

## Opposition slams Centre over Trump's H-1B visa fee hike move after tariff setback

Trump's \$100,000 H-1B visa fee hike triggers sharp criticism in India. Opposition leaders accuse Modi of weak diplomacy, warn of damage to Indian workers, economy and US ties.

New Delhi. (Agency)

In a move that could hit thousands of Indian professionals in the United States, President Donald Trump has signed a proclamation raising the annual H-1B visa fee to \$100,000 (around 90 lakh). The hike, which takes effect on September 21, has sparked sharp criticism from Indian opposition parties, who accuse the Narendra Modi

government of failing to protect national interests.

### CONGRESS SLAMS US BELLIGERENCE

Lok Sabha Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi described Prime Minister Narendra Modi as "weak." "I repeat, India has a weak PM," he wrote on X. He claimed crores of young Indians would suffer due to the steep fee hike while the Prime Minister remained silent. Congress leader Manish Tewari alleged that Washington is deliberately adopting a hostile stance toward New Delhi. Referring to the visa fee hike, trade tariffs and US-Pakistan ties, Tewari said these were part of a systematic pattern of pressure on India. He warned that such actions could damage long-term India-US relations.

### SAMAJWADI PARTY CALLS POLICY WEAK

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav termed India's foreign policy "weak" and questioned the Centre's preparedness to deal with the fallout. Highlighting India's

dependence on imports such as oil and fertilisers, he argued that repeated missteps had left the economy vulnerable.

### AAP LEADERS TARGET PM MODI

AAP MP Raghav Chadha wrote, "I had foreseen this in February 2025 and



predicted this would happen. With the new proclamation hiking H-1B visa fees to \$100,000/year, the U.S. risks pricing out thousands of talented Indian professionals who've long been the backbone of its tech and innovation sectors. Now, more than ever, India must invest deeply in its own innovation and

skill ecosystem, creating world-class labs, startups and opportunities right here at home. Our engineers, scientists and entrepreneurs can turn this disruption into a moment of strength fuelling growth if channelled and dealt with correctly." He urged India to invest in homegrown innovation and create opportunities domestically. Party chief Arvind Kejriwal went a step further, asking on social media if the Prime Minister of 140 crore people was "helpless", "Prime Minister ji, kuchh toh karo (do something at least)," he tweeted on X. He pressed Modi to act decisively instead of remaining silent.

### OWAISI REVIVES 'HOWDY MODI' DEBATE

AIMIM leader Asaduddin Owaisi recalled Modi's past camaraderie with Trump. He stated, "My complaint is not against Trump, he did what he wanted. My quarrel is with this government: what did you achieve with Howdy Modi and Namaste Trump? All those NRIs that you gathered in the Madison Square garden, what did that achieve?"

Unable to answer basic questions on Nicobar project: Congress slams Environment Minister

New Delhi. (Agency)

Hitting back at Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav for criticising the Congress for opposing the Great Nicobar infrastructure project, party leader Jairam Ramesh on Sunday said drawing the nation's attention to an imminent "ecological and humanitarian disaster" is not "negative politics" but an expression of grave concern. The minister is simply unable to answer basic questions that Congress has been repeatedly raising on the project, Ramesh said.

"The Union Minister of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change Shri Bhupender Yadav has accused the Indian National Congress of doing what he calls 'negative politics' on the Great Nicobar mega infrastructure project. Drawing the nation's attention to an imminent ecological and humanitarian disaster is NOT 'negative politics'. It is an expression of grave concern," Ramesh said on X. The minister is simply unable to answer basic questions that the INC has been repeatedly raising on the project, he said and asked whether the Great Nicobar Mega Infra Project, which requires the diversion of lakhs of trees, violate the National Forest Policy, 1988 which states that "tropical rain/moist forests, particularly in areas Andaman & Nicobar Islands should be totally safeguarded?"

"Compensatory afforestation is always a poor substitute for old-growth forests but the afforestation planned in this project is farcical. How can afforestation in distant Haryana, with a completely different ecosystem, be considered a genuine offset for the loss of old-growth rainforest unique to Great Nicobar? Why has the Government of Haryana already freed up 25 per cent of this land for mining instead of reserving it for the afforestation?" Ramesh said.

## Bihar 'gaali' row returns, BJP claims PM's mother abused at Tejashwi Yadav rally

On the other hand, RJD MLA from the Mahua constituency, Mukesh Roushan, smelt a conspiracy claiming that the viral video had been doctored by the BJP to defame Tejashwi and the party.

New Delhi. (Agency)

The BJP claimed that abuses were once again hurled at Prime Minister Narendra Modi's mother in poll-bound Bihar, this time during RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav's 'Bihar Adhikar Yatra.' Abusive words targeting PM Modi's mother could be heard in a video from the event in the Mahua assembly as Tejashwi reached there on the last day of the Yatra. The video was also shared by the BJP. Last month, a huge row erupted over the use of expletives against PM Modi's mother during Rahul Gandhi's Voter Adhikar Yatra, prompting the



BJP to file an FIR and call for a statewide bandh. There were street clashes in Patna as BJP and Congress workers confronted each other near the Grand Old Party's state headquarters. Following the fresh controversy that erupted at Tejashwi's rally, Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary lashed out at the INDIA bloc, saying, "Tejashwi Yadav has once again insulted Modi ji's late mother. He has once again torn apart the culture of Bihar. In the rally, the RJD workers were hurling as many abuses as they could,

and Tejashwi was encouraging them. The mothers and sisters of Bihar will surely hold him accountable for this thuggish mentality and abusive behaviour."

Echoing Samrat Choudhary's views, Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Kumar Sinha wrote:

## 2 detained in Manipur over deadly Assam Rifles ambush; Governor reviews security

Two people were detained in Manipur after an ambush on an Assam Rifles convoy killed two personnel and injured five. A probe is underway, and the government has announced ex-gratia for martyrs and injured.

Dispur. (Agency)

Manipur police detained two people in Manipur on Saturday in connection with the ambush on an Assam Rifles convoy that killed two personnel and injured five others, police said. A van suspected to have been used in the attack at Nambol Sabal Leikai on Friday evening has also been recovered, they added. Two jawans of the Assam Rifles lost their lives and five others sustained injuries when a group of armed men ambushed a Tata 407 vehicle of the paramilitary force. "... Security forces carried out a massive operation in Shantipur and Ishok areas... Two persons were detained for further verification," Manipur Police said in a statement late on Saturday.

The silver-blue van was found at Mutum Yangbi in Imphal West district, about 10 km from the ambush site, police said. "As per preliminary investigation, multiple owners of the said vehicle have been identified, and efforts are still on to uncover more details," the statement added. A day after the attack, Manipur Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla chaired a high-level security review meeting at Raj Bhavan, Imphal. The discussions focused on the September 19 ambush in Bishnupur district,

where personnel of the 33 Assam Rifles came under fire. Nb Sub Shyam Gurung (58) and Rifleman GD Kashav (29) were killed in the line of duty, while five others were injured. Officials resolved to strengthen coordination among security agencies to swiftly identify the perpetrators and prevent similar incidents. Measures under consideration included enhanced patrolling, intensified intelligence



gathering, and tightened security in vulnerable areas, highways, and border zones. Following the meeting, the Governor visited the IGAR (South) Headquarters at Mantripukhri, where he paid homage to the mortal remains of the two martyrs. He laid a wreath, and a general salute was accorded in their honour.

## Punjab CM rips into Congress over internal chaos, denies cross-voting in V-P poll

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann has denied allegations that AAP MPs from the state cross-voted in the recent vice-presidential election. In an interview with, he accused Congress of internal disarray, questioning its MPs' loyalty, and reiterated that AAP ensured all its MPs voted as directed.

Chandigarh. (Agency)

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Thursday denied allegations that Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MPs from Punjab cross-voted in the recent vice-presidential election, while sharply criticising Congress for internal disarray and mismanagement. Speaking to India Today TV, Mann said the party ensured its MPs voted as directed and that no deviation occurred in V-P polls. Responding to a query about reports that some MPs from Punjab did not align with the AAP during the election, Mann clarified that the party took special measures to ensure participation. He said MPs Shichewal and Ashok Mittal were taken off their regular schedules and provided transportation, including cars and flights if needed, to reach Delhi and cast their votes. "When they went for the secret ballot, do you think the vote was not ours? We did not cross-vote," Mann asserted. The vice-presidential election was held earlier this month on September 9, following the sudden resignation of Jagdeep Dhankar in July. CP Radhakrishnan, a veteran BJP leader from Tamil Nadu, won the poll by securing 452 votes against Opposition INDIA bloc nominee B Sudershan Reddy, who polled 300 votes. The BJP-led NDA, with support from smaller parties including the YSR Congress, comfortably crossed the halfway mark in the 775-member Electoral College. Mann criticised the Congress party for allegedly not managing its own members and repeatedly questioning the loyalty of others. Mann cited that 115 former Congress MPs have joined the BJP and highlighted internal issues within Congress as a reason for such doubts.

## The Future Belongs to India, the Whole World Will Witness It: CM Rekha Gupta

The Sikh Times  
Simmi Kaur Babbar

New Delhi, 21 September 2025  
Delhi Chief Minister, Mrs. Rekha Gupta, stated that the future belongs to India. India is emerging as a global guru, and the whole world will witness this rise. The Chief Minister shared these views today at the 'Vikas Bharat Art Camp – Seva Pakhwada' held near the Mohammad Quli Khan Tomb in Mehrauli Archaeological Park. The event was organized jointly by the Delhi Government's Department of Art, Culture, and Language and the Sahitya Kala Parishad. The Chief Minister also emphasized that the preservation and beautification of historical monuments is an important responsibility of the government,

being carried forward in alignment with the vision of the Hon'ble Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi.

The event was attended by Delhi's Minister of Art, Culture, and Language, Kapil Mishra; local MLA Shri Gajendra Yadav; Secretary Rashmi Singh; and other dignitaries. Around 1,000 children and 75 young artists showcased their creativity and art. Additionally, the Sahitya Kala Parishad presented the cultural program 'Aneka Mein Ekta'. On this occasion, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta mentioned that the event is a beautiful celebration of Bharat Mata's culture and art, organized by the Ministry under the 'Seva Pakhwada' on the occasion of the Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi Ji's birthday. She further noted that four monuments, whose restoration has been fully



completed, were dedicated during the event. The Chief Minister highlighted that the program reflects the Prime Minister's vision of 'Vikas Bhi aur Virasat Bhi'. Alongside the country's development, the preservation of historical heritage is equally important. Currently, the Ministry is working on 14 monuments, which are being

preserved for future generations. With warmth and enthusiasm, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta shared personal experiences, stating that visiting this complex brought back childhood memories of picnics to Qutub Minar, Red Fort, and the Delhi Zoo.

She reiterated that preserving and beautifying monuments is an important government task, carried forward in alignment with the Prime Minister's vision. She emphasized that the paintings created by children and artists reflect what India's next phase will be. The future belongs to India, which is emerging as a global guru, and the world will witness it. She added that everyone should work together to ensure both the country and Delhi progress.

Continued news page 2

## What DY Chandrachud said after Chief Justice's subtle dig over official home row

New Delhi. (Agency)  
Former Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud brushed aside the controversy surrounding the delay in vacating his official residence after retirement and the remarks made by current CJI BR Gavai, saying that everyone has the right to express their views. Gavai's comment during Justice Sudhanshu Dhulia's farewell

-- "See, some people vacate the next day" -- was seen by many as a subtle dig at Chandrachud. CJI Gavai then said that he would "for sure vacate" his official residence following his retirement this November, within the stipulated time as per the rules. When asked if CJI Gavai's statement was directed at him, Justice Chandrachud told India Today's sister channel

Lallatop: "Look, I wouldn't like to comment on anyone. You mentioned that maybe the Chief Justice of India said something at Justice Dhulia's farewell. That is his opinion. I may or may not agree with it. But I respect every organ of our institution. Everyone has the right to express what they think." In an unusual move, the Supreme Court administration

had written to the Centre back in July stating that the time allotted for Justice Chandrachud to vacate the official residence of the CJI has already expired. Chandrachud vacated his official residence at Krishna Menon Marg in Delhi earlier in August. I once held the same position that CJI Gavai currently holds.

Front continued news

## The Future Belongs to India, the Whole World Will Witness It: CM Rekha Gupta

According to the Chief Minister, thousands of paintings created by children and numerous artists reflect their dedication and feelings towards the nation. The Ministry of Art, Culture, and Language, along with Minister Kapil Mishra, deserves appreciation for organizing such special programs. Shri Kapil Mishra is not just a cultural organizer but a true lover of art who wholeheartedly organizes every cultural and artistic event.

Art and Culture Minister Kapil Mishra said that the Mehrauli Archaeological Park has been restored and preserved by the Delhi Government. The site is now being presented in a new form with high-tech lighting and is being developed as a major tourist destination. He added that in line with the Prime Minister's vision of 'Vikas Bhi aur Virasat Bhi', the Delhi Government is restoring approximately 14 historical monuments, four of which have been completed. An exhibition at the venue displayed the old and current forms of the monument. He further stated that on the occasion of Prime Minister Narendra Modi Ji's birthday, Delhi's children and artists displayed their creativity in large numbers. Around 1,000 children created paintings on themes such as Developed India, Operation Sindoos, Future India, and Transforming India. These artworks are not only inspiring but also provide a glimpse of the nation's bright future.

Minister Kapil Mishra also said that Delhi and India's Gen Z are deeply connected with the Prime Minister. Children and youth do not need explicit instructions on what themes to choose for their paintings. Most children independently select topics such as the Prime Minister, Atmanirbhar Bharat, or Viksit Bharat. These creations reflect the new generation's positive attitude and determination regarding the country's future. He noted that the paintings prominently feature themes such as the Prime Minister's life, Atmanirbhar Bharat, and Viksit Bharat. These thousands of artworks convey the message that India's future is safe and bright in the hands of the new generation. He added that those who question the Prime Minister's vision should visit such events to witness the optimism and commitment of the youth towards the nation. He emphasized that this event is not only a celebration of art and culture but also a symbol of the new generation's creative energy and faith in a developed India.

## News box

## 600 challans, Rs 60L fines: Cops turn the volume down on noisy bikes in Gurgaon

**Noida.(Agency)**

In a move to tackle noise pollution and improve road safety, cops in the city have launched a crackdown on two-wheeler riders using modified silencers and pressure horns, with a special focus on "bullet firecracker" motorcycles. The campaign, which concluded on Friday, saw cops issue a total of 604 challans to violators, amounting to fines worth Rs 60.4 lakh. The enforcement drive began early this year, with police closely monitoring city roads for bikes fitted with illegal modifications that create loud, firecracker-like sounds. Till Aug 31 this year, the police issued 515 challans for such violations, collecting Rs 51.5 lakh in fines. The drive continued into Sept, when cops handed out 89 additional challans specifically for "bullet firecracker" bikes, resulting in Rs 8.9 lakh more in penalties. Explaining the motive behind the campaign, Rajesh Mohan, DCP (traffic), said, "The initiative was part of the traffic police's mission to combat violations that endanger road safety and disrupt public peace. We noted that certain two-wheeler riders, especially those driving Bullet motorcycles, modify their silencers to produce explosive, firecracker-like sounds."

## H-1B visa fee hike may force many to return: Experts

**Noida. (Agency)**

US president Donald Trump's recent decision to significantly increase the fees for H-1B visas has shocked the IT industry in Gurgaon, which is already reeling from a 50% tariff on Indian goods.

Signed on Sept 19, the proclamation hikes the annual H-1B fee to \$100,000, a move experts say could reshape the flow of Indian tech talent. Industry insiders say the change could prompt many Indian IT professionals to return home, potentially benefiting domestic IT services firms and Global Capability Centres (GCCs). However, mid-career professionals with established lives in the US may face significant disruption. Pravin Kaushal, advisor at Antino, described the new reality as making the "American Dream" far costlier. "Young professionals are already exploring alternatives, from Canada's tech-friendly immigration, emerging European hubs, or India's increasingly vibrant startup ecosystem," he said. Kaushal stressed the need to build domestic strength. "India must invest in world-class R&D, deep tech, and improve living conditions to retain and attract top talent. Success should not be defined only overseas," he added. Nitin Sahini, founder of Foqal Analytics, said the move could be a boon for Indian IT services and GCCs in the long term but disruptive for individuals. "Mid-career professionals, fully invested in life in the US, will be most affected," he said. He also noted that AI and data science are reshaping skill demands, with traditional IT roles potentially losing relevance. Early-career professionals are better positioned to capitalise on new-age skills.

Manas Human, CEO of Nagarro, echoed the sentiment. "While the order will cause individual grief and displacement, it will sharply reduce brain drain and strengthen India's talent pool," he said. Atul Rai, co-founder and CEO of Staqu Technologies, called for a broader structural shift. "India currently functions largely as a service provider for global IT. Rising visa fees expose the fragility of that model. The focus should shift to creating and exporting products, building AI and automation capabilities, and encouraging domestic adoption of Indian software," he said, underscoring the need for India to emerge as a self-reliant technology powerhouse.

