, which went viral on Wednesday, captured the corridor leading to Room Number 41 completely waterlogged, with stagnant water remaining for several hours. Officials from the hospital attributed the water accumulation to ongoing construction work.

"The waterlogging was caused due to an ongoing construction in front of the H-

Block and got cleared within some time," said a hospital official. He added that the affected area was the ground-floor passage connecting the OPD with the new emergency ward.



However, officials maintained that patient care and health services were not significantly impacted.

Contrary to those claims, several patients

and their families said they were forced to delay or abandon treatment plans as they struggled to navigate the flooded premises.

The corridor remained inundated through much of the day, creating difficulties for patients, especially the elderly and those with mobility issues. In another incident, the National Institute of TB and Respiratory Diseases (NITRD) in Mehrauli faced a prolonged power outage lasting more than two hours on Wednesday afternoon. The blackout, which began around 1 pm at emergency, left critical care patients on ventilator support at serious risk, as the institute lacked adequate backup power systems.

According to doctors, junior residents had to manually pump ambu bags to maintain airflow for patients during the outage. Power supply was restored after 3 pm, but the institute is yet to issue an official statement regarding the incident.

## MCD to launch 'Freedom from Garbage' drive across Delhi from August

**Agency New Delhi.**

Days after Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta's announcement to undertake a citywide cleanliness drive throughout the month of August with the aim of making the national capital exceptionally clean and well-maintained, Mayor Sardar Raja Iqbal Singh on Thursday said that the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has made all necessary arrangements to commence the 'Delhi's Freedom from Garbage' cleanliness drive with full strength.

The initiative will involve massive sanitation efforts across 12 zones with active involvement from residents, schools, market associations, and community groups.

The mayor said that the drive will cover intensive cleanliness operations in residential colonies, markets, industrial areas, schools, colleges, slum clusters, public toilets, and other public spaces. Special campaigns will spread awareness on waste segregation at the source, urging households and businesses to separate dry, wet, and hazardous waste for proper disposal and recycling.

The MCD will undertake targeted removal of municipal solid waste (MSW) along railway tracks to improve sanitation and safety. There will also be a special focus on construction and demolition (C&D) waste, with dedicated efforts to collect, manage, and recycle such waste to prevent illegal dumping. The campaign will also work towards the elimination of single-use plastics, encouraging citizens and businesses to shift towards sustainable and eco-friendly alternatives. Alongside, the beautification of green and open spaces, including parks, gardens, and community areas, will take place with community participation through tree plantation, wall painting, and art-based activities.

## Sales manager stabbed to death after brawl with momo vendor in Ghazipur

**"Vikas, a resident of Faridabad, was declared dead at LBS Hospital, where Sharma is currently undergoing treatment," the DCP said.**

**Agency New Delhi.**

NEW DELHI: A 28-year-old sales manager was allegedly stabbed to death while his friend was injured during a late night brawl with a momo vendor in east Delhi's Ghazipur area, police said on Thursday. Three accused were arrested and a juvenile was apprehended in connection with the incident, he said. According to police, during a birthday celebration on Wednesday night, the deceased Vikas Walecha told his friends about a recent altercation he had with a momo vendor, Salman. They then decided to confront him. DCP (East) Abhishek Dhania said, "At around 10.30 pm, the group



went to the Paper Market near CNG pump in Ghazipur in three vehicles. On spotting Salman near a wine shop, they confronted him. Salman called his associates and in the ensuing scuffle, Walecha was fatally stabbed while his friend Sumit Sharma sustained a leg fracture." Both Vikas and Sumit

worked at a private company in Sector 5, Noida.

"Vikas, a resident of Faridabad, was declared dead at LBS Hospital, where Sharma is currently undergoing treatment," the DCP said.

Based on a complaint filed by one of the victims, a case has been registered at the Ghazipur police station, and four people have been held in connection with the case, Dhania said.

The arrested accused include Salman Khan (24), Azad Kumar Mishra (31) and Monu Mishra (28), all residents of Khoda Colony in Ghaziabad. A 13-year-old juvenile was also apprehended, the DCP said.

## Cloudy skies and steady showers drench Delhi; wet spell to continue till August 3

**Delhi airport issues travel advisory to passengers amid intermittent rain Videos on social media show patients walking through submerged passageways**

**Agency New Delhi.**

The national capital witnessed a cloudy sky and intermittent rain on Thursday morning. The weather department has forecast light to moderate rain throughout the day, but no warning advisory has been issued for the city, so far. However, Delhi airport issued an advisory for the flyers. "Delhi is experiencing inclement weather conditions. Our on-ground teams are working diligently with all stakeholders to ensure your journey remains hassle-free. Passengers are advised to consider alternative modes of transport, including Delhi Metro, to reach the airport and avoid potential delays," the advisory read.

The minimum temperature settled at 24.7 degrees Celsius, 1.1 degrees below normal, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) data showed.

According to the IMD, the city received intermittent rain through the night. In the



24 hours till 6.30 am on Thursday, central Delhi's Pusa station received 40 mm of rainfall, Sports Complex 38 mm, Safdarjung 34 mm, Najafgarh 23.5 mm, Pragati Maidan 22.1 mm, KV Narayana 20.5 mm, Lodhi Road 18.5 mm, KV Janakpuri 18 mm, and Ayanagar 13 mm. The regional Met centre has predicted that

the ongoing spell of rain is expected to continue till August 3. Delhi has recorded a total of 14 rainy days this month. The highest maximum temperature recorded was 37.5 degrees Celsius on July 27, while the lowest minimum temperature was 22.9 degrees Celsius on July 7.

**IIT Delhi attracts Rs 432 crore for tech innovation; quantum T-Hub gets major push**

**Agency New Delhi.**

The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi undertook 650 sponsored projects and consultancies through its Industrial Research and Development (IRD) Unit, attracting total funding of Rs 352 crore.

Another 80 crore was secured for 152 technology development projects and consultancies via FITT (Foundation for Innovation and Technology Transfer), stated the data shared by the institute on Thursday.

One of the most ambitious ventures underway is the Technology Hub (T-Hub) on Quantum Materials and Devices (QMD), funded by the Union Government with an initial outlay of Rs 312 crore until March 2031. Housed at IIT Delhi, the QMD T-Hub is envisioned as a national centre of excellence in quantum materials science. It aims to play a transformative role in shaping India's quantum technology roadmap by advancing innovation at the intersection of materials science, photonics, and quantum device engineering.

At its core, the T-Hub is focused on developing next-generation materials and devices that support quantum computing, secure communication, and ultra-sensitive sensing technologies. The officials said, "Among its key objectives is the development of on-demand single-photon emitters (SPEs), single-photon avalanche detectors (SPADs), and reconfigurable photonic qubit circuits—all crucial for building a robust quantum technology ecosystem in the country." IIT Delhi is also leading efforts to address global research challenges through the Multi-Institutional Faculty Interdisciplinary Research Project (MFIRP) initiative. Launched by the IRD Unit, this programme fosters collaboration with top-tier national and international universities. So far, it has supported 112 joint projects with India and 144 with global institutions.

## MCD to launch 'Freedom from Garbage' drive across Delhi from August

**Agency New Delhi.**

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## Cloudy skies and steady showers drench Delhi; wet spell to continue till August 3

**Delhi airport issues travel advisory to passengers amid intermittent rain Videos on social media show patients walking through submerged passageways**

Meanwhile, the air quality was recorded in the satisfactory category at 11 am, with an Air Quality Index (AQI) reading of 56, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) data showed. Data from the central pollution watchdog showed that July 2025 was the cleanest in over a decade, with an average Air Quality Index (AQI) of 79, according to data from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).

This breaks the previous records—the average AQI was 96 in 2024, 84 in 2023, 87 in 2022, 110 in 2021, 84 in 2020, 134 in 2019, 104 in 2018, 98 in 2017, 146 in 2016, and 138 in 2015. According to the CPCB, an AQI between zero and 50 is considered 'good', 51 and 100 'satisfactory', 101 and 200 'moderate', 201 and 300 'poor', 301 and 400 'very poor', and 401 and 500 'severe'. Nearly 50 complaints related to waterlogging reported.

## NEWS BOX

**Sunil Gavaskar, Sharad Pawar to be honoured with life-size statues at MCA museum**

**New Delhi. (Agency)**

The Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA) on Thursday announced that Indian cricket legend Sunil Gavaskar and veteran administrator Sharad Pawar will be honoured with life-size statues at the entrance of the upcoming 'MCA Sharad Pawar Cricket Museum' at Wankhede Stadium.

Set to be inaugurated in the latter half of August, the museum will celebrate Mumbai's rich cricketing legacy and pay tribute to the figures who have significantly contributed to its rise as a powerhouse of Indian cricket. "At the museum's entrance, visitors will be welcomed by life-size statues of Shri Sharad Pawar and cricket legend Sunil Gavaskar, who remains one of Mumbai's and India's most iconic sporting figures," the MCA said in a statement. Gavaskar, one of the finest opening batters the game has seen, said he was "deeply touched and tremendously honoured" by the MCA's decision. "I am deeply touched and tremendously honoured that my mother Cricket Association (MCA) has decided to have a statue of mine at the entrance of the new MCA Sharad Pawar Cricket Museum at the Wankhede Stadium," he said in a statement. "I will forever be grateful to Mumbai Cricket Association for



holding my hand as I took my first steps in the game and to the BCCI for then giving me the opportunity to spread my wings and fulfil the dream of representing my country in the sport. It's an honour which I will cherish for whatever is the rest of my life." The statue of Gavaskar, the MCA said, will serve as "a symbol of excellence and dedication that will inspire aspiring young cricketers for generations to come". Sharad Pawar, currently the chief of the Nationalist Congress Party (SP), has served in top administrative roles in cricket, including as president of the MCA, BCCI, and the International Cricket Council (ICC). The museum bearing his name is also a tribute to his long-standing association with and contribution to the sport. MCA president Ajinkya Naik said the initiative was a "heartfelt tribute to the stalwarts of Mumbai cricket and a testament to the visionary leadership of Shri Sharad Pawar." He added, "The statue of Shri Sunil Gavaskar, one of India's greatest cricketing legends, will serve as a powerful symbol of excellence and determination."

**Chinese 12-year-old Yu Zidi has won a bronze relay medal at the swim world championships**

**SINGAPORE. (Agency)**

Chinese 12-year-old Yu Zidi has won a bronze medal at the swim world championships, an astounding feat for a girl who would be a sixth- or seventh-grade student depending on the school system. Yu earned the medal by swimming in the prelims of China's 4x200-meter freestyle relay team. She did not swim in the final on Thursday — China placed third behind winning Australia and the United States — but gets a bronze medal as a team member. She's been close to winning an individual medal, placing fourth in both the 200 butterfly and the 200 individual medley. She still has the 400 IM to swim.

Brent Nowicki, the executive director of World Aquatics, said the governing body would look at its age-limit rules. The limit is now 14, but athletes can reach the worlds if they surpass a tough time standard.

"I didn't think I'd have this conversation, but now I think we have to go back and say is this appropriate?" he said this week in



Singapore. "Is this really the right way to go forward and do we need to do other things? Put other guardrails up? Do we allow it under certain conditions? I don't know the answer." He called Yu "great." He also said officials had to be "careful" about the age issue. Friday's session will be missing the two big stars of the meet so far — France's Leon Marchand and Summer McIntosh of Canada. Both have no final swims.

Five finals were set for Friday. Some of the attention will go to Evgenia Chikunova, swimming as a Neutral Athlete. She holds the world record in the 200 breaststroke where has the top time entering the final. The top challenger is American Kate Douglass. South African Pieter Coetzee is the favorite in the men's 200 backstroke. Yohann Ndoye-Brouard of France and Huribert Kos of Hungary were the next quickest qualifiers.