# Dengue cases cross 300 in Noida, 120 logged in 2 weeks

**Noida/Ghaziabad.(Agency)**

Noida has reported 312 dengue cases so far this year, with over 130 recorded in the past two weeks, officials said on Saturday. Ghaziabad's tally stands at 108. Noida health authorities have now capped dengue test charges at Rs 600 and directed private hospitals to prioritise treatment for patients suffering from vector-borne diseases. Officials said 265 rapid response teams are working under the Dastak campaign to conduct surveillance, provide treatment, and raise awareness. Preventive measures, including intensified fogging, larvicide spraying, and awareness campaigns, have also been stepped up to curb mosquito

breeding. The rising numbers, officials said, were linked to heavy rainfall and waterlogging that created breeding grounds for mosquitoes. "The rise in numbers also says that more tests are happening. Several hotspots have been identified and inspections are underway to prevent mosquito breeding there," said Stuti Kirti Verma, district malaria officer. Areas such as Barola, Harola, Amrapali Dreams, Galaxy Vega, and Royal Nest remain among the most affected localities in Noida, while survey teams also detected larvae in several areas. Private hospitals are also witnessing an increase in patient load. "We are seeing 20-25 dengue cases daily in the OPD," said the Noida official.

The notice instructed that every private hospital should prioritise patients suffering from vector-borne diseases and reserve at least five beds with mosquito nets to prevent the possibility of infection in other patients. The maximum rate for dengue-related tests, including NS1 ELISA and MAC ELISA, has been fixed at Rs 600, and under no circumstances should higher charges be levied," said the Noida official.



## Flip-flip-flip: SPR plan back to where it began — underpasses or flyovers

**Bhimpur (Nuh).**

"Gurgaon: Southern Peripheral Road (SPR) has gone from a road on the city's margins to the main artery of its new development in six years, but its redevelopment plan just can't seem to pass muster. After going back and forth several times on what kind of a road they want to build, GMDA officials will circle back to the same debate that the original redevelopment proposal of 2019 had triggered — whether to build flyovers or underpasses. This is because cabinet minister Rao Narbir Singh has asked GMDA to explore the feasibility of underpasses between Ghata Chowk and Vatika Chowk, reopening an idea that surfaced in the early stages of the project but was canned. "I have been pushing for the redevelopment of this road for a long time. I had suggested the construction of underpasses so that if a metro line is planned in the future, sufficient space remains available. GMDA will prepare the detailed plan, but my priority is that this road should be built properly to ensure smooth and uninterrupted vehicular movement," Singh told TOI.

Officials admitted that underpasses will not only cost 15-20% more than flyovers but also bring higher maintenance

challenges. Besides, since the city has poor drainage, underpasses are particularly prone to waterlogging when it rains.

A GMDA official said, "Flyovers are straightforward to maintain. Underpasses, however, need robust drainage systems and continuous upkeep and power supply. We have received representations from the minister and other stakeholders to consider developing underpasses instead of flyovers on the same lines as Golf Course Road." The underpass-flyover debate, however, pertains to a 7km section of the road till Vatika Chowk. The Vatika Chowk-NH48 section of SPR will be redeveloped as an elevated road. Planners initially studied the Golf Course Road model, where underpasses were built instead of flyovers to avoid dividing neighbourhoods with tall retaining walls. However, unlike Golf Course Road, where underpasses have a clearance of 3.5metres, SPR carries a large volume of commercial traffic, requiring a minimum 5.5m clearance. Planners argued that this would make underpasses unsafe and impractical. The stretch's natural gradient also raised red flags — a sharp drop of around 60 metres over 8.8km makes it

vulnerable to heavy water accumulation during rains. "Providing underpasses with 5.5m clear height on this stretch does not seem to be a safe deal," an earlier feasibility note stated. Golf Course Road needed underpasses because they had to be integrated with the Rapid Metro corridor. Since SPR does not have a metro corridor, flyovers with wide viaducts was what planners settled on. In 2022, the metropolitan authority prepared a plan to build eight flyovers and widen SPR into a six-lane carriageway with three-lane service roads at an estimated cost of Rs 845.5 crore, with around Rs 333 crore estimated for eight flyovers. However, the plan was scrapped in Aug 2023 by the state govt when questions were raised over the requirement for three flyovers between Vatika Chowk and NH8 due to "low traffic volume." A revised DPR approving five flyovers from Ghata Chowk to Vatika Chowk was cleared, but govt directed GMDA to rework costs since the detailed project report was old.

In Aug 2023, GMDA was asked to revamp a 5.5km stretch of the road as a signal-free elevated corridor to improve connectivity between Dwarka Expressway, Delhi-Mumbai Expressway and NH48. The

## Staffer for 23 years dies by suicide, abetment FIR against music company owner

**Gurgaon. (Agency)**

An FIR for abetment was registered against senior officials of T-Series, including its MD and head of department, after an employee for 23 years died by suicide alleging harassment. Manoj Kumar (47), who rose through the ranks as assistant manager in the two decades he worked with T-Series, was found dead at a company-owned property in Sobha International City in Sector 109 on Sept 16. His family alerted police after he did not return home in Delhi's Bijwasan till late that night. According to police, a few hours before his death, Kumar sent a video to his wife, Rekha Rani, in which he alleged mental harassment by his senior and also named the music company's MD and a female relative of the owner. In the video, Kumar claimed that his senior had threatened him and referred to the company's influential connections, even mentioning a notorious gangster. Police officials, however, pointed out that the video did not detail the specific nature of the alleged harassment. Rekha Rani told police that her husband had been sharing his distress over alleged harassment at workplace, naming senior officials and the company's owner as responsible for it. She claimed that the "pressure and threats" he described eventually drove him to take the extreme step. The man took the names of his senior and the company's owner in the video, which is why we mentioned them in the FIR. But he did not specify the nature of the suffering he allegedly endured. That would have made the case clearer. Now, we are yet to ascertain how he was mentally harassed in office. We will question the local staff and initiate a detailed probe in the case," senior police official said.

Police spokesperson ASI Sandeep Kumar confirmed that Kumar's wife had lodged a complaint, following which an FIR was registered at Baighera police station under sections 108 (abetment of suicide) and 3(5) (criminal act done by several persons)

## Corporations in Gurgaon and Manesar will now turn to AI to spot potholes, encroachments

**Noida. (Agency)**

Municipal corporations in Gurgaon and Manesar have introduced an AI-based audit system to monitor the condition of roads. The project, launched on Saturday in wards 21 and 27 of the MCG, uses camera-equipped vehicles and computer vision software to flag defects such as potholes, faded markings, and encroachments. Developed in partnership with IT firm Nagarro and AI platform Road Athena, the initiative aims to replace manual road surveys with faster and more accurate assessments. The photographs and video footage captured during road patrols are processed through advanced computer vision algorithms and categorise the problems into issues like damaged

signboards, non-functional signalling systems, and broken sidewalks. According to MCG engineers, the system generates a digital map of defects with geo-tags and severity ratings, enabling the civic body to prioritise repairs. This information is available on a centralised dashboard for municipal officials, enabling them to

prioritise repair work more effectively. They added that AI-driven reporting would cut down the time spent on physical inspections and improve accountability in road maintenance. The two corporations plan to expand the audits to more wards in the coming weeks. Officials said that this initiative aims to transform the way road infrastructure is monitored and maintained. "Our Hon'ble Chief Minister has assured everyone that Gurgaon will be transformed within a year through a proactive approach and the adoption of technology-driven, decisive reforms. In line with this vision, we are introducing AI to replace conventional methods for improving the city's roads.



## Man from Noida handed life term for killing wife of 7 mths; had claimed she died of dengue

**Ghaziabad. (Agency)**

Noida: A fast-track court in Noida sentenced a man to life imprisonment for strangling his wife just seven months after their marriage, even as he attempted to mislead authorities into believing she had died of dengue-related complications.

Raj Kumar, alias Raju, a resident of Sector 49, was convicted under Section 302 of the Indian Penal Code and fined Rs 1 lakh by additional sessions judge Saurabh Dwivedi. The court, however, acquitted his mother and father of murder and dowry death charges, citing insufficient evidence of their involvement. Raju married Pooja, a native of Kasganj, on May 4, 2018, following a court order after the couple eloped. On Nov 16 the same year, she was found dead at their rented accommodation. Pooja's father, Satish Chandra, lodged a complaint alleging his

daughter was murdered for dowry, prompting Sector 49 police to register a case under Sections 498A, 304B, 302 IPC, and provisions of the Dowry Prohibition Act against Raju, his mother Manju, and later his father Virendra Singh.

The case was transferred to a fast-track court in Feb 2024. During the trial, the prosecution produced 12 witnesses, including the doctor who performed the autopsy, while the defence presented only one — Pooja's treating doctor — claiming she had died of post-dengue complications. That claim was refuted by Dr Anil Kumar Gupta, who testified that Pooja's cause of death was "asphyxiation due to strangulation".

Investigating officer ACP Swetabh Pandey also confirmed that the woman had not been admitted to any hospital for dengue treatment and had died at home. The defence further argued that the case was motivated by vengeance, pointing to the complainant's earlier resistance to the marriage. Chandra admitted his daughter had eloped and chosen to marry Raju against the family's wishes, but denied registering a false case. The court observed that contradictory statements from witnesses weakened the

prosecution's case for dowry harassment. "Since the prosecution witnesses have not established the demand for dowry, the prosecution cannot rely on Section

304B," the judge ruled. However, it held that the evidence clearly proved Raju strangled his wife, making him solely liable for murder under Section 302.

## Cop on way to work dies after truck rams her scooter on NH-9

**Ghaziabad.(Agency)**

A 34-year-old head constable, posted in Greater Noida's Dadri, was killed on Saturday morning after a truck rammed her scooter on NH-9 near Bambeta village, police officials said. The cop, identified as Anuradha, was headed for work when the accident occurred around 10.45am in front of a fuel station near Wave City.

ACP (Wave City) Priyashri Pal said the accident was reported by a patrolling vehicle (PRV), which confirmed that the scooter had been hit by a truck and the cop died on the spot. "The police team immediately reached the site, identified head constable Anuradha and took the body into custody for autopsy. A case has been registered and further action is underway," Pal said. Officials said the truck involved in the collision was seized, but the driver fled the scene. Circle officer (Greater Noida-2) Ajit Kumar Singh said Anuradha was likely trying to bypass heavy morning traffic by taking a shortcut from Lalkuan when the truck hit her from behind. Anuradha, originally from Muzaffarnagar, had joined UP Police in 2011.

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# Sirsa directs a time-bound study on “smog-eating” photocatalytic surfaces to strengthen Delhi’s air protection

## The Sikh Times

New Delhi, September 21: Under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and the effective guidance of Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, the Delhi Government has deployed a 24x7, 365-day strategic environmental action plan to strengthen the city's protective shield against air pollution through technology-driven interventions and rigorous scientific validation. In a recent order, Sirsa has directed the Environment Department to conduct a focused study on “smog-eating” photocatalytic coat-

ings that can be applied on roads, concrete and tiles to reduce NO2 and harmful hydrocarbons where Delhi citizens live, travel and work. Delhi will evaluate and adopt the best of proven photocatalytic technologies, prioritising safety, sustainability and measurable impact to deliver cleaner air faster,” said Manjinder Singh Sirsa. “Delhi's fight against pollution is personal – for every child, every senior, every worker—and we are putting simple, safe, science-based tools on the ground, measuring results openly, and scaling up quickly wherever families can feel the difference in the air they breathe and in their lives.” Sirsa informed that the

Environment Department will lead this work in sim-

ple, accountable steps: selecting a reputed scientific partner within 30 days, running field trials on real city stretches, shar-

**NAME CHANGE**  
I Shivani Bodra Wife of Dhane Bodra is legally wedded wife spouse of CS No. 181606 Rank PNR presently residing at Phatka, PO. Dumardin Dist. Khunti Jharkhand 835227 have changed my name from swami Bodra to SHIVANI BODRA and my date of birth from 10.07.1983 to 01.01.1977 for all future purposes. Vide affidavit dated 21.08.2025 before Sub. division magistrate Ranchi Jharkhand India.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I hitherto known as SANGETA alias SANGETA CHANDER alias SANGETA KACHHWAH D/O UMED SINGH and wife SUBHASH CHAN DER, R/o H.no. 71, Puket-6, Sector-21 Rohini, Sutlajpur C-Block, PO. Sutlajpur C-Block, Dist. North West Delhi, Delhi-110086, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as SANGETA KACHHWAH.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
To be known to all that I Abhilash Pathak W/O Shri GP Pathak owner of 136B Ground Floor/Type, pvt A-3 Kondli, Sector-1, Mohan Vihar Phase-1, Delhi-110062, has applied for certified copy of the aforesaid flat such as original Demand cum Allotment letter office Possession Letter and NOC for Water and Electric has been lost. File no-L-045/756 90/KG/NP And FIR no/LR no- 234479/2024 to this effect has been lodged in the police station crime branch Delhi on dated 27/11/2024. Any person claiming any right, interest, having any objection or found in possession of original documents may write/ contact 9810519528. Dy. Director (LAB) Housing & Director (Housing), DDA Office Vikas Sadan, New Delhi, within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice.

**NAME CHANGE**  
It is for general information that I, JAI BHAGWAN SINGH S/O PURAN SINGH R/O G-108, Lalpat Nagar, Sahibabad, Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh-201005, declare that name of mine has been wrongly written as JAI BHAGWAN in my service records. The actual name of mine is JAI BHAGWAN SINGH which may be amended accordingly.

**NAME CHANGE**  
I, hitherto known as ANANCHAL KUMARI D/O PANKAJ KUMAR GUPTA R/o 611, KHAJURI PUSTA ROAD, NEAR CRPF CAMP BIHARIPUR VILLAGE, NORTH EAST DELHI, DELHI-110054 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as ANANCHAL KUMARI.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
I SUKHBIR S/o Pratap Singh, R/o Plot No-171, A-Block, Prem Nagar, Najafgarh, South West Delhi-110043 aged about 49 I have changed my name from Sukhbir to Sukhbir Yadav and I declare that Sukhbir and Sukhbir Yadav is the same person. Henceforth, I shall be known as Sukhbir Yadav for all purpose.

**NAME CHANGE**  
It is for general information that I, POOJA Daughter of JC-812434N Rank-SUB Name-YASHPAL SINGH Presently residing at VILL-PALPUR, PO-DEGHTA, TEH-BHIKASHEN, DIST-ALMORA, UTTARAKHAND-263659, have changed my name from POOJA to POOJA NEGI for all future purposes vide Affidavit dated 20/09/2025 before Notary Public, Delhi.

**NAME CHANGE**

It is for general information that I, Nisha alias Nisha Verma D/O Ram 4139, Gali Jain Mandir, Arya Pura, Subz Mandi, Malika Garj, North Delhi, Delhi-110007, declare that I got divorce from my husband vide court decree No. HMA No. 1089/2015 dated 22.09.2015. Further I remarried with Yogesh S/o Jagdish Parshad R/O Ward No. 8, Beniwal Mohalla, Mishran Wali Gali Samalkha , Samalkha Samalkha Panipat Haryana-132101,vide marriage certificate No-9073000 0230767, dated 03.09.2025. Further I have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Nisha Verma. Henceforth, I declare that the name of the father of my minor daughter Tanishka aged 13 years, may be known as Yogesh for all purposes in future, which may be amended accordingly.

**NAME CHANGE**

It is for general information that I, SANJAY SINGH S/O SHANKAR DAYAL R/O RADHA NAGAR HARDOI, HARDOI, UTTAR PRADESH-241001 declare that the name of mine and my wife have been wrongly written as SANJAY KANAUJIYA and BEBI VERMA in my minor son NAME GAURAV KANAUJIYA aged 17 years in his school record. The actual name of mine and my wife are SANJAY SINGH and BEBI DEVI respectively which may be amended accordingly.

**NAME CHANGE**

I, SELVARAJ father No-4583362Y Rank-HAV NAME-PERUMAL SAMY residing at STREET-9,2,16, KULALAR STREET, VILL-VAYAL PATTI, PO-VEERAPANDI, DIST-THENI, TAMIL NADU-625534, have changed my name to SELVARAJ to M SELVARAJ for all future purposes vide Affidavit dated 20/09/2025 before Notary Public, Delhi.

**NAME CHANGE**

I, VIDYA is wife of No. 2810561W Rank SEP Name DESHMUKH MAYUR presently residing at VILL-TASGAON, POST-TASGAON, TEH-SATARA, DIST-SATARA, STATE-UTTAR PRADESH PIN-221709, have changed my name from VIDYA to TETRI DEVI and date of birth from 22-11-1961 to 01-01-1960 for all future purposes. Vide affidavit dated 28.07.2025 before Notary Public, Delhi.

**NAME CHANGE**

I, VIDYA is wife of No. 2810561W Rank SEP Name DESHMUKH MAYUR presently residing at VILL-TASGAON, POST-TASGAON, TEH-SATARA, DIST-SATARA, STATE-UTTAR PRADESH PIN-221709, have changed my name from VIDYA to DESHMUKH VIDYA MAYUR for all future purposes. Vide affidavit dated 04.09.2025. before Notary Public, Delhi.

**NAME CHANGE**

I, VIDYA is wife of No. 2810561W Rank SEP Name DESHMUKH MAYUR presently residing at VILL-TASGAON, POST-TASGAON, TEH-SATARA, DIST-SATARA, STATE-UTTAR PRADESH PIN-221709, have changed my name from VIDYA to DESHMUKH VIDYA MAYUR for all future purposes. Vide affidavit dated 04.09.2025. before Notary Public, Delhi.

**NAME CHANGE**

I, VIDYA is wife of No. 2810561W Rank SEP Name DESHMUKH MAYUR presently residing at VILL-TASGAON, POST-TASGAON, TEH-SATARA, DIST-SATARA, STATE-UTTAR PRADESH PIN-221709, have changed my name from VIDYA to DESHMUKH VIDYA MAYUR for all future purposes. Vide affidavit dated 04.09.2025. before Notary Public, Delhi.