# 1st T20I: Saim Ayub, Nawaz star for Pakistan as West Indies' horror run continues



**ENG vs IND: Former India captain Sourav Ganguly said Anshul Kamboj should not be judged based on just one Test and deserves a longer run of at least five matches.**

**New Delhi. (Agency)**

West Indies' alarming slide in T20 Internationals continued as they slumped to a sixth successive defeat, falling 14 runs short against Pakistan in the first T20I at Lauderhill. Though the margin appeared narrow on paper, the contest was firmly controlled by Pakistan, whose spinners dismantled the hosts' chase with clinical precision during the middle overs. Chasing a target of 179, West Indies made a promising start, reaching 47 without loss in the

powerplay, but a dramatic collapse followed. The introduction of spin turned the tide as Mohammad Nawaz and Saim Ayub struck crucial blows to derail the innings. Nawaz, the pick of the bowlers, removed Johnson Charles, Jewel Andrew, and Gudakesh Motie in a single over to leave the hosts reeling. Ayub then dismissed West Indies captain Shai Hope in the very next over, and the home side never recovered. West Indies vs Pakistan, 1st T20I:

**HIGHLIGHTS** Jason Holder briefly threatened to script a miracle with a blistering unbeaten 30 off just 12 deliveries, including four towering sixes. His late onslaught brought 38 runs in the final two overs, but it was too little, too late, as West Indies finished on 164 for 7.

Earlier, after being asked to bat first, Pakistan posted a competitive 178 for 6. Young opener Saim Ayub set the tone with a stylish 57 off 38 deliveries, laced with five fours and

two sixes. He stitched together an 81-run stand for the second wicket with Fakhar Zaman (28 off 24), providing Pakistan with a solid platform. Although the West Indies' bowlers showed discipline — with Shamar Joseph impressing with figures of 3 for 30 — they couldn't completely stem the flow of runs. Pakistan's batters never fully cut loose, but cameos from Hasan Nawaz (24 off 16), Faheem Ashraf (16 off 9), and a final-ball six from Mohammad Haris ensured 58 runs came off the last 31 balls, pushing the total beyond 175. In reply, West Indies' top order initially looked assured, but the innings unravelled under the pressure of Pakistan's spinners. Nawaz ended with outstanding figures of 3 for 23, while Ayub and Sufyan Muqeem chipped in with a wicket apiece.

Shaheen Shah Afridi, the standout among the seamers, also picked up a crucial wicket and applied pressure throughout. The defeat adds to West Indies' woes in the format, following a 0-5 whitewash against Australia at home. With Pakistan now 1-0 up in the three-match series, the hosts will need to regroup quickly if they are to avoid another series loss in front of their own supporters.

**Khalid Jamil announced as new head coach of Indian football team**

**New Delhi. (Agency)**

Khalid Jamil, the former manager of East Bengal and Mohun Bagan, has been announced as the new head coach of the Indian men's football team. Jamil, who is a recognised football manager in the subcontinent, has been entrusted with rebuilding the side, which has been tottering on the international stage.

Jamil, who coaches Jamshedpur FC will be taking over the Indian team, although the All Indian Football Federation (AIFF) did not mention when exactly he will be taking over the side. Jamil is the first Indian man to coach in the national team in 13 years. The last Indian coach to head the national team was Savio Medeira who was in charge from October 2011 to March 2012. "The AIFF Executive Committee, in the presence of the Technical Committee, has approved the appointment of Khalid Jamil as the new head coach of the Senior India Men's National Team," the AIFF said in a



## Galatasaray break Turkish transfer record to sign Victor Osimhen from Napoli

**Galatasaray have paid €75 million to sign Victor Osimhen from Napoli**

**• Osimhen scored 37 goals in all competitions last season**

**• Nigerian striker has signed a four-year contract with Galatasaray**

**New Delhi. (Agency)**

Galatasaray have completed the sensational signing of Victor Osimhen from Napoli, breaking the Turkish transfer record in the process. The Super Lig champions announced the Nigeria international's arrival on a long-term deal after agreeing to pay 75 million (63.8 million), the most expensive incoming transfer in Turkish football history. The previous record was set only last year when Fenerbahce signed Youssef En-Nesyri from Sevilla for 20 million. Galatasaray's move marks a major statement of intent as they look to cement

their dominance both domestically and in Europe. A four-year contract has been signed with the player, starting from the 2025-26 season," the club said in a statement. The deal also includes a 10

payments — compensating for the use of his name, image, and likeness in club marketing and promotions.

Napoli confirmed the details of the deal in a separate statement.

Osimhen had spent the 2024-25 season on loan at Galatasaray, where he enjoyed a prolific campaign, finishing as the league's top scorer with 26 goals. He also became the highest-scoring foreign player in a single season in Turkish football history, netting 37 times in all competitions. The former Lille and Wolfsburg striker joins Galatasaray at the peak of his powers, having already made a significant impact on the European stage. With 26 goals in 40 appearances for Nigeria, he arrives in Istanbul as one of the continent's most feared forwards. Galatasaray's record-breaking move signals a new era of ambition for the club — and with Osimhen leading the line, fans will be dreaming of both domestic dominance and a deep run in Europe.

percent sell-on clause in favour of Napoli, meaning the Italian side will receive a portion of any future transfer fee. Osimhen, 26, will earn a net guaranteed salary of 15 million per season. He will also receive a 1 million net loyalty bonus annually, along with 5 million per year in image rights

team captain Salman Ali Agha, and a member of the coaching staff," the PCB said in an official statement. The PCB affirms that no such incident has occurred at any point during training or practice sessions. These malicious rumours are

entirely fictitious and appear to have been deliberately concocted with clear malafide intent to sow discord within the national squad. "The PCB accused unnamed individuals of launching a "calculated and

reprehensible attempt" to disrupt the unity of the team and tarnish the reputations of those involved. It further said that the Board would initiate "stringent legal proceedings, including but not limited to defamation and cybercrime charges," against the perpetrators. In the wake of the viral post, Shaheen Afridi faced significant backlash from a section of the fan base, with speculations gaining traction about dressing room unrest. With the team currently on a multi-format tour of the West Indies, the controversy threatened to cast a shadow over their campaign.

"The PCB considers this a serious and premeditated defamation campaign, which is aimed at damaging the professional integrity of the individuals targeted and the collective environment of the squad," the statement continued. "Any persons found complicit in propagating these claims will be held fully accountable under applicable laws."