**NAME CHANGE**

I, VIDYA is wife of No. 2810561W Rank SEP Name DESHMUKH MAYUR presently residing at VILL-TASGAON, POST-TASGAON, TEH-SATARA, DIST-SATARA, STATE-UTTAR PRADESH PIN-221709, have changed my name from VIDYA to DESHMUKH VIDYA MAYUR for all future purposes. Vide affidavit dated 04.09.2025. before Notary Public, Delhi.

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**NAME CHANGE**

I, VIDYA is wife of No. 2810561W Rank SEP Name DESHMUKH MAYUR presently residing at VILL-TASGAON, POST-TASGAON, TEH-SATARA, DIST-SATARA, STATE-UTTAR PRADESH PIN-221709, have changed my name from VIDYA to DESHMUKH VIDYA MAYUR for all future purposes. Vide affidavit dated 04.09.2025. before Notary Public, Delhi.

**NAME CHANGE**

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**NAME CHANGE**

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**NAME CHANGE**

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**NAME CHANGE**

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**NAME CHANGE**

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**NAME CHANGE**

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**NAME CHANGE**

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**NAME CHANGE**

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**NAME CHANGE**

I, VIDYA is wife of No. 2810561W Rank SEP Name DESHMUKH MAYUR presently residing at VILL-TASGAON, POST-TASGAON, TEH-SATARA, DIST-SATARA, STATE-UTTAR PRADESH PIN-221709, have changed my name from VIDYA to DESHMUKH VIDYA MAYUR for all future purposes. Vide affidavit dated 04.09.2025. before Notary Public, Delhi.

**NAME CHANGE**

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**NAME CHANGE**

I, VIDYA is wife of No. 2810561W Rank SEP Name DESHMUKH MAYUR presently residing at VILL-TASGAON, POST-TASGAON, TEH-SATARA, DIST-SATARA, STATE-UTTAR PRADESH PIN-221709, have changed my name from VIDYA to DESHMUKH VIDYA MAYUR for all future purposes. Vide affidavit dated 04.09.2025. before Notary Public, Delhi.

**NAME CHANGE**

I, VIDYA is wife of No. 2810561W Rank SEP Name DESHMUKH MAYUR presently

## NEWS BOX

Trump at it again, claims he stopped India-Pak war with trade, wants 7 Nobels



Washington. (Agency)

US President Donald Trump repeated the claim that he solved the India-Pakistan conflict earlier this year with trade and asserted that he should get the Nobel Peace Prize for "ending seven wars". "On the world stage, we are once again doing things that we are just respected at a level that we have never been respected before.

"We are forging peace agreements, and we are stopping wars. So we stopped wars between India and Pakistan, Thailand and Cambodia," Trump said on Saturday at the American Cornerstone Institute Founder's Dinner.

He went on to say, "Think of India and Pakistan. Think of that. And you know how I stopped that -- with trade. They want to trade. And I have great respect for both leaders. But when you take a look at all of these wars that we've stopped."

"Just look at that, India, Pakistan, Thailand, Cambodia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kosovo and Serbia, Israel and Iran, Egypt and Ethiopia, Rwanda and the Congo. We stopped all of them. And 60 per cent of them were stopped because of trade," the US president claimed.

## New Hampshire country club shooting: One dead, several injured as suspect detained



WORLD. (Agency)

A shooting at a country club in southern New Hampshire of US on Saturday left one man dead and "several" others injured, according to authorities, as cited by Associated Press (AP). The incident took place at the Sky Meadow Country Club in Nashua, around 45 miles northwest of Boston.

Attorney General John Formella and Nashua Police Chief Kevin Rourke confirmed that the victim who died was an adult male. They said the suspected gunman, also an adult male, was taken into custody at the scene.

Details about the number of wounded or their conditions were not immediately released.

No second shooter

Authorities initially received reports suggesting two shooters, but officials later clarified there was only one suspect. Police said there was no ongoing threat to the public.

Aerial footage from WMUR-TV showed a heavy emergency response at the club, with multiple vehicles converging on the scene. US Representative Maggie Goodlander said in a statement that she was "closely monitoring the tragic reports of a shooting tonight at Sky Meadow Country Club in Nashua." She added, according to AP, that her heart is with the victims, their families and the community.

## Pete Hegseth-led Pentagon plans to limit journalists' access for releasing 'unauthorised information'

World. (Agency)

In an effort by the Trump administration to shape media reporting, the US Department of War has said that journalists need to agree to use only pre-approved information about the military and not disclose any unauthorised information or risk losing their credential to cover the Pentagon, BBC reported.

The new rule, that includes restrictions on the movement of journalists within the Pentagon facility, is reportedly part of an updated press credentialing process presented to news organizations this week. The rules came in a memo by Pentagon spokesperson Sean Parnell. The Pentagon's memo required journalists to sign a 10-page form which would act as a condition for receiving and holding a press pass to report on the Department of War, formerly known as the Department of Defense, Bloomberg reported. The development comes amid a series of leaks from the Pentagon in recent months. The "press" does not run the Pentagon — the people do. The press is no longer allowed to roam the halls of a secure facility. Wear a badge and follow the rules — or go home. pic.twitter.com/nkG1m6bW3z

—Pete Hegseth (@PeteHegseth) September 19, 2025

In a post on social media, Pete Hegseth, the Secretary of War said, "The 'press' does not run the Pentagon — the people do. The press is no longer allowed to roam the halls of a secure facility. Wear a badge and follow the rules — or go home." The Pentagon memo issued on Thursday stated "it remains committed to transparency to promote accountability and public trust."

# Police car torched, rocks thrown in Dutch anti-immigration protest; 30 arrested

**Dutch police used tear gas and water cannon to disperse violent anti-immigration protesters in The Hague. The clashes have raised tensions ahead of the national election and sparked debate over migration policies.**

NEW YORK/WASHINGTON. (Agency)

Dutch police used tear gas and a water cannon to disperse violent anti-immigration protesters in The Hague on Saturday, local authorities said.

Thirty people have been arrested, and two police officers were injured. Authorities did not rule out additional arrests in the coming days as they review camera footage.

Thousands of people had joined a protest organised by a right-wing activist, demanding stricter migration policies and a clampdown on asylum seekers, just over a month before a national election.

Large groups of protesters, many waving Dutch flags and flags associated with far-right groups, clashed violently with the police, throwing rocks and bottles,



footage from broadcaster NOS showed.

A police car was set on fire and a group of protesters briefly blocked a highway near the site

of the demonstration.

Local media reported that protesters also smashed several windows at the headquarters of the centre-left D66 party, viewed

by many on the far right as a party that serves a progressive elite. D66 leader Rob Jetten said on social media platform X that the damage inside was extensive.

## Thousands protest in Philippines over massive corruption scandal

Manila. (Agency)

Thousands of protesters took to the streets in the Philippine capital on Sunday to express their outrage over a corruption scandal involving lawmakers, officials and businesspeople who allegedly pocketed huge kickbacks from flood-control projects in the poverty-stricken and storm-prone Southeast Asian country.

Police forces and troops were put on alert to prevent any outbreak of violence.

Thousands of police officers were deployed to secure separate protests in a historic Manila park and near a democracy monument along the main EDSA highway, also in the capital region, where organizers hoped to draw one of the largest turnouts of anti-corruption protesters in the country in recent years.

The United States and Australian embassies issued travel advisories asking their citizens to stay away from the protests as a safety precaution.



"I feel bad that we wallow in poverty and we lose our homes, our lives and our future while they rake in a big fortune from our taxes that pay for their luxury cars, foreign trips and bigger corporate transactions," student activist Althea Trinidad told The Associated Press in Manila, where she joined a noisy crowd that police estimated at around 8,000 people by midday. "We want to

shift to a system where people will no longer be abused."

Trinidad lives in Bulacan, a flood-prone province north of Manila where officials said the most flood-control projects were being investigated either as substandard or nonexistent.

"Our purpose is not to destabilize but to strengthen our democracy," Cardinal Pablo Virgilio David, the head of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, said in a statement. He called on the public to demonstrate peacefully and demand accountability.

Organizers said protesters would focus on denouncing corrupt public works officials, legislators and owners of construction companies, along with a system that allows large-scale corruption, but they would not call on President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to step down.

Marcos first highlighted the flood-control corruption scandal in July in his annual state of the nation speech.

## British RAF Typhoons patrol Polish skies in response to Russian drone threat

**British Royal Air Force Typhoons have completed their inaugural Nato air patrol over Poland in response to a recent Russian drone incursion. The operation is intended to reinforce Nato airspace security and demonstrate alliance solidarity.**

WORLD. (Agency)

British Royal Air Force (RAF) fighter jets have carried out their first Nato air defence patrol over Poland, marking the United Kingdom's direct response to a recent Russian drone incursion into Polish airspace. The operation is part of Nato's Eastern Sentry mission, a move aimed at bolstering the alliance's eastern defences following what the UK government described as the "most significant violation" of Nato airspace since the onset of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Defence minister John Healey announced the mission on



Monday, highlighting the UK's commitment to the alliance after Russian President Vladimir Putin's escalation. Healey stated the sortie "sends a clear signal: Nato airspace will be defended," underlining the gravity of the latest security challenge facing the alliance.

According to a government statement, two RAF Typhoons departed from a British base in eastern England on Friday night, patrolled Polish skies, and returned safely to the United Kingdom early Saturday morning. The deployment aimed to deter and defend against aerial threats from Russia, including drones, in coordination with Nato partners.

Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Harv Smyth, confirmed the British jets joined allied forces operating along Nato's eastern flank. Emphasising operational readiness, Smyth said, "We remain agile, integrated, and ready to project airpower at range."

The UK has pledged to increase its defence spending to 2.6 per cent of GDP by April 2027. This announcement follows repeated criticism from US President Donald Trump regarding European defence contributions, with Britain positioning itself as a major contributor to collective European security.

## Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro's YouTube account offline as tensions with US escalate

WORLD. (Agency)

The YouTube account of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro was offline Saturday, with Venezuelan state-run channel Telesur claiming in a message on X that it was "eliminated" late the previous night without justification.

YouTube's parent company Google did not immediately respond to questions on the apparent termination of the Venezuelan president's account. It comes amid rising tensions between Venezuela and the United States over the deployment of American warships and fighter jets in the southern Caribbean.

Maduro's YouTube account had more than 200,000 followers before it became unavailable Friday and was used to publish the Venezuelan president's speeches, as well as clips from his weekly show on Venezuelan state TV. On its website, YouTube says it eliminates accounts that commit

"repeated violations of community guidelines" that include publishing misinformation, hate speech and content that "interferes with democratic processes."



Maduro has been widely accused of stealing last year's presidential election in Venezuela, which he lost by a landslide according to tally sheets gathered by hundreds of Venezuelan opposition activists. Venezuela's elections agency, which is controlled by the ruling socialist party, never

published tally sheets to support its claim that Maduro won the vote. In 2020, Maduro was indicted by a federal court in New York where he has been charged with conspiring to traffic cocaine to the United States. Recently, the U.S. doubled a bounty payment for Maduro's capture to \$50 million, with White House officials often referring to Maduro as a drug cartel leader who must be brought to justice.

While Venezuela continues to sell oil to the United States and take deportation flights, relations between the two nations have worsened with the deployment of eight U.S. warships last month to an area of the southern Caribbean near Venezuela's coast.

The Trump administration says the ships, which are fitted with long-range missiles and are also transporting a landing force of 2,000 Marines, are on an anti-drug trafficking mission.

# California bans most law enforcement officers from wearing masks during op

World. (Agency)

California became the first state to ban most law enforcement officers, including federal immigration agents, from covering their faces while conducting official business under a bill that was signed Saturday by Gov. Gavin Newsom and swiftly denounced by Trump administration officials.

The ban is a direct response to recent immigration raids in Los Angeles, where federal agents wore masks while making mass arrests. The raids prompted days of protest and led President Donald Trump to deploy National Guard troops and Marines to the area.

Newsom said at a news conference in Los Angeles, where he signed the bill flanked by state lawmakers, education leaders and immigrant community members, that California is unique in that 27% of its residents are foreign born. "We celebrate that diversity. It's what makes California great. It's what makes America great. It is

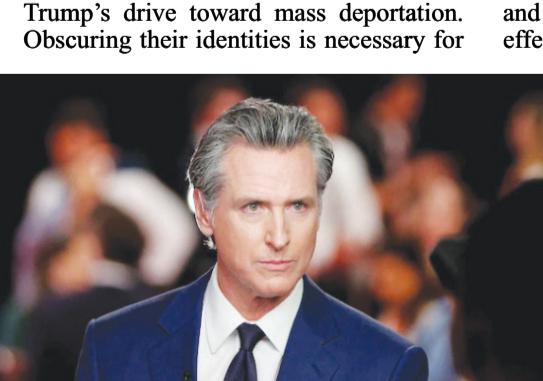
under assault," he said.

The Democratic governor said the state is pushing back against the practice of masked agents without identification or badge numbers detaining people on the streets.

"The impact of these policies all across this city, our state and nation are terrifying," Newsom said. "It's like a dystopian sci-fi movie. Unmarked cars, people in masks, people quite literally disappearing. No due process, no rights, no right in a democracy where we have rights. Immigrants have rights, and we have the right to stand up and push back, and that's what we're doing here today." But it's unclear how — or whether — the state can enforce the ban on federal agents.

Trump administration officials have defended use of masks, saying immigration agents face strident and increasing harassment in public and online as they

carry out enforcement in service of Trump's drive toward mass deportation. Obscuring their identities is necessary for



jurisdiction over the federal government and he has told agencies the mask ban has no effect on their operations. "Our agents will continue to protect their identities," he said.

Essayli also criticized Newsom's comment on X saying Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem was "going to have a bad day today," adding that there is zero tolerance for "direct or implicit threats against government officials." He referred the matter to the Secret Service, which said in a statement, also on X, that it could not comment on the specific case but must investigate any potential threat.

DHS OFFICIAL CRITICIZES CALIFORNIA LAW

Tricia McLaughlin, Homeland Security assistant secretary for public affairs, called it "despicable and a flagrant attempt to endanger our officers."

**Mohali Mayor extends Rs 50,000 aid to mother of murdered child's kin in Kumbhra**

**Mohali .(Agency)**

Mohali Mayor Amarjit Singh Jeet Sidhu on Friday visited Mohali's Kumbhra village, where a year ago two local children were brutally murdered reportedly by migrants living as paying guests.

Moved by the family's plight, the Mayor handed over Rs 50,000 in financial assistance to victim Damanpreet's mother after learning about the dilapidated condition of their house, which villagers said was at risk of collapsing.



"This family has already suffered a tremendous loss. My effort is to ensure they do not have to face any new hardship. Whatever further need arises, I will personally make every

possible effort," Sidhu said.

The Mayor learned of the family's situation while being informed about a community feast (Bhanda) organised in memory of victims Damanpreet and Dilpreet. He emphasised that poor Punjabi families must be supported so they feel "safe and respected within the community."

Local dignitaries Happy Malik, Jasmer Singh, and several others were present during the visit.

**'Misappropriation of farmers' money worth crores': Complainants demand action against SAS Nagar Cooperative Bank officials**

**Mohali .(Agency)**

Representatives of Punjab Against Corruption and Lok Hit Mission on Saturday claimed that large-scale embezzlement has taken place in 21 branches of the SAS Nagar (Mohali) Cooperative Bank. They accused bank's current Managing Director (MD) Pragati Jagga and several senior officers of involvement, demanding an immediate Vigilance Bureau inquiry and transfer of the accused officials.

According to the complainants, who have submitted a memorandum to the Punjab government, and addressed the press conference outside the bank's head office, "several other branches (of the bank) in the district have witnessed large-scale irregularities, including fraudulent home loans, misappropriation in branch renovations and furniture purchases".

Punjab Against Corruption's Satnam Singh Dau stated that an email has been sent to the Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann requesting action against the accused, and that other relevant officials have also been contacted via email regarding the matter.

Audit officers prepared a special report on the multi-crore scam in the Sialba branch, recommending action against Jasbir Singh (Branch Manager) and Jagga among others. The report stated, "the main accused misappropriated crores of rupees belonging to farmers and other customers".

After protests and sit-ins, dozens of victims from the Sialba branch were refunded their money, the complainants said. So far, Rs 281.53 lakh of principal and Rs 16.04 lakh in interest have been returned to 88 of 145 victims, while crores of rupees owed to several others remain unpaid. The complainant claimed that the "fraudsters have been posted in the Mohali district for decades and have strong political and administrative connections". It further said that in the Milk Plant branch, "loans were fraudulently issued for fictitious plots in Preet City". They also cited an October 9, 2018 report alleging that during branch renovations and furniture purchases, "quotations were sought from different places but written in the same handwriting to facilitate fraud".

# Food Safety raids expose lapses in three hospitals run by Telangana government

Food Safety Officers (FSOs) issued notices to the respective contractors and directed hospital superintendents to ensure immediate corrective measures.