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## Shaheen Afridi-Salman Agha controversy: Pakistan refute rift between top stars

**New Delhi. (Agency)**

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Thursday issued a strong statement to quash viral social media rumours suggesting a rift between pace spearhead Shaheen Shah Afridi, white-ball captain Salman Ali Agha, and head coach Mike Hesson. The Board categorically denied the claims, calling them "baseless, fabricated and defamatory," and announced its intention to pursue legal action against those behind the allegations. Earlier in the day, a post circulated widely online, alleging that head coach Hesson and skipper Salman had expressed dissatisfaction with Shaheen's attitude and had taken the matter up with PCB chairman Mohsin Naqvi — claims which the board has dismissed outright.

The Pakistan Cricket Board categorically denies the baseless, fabricated, and defamatory allegations currently being circulated on social media pertaining to an alleged incident involving Shaheen Afridi,

team captain Salman Ali Agha, and a member of the coaching staff," the PCB said in an official statement. The PCB affirms that no such incident has occurred at any point during training or practice sessions. These malicious rumours are

entirely fictitious and appear to have been deliberately concocted with clear malafide intent to sow discord within the national squad. "The PCB accused unnamed individuals of launching a "calculated and

he ran as soon as he defended the ball. It was almost suicidal. In that kind of situation, the one who misjudges should ideally be the one to get out. Thankfully, that's what happened here." Chopra stressed that Gill's decision to charge down the pitch was completely out of place, especially given the match context and the early stage of the innings. "If Sai Sudharsan had responded, he would've been run out without a doubt, so in that sense, Gill getting out was the right outcome because the error was his," he added. The timing of the dismissal was especially frustrating considering the form Gill has displayed in this series. The 25-year-old had just surpassed Sunil Gavaskar's long-



standing record for most runs by an Indian captain in a Test series, reaching 743 runs to go past Gavaskar's 732. "You don't want your captain, especially one in such good form, to

throw away his wicket like that. It's something the team may look back on with regret if things don't go their way in the match," Chopra noted. The criticism wasn't limited to Chopra. Former India wicketkeeper Saba Karim, speaking on Sony Sports, termed the run-out a "brain fade" moment. "Shubman Gill is an experienced player and captain now. That kind of misjudgement is hard to explain. If Sai Sudharsan had taken off, he'd have been batted out. It's understandable that a young player like him wouldn't want to risk his wicket so early in his Test career," said Karim.

## Shubman Gill's suicidal run-out was game-changer in Oval Test: Aakash Chopra

**New Delhi. (Agency)**

Former India opener and cricket commentator Aakash Chopra has termed Shubman Gill's run-out on Day 1 of the fifth Test at The Oval as a "game-changing" moment that could influence the course of the match. Gill, who had been in sublime form throughout the series, was dismissed for 21 in a moment of misjudgement that sparked sharp criticism from former players. India, put into bat by England's stand-in captain Ollie Pope, ended the day precariously placed at 204 for 6. But it was Gill's self-inflicted dismissal that drew the most scrutiny. The Indian skipper called for a quick single moments after defending the ball, only to be caught short of his crease after Sai Sudharsan, at the non-striker's end, refused the call. "Shubman Gill's run-out was pivotal," Aakash Chopra said on his YouTube channel. "It was his own mistake.

**Sensex opens 168 points lower, Nifty below 24,800; HUL gains 4%**

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

Benchmark stock market indices opened lower on Friday, tracking tariff developments globally as a fresh round of tariffs were announced by the US. The S&P BSE Sensex was down by 150.77 points to 81,034.81, while the NSE Nifty50 lost 62.50 points to 24,705.85 as of 9:47 am. Dr. VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Investments Limited, said that the August series starts on a weak note after the 3.1% dip in Nifty in July. "In the near-term the market will be influenced by the tariff-related news. Since the date of implementation of the modified tariff rates is August 7th, that gives countries time to negotiate and bring the tariffs down. That may happen," he added. Among the top gainers in early trade on Sensex were Hindustan Unilever, which rose by 3.73%, followed by Asian Paints up 1.41%, Kotak Mahindra Bank and ITC both up 0.97%, and Bajaj Finance up 0.44%. The worst hit was Sun Pharmaceutical Industries, which fell sharply by 3.72%. Mahindra & Mahindra dropped 2.19%, Tata Steel was down 1.84%, Tata Motors fell 1.66%, and Power Grid Corporation of India slid 1.36%. "Yesterday's market action indicates that the market views the 25% tariff as a short-term issue. The rate is likely to come down after the next round of negotiations beginning this month. An important trend in the market is the weakness in the broader market, particularly the smallcaps. This trend is likely to continue given the high valuations of the segment," said Vijayakumar. "Sustained selling by the FIIs continues to be a negative. The sharp surge in the dollar index to 100 will nudge the FIIs to continue selling putting pressure on largecaps too. Investors can adopt a wait and watch strategy," he added.

**Tariff war: Economic impact on US will be worse compared to India, says SBI Research**

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

With US President Donald announcing 25 per cent tariff on the goods imported from India with effect from August 1, 2025, Friday, SBI Research has released a report mentioning that the economic implications for the current trade stalemate between the two countries will hit the US more as compared to India with a lower GDP and higher inflation and a weaker \$. The report also mentioned that the efforts of BRICS members to strengthen multilateralism and reforming global governance could have led to the tariff imposition.

Efforts to rejuvenate BRICS partnership could have sparked stalemate. Across the border, a rogue nation with broken economy, has taken a mistaken leap of faith by launching a digital currency pilot programme and showing the intent towards development of legislation for virtual assets through creating a regulatory and legal framework to govern digital currencies in banking, trade settlement, Fx and gold... The mess this neighbor of ours has put itself into on all counts makes the evolving situation simultaneously gravely ridiculous and comically pathetic.

With economic integration intended through the National Crypto Council, whose CEO was appointed this May as the PM's special assistant on blockchain and cryptocurrency with Minister of State status—this troubled neighbor looks set to venture into an area where the angel would fear to trade... Worse, its policy makers and Central Bank could have read the writing on the wall which is evident through blocking the CBDC developments in the US.

**HUL lowers prices of tea, homecare products but goes for hike in skincare segment**

**New Delhi. (Agency)**

HUL has slashed prices of products in categories such as tea and homecare products due to lower commodity prices and competitive pressure but raised the prices in the skincare segment on account of rising palm oil prices. The leading FMCG maker is keeping an eye on the price movements of palm and palm derivatives, a key input for its skin cleansing products, which are softening and will pass on the benefits to the consumers as it has done in other segments as tea, HUL CFO Ritesh Tiwari said in an earnings call. "Skin cleansing has seen a material increase in the last 6-12 months, in terms of palm and palm oil derivatives. Because of that, we have taken sequential price increases," he said.