**Hyderabad .(Agency)**

The Task Force teams from the Commissioner of Food Safety, Telangana, as part of their routine quality assurance, carried out inspections at diet kitchens of three government hospitals—Government Maternity Hospital, Sultan Bazar, Government ENT Hospital, Koti, and Area Hospital, Nampally on Saturday. They found serious lapses in hygiene and maintenance at all three facilities. Food Safety Officers (FSOs) issued notices to the respective contractors and directed hospital superintendents to ensure immediate corrective measures. At the Government Maternity Hospital, Sultan Bazar, maintained by contractor M/s Katikam Linga Reddy, violations



included open waste bins, rice bags and vegetables stored directly on the floor, no water quality test reports, lack of FoSTaC training for

staff, and food handlers working without caps or aprons. At Area Hospital, Nampally, run by M/s Shiva Sai Manpower Services, the

task force noted unclean floors, rusty racks, greasy exhaust systems, damp walls, and damaged window meshes. At Government

ENT Hospital, Koti, managed by M/s Boini Shiva Kumar, the team found drainage overflow, risk of pest entry, greasy exhaust systems, and no separate storage for raw ingredients. FSOs also inspected hotels, sweet shops, restaurants, school kitchens, and canteens. Major lapses included greasy floors and poor segregation (Kaveri Kitchen); expired chilli sauce and Sprite batches (Srinivasa Hotel, Narayanpet); stale chicken biryani (King's Family Restaurant, Siricilla); labelling/display violations (Tirumala Ice Cream Parlour, Medak); and unsanitary kitchens, pest control failures, and licensing issues (Keerthi Bakery). Notices were issued, and expired or stale stock was discarded on the spot.

## Madhopur barrage gate collapse: Punjab govt suspends three engineers for negligence

The Punjab government has suspended three officers, including an executive engineer, in connection with the collapse of two floodgates at the Madhopur barrage in Pathankot district last month amid heavy rain and floods in the state, officials Saturday said.

The damage to the headworks had aggravated the flood situation downstream. Officials who had reached the site to manually open the gates were trapped and one of them was washed away while the others were airlifted.

Executive engineer Nitin Sood (Gurdaspur Canal and Ground Water Division),

sub-divisional officer Arun Kumar and junior engineer Sachin Thakur have been placed under suspension, as per official orders issued by Principal

Secretary, Water Resources Department, Krishan Kumar, on September 15. All three have been transferred to the Chief Engineer Headquarters in Chandigarh, a government statement said.

On August 27, two out of the 54

floodgates at the Madhopur headworks failed during an operation

to release excess water following a heavy inflow into the Ravi River.

A team of officials reached the site to manually open the floodgates during

which two gates gave way, trapping

the officials while washing away a

charge man. The water inundated

scores of villages, submerged acres of agriculture land, and put a

question mark on the performance of the departments concerned. The

trapped officials were airlifted.

At that time, over 2 lakh cusecs of

water was released into the Ravi after

the level in the Ranjit Sagar dam was at its maximum capacity.

Sources said an inquiry was ordered by the administrative secretary into the

case, which indicted three engineers for negligence.

Even since the government has been under attack

for not maintaining the headworks and not carrying out a drill to check

the functioning of the gates.

Water resources minister Barinder

Kumar Goyal had issued a notice to a

private company for wrongly

certifying the strength of the

Madhopur headworks gates.

## Over 50 officials trapped in eight months: Lokayukta court slams entrenched corruption in Bengaluru offices

**This was challenged before Ramanuja, who had demanded a Rs 75,000 bribe to allow the appeal, exempt from paying the GST, and to order a refund of the appeal fee paid.**

**Bengaluru.(Agency)**

The judge of the Special Court for Lokayukta Cases, K M Radhakrishna, noted that the trapping of over 50 government officers within just eight months in Bengaluru Urban district serves as a stark testament to how the lawless have entrenched themselves in public offices. The court made these observations while rejecting the bail petition filed by Dr S Ramanuja, Joint Commissioner of Commercial Taxes (Appeals-6), who was trapped while accepting a Rs 25,000 bribe from the wife of a doctor for passing the order to waive off the GST. Stating that no one can expect to work in the public offices without paying the illegal gratification to the corrupt officials, the court observed. Still, some people are there to express sympathy towards these corrupt officials,

because they also have paid money to get their positions in the first place.

"We are not thinking about how the middle class, poor and helpless people who are struggling for their livelihood are becoming the victims and losing hope in the system. In other words, the cancerous seed of corruption is going to kill the very constitutional object. Therefore, it is time for every one of us to introspect and realise the responsibility to put an end to this menace", the court observed. The Lokayukta police registered the case on September 10, 2025, based on the complaint filed by D H Guruprasad. The commercial tax officers of Sira have issued a notice to the complainant's wife, D G Gayathri Prasad, demanding the payment of Rs 2.79 lakh as SGST and Rs 2.79 lakh as CGST for the year 2018-19 concerning a cement shop in Sira town.

This was challenged before Ramanuja, who had demanded a Rs 75,000 bribe to allow the appeal, exempt from paying the GST, and to order a refund of the appeal fee paid. When the complainant expressed difficulty in paying Rs 75,000, the accused agreed to Rs 25,000. Ramanuja denied the allegations and claimed that he was innocent. The court, while referring to objections filed by Lokayukta police, observed that the accused is an officer in the higher cadre.

The recording of statements from the material witnesses is noticed to have been still pending. Therefore, the possibility of holding threats to the complainant and influencing the witnesses cannot be ruled out if he is granted bail at this stage.

## Karnataka HC rejects plea against slum near temple, says sanctity not endangered by presence of poor

**The temple argued that samithi that the coexistence of the temple and the slum together will affect the religious feelings of a large number of devotees, which is a violation of Article 29.**

**Bengaluru.(Agency)**

Taking a dig at the Sri Kalikamba Seva Samithi in Mandya for approaching the court with a plea that allowing slum adjacent to the temple will affect the sanctity and serenity of the temple, the Karnataka High Court rejected the petition with an observation that such a contention projected by the Temple Samithi is wholly untenable.

Equality does not admit gradations of worth; it encompasses the entirety of our citizenry, it said. "The sanctity of a temple is not so fragile as to be endangered by the presence of the creator's children who, by accident of circumstance, live modestly beside it. To suggest otherwise is to deny the very universality that our Constitution professes," Justice M Nagaprashanna observed.

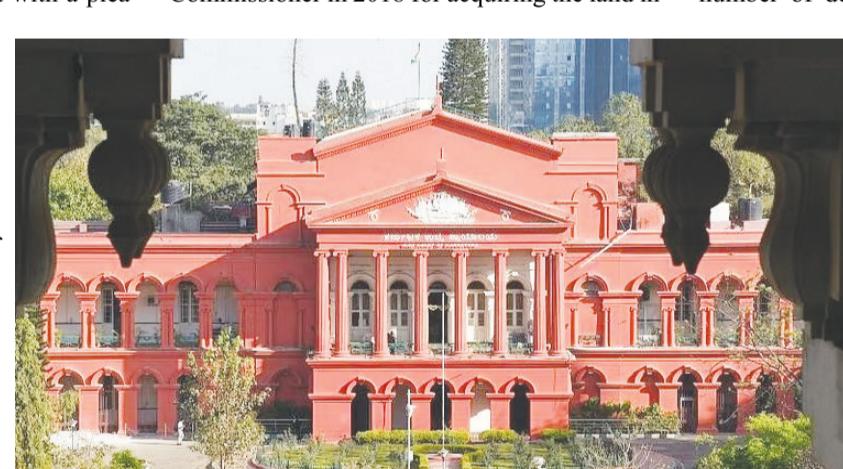
The court made these observations while dismissing the review petition filed by Sri Kalikamba Seva Samithi of Mandya and a

petition filed by devotees questioning the notification issued by the Deputy Commissioner in 2018 for acquiring the land in

coexistence of the temple and the slum together will affect the religious feelings of a large number of devotees, which is a violation of Article 29.

The court observed that what deeply wounds the conscience of the court is the contentions advanced by the Samithi. The contention proclaims that slum dwellers are lesser beings, bereft of the right to devotion, the right to shelter and the right to dwell beside a place of worship. Such an assertion, in this enlightened age, is appalling.

The notion that the divine aura of a temple could be diminished by the proximity of humble homes is sullied by the entry of a slum dweller, which bespeaks a mindset steeped in prejudice and exclusion. This court cannot but observe that such a stance is an attempt to rend society asunder along the lines of caste, class or creed, the court added.



question for the construction of houses for slum dwellers following the compromise deed entered into by the Samithi of the temple and the Karnataka Slum Clearance Board.

The temple argued that samithi that the

## IIT-M virtual pass for govt students in Telangana

**The programme allows students to choose courses based on their interests — Artificial Intelligence, Data Science, Electronics, Robotics and more — with training delivered online.**

**Hyderabad .(Agency)**

A pilot project from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)-Madras is quietly transforming career dreams into tangible plans for students at the Maskapur Zilla Parishad High School in Khanapur mandal, Nirmal district. Selected for the national School Connect Programme, this government school is now offering Class 10 students a unique gateway: a flexible, three-month online course in high-tech fields, providing clarity about future careers and a certificate from one of the country's premier institutes.

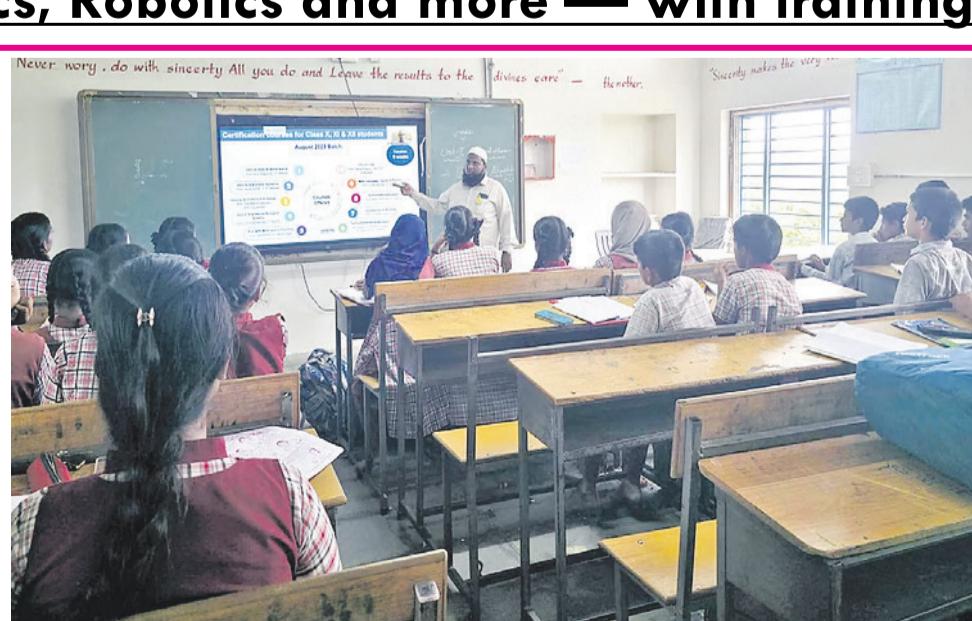
The programme allows students to choose courses based on their interests—Artificial Intelligence, Data Science, Electronics, Robotics and more—with training delivered online. Every two weeks, students take assessments, followed by a final exam at the end of the three months. The school has a total strength of 800

students, including 156 in Class 10. Of these, 35 students—18 boys and 17 girls—were selected for the first batch.

"I was interested in AI, so I chose that course," says D Yeshwanth, a Class 10 student. "We have completed three exams so far, and the final one is on October 12. These classes are giving me clarity on which course to take in Intermediate. I enjoy the sessions after school hours."

Another student, N Charan, says he opted for Electronics and Robotics. "It is very interesting, and I've already completed three levels of exams," he adds.

School Assistant in Mathematics, Syed Faraz Abdul Karim, says the initiative is equipping students with early exposure to technology. "We selected 35 students and are training them carefully. It's a nationwide programme, and every three months a new batch will be taken up," he adds.



The courses feature recorded lectures, live sessions, assignments and computer-based

studies. On completion, they receive a certificate from IIT-Madras, which was adjudged the top overall and engineering college in the country as per the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) 2025.

Headmaster Bonagiri Narendra Rao tells TNIE that the project has boosted the school's standing. "We are competing strongly with private schools. Last year, all 129 students in Class 10 cleared the exams with a 100% pass rate. With government support, we've set up a computer lab with 10 systems and 10 virtual reality headsets, which help even primary students learn easily through visual content," he said.

The school has also made a mark in sports. Last year, Class 10 student Shiva Sai won a medal at a national weightlifting tournament in New Delhi and secured admission to IIIT Basara under the sports quota.

## Need for speed and the rise of stablecoins

Blockchains are encrypted databases—the ledger—controlled by a dispersed web of private validators who update and maintain a record of transactions by appending a new block through consensus among the network. It has always been an invention searching for a definitive application.

Initially used as the basis for Bitcoin—which was to replace money, but has become the ultimate speculative asset—it morphed into de-fi or decentralised finance. The latest incarnation is ‘stablecoins’, tokens using public blockchains (for example, Ethereum) with a value pegged to and backed by fiat currency asset. They were originally designed to allow crypto traders to transfer holdings or convert them into cash. It avoided high transaction costs of crypto-to-fiat conversions and overcame some cryptocurrency exchanges’ lack of normal bank accounts for deposits or withdrawals. Stablecoins such as Tether, Circle, and EUR CoinVertible are now being positioned as an alternative global payment system. The impetus is driven by greater regulatory clarity in major jurisdictions, particularly in the US via the Genius Act. The interests of Trump enterprises and those of some close supporters in the crypto sector are, of course, coincidental. Stablecoins also create demand for dollars and interest-bearing short-dated US Treasury bills helping the American government fund its deficit. Current investment, which totals a modest \$200 billion of shortdated Treasury bills (2 percent of outstandings), is expected to grow rapidly. Proponents cite several advantages. Stablecoin payments are borderless and more efficient than current arrangements that rely on bank-to-bank systems with layers of fees. They offer near-instant settlement while traditional payment systems can take up to 5 days, especially for foreign payments. They are significantly cheaper and available 24/7 through modern digital interfaces. This last benefit is overstated as modern bank fund transfer platforms are similar, although the settlements are restricted to business hours. With every technology entrepreneur trying to ‘improve the world’, there is the customary claim of inclusion with stablecoins helping provide access to underserved members of the community. But there are concerns. Existing systems process \$5-7 trillion in global money transfers daily. In contrast, stablecoin transactions facilitate \$20-30 billion a day. Scaling up and improving speed requires compromises including processing transactions off-blockchain or revising consensus verification protocols. They used inherited data from an underlying layer reducing security and require centralisation with a few large users playing a dominant role moving away from the fully decentralised, democratised original technology. The stability and acceptance of stablecoins requires provable high-quality reserves, typically cash or short-dated government obligations. Verification of holdings remains problematic with some issuers based offshore and concerns around audit processes. There has been occasional de-pegging from the underlying unit of currency, mostly triggered by concern about reserve backing. Unlike normal transfer systems that are backed by central banks with highly controlled access, blockchain-based systems are more open, with a corresponding loss of security. In addition, traditional systems have protection via manual interventions and detailed checks, while digital currencies are less protected. The biggest risk is if the access point, vulnerable to wallet, custody, or private key theft, is breached. Transactions are largely irreversible, and catastrophic losses may result where security is compromised, or codes and keys lost.

## The inverted question of Kashmir

**THE GREAT GAME: It's no longer about 'Ask what your country can do for Kashmir,' but 'What Kashmir can do for your country'**

THE Yasin Malik affidavit in the Delhi High Court, that should have created a much bigger storm, if only because it reveals how the Kashmiri separatist leader was both doted and despised by governments across the ideological spectrum over the last three decades, comes in the exact month elections were held in Jammu & Kashmir a full year ago. Some would yawn, and ask, Yasin Malik who? Others, who know well his role in the kidnapping of then Home Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed's daughter, Rubaiya, in 1989; in the cold-blooded killing of four Air Force officers in Kashmir in 1990, are equally aware that Yasin has been wooed by every small and big prime minister since — Chandra Shekhar, PV Narasimha Rao, IK Gujral, Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Manmohan Singh as well as by PM Modi's interlocutors in his first term. In some ways, Yasin Malik's affidavit is the story of Kashmir in these past decades. It spans the many experiments tried by the powerful Indian state to bring peace to a troubled region — from wooing both moderate and extremist leaders like Yasin and Mirwaiz Umar Farooq as well as those in the Hizbul Mujahideen, in the hope that these separatists would persuade their mentors in Pakistan to turn over a new leaf — and help prepare the ground for a more structured dialogue process between the leaders of India and Pakistan.

For at least 16 years, from the time Vajpayee became PM in 1998 to when Manmohan Singh lost power in 2014, the Indian state attempted this ambitious, triangular conversation — between Kashmiri separatists in India and Pakistan, between Indian Kashmiri leaders and Delhi as well as between India and Pakistan. (The Pakistani Kashmiris and the Pakistani establishment were one and the same.) No one said it better than Vajpayee during a 2003 trip to Srinagar. “India will talk to Kashmiris under the ambit of insaniyat, Kashmiriyat and jamhuriyat,” he said. There was no mention of the word “Constitution,” but everyone understood what the lakshman rekha was — no violence; violence would shut the conversation down. So when Manmohan Singh picked up the baton from Vajpayee, the country cheered. Never forget that Singh not only helped end the monarchy in Nepal in 2006, he also encouraged Kashmiri leaders for the first time ever to travel to Pakistan via the Line of Control, turning the rigid, turgid Line into a porous border. Meanwhile, Singh's special envoy, former diplomat Satinder Lambah, was meeting

his Pakistani counterparts in world capitals like Dubai and London to hammer out a four-point formula that would bring peace to Kashmir, as well as resolution to the India-Pakistan trauma that had gone on since 1947. A shiver ran through the subcontinent. Was it too good to last. There's a story about Yasin Malik that Wajahat Habibullah, Kashmir-watcher and IAS officer posted in Kashmir in the awful days of the early 1990s, tells. It relates to the 2002 period when elections were to be held in J&K and Habibullah said to Yasin and Mirwaiz and the rest of the Hurriyat that they could not hope to speak for Kashmir if they didn't stand for polls. The Hurriyat agreed, but muttered they didn't trust the Election Commission of India. Habibullah communicated the Kashmiri unease to then Chief Election Commissioner

missteps of Op Balakot have been rectified by Op Sindoor. Exactly a year ago, and five years after the revocation of Article 370, J&K went to the polls again to re-elect a Union Territory. The euphoria of installing your own CM has since given way to ennui, as everyone knows that Lt Governor Manoj Sinha continues to call the shots. Statehood is hardly on offer. Even the questions are inverted. It's no longer, ‘Ask not what the country can do for Kashmir,’ but ‘What Kashmir can do for the country.’ Can it help win, for example, an election in Bihar? The story of Kashmir can be written in many ways — via the affidavit of Yasin Malik, in Tihar jail since 2022, sentenced to life imprisonment in a money-laundering case from 20 years before that may or may not have been true, but to which he has pleaded guilty; via the books of

AS Dulat, a former special director of the Intelligence Bureau, head of India's external intelligence agency R&AW and Vajpayee's special advisor — his last book, *The Chief Minister and the Spy*, caused a national stir this April because he revealed, with an unvarnished eye, how the Indian state ran Kashmir for decades.

Perhaps that's the moral of the story. That the state is primarily ruthless, and when it gives a long rope to people like Yasin Malik, it is actually giving him the illusion that he is, or was, an actor on the large geopolitical chessboard — only, he was a mere upstart on a string.

Never forget, too, the Pakistani military establishment's overarching arrogance which has also brought us to this pass — Pervez Musharraf's refusal to compromise with both Vajpayee and Manmohan Singh, a compounded double barrel of short-sight and stupidity, is a perfect example of what should never



have been. The Pakistanis exposed India's weak underbelly in 2008 in Mumbai. April's Pahalgam massacre reminded us of Mumbai. Op Sindoor was an avenging memory. And so this Saturday morning, as I turn the Kashmir story over and over again, wondering how to write it, I know that we will always miss one writer, an outsider-insider, who was always such a delight to read. Sankarshan Thakur articulated the hopes and dreams and fears and above all, the battle of argument that have consumed so many generations of Kashmiris. He would have loved to weigh in on the Yasin Malik affidavit. In his passing, the story is so much poorer.

### Despite Fed rate cut, RBI's decision hinges on domestic realities

**The key reason for such constrained enthusiasm is the Fed's worry about slowing job growth. While Fed Chair Jerome Powell was cautious on inflation, jobs and growth, there were no clear signals from the other members on where the rates will go from here**

After months of waiting, the US Federal Reserve finally delivered a 25-basis-point rate cut this week. The short-term Fed Funds rate, which banks charge each other for overnight loans, now stands at 4-4.25 percent. The cut was widely expected to boost market sentiment, but the US bourses remained motionless, while the global ones saw moderate jumps. Even though the central bank left the door open for at least two more rate cuts this year, Fed Chair Jerome Powell's hawkish stance citing upside risks to inflation and downside risks to employment dampened overall sentiment. Just weeks ahead of the Fed meeting, American stock markets rallied anticipating a cut; but on D-day, there was muted response. While the Dow closed 0.57 percent higher, the broader S&P500 edged lower by 0.1 percent, followed by the tech-heavy Nasdaq Composite that fell 0.33 percent. Indian markets, too, cheered on with a moderate rally.

The key reason for such constrained enthusiasm is the Fed's worry about slowing job growth. While Powell was cautious on inflation, jobs and growth, there were no clear signals from the other Fed members on where the rates will



go from here. Traditionally, lower US rates soften the dollar and bond yields, prompting institutional investors to take refuge in emerging markets for better returns. But they have been on a sell-off spree here, having offloaded

Indian stocks worth ₹1.06 lakh crore since July. Weak earnings, overstretched valuations, tariff-related uncertainties, the rupee's weakness and aggravated outflows are the causes. However, despite a \$15.6-billion foreign capital flight in 2024-25, the Nifty still delivered a 5 percent gain. Analysts reason that domestic growth triggers, a better monsoon, and expected improvement in earnings in the coming quarters should attract foreign institutional investors in due course.

The Fed rate cut may not have a significant bearing with the RBI, which is widely expected to maintain status quo. However, the recent GST rate cuts, which are expected to boost demand, and softening inflation offer the flexibility to extend the easing cycle. Headline inflation is expected to settle at 2.4 percent in 2025-26, significantly lower than the RBI's 4 percent target, prompting policy watchers to not disclaim a 25 bps cut next month followed by another 25 bps cut in December, taking the repo rate to 5 percent at the end of 2025-26.

## Welcome to the new world disorder

India is cautiously evaluating Donald Trump's birthday greetings to his friend Narendra Modi after weeks of accusing India of protectionism. Was it premature for PM Modi to project a united front with Xi and Putin at Tianjin, since, in the long term, the US and India are natural partners? Or was the show of unity in China just as natural, since Indian industry needs China's inputs to grow, China needs India's markets, and both need Russian oil? There are no clear answers visible in the new world disorder. The only certainty is that the system is disorderly, that its anchors have come unstuck, and that all things that rely on a common understanding and shared mechanisms will change—from trade and security to the environment and public health. Trade is directly affected—it's become the art of the deal. The US had chafed at rules-based multilateral forums for years, and Trump has provided the derring-do to turn back to unilateralism and bilateralism, which help powerful nations to prevail. Since 2019, Washington has been blocking appointments to the appellate body of the World Trade Organization, making its processes unenforceable. In order to send a case into limbo, a member nation only has to raise an appeal. Besides, bilateral tariff threats exceed the caps set in the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs and bilateral deals bypass the system of most favoured nations, undermining the authority of the WTO. The US had lost interest in the UN long ago, and now it is little better than an observer of global issues, alerting the world with a resolution when evil is afoot. Its critics seem to have forgotten the grave dangers which faced the human race when it was created at the end of the Second World War. And they seem to have

shrugged off the horrors of the First World War, out of which its predecessor, the League of Nations, was born.

Now, without the need for a time machine, perhaps we'll get to experience what international affairs were like before multilateral and intergovernmental forums were established—nations operating unilaterally and bilaterally, ganging up and deciding matters by brute force, or by force of arms. The age of globalisation also seems to be over, though the tariff wars allegedly promote the free movement of goods, services and intellectual property. But the age of protectionism seems to be returning, in lockstep with the rise of nationalism. At present India, which has been historically reluctant to open up to market forces, is being challenged by tariffs to roll back protectionism. But the challenger, the US, is itself turning protectionist, withdrawing from a world which, it fears, has been ripping it off. The outsourcing of business processes is going to be less popular because national security now comes before margins. For the same reason, the US is jettisoning climate concerns and fiercely embracing fossil fuels. This will seriously damage the global compact painstakingly developed by three decades of advocacy, in which nations have advanced from climate change denial to partnership for abatement. However, the compact has always been stressed because prosperous nations that industrialised early and polluted more

do not want to pay more than the rest, the victims of climate change, while those nations believe that the polluter must pay. Now, it could unravel.

Under the stewardship of the WHO, which had anchored the global health system, the world has rid itself of ancient scourges like smallpox, leprosy and polio. It was possible because nations cooperated to follow global protocols like the oral polio vaccine programme. But now, scepticism in

The threat of nuclear warfare is back after decades. The India-Pakistan conflict earlier this year escalated and ended swiftly—to general relief, because persistent bad blood between the two nuclear powers in South Asia makes the region an ever-ticking flashpoint. But like many recent conflicts, including the missile duels in West Asia, it was from at a distance—rendering violence abstract, which may make the use of nuclear weapons more acceptable. The present nuclear arms regime, presided over by the US, remains patent only until first use. After that, it'll be a free-for-all tournament. As the US furls up its security umbrella, nations from Europe to Japan are again committing themselves to defence, and will form new blocs of military power. In our region, Pakistan has entered into a pact with Saudi Arabia, under which an attack on one will be seen as an attack on both. The US is revoking the sanctions waiver on Chabahar port. Nato nations are investing more in defence. And amazingly, Japan, the only victim of nuclear war, which had kept N-



the US about vaccines—and science-based interventions in general—is undermining the unity of purpose upon which disease eradication depends. The containment of communicable diseases—and even rapidly communicated modern lifestyles—depends on globally consistent action. If polio is not rigidly controlled in the US, the effects will be felt in Africa and Asia.

weapons at arm's length, is doing an about-face. In so many areas, change will be the only constant. But nations at the forefront of change—the US, India, Russia, and China—are led by individuals nearing the end of their careers. Perhaps there will be stability after their political heirs establish a new normal—if systems of election and selection can retain the public trust till that time.

# Amrit Bharat Express offers modern comforts at affordable fares

## The Sikh Times

Maligaon, 21st September: Indian Railways has launched the Amrit Bharat Express, introducing a new generation of trains that combine affordability with state-of-the-art modern facilities. Designed indigenously with a focus on passenger comfort and convenience, these trains reflect the nation's aspirations and commitment to progress. Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi had announced the introduction of this new category of trains, emphasizing modern amenities at affordable costs for the common man. The Amrit Bharat Express trains embody this vision by offering both comfort and efficiency. A total of 11 Amrit Bharat Express trains have been introduced across the Indian Railway network on different routes. Under the jurisdiction of N. F. Railway, a new weekly Amrit Bharat Express between Erode and Jogbani will commence operations from 25th September, 2025. Train No. 16601 (Erode - Jogbani) Amrit Bharat Express will depart from Erode every Thursday at 08:10 hours starting from 25th September, 2025 and arrive at Jogbani at 19:00 hours on Saturday. In the return direction, Train No. 16602 (Jogbani - Erode) will leave Jogbani every Sunday at 15:15 hours starting from 28th September, 2025 and reach Erode at 07:20 hours on Wednesday. The inaugural run of this Amrit Bharat Express was flagged off by Hon'ble Prime Minister on 15th of September, 2025. This new service is expected to further enhance regional connectivity while providing

passengers with an affordable and modern travel experience. Each train is equipped with advanced safety features, including Kavach

ensure lower noise levels and a more comfortable environment inside the coaches. With a maximum speed capability of 130 kmph, the



anti-collision technology, modern braking systems and improved suspension to ensure smoother rides. The coaches are fitted with modern automatic doors, enhanced bio-vacuum toilets, mobile charging points, CCTV surveillance and automatic smoke/fire detection systems. To provide a better travel experience, LED lighting, improved seating arrangements, modular toilets and GPS-based passenger information systems have been incorporated. The trains use push-pull technology, with engines installed at both ends, significantly reducing journey time by avoiding long halts during locomotive reversals. Enhanced insulation and energy-efficient equipment also

Amrit Bharat Express will cover journeys of approximately 1,000 kilometres efficiently for around Rs. 450/-, providing a safe, reliable and affordable option for passengers. These trains are expected to serve as a milestone in Indian Railways' continuous efforts to modernize its services while making travel accessible to all sections of society. The launch of the Amrit Bharat Express not only reflects the modernization of Indian Railways but also reinforces its commitment to providing world-class facilities to passengers at affordable costs. This initiative is another step towards realizing the vision of a progressive, inclusive and modern India.

## Telangana high court acquits Warangal R&B employee in 25-yr-old bribery case

### Hyderabad. (Agency)

Nearly 25 years after being allegedly caught taking a 4,000 bribe, a roads and buildings (R&B) department employee from Warangal has been acquitted by the Telangana high court. The court set aside a 2007 verdict of the special court for ACB cases that had sentenced the employee to one year of rigorous imprisonment under the Prevention of Corruption Act.

Delivering the judgment on Sept 19, Justice J Sreenivas Rao held that the ACB court had erred in convicting the employee on weak and unreliable evidence. The judge observed that "mere recovery of money from an accused does not establish guilt without corroborative proof of conscious acceptance, and courts must not infer criminal liability from assumptions or incomplete evidence." The case dates back to a complaint by a contractor, who alleged that the employee demanded a 4,000 bribe for releasing a balance payment of 25,500 relating to the construction of a school building in Thattupuram village in Warangal district. Acting on the complaint, ACB trapped and arrested the employee and later secured his conviction in 2007. However, during the trial, the contractor turned hostile and other witnesses examined by the ACB did not support the prosecution's case.

## Telangana explores legal options to counter K'taka on Almatti dam



### Hyderabad. (Agency)

Even as the Telangana govt is engaged in a dispute with the Andhra Pradesh govt over the Banakacherla lift irrigation project on the Krishna River, the state now finds itself at odds with another neighbour, Karnataka, over the Almatti dam. Although the Congress is in power in both states, each govt is determined to protect its interests on water issues. After the Karnataka govt decided to raise the height of the Almatti dam from 519 metres to 524 metres and even decided to acquire 1.30 lakh acres for this purpose, the Telangana govt began exploring various options, including approaching the Supreme Court to stall the attempts of the neighbouring state.

## Delhi CM Rekha Gupta hails Sant Rajinder Singh Ji Maharaj as Guiding Light at 29th Global Conference on Mysticism

New Delhi: World-renowned Spiritual Master and head of Sawan Kirpal Ruhani Mission, Sant Rajinder Singh Ji Maharaj, on



Sunday presided over the concluding session of the 29th Global Conference on Mysticism (GCM). He was joined on stage by Hon'ble Delhi Chief Minister Smt. Rekha Gupta Ji, the distinguished Guest of Honour, along with BJP MLA Shri Ashok Goel Ji, Member of Parliament Shri Manoj Tiwari Ji, eminent faith leaders and international delegates.

# A'bad gets 24mm of rain, more showers likely

### Ahmedabad. (Agency)

Narmada received 74mm of rain, followed by Modasa at 56mm, Galteshwar at 55mm, Gondal at 52mm and Malpur at 50mm. The



state has so far received 109.4% of its average annual seasonal rainfall.

For the next two days, the state is likely to receive widespread light to moderate rainfall, according to the Met forecast. Almost all regions of the state, except parts of Kutch and north Gujarat, are expected to receive rainfall, the forecast added.

# Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation issues advisory for dog ownership & safety regulations

### Navi Mumbai. (Agency)

The Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation (NMMC) has intensified its ongoing dog birth control programme, which has been operational since 2006 at the Turbie Dog Control Centre. The programme focuses on the sterilisation, surgery, and vaccination of stray and pet dogs to manage the canine population within the city. NMMC has now issued an advisory for pet owners. Navi Mumbai's pet owners are now required to obtain a dog licence through the NMMC's official website, nmmc.gov.in. The related department is overseeing the issuance of licences and ensuring that all pet dogs are registered appropriately.



In response to a suo motu writ petition filed in Aug this year, the Maharashtra govt has issued guidelines instructing local civic

administrations to enforce animal protection laws strictly. The order emphasises the need for animal lovers to comply with legal

responsibilities towards pet care and public safety. The NMMC has reported numerous complaints from citizens regarding stray dogs biting, chasing, and frightening children within its jurisdiction in the time of the ongoing controversy and protests against the Supreme Court's decision to relocate street dogs to shelters.

According to NMMC sources, particular concern has been raised about breeds such as Rottweilers, Pit Bulls, German Shepherds, and Dobermanns. These breeds are deemed highly aggressive and pose significant risks if allowed to roam freely on the streets. Despite these concerns, all breeds of domestic dogs, including the aforementioned, are advised to be

properly vaccinated and restrained with chains or belts when taken outside the home.

It is mandatory to use muzzles that do not cause discomfort to the dogs. The NMMC urges citizens to adhere strictly to the guidelines and rules set forth by the Court and the Animal Welfare Board. Non-compliance, such as walking dogs without muzzles, may result in legal punitive action.

"Residents are reminded that responsible pet ownership is crucial for public safety and animal welfare. NMMC continues to work towards creating a safer environment for both citizens and animals through these measures," said NMMC commissioner Kailas Shinde.

# Farmers urge permanent solution to Ghaggar floods, Union min assures action

### Patiala. (Agency)

Union minister Shripad Naik visited the flood-affected areas of Shurana Haryau, Shurana and Harchandpura in Patiala district on Saturday. He was accompanied by ex-Union minister Preneet Kaur and BJP Punjab Mahila Morcha president Jai Inder Kaur.

Speaking to farmers and residents, Shripad Naik said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has directed all Union ministers to personally interact with affected families and farmers to understand the scale of damage and develop permanent solutions to prevent such disasters in the future. He said that the central govt had provided a relief package of Rs 1,600 crore to Punjab, in



addition to the SDRF allocation. Additionally, BJP-led state govt were extending support by sending relief material to Punjab, he said. During the visit, Preneet Kaur highlighted that Patiala district faces recurring floods every year due to the Ghaggar, Tarni and Markanda rivers, which annually affect many villages across the district. She recalled that only a few days

ago, Union minister of state for sports, Raksha Nikhil Khadse, had also visited Patiala and conveyed the district's key demands to the Prime Minister's Office. She assured the people that the Central Govt is in constant touch and committed to supporting Punjab in this difficult time.

Farm unions and residents from surrounding villages also demanded a permanent solution to the recurring Ghaggar river floods by channelising the river and strengthening embankments along vulnerable areas. Union minister Shripad Naik assured that this demand will be taken up with the Central Water Commission, which will work with the concerned.