Going forward, HUL is seeing "some softening in palm and palm derivatives". "It remains volatile, so we will keep watching how that unfolds," Tiwari said, adding, "We will stay true to the principle of replenishment pricing when it comes to tea or, for that matter, when it comes to skin cleansing." The FMCG leader further said like previous quarters, the rural market has continued to grow ahead of urban markets in the June quarter, though urban markets have also improved sequentially and expects this recovery to be sustained.

"Rural is ahead of urban, but urban has also improved. We have seen improvement and gradual recovery of the urban market," he said, adding, "We expect this recovery to be sustained." Factors such as lower inflation, improved liquidity in the country, taxation relief the government gave in the Budget, help urban areas to recover, he said. Tiwari said HUL's gross margins will improve, and invest that improvement in gross margin back into the business. The company will hold margins of 22 per cent for the next few quarters.

# PNB projects 700 crore quarterly benefit from new tax regime shift

**The bank took a one-time hit of ₹3,300 crore in the April–June quarter (Q1FY26) due to a mandatory provisioning linked to deferred tax assets.**

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

State-run Punjab National Bank (PNB) expects to save nearly ₹700 crore every quarter, or ₹2,800 crore annually, following its transition from the old corporate tax regime to the new one, D Surendran, Executive Director, Punjab National Bank, told TNIE in an exclusive interaction. The bank took a one-time hit of ₹3,300 crore in the April–June quarter (Q1FY26) due to a mandatory

provisioning linked to deferred tax assets, which sharply reduced its net profit year-on-year. But the Surendran said the move is a strategic one that will boost profitability in the coming quarters.

"Under the old regime, we were paying close to 35% in taxes. The new regime brings it down to about 25%. So, despite the one-time provision, we will save approximately ₹700 crore every quarter going forward," he said, calling it a "prudent long-term decision." Despite the accounting impact, the bank reported strong underlying performance in Q1. Profit before tax rose 28.3% to ₹6,758 crore, while operating profit crossed the ₹7,000 crore mark, the highest ever for the lender. The executive director of the PSU bank acknowledged that the bank's net interest income (NII) growth was moderate (grew at 1%) year-on-year and declined (-1.7%) sequentially, but attributed it to the time lag in deposit repricing amid falling interest rates.

"When RBI cuts rates, the benefit is passed on to borrowers almost immediately due

to around 73% by year-end," the PNB ED said. Retail and MSME segments led the growth in the loan book, with MSME loans expanding by 18%. Corporate loan growth was 7%, even after shedding ₹21,000 crore of low-yield assets. The bank has already sanctioned ₹91,000 crore in corporate disbursements, with another ₹38,000 crore under process. Slippages under control; strong recoveries

Despite high MSME growth, asset quality remained stable. The bank reported slippages of ₹1,880 crore, lower than its guidance of 1%. Notably, it recovered ₹3,350 crore in cash — 1.8 times the slippages — largely due to its revamped recovery strategy and dedicated asset recovery branches. Net NPA stood at just 0.38%, and provision coverage crossed 90%. "Every rupee recovered directly boosts our profits now," the official said. The bank has targeted ₹16,000 crore in recoveries this fiscal. The bank's CASA ratio declined to 37% from ~40% a year ago.



Credit outpaces deposits; MSME growth robust PNB reported 11.6% year-on-year growth in global business, with global deposits up 12.9% and global advances rising 9.8%. The bank aims to end FY26 with 11–12% credit growth and 9–10% deposit growth. "Our credit-deposit ratio is currently 70%, and we expect it to rise

## Jane Street not cooperating in probe with income tax department: Report

**WASHINGTON.(Agency)**

US-based global trading firm Jane Street is not cooperating with the income tax department in its ongoing probe, reported news agency Reuters on Friday. The firm is facing investigation over its operations and tax compliance in India. According to the source mentioned in the report, Jane Street has not provided access to important documents and data that the tax authorities have asked for. The firm's servers are located outside India, and officials said they are unable to access them. Additionally, accounts books are also being maintained overseas, even though company law requires them to be kept in India. "They have only a skeletal staff present here, who are also not cooperating," the government official said, cited in the report. "Their servers are located outside India and access is being blocked. The books of accounts are also maintained outside

the country, despite the requirement under Indian company law to maintain them in India," said a source quoted by Reuters. As part of the inquiry, tax officials are reviewing documents and



operations across Jane Street's India offices and those of its local trading partner Nuvama Wealth. The probe is still in its early stages, and officials say they are facing difficulty due to lack of cooperation. Earlier this month, markets regulator Sebi had temporarily

barred Jane Street from trading in the Indian market. The July 4 order alleged that the firm had manipulated stock indexes through its positions in derivatives. Sebi's investigation found that Jane Street earned a profit of \$4.23 billion from trading in India between January 2023 and May 2025. In response, the firm deposited \$567 million in an escrow account. This amount, according to the regulator, represents what it described as "unlawful gains". Jane Street made this deposit to demonstrate its intent to settle the issue while keeping its legal options open.

Following this, Sebi lifted the trading restrictions. However, despite the regulator clearing the path, Jane Street has not resumed trading in India.

The ongoing tax probe and issues of data access are now seen as the next hurdle in resolving the matter.

## New tax rules coming soon. How the Income Tax Bill 2025 could impact you

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

A new income tax law is on the way. Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is expected to table the much-talked-about Income Tax Bill, 2025 in Parliament on August 11. This move could replace the current Income Tax Act of 1961, which has been in use for over 60 years.

**WHAT'S NEW IN THE INCOME TAX BILL, 2025?**

This new law aims to make income tax rules easier to understand, reduce legal disputes, and help people comply with tax rules more easily. The current Act is bulky, with over 5,12 lakh words, but the new Bill has been trimmed to about 2.6 lakh words. The number of sections has been cut down from 819 to 536, and chapters from 47 to 23. While the new law includes more tables, 57 compared to 18 earlier, it removes more than 1,200 provisos and 900 explanations, making the document cleaner and easier to read.

**A BIG CHANGE: SAY GOODBYE TO ASSESSMENT YEAR**

One of the biggest changes in the new Bill is the introduction of a single 'tax year'. At present, we follow the concept of 'previous year' and 'assessment year', where income earned in one year is taxed in the next. The new Bill wants to do away with this system and tax income in the same year it is earned. This change is meant to bring more clarity and reduce confusion.

**DIGITAL-FRIENDLY AND EASIER FOR ALL**

The Bill also focusses on modernisation. It supports digital paperwork, introduces simpler dispute resolution methods, and aligns Indian tax laws with global standards, especially on international taxation. **SUGGESTIONS FROM THE SELECT COMMITTEE** On July 21, the Select Committee submitted its detailed report on the draft Income Tax Bill, 2025. The

committee examined the proposed legislation and made 285 recommendations, all documented in a comprehensive 4,500-page report.

Among the key suggestions were updates to certain definitions, such as "capital asset", "infrastructure capital company", and "micro and small enterprises," to ensure they align with other existing laws, reported Business Today. The panel also suggested providing more relief to taxpayers and homeowners by proposing a fairer method for calculating deductions on house property income. Additionally, it recommended allowing loss carry-forwards even when there are temporary changes in shareholding, which could particularly benefit small investors and entrepreneurs. Startups and environmentally-conscious businesses were also a focus, with proposals for clearer tax rules on R&D investments, tax relief for firms handling biodegradable waste.



share market shortcuts," Walia says. "Just clarity and consistency."

**THREE YEARS LATER: GOAL ACHIEVED** Over a span of three years, the technician managed to save Rs 2.5 lakh through mutual funds and Rs 2.1 lakh in recurring deposits. Alongside this, he earned Rs 2 lakh from weekend freelance work, received a Rs 50,000 Diwali bonus, and added another Rs 10,000 by selling his old scooter. In total, he gathered Rs 7.1 lakh, enough to buy a car outright, with no EMIs and zero financial stress, said Walia.

**A LESSON FOR EVERYONE** Walia believes you don't need a 7-figure salary to hit your personal milestones. What matters more is having a plan that works for your life, and the discipline to stick to it. So, the next time someone says you need a big salary to live big, tell them that you don't have to earn big to dream big.

## Why has ED summoned Anil Ambani on August 5

**Anil Ambani, chairman and managing director of Reliance Group, has been summoned by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) for questioning on August 5.**

**New Delhi.. (Agency)**

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has called Anil Ambani, chairman and managing director of Reliance Group, to appear for questioning on August 5. This is part of an investigation into an alleged Rs 17,000 crore loan fraud, according to a report by The Economic Times. The case relates to money laundering under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). Last week, ED officials searched 35 locations in Mumbai. These searches covered 50 companies and 25 individuals connected to Reliance Group. Alongside the ED's probe, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has submitted findings of a separate investigation. Sebi's report, as accessed by The Economic Times, alleged that Reliance Infrastructure (R Infra) diverted around Rs 10,000 crore.

He also said that the recovery from Odisha's distribution companies, part of the settlement deal, is still pending in court. "This amount is fully recoverable," he said, and denied receiving any notice from Sebi on the issue. In May, Sebi wrote to three agencies: ED, the National Financial



Reporting Authority (NFRA) and the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI), asking them to investigate the matter on their own. According to Sebi, the transactions between R Infra and CLE were not just business dealings. The market regulator said the company showed these as normal business activities, which helped hide the fact that funds were being moved to another group company.

The report added that R Infra did not disclose these connections in its financial reports. Sebi claimed this misled investors and regulators. "By considering CLE as a third-party company, R Infra avoided accurate and meaningful disclosures," said the report. It added that these misstatements

"continue till date." Sebi found that R Infra had moved funds to CLE in different forms. These included loans, investments in shares and giving corporate guarantees. As of March 31, 2022, the total exposure was Rs 8,302 crore. The regulator's probe covers financial years from 2016 to 2023. Between 2017 and 2021, R Infra wrote off Rs 10,110 crore because of provisions, fair value adjustments and impairments. Sebi said that even after CLE showed signs of not being able to repay loans, R Infra kept sending more funds. It also found that CLE's annual transactions made up a significant portion of R Infra's total assets. From 2013 to 2023, this ranged from 25% to 90% each year. Sebi further claimed that R Infra did not name CLE as a related party to avoid mandatory clearances and checks. This included approvals from shareholders and audit committees.

# Rhea Chakraborty

Gets Annoyed With Paparazzi At Mumbai Airport, Says 'Ab Mere Peeche Mat Aao'

Rhea Chakraborty, once again, became the center of attention as she was spotted at the Mumbai airport on Thursday. However, what caught the public's eye this time wasn't her airport fashion or a film announcement—it was her visibly annoyed reaction to the paparazzi following her to the parking lot.

In a video circulating online, the Chehre actress is seen walking briskly toward her car when she turns to the shutterbugs and says, "Ab mere peeche mat aao. Maine solo de diye, bye!" (Don't follow me. I've already given solo pictures, bye!). Her tone, though assertive, came off as irritable to many viewers, sparking debate across social media platforms.