# Grim Harvest 6: In livestock, many lost their only way of livelihood

### Bathinda. (Agency)

The worst floods in over three decades in Punjab caused immense loss of lives, property, and standing crops. However, many small farmers or those from the dairy sector are silently facing the biggest traumas of their lives. They lost their livestock, mainly the milch animals, which were the only source of their livelihood. Even after over a month of the flooding in Punjab, there is no data on the livestock lost in the floods or in heavy rains in areas where there were no floods. Various departments have furnished data about the loss of lives (57 so far), the number of villages affected (2,539 so far), the population affected (389,387 so far), and the loss to crops (199,766 hectares or 4.99 lakh acres), but data about the loss to the livestock has not been made public so far. Thousands of cattle, including milch animals, died by drowning or were washed away. Many

faced ailments due to waterborne diseases as they remained underwater with no one to take care of them for days, facing all this silently. It is also being said that as the Sutlej zigzags into India and Pakistan territory in Ferozepur and Fazilka districts, many animals washed away in the surging river into Pakistan territory, and there is no word about it from the authorities. A good milk-giving buffalo fetches prices up to Rs 1 lakh or more, and for many, lives were sustained by selling the milk from those animals. In losing milch animals, they not only lost buffaloes, cows, or goats but also their livelihood, says an official from the animal husbandry department who did not want to be named. "I had three buffaloes with which I was running the household. Two of these died in floods, and I lost almost everything in it," said small farmer Jaginder Singh from district Fazilka.

Speaking to farmers and residents, Shripad Naik said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has directed all Union ministers to personally interact with affected families and farmers to understand the scale of damage and develop permanent solutions to prevent such disasters in the future. He said that the central govt had provided a relief package of Rs 1,600 crore to Punjab, in

addition to the SDRF allocation. Additionally, BJP-led state govt were extending support by sending relief material to Punjab, he said. During the visit, Preneet Kaur highlighted that Patiala district faces recurring floods every year due to the Ghaggar, Tarni and Markanda rivers, which annually affect many villages across the district. She recalled that only a few days

# Birthday bash turns tragic: 25-year-old youth murdered, female friend injured in robbery near canal in Ahmedabad

### Ahmedabad. (Agency)

A birthday night meant for joy ended in heartbreak and horror for a young couple from Ahmedabad. In the early hours of Saturday, just hours after friends cheered him on his 25th birthday, Vaibhav Manwani was fatally stabbed in his car near the Narmada canal in Adalaj by a robber. His 23-year-old female friend, who desperately tried to save him, suffered stab wounds and is currently being treated at Civil Hospital. Despite her injuries, the young woman ran nearly 800 metres to find help and alert her family. Adalaj inspector L D Odedara said Manwani was a resident of Hansol, while his female friend lives in the eastern part of the city. According to the FIR filed by the survivor, the couple had driven out after celebrating with friends at Sindhu Bhavan Road. "It was my friend Manwani's birthday on Friday. I went to CG Road and met him. Along with our friends, we went to Sindhu Bhavan Road in Manwani's car and had snacks. Around 11:45pm, we dropped the others off and

drove around, ending up on the canal road passing near the metro cable bridge in Ambapur," the complaint stated.

The survivor told police that after driving about half a kilometre, they parked the car by the road and sat talking in the rear seat of the vehicle. "About 15 minutes later, an unknown man suddenly opened the back door, leaving us shocked and scared," she stated in the FIR. She further told the police: "Brandishing a knife, he threatened us and demanded our valuables. When Manwani resisted, the attacker stabbed him. I tried to stop him, but he stabbed me in the neck and right arm. He again asked us to hand over our valuables. I gave him my wristwatch, imitation jewellery, purse, and our mobile phones. The stranger took everything and fled in Manwani's car." The vehicle broke down a short distance away, forcing him to abandon it and escape, said

police. Despite being in shock and pain, the woman

ran nearly 800m and flagged down a couple who were passing through the area on a two-wheeler. PI Odedara said, "She borrowed their mobile phone to call her parents. They

arrived at the spot and called the 108 ambulance, which rushed her to the hospital."

Dr Rakesh Joshi, who treated her, said, "The woman had stab wounds on her hand and neck. We operated on her, and her condition is stable at present." Adalaj police registered a case of murder, attempted murder, and robbery or dacoity, with an attempt to cause death or grievous hurt. "We have formed 15 police teams, including the local crime branch and special operations group, that are pursuing leads. They are pursuing some leads we got about the assailant," said Gandhinagar SP Ravi Teja Vasamsetty. Police said CCTV footage from around the crime scene showed a person riding a bike onto the canal's service road around 1am and leaving around 2.30am. Police are probing whether a parolee with a history of similar offences was involved.



# 4Chan, MAGAs unite in 'clog the toilet' op to block H-1B workers flying back

**►US-India airfares spiked after Trump's H-1B visa order, as 4Chan users ran 'Operation Clog the Toilet' to inflate prices, disrupting H-1B holders' travel.**

**Agency New Delhi.** Following Donald Trump's executive order imposing a USD 100,000 fee on H-1B visas, and Big Tech firms like Amazon and Microsoft instructing employees abroad to return by 9:31 am today, ticket fares from India to the US soared on Sunday, prompting many to rush bookings to avoid penalties. With fares doubling from around Rs 40,000 to Rs 80,000, users on the online forum 4Chan reportedly tried to block Indians from returning ahead of the deadline by reserving seats without completing purchases, further driving the surge. Indians constitute the largest group of H-1B visa holders. US-India flight prices soared sharply in the hours following President Donald Trump's announcement overhauling the H-

1B visa fee system. Within two hours of Trump's statement, the cost of a one-way ticket from New Delhi to New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport jumped from approximately \$420 (Rs 37,000) to between \$794 and \$908 (Rs 70,000-80,000). **4CHAN USERS LAUNCH 'OPERATION CLOG THE TOILET'** Amid the travel rush, 4Chan users launched 'Operation Clog the Toilet,' a coordinated effort to spike airfares and block Indian H-1B holders from booking return flights. The campaign involved, thereby temporarily blocking others from booking. A post shared on 4Chan read: "Indians are just waking up after the H1B news. Want to keep them in India? Clog the flight

reservation system!" The instructions advised users to search for popular India-US flight routes on booking platforms, begin the checkout process, but not complete the purchase, flights, intensifying the shortage and inflating prices. The stated goal was to tie up as many seats as possible to hinder H-1B visa holders' ability to return to the US. Some users booked tickets with the intention of cancelling later or holding seats without payment. One user claimed, "I got 100 seats locked," illustrating the scale of the operation coordinated on the imageboard. The White House clarified that the USD 100,000 fee was a one-time payment and would not apply to current H-1B holders abroad, but only after chaos over rushed travel plans. White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt posted on X: "Those who already hold H-1B visas and are currently outside of the country right now will NOT be charged \$100,000 to re-enter."



**'Terminated' faculty moves Delhi HC again as JNU sits on stay order**

**Agency New Delhi.** The case of Rohan Choudhary, a faculty member at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), has resurfaced after he approached the Delhi High Court for a second time. His move followed the university's delay and lack of clarity in implementing the stay on his termination order. Earlier, the court had directed that Choudhary's termination be kept in abeyance pending disposal of his appeal by the University Court. He submitted his appeal on September 9, 2025, but with no official response, he sought clarification on September 15. Only then did the university acknowledge his appeal, confirm his faculty status, and initiate the release of his pending salary. On September 17, Choudhary received a notice to appear before a newly formed "Standing Committee for Confirmation" on September 22. The JNU Teachers' Association (JNTA) termed this committee unprecedented and ad hoc, lacking Executive Council approval. JNTA has raised wider concerns over delays in faculty confirmations and promotions, citing violations of due process, statutory norms, and the dignity of academic staff.



**Huge rate cuts on stadium booking to boost concerts, live events in Delhi**

**Agency New Delhi.** After losing out major concerts and cultural shows to cities like Mumbai, Ahmedabad and Gurugram for years, largely due to steep stadium-booking charges, the Delhi government on Saturday announced a substantial cut in venue rates, a move officials and industry leaders hailed as "historic." Culture and Tourism Minister Kapil Mishra announced a 40-50% reduction in booking rates for major stadiums across the city, a decision taken jointly by the Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports and the Delhi government. The reduction, Mishra said, could transform Delhi into the country's most event-



friendly city and a global hub for live entertainment. The Delhi government plans to cut the booking cost of the main JLN main arena from Rs 50 lakh per day to Rs 20 lakh. For the Indira Gandhi Sports Complex, the government has proposed to cut the booking cost from Rs 20 lakh per day to Rs 5 lakh. According to the sources, the government expects to generate annual revenue of Rs 30 crore through this approval. "The prime minister's vision is to make Delhi a hub for live events and the concert economy. High stadium rates were a major obstacle that pushed big shows to other cities. That changes today," Mishra said, adding that the initiative followed extensive consultations with Union Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya and industry leaders.

The revised rates are expected to open up these two stadiums for major cultural shows, music festivals, and international acts. Officials said that the move will boost tourism, generate jobs.

## Shubho Mahalaya: PM leads nation in greeting people as Durga Puja countdown begins

**Agency New Delhi.** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday greeted the people across the country on Mahalaya and wished that everyone's lives be filled with light and purpose as Durga Puja draws near. The devout believe that Goddess Durga begins her descent from her abode on Mount Kailash to the Earth on this day, a week before Durga Puja begins. This year, the festival will begin on September 27 and conclude on October 2. "Wishing you all Shubho Mahalaya! As the sacred days of Durga Puja draw near, may our lives be filled with light and purpose. May the divine blessings of Maa Durga bring unwavering strength, lasting joy and wonderful health," PM Modi wrote on X. Union Home Minister Amit Shah too extended his greetings on Mahalaya. "Shubho Mahalaya! On the holy occasion of Mahalaya, I extend my heartfelt greetings to all.

May the unbound affection of Maa Durga shower all the divine blessings of joy, strength, prosperity, and good health on every home," he wrote on X. West Bengal Chief Minister and Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee released a Durga Puja song written and composed by her on her X handle. Wishing the people on Mahalaya, she wrote in Bengali, "Awake Durga, awake, bearer of ten weapons. On the occasion of Tan, Agomoni, and Abahan, I express my heartfelt Mahalaya greetings to all.



On this occasion, I am sharing with all of you a new Puja song written and composed by me. BJP chief JP Nadda also extended his greetings on the occasion.

### WHAT IS MAHALAYA?

Mahalaya is an auspicious day in the Hindu calendar marking the end of the Pitru Paksha (ancestral worship period) and the beginning of the Devi Paksha (divine mother's festival), signalling the ceremonial arrival of Goddess Durga for the annual Durga Puja festival. Every year on Mahalaya at 4 am, Bengalis listen to the famous Mahishasura Mardini (the annihilation of the demon) recited by Birendra Krishna Bhadra, who describes the victory of Goddess Durga over the buffalo-headed demon Mahishasura. The legendary narrator recites the holy verses and tells the story of the descent of Durga to earth, in his inimitable style.

## Making Delhi an education hub government's priority: CM Rekha Gupta

**Agency New Delhi.** Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Saturday said her government's focus on making the national capital an education hub, saying that while Delhi cannot be developed into an industrial centre due to restrictions on heavy industries, it can emerge as the country's foremost destination for learning. Speaking at the inauguration of the Swami Vivekananda Bhawan at Ambedkar University's Karampura campus, Gupta said, "The biggest sector we can work on in Delhi is to make the city an education hub. Students searching for the best place to get education should think of Delhi



first. We have to make our system so strong that our children do not need to go abroad for higher studies." She

assured that the government would provide the resources required to strengthen the city's education infrastructure. The CM linked the inauguration to the Sewa Pakhwara, being observed on

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 75th birthday, adding that the building was a symbol of the government's commitment to youth and learning. Education Minister Ashish Sood, who was also present, underlined AUD's outreach initiatives, pointing out that the university has adopted seven slum clusters and villages and is working on restoring 23 hectares of wetland. "Spending on education is not expenditure, it is the biggest investment for the future," he said.

Saturday's event saw the participation of AUD Vice-Chancellor Anu Singh Lather, New Delhi MP Bansuri Swaraj, local MLA Harish Khurana and other leaders.

## India, Pak troops exchange brief fire at LoC, months after Op Sindoos: Sources

**Indian and Pakistani troops exchanged small arms fire in Kupwara's Nowgam sector on September 20, with no injuries reported. Army sources said the incident was not a ceasefire violation.**

**Agency New Delhi.** Indian and Pakistani troops exchanged small arms fire in the Nowgam sector of the Line of Control (LoC) in Kupwara on the evening of September 20. Army sources maintained that the incident did not amount to a ceasefire violation. "Brief exchange of small arms fire from both sides along the LoC, not amounting to ceasefire violations," sources said. According to sources, the firing began around 6:15 pm and continued intermittently for nearly an hour before the guns fell silent. No injuries were reported in the incident. So far, the Army has not issued an official statement on the incident. The exchange of fire comes months after tensions flared in May, when India launched Operation Sindoos on May 7, targeting

Pakistani terror infrastructure in retaliation for the Pahalgam terror attack that claimed 26 lives. The four-day conflict ended swiftly with both sides reaching a ceasefire agreement. While several airbases and nine terror launch pads were destroyed in Pakistan during the conflict, India did not suffer any notable damage. The last ceasefire violation occurred between both countries on May 10, 2025. On August 5, some reports surfaced of ceasefire violations between both countries. However, the Indian Army denied any ceasefire violation by Pakistan. Clarifying that there were no

unprovoked firings from the neighbouring country, the Army said in a statement: "There have been some media



and social media reports regarding ceasefire violation in Poonch region. It is clarified that there has been NO ceasefire violation along the Line of Control.

**Bomb threats to 100 Delhi schools leaves parents, students anxious**

### Agency New Delhi.

More than 100 schools in the capital received bomb threat emails on Saturday morning which turned out to be hoaxes after police conducted a thorough search of the premises, officials said. The subject of the e-mail mentioned "Bombs Placed in Your Building – React or Face the Disaster". It came from 'Terrorizers111' at 6:10 am on Saturday, stating that the schools have 24 hours to disarm the bombs or face the blood pool, the officials added. Delhi fire services said that they received information of schools including Delhi Public School Dwarka, Krishna Model Public School, Sarvodaya Vidyalaya in Qutub Minar, CRPF Public School in Dwarka, and Mata Vidya Devi Public School in Noida. "Bomb disposal



squads and police teams rushed to the campuses. However, after a thorough checking of the premises, they were declared a hoax," a police officer said, adding that the source of the threats is being probed.

Meanwhile, Arvind Kejriwal alleged that BJP has failed Delhi's security. Kejriwal, in a post on X, said, "Delhi's schools are repeatedly receiving bomb threats. Panic spreads everywhere, schools are forced to shut... Yet, for the past year, not a single culprit has been caught... The so-called four-engine BJP government cannot even manage the safety of the capital. Parents are living in fear every single day. When will all this end?"

## After gunfight in middle of the road in Delhi, three Gogi gang members arrested

### Agency New Delhi.

After purposely getting one of their patrol vehicles to collide head on with a Swift car carrying suspected members of the Jitender Gogi gang, the police managed to arrest three of the men early Saturday following a gunfight in the middle of the road in Rohini. The confrontation allegedly took place while the men were plotting to fire at the house of a Gau Raksha Dal member.

DCP (Rohini) Rajeev Ranjan identified the three men as Ashroo alias Lallu (23), Irfan (21) and Nitesh (30).

While Ashroo and Irfan sustained gunshot injuries to their legs, Nitesh was overpowered, he added. "The three, associated with the Jitender Gogi gang, were travelling in a white Swift car along with two associates, who managed to escape... The accused have previous criminal records... Two sophisticated firearms and one countrymade pistol were recovered from them," the DCP said. The three, who are recuperating in a hospital, will be produced before the court once they are discharged, police said.

An officer said that on Saturday, a team from Budh Vihar police station was on patrol duty after receiving a tip-off regarding the possibility of miscreants opening fire at the residence of a man associated with the Gau Rakshak Dal. The man had allegedly earlier called for a mahasabha of a particular community in response to an incident in which three persons were allegedly assaulted by Ashroo and his associates.

"The attack was reportedly linked to the mahasabha called by the community on September 20, following the alleged assault of three persons — Gourav Solanki, Chahat, and Yogesh — by Ashroo and his associates a few days earlier," the DCP said.

Please avoid spreading unverified information." On Saturday, in an event, the Air Chief Marshal AP Singh told Air Force veterans that Operation Sindoos ended as soon as its anti-terror objectives were achieved, arguing that prolonging the conflict would carry disproportionate cost. "We stopped the war very quickly. Yes, they were on the back foot, no doubt, but what were our objectives? Our objective was anti-terrorism. We had to strike them. We had done that. So if our objectives have been met, then why should we not terminate a conflict? Why should we carry on? Because any conflict has a lot of price which has to be paid."

## NEWS BOX

What's in the game? Will off-field drama be India vs Pakistan's saving grace again?

New Delhi. (Agency)

India and Pakistan renew their rivalry on Sunday, September 21 in the India vs Pakistan Cup 2025. Yes, let's call the tournament what it is—not the Asia Cup, but the India vs Pakistan Cup. And this is not meant as a disrespect to any other team, but this is how the tournament treats itself.

India and Pakistan games are slotted on Sunday evenings - for primetime TV. They are drawn in the same group every time so that they play each other as often as possible. In fact, let's talk about the ticketing fiasco for a moment. The organisers earlier did not allow fans to buy single tickets for the India vs Pakistan clash. If you wanted to watch the arch-rivals play, you had to buy a combination ticket of three matches in the tournament.