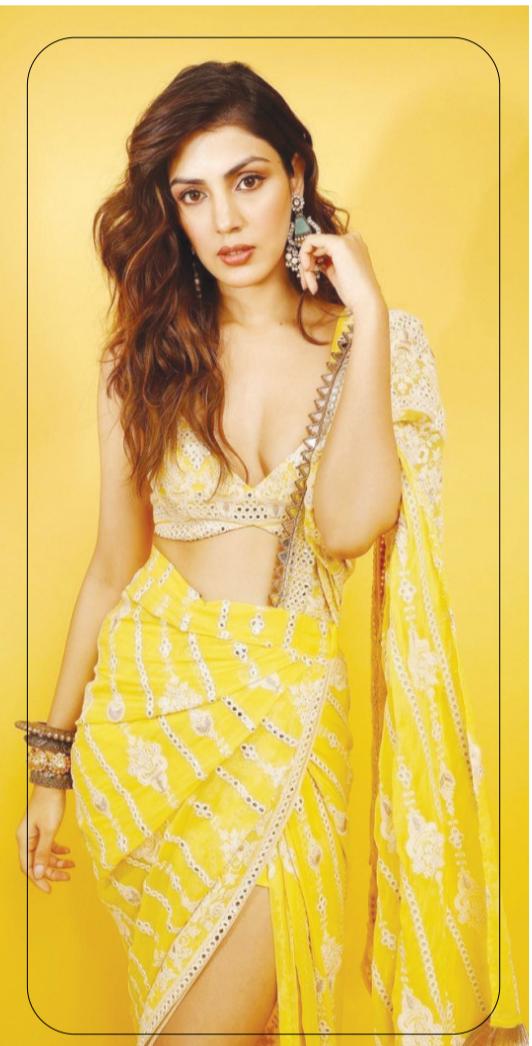
While some defended her need for space, others criticized her demeanor. "Bhaileg, tumlog ka itna din kharab ho gaya ki ise bhi bhaw dete ho," wrote one netizen, taking a dig at both the paps and Rhea's perceived attitude. Another Instagram user remarked, "Har jagah muh uthake chale jaate hain aap log," targeting the media for being intrusive. One user bluntly said, "Attitude nahi, dimaag kharab," adding to the wave of mixed reactions.

The incident comes at a time when Rhea is once again in the legal spotlight. A Mumbai court recently issued a notice to her in connection with the 2020 complaint she had filed against late actor Sushant Singh Rajput's sisters—Priyanka Singh and Meetu Singh—and Dr. Tarun Nathu Ram. In her complaint, Rhea alleged that they facilitated the procurement of medication for Sushant without valid medical supervision. However, the CBI's closure report found no evidence of criminal wrongdoing. Rhea has now been directed to submit her response by August 12, 2025.

On the professional front, Rhea has stayed away from films since Chehre. However, she

made a television comeback as a gang leader in two seasons of MTV Roadies, earning praise for her strong persona.

Still, moments like Thursday's show that public opinion about Rhea remains sharply divided, reflecting the complex legacy she continues to navigate in the aftermath of controversy.



## Saiyaara's Aneet Padda Puts Her Goofy Side On Display In New Vacation Post



Aneet Padda is a star now, thanks to the success of her blockbuster film Saiyaara. But how is she celebrating? With a well-deserved vacation, of course. The actress jetted off to a beautiful, exotic location to enjoy her break from work and her fans can't get enough of the glimpses she has been sharing, keeping them posted with her life off-camera. But it is her latest post that has the internet buzzing and that's not because of just her gorgeous looks, though she looks like a dream.

In a new snap on Instagram stories, Aneet posted a cute close-up selfie and her glowing skin melted

hearts. What stole the attention was the caption as she wrote, "Raina did not like this picture so I had to edit her out," putting her playful honesty into display.

#### Aneet Padda's Film Journey

Aneet Padda is basking in love for her role of Vaani Batra in Saiyaara. Also starring debutant Ahaan Panday, the Mohit Suri-directorial is inching close to Rs 275-crore mark at the box office. Before the romantic drama, the actress also worked in Kajol's film, Salaam Venky and a web series titled Big Girls Don't Cry.

#### Aneet Padda's Struggling Days

In an earlier interview with Zoom, Aneet Padda had opened up about her struggling days, revealing that it was difficult for her to make a name in showbiz, given her roots in Amritsar. She had said, "The most obvious thing for me to say is that wanting to become an actor in a Punjabi household—a girl from Amritsar wanting to make it big in the industry—has been especially



difficult because everybody around you asks questions about your decision to do something in the industry. I had decided that if I never put my foot out there and actually tried to make it, I would definitely hate myself. I still don't know if I will." Looking ahead, Aneet Padda has reportedly signed a courtroom drama which also features Fatima Sana Shaikh. The upcoming project, titled Nyaya, produced by Applause Entertainment, will see Fatima in a bold role of a cop fighting for justice for a 17-year-old rape victim, played by Aneet Padda. The show, filmed last year, also stars Arjun Mathur in the key role.

Sam Merchant Joins Tripti Dimri At Dhadak 2's Special Screening



Tripti Dimri was on cloud nine as her loved ones attended the special screening of her upcoming movie, Dhadak 2. Co-starring Siddhant Chaturvedi, the movie will hit the theatres on August 1. Ahead of this, the makers hosted a special screening of the romantic thriller on July 30. The Animal actress was joined by Sam Merchant, her rumoured boyfriend, and other friends.

Sam Merchant Joins Tripti Dimri For Special Screening Of Dhadak 2

On her Instagram stories, Tripti Dimri reposted a picture shared by her friend and YouTuber, Saloni Patel. The snap featured Tripti and Sam Merchant as well as Saloni, Sonali Vachher and producer Sheetal Bhangre posing for a selfie.

Sam Merchant Cheers For Tripti Dimri's Dhadak 2

In one of the following Instagram stories, Tripti Dimri also reposted another video shared by Sam Merchant. The clip featured the credits scene of the movie, with the audience clapping at the end. Sharing the video, Merchant dropped three red heart emojis and tagged Tripti.

He even recorded Tripti's candid moment inside the movie hall with her fans and posted it on his Instagram Stories. Not only this, Sam Merchant also promoted Dhadak 2 by posting a picture of the film's poster banner while travelling.

Talking about Tripti and Sam, the two have never confirmed any rumours about their relationship. But fans have joined the dots between their social media posts and multiple appearances together at various public events, giving rise to speculation that the actress is dating the model-turned-businessman.

#### Dhadak 2's Cast And Crew

Coming to Dhadak 2, the romantic drama is written and directed by Shazia Iqbal. The spiritual sequel to the 2018 movie Dhadak is produced by Dharma Productions, Zee Studios and Cloud 9 Pictures. It is a remake of the Tamil film Pariyerum Perumal. Apart from Tripti Dimri and Siddhant Chaturvedi, Zakir Hussain and Saurabh Sachdeva are also part of Dhadak 2.

**Ranbir Kapoor Looks Uber Cool In Casuals, Takes Selfies With Fans**



Ranbir Kapoor is everyone's favourite for a reason. The actor is widely loved by all, not just for his acting skills but also for his humble and down-to-earth nature. On Thursday too, Ranbir impressed everyone as he was spotted taking selfies with his fans in Mumbai.