Stay updated on Asia Cup 2025 with India Today! Get match schedules, team squads, live score, and the latest Asia Cup points table. But the demand was grossly overestimated. Hardly anyone wanted to buy the package deal, and the organisers were eventually forced to go back to single-match tickets. By then, the damage had been done—the fiasco hit sales badly, and many seats were empty in the stadium.



What the organisers perhaps did not realise was that despite the geopolitical tensions, the novelty of an India-Pakistan cricket game had started to fade. Nearly 30 per cent of the stands remained empty in the Dubai International Stadium during the group-stage clash, and rightly so. Why would anyone want to watch India vs Pakistan?

India vs Pakistan: Super 4s preview

On one side, there is India, a global superpower in world cricket, while on the other side is Pakistan, which is busy changing its captain and coaching staff every six months. What we perhaps did not realise is that the Asia Cup was not about cricket at all. It had become the perfect place for highly placed officials to create unnecessary drama against the backdrop of a dead contest.

It all started with India captain Suryakumar Yadav not shaking hands with Pakistan skipper Salman Agha at the toss. The murmur was that Salman Agha had been told by match referee Andy Pycroft not to shake Surya's hand either.

## Asia Cup, Super 4: Drama off-field, India look to repeat Pakistan rout

New Delhi. (Agency)

It's time for another India-Pakistan clash in the Asia Cup, just eight days after their last meeting. Tense build-ups to Indo-Pak men's cricket matches are nothing new, but the "surface tension" this time is particularly pronounced, following last Sunday's controversy when Suryakumar Yadav and his team chose not to shake hands with their rivals, sparking a media storm. The past week has also been dominated by off-field drama, including Pakistan's boycott threat ahead of the UAE clash and their appeal against referee Andy Pycroft.



On the field, little has changed. India remain the team to beat, while Pakistan continues to search for balance and consistency. Yet the spotlight has increasingly shifted from cricketing strategy to off-field tensions. The handshake incident drew attention away from the match itself, and it is understood that the Indian team may maintain the no-handshake policy for Sunday's Super 4 clash, even as Pakistan players and supporters frame it as a "grudge match."

### Battle of unequals in Super 4s?

Sunday's game, like the last, is expected to be a contest of unequals, but the intensity surrounding India-Pakistan matches is unmatched in world cricket. Few sporting rivalries carry the history, pride, and sheer spectacle of this fixture. Off-field tensions aside, India are preparing for another dominant display, promising a high-pressure Super 4 encounter. Pakistan, in contrast, have retreated from media attention, choosing to prepare quietly behind closed doors.

# Handshake row 2.0, Shubman Gill redemption? Key things to watch in IND vs PAK clash

The India-Pakistan rivalry returns to Dubai, with Sunday's Super 4s clash carrying extra spice. After the handshake controversy from their last meeting, the rematch promises fresh drama alongside the cricketing battles that matter most.

Dubai. (Agency)

India and Pakistan will once again share the field in Dubai on Sunday, September 21, for the Asia Cup 2025 Super 4 clash, just days after their previous meeting. In that earlier clash, India sealed a commanding seven-wicket victory, but the cricket was overshadowed by an unusual post-match controversy. The absence of a customary handshake between the two sides sparked headlines and an official complaint from the Pakistan Cricket Board, adding a layer of tension to an already charged rivalry.

Yet beyond the drama, Sunday's game carries major cricketing weight. India arrive unbeaten, having dominated the group stage, while Pakistan are still trying to find rhythm with concerns over their top order. The clash promises more than just fiery exchanges; it will also test players under pressure, highlight key individual duels, and possibly set the tone for a third meeting in the final. Handshake 2.0: Will It Resurface?

The most talked-about storyline from the last encounter was not India's dominant win, but the fact that the Indian players, led by skipper Suryakumar Yadav, refrained from shaking hands with their opponents. The move drew strong reactions from Pakistan, with their cricket board even filing a complaint to the Asian Cricket Council and questioning the role of match referee Andy Pycroft.

As the teams prepare for another face-off, fans are wondering whether the snub will repeat itself. Suryakumar's post-match comments, where he hinted that "some things are beyond sportsman spirit," only added fuel to the speculation. Pakistan, too, have shown little inclination to extend the olive branch, having already cancelled their pre-match press briefing ahead of the Super 4 tie.

This subplot, though off the pitch, has become an unavoidable talking point and could once again set the tone for how the game is perceived, regardless of the result on the



scoreboard.

Shubman Gill under pressure

For India, one of the more pressing cricketing concerns is the form of vice-captain

Shubman Gill. Returning to T20Is after almost a year, Gill has found runs hard to come by. His tally of 35 runs across four innings has not inspired confidence, with dismissals ranging from a soft charge against Pakistan's Saim Ayub to being cleaned up by Oman's Faisal Shah.

Determined to iron out his flaws, Gill was one of the few who trained on an optional practice day, focusing on countering left-arm angles, preparing for the challenge of Shaheen Afridi. Expectations remain high, and Sunday could be a make-or-break outing for him.

With Sanju Samson knocking on the door after a patient half-century against Oman, and Abhishek Sharma showing spark at the top, the pressure on Gill is twofold: to deliver for his team and to safeguard his place. His response will be one of the subplots to watch.

Pakistan 7th division team, make them play amongst associates: Kris Srikkanth



New Delhi. (Agency)

Former India selector and World Cup winner Kris Srikkanth has given a blunt verdict on the quality of the Pakistan team ahead of the Super 4s clash on Sunday, September 21. Srikkanth said that Pakistan are like a seventh division team in a local league in Chennai.

Pakistan's performances in the Asia Cup 2025 have been far from convincing. After a big win over minnows Oman, they were beaten comprehensively by India in their second game. They were given an all mighty scare by the UAE in their final group game and scraped through to the Super 4s stage, where they will face India on Sunday. Previewing the game on his YouTube channel, Srikkanth said that Pakistan shouldn't be allowed to play against the big teams and instead should face associate sides.

"Going forward, Pakistan shouldn't be playing with the main teams. Have them among the Associate nations and bring a few of the others there here. It's a big thing for Pakistan that they are even allowed to play in such a prestigious tournament," said Srikkanth.

India-Pakistan rivalry is history

Over the last few years, India-Pakistan matches have been one-sided, and this was evident during the group stage game between the two. India dominated Pakistan in all three departments and went to the Super 4s unbeaten. Srikkanth said that the rivalry is now a thing of the past and the match won't be able to attract crowds like it used to back in the day.

"Pakistan should be removed from the top seven. From hereon, India-Pakistan matches won't attract crowds. India-Pakistan rivalry has become history. This Pakistan team will give us no scare. This is a seventh division team in a Chennai league," said Srikkanth.

Srikkanth also slammed Pakistan coach Mike Hesson and claimed that the team will go nowhere with him at the helm.

Ravichandran Ashwin says India have acknowledged reality ahead of the Asia Cup 2025 Super 4 match against Pakistan. The Indian team's confidence contrasts with Pakistan's recent inconsistencies and off-field issues.

New Delhi. (Agency)

Former India cricketer Ravichandran Ashwin weighed in on the build-up to the highly anticipated Asia Cup 2025 Super 4 clash between India and Pakistan, suggesting that the Men in Blue have not played down the hype but simply acknowledged reality.

Speaking on his YouTube channel Ash ki Baat, Ashwin reflected on skipper Suryakumar Yadav's remarks in the pre-match press conference, where the Indian T20I captain cheekily dismissed the "rivalry" narrative. Asked about Pakistan,

Suryakumar chose not to engage directly, instead remarking that when large crowds are present, his side's job is simply "to entertain." Ashwin, however, believes this response was not India dodging the question but a reflection of their confidence



and dominance over Pakistan in recent years. "The Indian team haven't played down (the hype). The Indian team have just spoken the truth as it is. There is nothing more to talk about it. That is just the plain truth," Ashwin said.

He further added, "Suryakumar Yadav has just represented what the Indian team's players were feeling. That is their truth, that

is their problem and we have nothing to do with that."

India enter the Super 4 stage in commanding form, having brushed aside all opposition in the group stages without major hiccups. Under the guidance of Gautam Gambhir, the squad has looked balanced and prepared, with the top order firing, the bowlers maintaining discipline, and the bench strength also getting valuable game time. Pakistan, on the other hand, arrive with plenty to prove. After their inconsistent group-stage performances and off-field controversies surrounding the handshake snub and what ensued later on, Salman Ali Agha's men will need to summon a strong performance to stay in contention for the final. History, however, does not favour them — India have dominated recent encounters across formats, and the psychological edge clearly rests with Suryakumar's side.

Stay updated on Asia Cup 2025 with India Today! Get match schedules, team squads, live score, and the latest Asia Cup points table.

## India vs Pakistan: Can under-fire Shubman Gill step up and claim his crown?

Shubman Gill's continues to struggle during the Asia Cup 2025, with the failure against Oman being the latest. The uncrowned king of Indian cricket needs to find his footing in the new system, with the Pakistan game now being a real test of his credentials.

New Delhi. (Agency)

A few months ago, when Shubman Gill was timing the ball to perfection and hitting boundaries in England, the drives were exquisite and the crowd was on its feet. Fast-forward to September 19, in a game against Oman, the same touch seemed to desert him. The India vice-captain went for a drive, but

the ball sneaked through and sent his off-stump cartwheeling. The fans weren't backing the "Prince of Indian cricket" at that point and slammed him for being part of a format where he seemed out of place. The Indian T20I setup underwent a massive overhaul after the 2024 World Cup win, bringing in explosive batting led by the openers and middle order.

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The fans weren't backing the "Prince of Indian cricket" at that point and slammed him for being part of a format where he seemed out of place. The Indian T20I setup underwent a massive overhaul after the 2024 World Cup win, bringing in explosive batting led by the openers and middle order.

Sanju Samson excelled as an opener, while Tilak Varma shone at No.3 when India dominated South Africa on their home turf.

Asia Cup 2025: Full coverage | Points Table

The England series followed, and it was Abhishek Sharma's time to stamp his authority. For a long time, the team looked set without major changes. Yes, you could add Jasprit Bumrah into the mix, but suddenly it wasn't just him being rotated in.

Gill, who last played a T20I in July 2024, returned and was made vice-captain of the side. Many expected him to ride on the success he found in England and seamlessly settle into the setup. But the numbers tell a different story. The 25-year-old has scored just 35 runs in three matches at a strike rate of 145.83. His dismissals have highlighted how he has struggled to adapt to the new mantra.

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# Trading Tests for T20s, Yuki Bhambri chases glory in tennis second innings

After years in the Test match grind of singles, Yuki Bhambri is embracing his T20 phase in doubles. With New Zealand's Michael Venus by his side, he's turning experience into momentum, proving he can still leave a mark on Indian tennis.

New Delhi. (Agency)

At 33, Yuki Bhambri is writing a second act few could have predicted. Once hailed as India's next big singles hope after winning the 2009 Australian Open junior title, his career was repeatedly halted by knee injuries. Now, with a fresh focus on doubles, Bhambri has found continuity and success on some of the sport's biggest stages.

That shift bore fruit at the 2025 US Open, where Bhambri and New Zealand's Michael Venus produced a sparkling run to the semi-finals. For Bhambri, it was the deepest he had ever gone at a Grand Slam and statement that his move from singles to doubles wasn't merely out of necessity, but out of a belief that he could still leave a mark on the game. His inspired run in New York propelled him into the top 25 in the world in doubles for the

first time in his career. "It was surreal and definitely bittersweet," Bhambri, who is back at his training base — the RoundGlass Academy in Chandigarh — in an exclusive interview.

"Reaching a Grand Slam semi-final is a great achievement, but during the tournament, your focus is on winning. We were quite close to making the finals, so that was a

slightly sad ending. But looking back, it's a memorable milestone — something not many Indians have achieved."

That mixture of delight and hunger is typical of Bhambri. Even as he savours the milestone, the 33-year-old is already framing it as a launchpad for more.

Perhaps the best way to understand his tennis philosophy today is through a sporting metaphor borrowed from another passion: cricket.

"Singles is like preparing for a Test match — long rallies, endurance, patience," he said. "Doubles is like T20 cricket — fast-paced, aggressive, with shorter points. Doubles focuses on the first shot, serving, returning, and net play, whereas singles requires covering more ground and balancing attack and defence."

It is that shift, from Tests to T20s, as he describes it, that has reshaped his career.

FINDING THE RIGHT PARTNER

Central to Bhambri's breakthrough has been his partnership with Michael Venus, the New Zealand doubles specialist. The two have known each other for 15 years, and friendship eventually evolved into a professional bond once their rankings aligned. But 2025 was hardly straightforward.

Bhambri played with multiple partners across the season, often dictated by availability. When his long-time partner Albano Olivetti went down injured, he was forced to look elsewhere. That search briefly landed him with singles specialist Alexei Popyrin, with whom he struck gold in Dubai, winning an ATP 500 title earlier in the year.



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"Reaching a Grand Slam semi-final is a great achievement, but during the tournament, your focus is on winning. We were quite close to making the finals, so that was a

**Amul cuts prices of 700 products, ghee cheaper by Rs 40 per litre from September 22**



**New Delhi.(Agency)**

The Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF), which markets dairy items under Amul brand, on Saturday announced reduction of retail prices of more than 700 product packs, including ghee, butter ice cream, bakery and frozen snacks, as it decided to pass on benefits of the GST rate cut to consumers. The new price will be effective from September 22. In a statement, GCMMF announced revision in price list of more than 700 product packs, offering full benefit of GST reduction to its customers, effective September 22, 2025.

"This revision is across the range of product categories like butter, ghee, UHT milk, ice cream, cheese, paneer, chocolates, bakery range, frozen dairy and potato snacks, condensed milk, peanut spread, malt-based drink, etc," GCMMF said.

**Here are some of the major rate revisions:**

The MRP of butter (100 gm) has been reduced to Rs 58 from Rs 62.

Ghee rates have been cut by Rs 40 to Rs 610 per litre.

The MRP of Amul processed cheese block (1kg) has been cut by Rs 30 to Rs 545 per kg.

The new MRP of frozen paneer (200 gm) will be Rs 95 from September 22 as against Rs 99 now.

"Amul believes the reduction in prices will spur consumption of a wide range of dairy products, particularly ice cream, cheese and butter, as the per capita consumption remains very low in India, creating a large growth opportunity," the statement said.

GCMMF, which is owned by 36 lakh farmers, said the reduction in prices will boost demand for its dairy products, leading to growth in its turnover. Earlier, Mother Dairy had also announced price cuts on its products from September 22.

## Mcap Of 7 Top Firms Rises By Rs 1.18 Lakh Crore Last Week

**Mumbai.(Agency)**

The combined market valuation of seven of the country's 10 most valued companies climbed by Rs 1,18,328.29 crore last week, with State Bank of India and Bharti Airtel emerging as the biggest gainers in an upbeat equity market.

During the week, the BSE benchmark index surged 721.53 points, or 0.88 per cent -- reflecting strong investor sentiment. Among the gainers, the market value of State Bank of India jumped by Rs 35,953.25 crore to reach Rs 7,95,910 crore, while Bharti Airtel's value rose by Rs 33,214.77 crore, taking it to Rs 11,18,952.64 crore.

Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) added Rs 12,952.75 crore, pushing its market capitalisation to Rs 11,46,879.47 crore. Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) also advanced Rs 12,460.25 crore to Rs 5,65,612.92 crore, while Infosys climbed Rs 6,127.73 crore to Rs 6,39,901.03 crore.

HDFC Bank recorded a marginal rise of Rs 230.31 crore, with its valuation standing at Rs 14,84,816.26 crore. On the losing side, ICICI Bank's market value declined by Rs 10,707.87 crore to Rs 10,01,654.46 crore. Bajaj Finance lost Rs 6,346.93 crore, slipping to Rs 6,17,892.72 crore and Hindustan Unilever shed Rs 5,039.87 crore to Rs 6,01,225.16 crore.

At the end of the week, HDFC Bank remained among the most valued company, followed by TCS, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India, Infosys, Bajaj Finance, Hindustan Unilever and LIC.

Meanwhile, in the previous week ended September 7, the combined market valuation of seven top firms had risen by Rs 1,06,250.95 crore, with Bajaj Finance emerging as the biggest gainer as the BSE benchmark jumped 901.11 points, or 1.12 per cent.

## Upcoming IPOs In India: 26 Companies Including Mainboard & SME Issues Set To Open Between September 22–30

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

The primary market is heating up as 26 IPOs are set to open in a single week, including 10 mainboard offers and 16 SME issues. Investors have a variety of options, from established companies to smaller firms, providing opportunities across sectors. Among the mainboard IPOs, Atlanta Electricals plans to raise Rs 687 crore through a mix of Rs 400 crore fresh issue and Rs 287 crore offer for sale, with a subscription window from September 22–24 and a price band of Rs 718–Rs 754. Ganesh Consumer Products, an FMCG player, is raising Rs 409 crore (Rs 130 crore fresh issue + Rs 279 crore OFS), with the same subscription dates and a price band of Rs 306–Rs 322. Anand Rathi Share, the brokerage firm, is launching a Rs 745 crore fresh issue, with bids open from September 23–25 and listing likely on September 30 at Rs 393–Rs 414 per share. Sesaasai Technologies is planning an Rs 813 crore issue (Rs 480 crore fresh + Rs 333 crore OFS), while Jaro Institute is raising Rs 450 crore (Rs 170 crore fresh + Rs 280 crore OFS), both opening for subscription from September 23–25.