In a video that surfaced on social media, Ranbir Kapoor was seen walking out of a studio when he was snapped by the paparazzi. The actor looked uber cool in casual attire. He was seen posing for the shutterbugs in a white hoodie with blue jeans. After flaunting his smile for the paparazzi, Ranbir even obliged fans with selfies.

Just a few days back, Ranbir was also spotted by the paparazzi as he arrived at Sanjay Leela Bhansali's office in Mumbai. He was also accompanied by his wife, actress Alia Bhatt. In the photos that surfaced on social media, the real-life couple was seen entering the Bhansali office.

It should be noted that Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt will soon be seen in Bhansali's Love And War, which will also star Vicky Kaushal in the lead.

Earlier this year, Ranbir talked about the project during a meet and greet event in Mumbai when he said, "Love and War is something which is every actor's dream. To work with brilliant actors like Alia and Vicky and to be directed by the master – Sanjay Leela Bhansali. I worked with him 17 years ago. To work with him again, I can say this with so much of clarity that I haven't met a human being who works so hard, who understands characters, emotions, music, Indian culture, Indian value system, as much as Sanjay Leela Bhansali. Just to be on his set, it is tiring. It is long. The process can be a little daunting but eventually, as an artist, it is so satisfying. He really nurtures art. As actors, it's truly been amazing so far."

# Exercise according to your Sun sign



Here's a rundown on what exercises you should opt for, based on your sun sign. Your astronomical signs not only give you insights into your characteristic traits but also tell you how your body works and functions. Says fitness expert, Althea Shah, "Each sun sign has something to tell about your strong as well as weak points, not only of your love life but also your body type."

**Aries (March 21-April 20)**

Aries have an abundance of energy and need to vent it out in a controlled manner. Since you hate routine, sticking to one can become boring for you. Says Shah, "Indulge in competitive sports like tennis, football and endurance training like weight lifting etc."

Make sure you stay away from any form of exercise that might stir anger as this will lead to high blood pressure and headaches.

**Taurus (April 21-May 21)**

Says fitness expert, Namrita Purohit, "The personality trait of a Taurian is said to have a slow metabolism. Thus you need to indulge in some form of rigorous exercise routine. Dance, running and jogging are ideal." Since you are prone to neck and throat problems, regular health care, sauna and massage will be of great help.

**Gemini (May 22 to June 21)**

You are prone to problems of the hands, arms and lungs. Says Shah, "Group

exercises, sports and gymnastics are a good option for you. Find a workout buddy to make exercising enjoyable for yourself." You can also indulge in yoga and meditation to battle stress. Since routine work is tedious for you, indulge in more than one form of exercise so that you don't get bored soon.

**Cancer (June 22 to July 22)**

Says Purohit, "Since you are bound to gain weight around your mid-section, invest in a few weights and exercise tapes to help workout better." You can also go in for water sports.

Since your problem area is the stomach, make sure not to go overboard with your exercise routine. To help fight anxiety, practice yoga and meditation.

**Leo (July 23 to August 22)**

Says Purohit, "Leos are said to have lot of energy and high intensity workouts like Altitude training is ideal." Cardio exercises are good for you as it will encourage the flow of blood. Pilates and stretches work the best for you. Leos are prone to heart attack, make sure to include jogging and

brisk walking to your every day exercise routine. The health chart of Leos say that they have a weak spine and heart — special attention is required.

**Virgo (August 23 to September 22)**

Indulge in meditation and relaxation based exercises to help calm your hyper active. Says Shah, "Cycling, playing badminton, running and stretching are some of the other endurance exercises which should be a part of your every day routine." Refrain from

indulging in habits which might trigger anxiety and tension.

**Libra (September 23 to October 22)**

Librans have a tendency to put on weight. Low impact cardio training and stretching are best recommended. Says Purohit, "Librans have shuffling levels of energy. In the mornings, you can try back stretches to strengthen your lower back." But you should

avoid heavy lifting or anything that can cause stress to your lower back.

**Scorpio (October 23 to November 21)**

Scorpios enjoy participating in aggressive sports. Intense, strenuous and competitive exercises are good for you. Boxing, martial arts and distance running like marathons will strengthen your muscles. But you should be careful of very strenuous exercises which might damage your ligaments or induce stress related injuries.

**Sagittarius (November 22 to December 21)**

You are prone to putting on weight around the waist, hips and thighs. Regular exercise is recommended. Says Shah, "Cycling, running and jogging are good exercises for you. Make sure to gym five days a week to tone your thighs and legs." But be careful of exercising too much, you can harm your hamstring and back muscles.

## Pink eye picks pace early this season

With the onset of summer, conjunctivitis is on the prowl. Doctors said though the peak period for the eye disease is yet to come, the number of patients has already started picking up. Since the viral conjunctivitis is highly contagious, the infection can soon assume an alarming proportion if the affected and those who are in their close contact don't take preventive and precautionary measures.

"The infection itself is self limiting (an illness or condition which will resolve on its own), lasting between three days to two weeks. But, the infection caused by adenovirus is contagious and hence the need for precautionary measures," said Keshab Halder, an eye specialist.

If the infection affects only the conjunctiva, it's easy to tackle. But the real concern is when the infection affects the cornea. According to doctors, in about 20%-30% of all conjunctivitis cases, the infection is more virulent involving the cornea. Since it threatens the vision there is a need for medical attention.

"Of the six cases I handled in the past two weeks, two involved the cornea. Now we have a kit that can detect if the infection is caused by adenovirus. If detected early, we can prevent the infection from spreading to the cornea. But the problem is people come rushing only when the vision is affected," said Jayangshu Sengupta, cornea and refractive surgeon.

Also known as the pink eye, the infection peaks during pre and post-monsoon. Though viral infection is the most common cause, other sources of infection are bacteria, chemical irritants, dust and pollens. For severe cases, there are antibiotic medication and steroid. In majority of the cases, remedies like washing the

bacterial drug. Random use of this drug is dangerous since it will cause resistance," said eye specialist Subrata Guha Thakurta. Though conjunctivitis is a self-limiting infection that goes away on its own or after treatment with anti-biotics, certain forms might become sight-threatening due to

scarring of the cornea. Therefore, in case the symptoms include pain, decreased vision, it's better to visit an eye specialist.