# From Microsoft to Facebook, tech majors ask H-1B visa holders to return to the US within a day

**Mumbai.(Agency)**

Following US President Donald Trump's sudden move to slap a \$100,000 annual fee on H-1B visas, leading American software majors such as Microsoft, Facebook and Amazon have asked their H-1B software engineers abroad to rush back to the US within a day, while warning those already in the country to stay put. This abrupt directive has thrown countless skilled professionals into chaos and uncertainty.

The Trump decision, coupled with advisories from tech companies, has sparked concern and uncertainty among H-1B visa holders currently in India. They will have to make travel plans without any delay and return to the US at the earliest – within the deadline. "Traveling on such short notice is challenging, and airfares have also surged," an engineer wrote on the 'X' platform.

In a communication to H-1B visa holders, Microsoft said, "If you are in H-1B status and are in the US, you should remain in the US for the foreseeable future. We

know this may interrupt your travel plans. But the critical thing is to stay in the US in order to avoid being denied re-entry."

"If you are in H-1B or H-4 status and are currently outside the US, we strongly recommend that you do what you can to return to the US tomorrow before the deadline. The Proclamation was released within the last 30 minutes, so we realize that there isn't much time to make sudden travel arrangements. But again, we strongly encourage you to do your best to return," Microsoft said.

Amazon has instructed its employees holding H-1B and H-4 visas to avoid international travel for the foreseeable future. The company has urged Indian and other foreign employees currently outside the US to return by midnight EDT (eastern daylight time) on September 21.

Meta (Facebook) has instructed its employees, particularly those on H-1B and H-4 visas, to remain in the US for at least two weeks while "practical applications" are assessed. Employees

currently outside the country have been directed to return within 24 hours.

Similarly, JP Morgan has mandated in an internal email that all staff return to the U.S. by 12:01 AM ET on September 21. The company has also advised all H-1B

tomorrow), individuals will not be able to enter/return to the US in H-1B status unless their petition has an additional \$100,000 payment associated with it," Microsoft said.

"While the proclamation doesn't reference H-4 dependents, we also recommend that H-4s remain in the US," it said.

Microsoft said it will be updating this post later with a form for people to fill out if they are currently outside the US with an H-1B visa. "We want to be able to follow up with each individual and provide support and guidance as they try to return within the next 28 hours. The proclamation does not impact any other visa statuses," it said.

"There is other content about the pause in processing H-1B petitions for individuals who are outside the US. At this time, we do not interpret this to immediately impact extensions of H-1B status or changes of status to H-1B as long as you are currently in the U.S. We'll share more about that later," Microsoft said.



visa holders to stay in the US and avoid international travel until further notice.

"We have now reviewed the actual text of today's Presidential Proclamation on H-1B visas. First, the proclamation is structured as a travel restriction. Beginning at 12:01 am eastern time on September 21, 2025 (9:01 pm Pacific time

## India's climate gamble: Catastrophe bonds as the next big shield

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

India stands at a critical juncture in its approach to managing natural disasters. With the escalating threat of climate change, the frequency and ferocity of extreme weather events from devastating floods and droughts to powerful cyclones have intensified. This new reality demands a fundamental shift away from our traditional, reactive disaster funding model towards a proactive, sophisticated strategy. It's time for India to embrace catastrophe bonds, a financial innovation that could provide a robust and rapid-response funding mechanism for climate-driven crises.

Currently, India's disaster response relies on a reactive strategy. When disaster strikes, the government allocates emergency funds from the national and state budgets, often supplemented by international aid and ad-hoc borrowing. This approach, while well-intentioned, is inherently slow and often leaves the country scrambling for resources in the immediate aftermath of a tragedy. The numbers paint a stark picture of this

vulnerability: India suffers economic losses of approximately \$9–10 billion annually due to natural disasters. A single event, like the 2013 Uttarakhand floods, can cause damages exceeding \$6 billion, wiping out years of development progress and plunging



vulnerable communities back into poverty. This reactive model is simply no longer fit for purpose in the era of climate volatility.

Understanding catastrophe bonds  
Catastrophe bonds, or "cat bonds," are a powerful and proven alternative. These are high-yield debt instruments that transfer the financial risk of a disaster

from a government or corporation to global capital markets. Here's a more in-depth look at how they function. An entity, such as a state government or a public utility, issues a cat bond through a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV). Investors, typically large asset managers, pension funds, or hedge funds, purchase these bonds. They receive attractive returns as long as a specified catastrophe does not occur. However, if a pre-determined trigger event is met, for example, a cyclone of a certain wind speed or an earthquake of a specific magnitude, the investors lose some or all of their principal, which is then released to the issuer to fund immediate relief and recovery efforts. This mechanism ensures rapid

liquidity. Payments are triggered automatically based on objective, third-party verified data, eliminating the delays of traditional insurance claims. This is a crucial advantage for a country like India, where post-disaster response needs to be swift to minimize human suffering and economic disruption.

## Piyush Goyal heads to US on Monday to take forward trade talks

**Dubai.(Agency)**

Commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal is headed to the US Monday to take forward talks for a bilateral trade deal, signaling the proposed agreement is moving ahead after a hiatus of several weeks.

"The delegation plans to take forward the discussions with a view to achieve early conclusion of a mutually beneficial trade agreement," an official statement said. Last week a team of American officials led by assistant USTR Brendan Lynch was in New Delhi where both countries vowed to intensify efforts for a trade deal.

This the first ministerial level dialogue between the two countries after trade talks collapsed over contentious issues. While India's red lines over farm and dairy stay, there is also growing realisation that the talks with the US following 50% tariffs need to take a different approach from other negotiations where reciprocity has

always been the key parameter. Goyal's visit to the US for talks was earlier announced by the US ambassador designate to India. Given US President Donald Trump's strategy, countries across the world are realising the need



to focus on comparative advantage vis-a-vis rivals.

While the first step will be to find a solution to the 25% secondary tariffs on India, ostensibly for its purchase of Russian crude, the next focus will be to negotiate a deal that puts India at level with other countries, given that its exports face 25% reciprocal tariffs

compared to sub-20% for its key competitors.

"What India is currently facing is nearly an embargo on several of its exports, even as other countries have managed to negotiate deals that seek to ensure that their goods are able to compete favourably," said a source in govt.

Although govt has maintained that more than half of India's exports, including critical ones such as electronics and pharma, are outside the ambit of tariffs, sectors such as seafood, textiles and leather and footwear shipments are facing rough weather with exporters having to hand out steep discounts to retain clients.

Until talks collapsed over the issue of farm and dairy, and allowing genetically modified products, govt was seeking to find a solution to the issue for sectoral tariffs for segments such as automobiles, auto parts, steel and aluminum. But it will be required to offer greater space in the talks now.

## Trump's \$100,000 H-1B fee: Notable jump in last-minute flight bookings, airfares to US from India

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

With US President Donald Trump's shock move to slap a \$100,000 annual fee on H-1B visas, there has been a notable rise in last-minute flight bookings from India to the US as H-1B visa holders in India scramble to reach the US before the order takes effect at 12:01 am eastern time (9:31 IST) on September 21. Else, the employer will have to pay \$100,000 for the employee's re-entry into the US.



The sudden last-minute demand has evidently also led to a surge in airfares to the US, complained a number of people on social media platforms.

Following the sudden announcement by the Trump administration, American software majors such as Microsoft, Meta, and Amazon asked their H-1B employees abroad to rush back to the US within a day, while asking those already in the country to stay put for the foreseeable future. This abrupt directive has led to chaos and uncertainty for numerous foreign skilled professionals working in the US.

"There has been a notable increase in last-minute bookings to the US since this morning. This increase in bookings for same-day or next-day travel is atypical for a long-haul segment," a spokesperson for travel booking major MakeMyTrip said.

According to industry sources, the number of last-minute bookings for direct as well as connecting flights to the US have seen an unusual spike. However, the situations is not too dire as the peak NRI travel season to India is not quite started yet, they said. The main season for Indian professionals in the US to visit India is the October–December festival season, stretching into the remainder of the winter, they said.

Travel industry insiders said that the uncertainty brought about the new visa fees is bound to lead to a significant number of cancellations of flight bookings made by H-1B visa holders to visit India over the coming weeks.

## From grocery runs to gym sessions: What today's homebuyers really want

**Today's urban buyers want more than a home, they seek a lifestyle where comfort, convenience, and community come together, and daily needs, work, and wellness coexist effortlessly.**

**New Delhi.(Agency)**

The definition of a "dream home" has shifted dramatically in the past few years. For today's urban buyer, a house is not just a flat or villa, it is a lifestyle hub. Beyond walls and windows, it is expected to offer ease, comfort, and a sense of balance. Increasingly, convenience sits on the same pedestal as location and size when people decide where to live.

"An ideal home today has evolved well beyond four walls," says C Prabhakar, Director of Gopalan Enterprises. "It is no

longer just a place to live, but a space that balances work, wellness, and leisure. Urban buyers want homes that reduce commute times, offer every convenience within reach, and create a more holistic living experience."

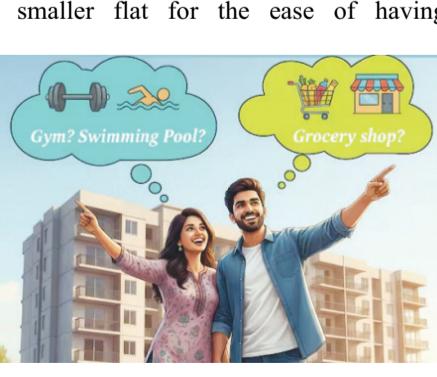
**FROM PERKS TO PRIORITIES**

Not long ago, a gym or a corner store inside a residential project was considered a bonus. Today, such add-ons have become non-negotiable. Fitness centres, co-working areas, and grocery shops within the community are among the first things buyers look for.

"Yes, amenities like gyms, co-working spaces, and convenience stores have quickly moved from being 'nice-to-have' to 'essential,'" Prabhakar points out. "Projects without these features often struggle in today's competitive market." Developments that integrate fitness hubs, workspaces, and daily conveniences under one roof are seeing brisker sales. People increasingly favour communities that allow them to live, work, and socialise without stepping too far from home.

**CONVENIENCE JOINS LOCATION AND SIZE**

While location still matters, convenience has quietly climbed up the priority list. Many buyers are willing to trade a slightly smaller flat for the ease of having



everything they need within the same gated community. The time saved from avoiding long commutes or multiple errands is a major draw.

"Convenience has become equally important as traditional factors like location and size," says Prabhakar. "Buyers increasingly prioritise living in a

self-contained community where daily needs are met within the complex itself.

**LIFESTYLE VS AFFORDABILITY**

Of course, the demand for lifestyle amenities brings in the challenge of affordability. Developers are finding ways to strike the right balance. Smart master planning, well-placed facilities, and pedestrian-friendly layouts are helping create vibrant yet affordable neighbourhoods.

"Connectivity and location convenience are shaping buyer decisions," explains Prabhakar. "We focus on creating well-connected neighbourhoods that combine accessibility with lifestyle, ensuring residents can enjoy convenience without sacrificing comfort or affordability."

**PAYING MORE FOR BETTER LIVING**

Homebuyers are also signalling they are prepared to pay extra for comfort. A 5–10% premium is often acceptable if the project offers features that add everyday value. Whether it is a gym, a co-working hub, or an on-site retail store, people see such facilities as both a time-saver and a long-term investment.

# Janhvi Kapoor

Pens Emotional Note, Calls Homebound's Oscar Entry 'Nothing Short Of A Dream'

Actress Janhvi Kapoor took to social media to express her joy after her film "Homebound" was named India's official entry for the Oscars 2026. Calling the film "nothing short of a dream," the actress shared her gratitude for being part of the milestone project. Taking to her Instagram handle, the 'Dhadak' actress shared the poster of the film and captioned it, "Every part of this film has been nothing short of a dream. The journey, the people, what this story means, and how personal it's been for everyone in our team. At every step I have been thankful I could witness this journey, which in my mind was truly the reward in itself." Janhvi added, "Everything since has been a celebration of all these people that I love and respect so much, for their talent, their goodness and their courage. @neeraj.ghaywan @karanjohar @vishaljethwa06 @ishaankhatter this movie and even its journey, has been about hope, in so many more ways than one would expect



in cinemas on the 26th of September :)." In a statement, Karan Johar shared, "We are deeply honoured and humbled that Homebound has been selected as India's official entry to the Academy Awards... Neeraj Ghaywan's labour of love is sure to find a home in a million hearts across the world." Expressing his happiness, filmmaker Neeraj Ghaywan added, "I'm deeply honoured that Homebound has been chosen as India's official entry to the Oscars. Rooted in the love for our land and our people, it carries the essence of the home we all share."

To take our stories to the world and represent India at one of the biggest global stages for cinema is both humbling and a matter of pride, and for this I'm deeply grateful." "Homebound" has been chosen as India's official entry for the Oscars 2026 in the Best International Feature Film category. Backed by Dharma Productions, the film also features Ishaan Khatter and Vishal Jethwa.

## Lakshmi Manchu Accuses Journalist Of Body Shaming And Ageist Remark, Files Complaint

Lakshmi Manchu has formally raised a complaint with the Telangana Film Chamber of Commerce (TFCC) after she alleged that a senior journalist made derogatory remarks about her appearance and age during a recent promotional event. The actress accused the journalist of humiliation and disrespect after he questioned her about her dressing sense at the age of 47.

### Lakshmi Manchu files complaint against journalist

According to reports, Manchu submitted a written statement to the TFCC detailing her experience. She claimed that the remarks were not only "body shaming and ageist" but also humiliating and disrespectful. The actress requested the Chamber to take note of the incident and hold the journalist accountable. In her submission, the actress highlighted the contrast between cultural reverence for women and the reality of workplace conduct. She wrote, "India is a country that reveres women as Shakti, yet when we step into professional spaces, we are subjected to casual misogyny, humiliation and disrespect. This cannot continue. I owe it not only to myself but to many young women who look up to me to call this out. I will always be open to tough questions, to criticism and to scrutiny as a public figure. But I will not tolerate cruelty marked as journalism."

Manchu ended her statement with a

demand for a public apology, stressing that basic respect must be non-negotiable. "Respect is not optional. Accountability is not negotiable," she concluded.



### What had happened at the event?

At a recent promotional event, a journalist asked Lakshmi Manchu about her dressing choices at the age of 47. The question upset the actress, who responded sharply and asked if he would pose the same question to a male actor like Mahesh Babu. In an interview with Great Andhra, the actress blasted the reporter and said, "Would you ask a man the same question? How dare you! How dare you ask me that question? Would you say, Mahesh Babu, you are 50 now, why are you going shirtless? Then how do you ask a woman the same thing? People learn from what you have asked me here today."

## Suraj Nambiar Plants Kiss On Mouni Roy's Forehead In Adorable Boomerang



Mouni Roy and Suraj Nambiar are a match made in heaven. Whether it's through candid clicks or cosy videos, the madly-in-love couple are one of the most loved celebrity duos on the internet. Their undeniable chemistry and heartwarming moments continue to win hearts, and their latest social media post is no different.

The lovebirds once again lit up social media with a glimpse into their beautiful relationship. Taking to Instagram Stories, Mouni shared a boomerang video that left fans gushing. In the sweet clip, Suraj is seen planting a gentle kiss on Mouni's forehead, and this gesture speaks volumes about their love.

### Mouni Roy and Suraj Nambiar's look

Dressed in matching black outfits, the duo looked effortlessly stylish, serving major couple goals. Mouni was wearing a halter neck top, while Suraj was seen in a crisp black shirt. As for the caption, Mouni kept it minimal and allowed the moment to speak for itself. She simply added a red heart emoji to express her feelings.

### Mouni Roy's love story

The actress met Dubai-based businessman and investment banker Suraj Nambiar through mutual connections. Mouni Roy and Suraj reportedly first met on New Year's Eve in Dubai in 2019. She later met Suraj's parents at Mandira Bedi's home in March 2021.

The couple tied the wedding knot in 2022. The wedding took place at the Hilton Goa Resort, with both Bengali and Malayali ceremonies. Arjun Bijlani, Neha Swami Bijlani, Mandira Bedi, Vanessa Walia and several other celebrities graced the couple's wedding with their presence.

### Mouni Roy's upcoming projects

She will soon grace the screens with Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai, directed by the legendary director David Dhawan. Filmed in Scotland, the romantic comedy brings together a star-studded cast of talented actors, including Varun Dhawan, Maniesh Paul, Rajeev Khandelwal, Mouni Roy, Mrunal Thakur, Pooja Hegde, Kubbra Sait, Chunky Pandey, Jimmy Shergill and Rohit Saraf.

## Disha Patani Turns Up The Heat In Sexy White Lace Gown, Fans Call Her 'Angel In White'



Disha Patani never disappoints when it comes to serving looks, and yet again she has proved that she knows how to slay every style. Disha's recent photo dump in a stunning white gown has her fans drooling over her good looks. In the recent photoshoot, Disha donned a stunning all-white lace ensemble.

The body-hugging outfit features a corset-style bodice. The fitted silhouette of the dress flares out into a mid-length hemline, giving the look a timeless appeal. To establish a perfect contrast, the actress paired her white gown with nude pointed-toe heels.

What stood out to us is the actress' minimal makeup that let her natural beauty shine. With a soft dewy base, flushed cheeks, glossy lips, and kohl-rimmed eyes, Disha stole hearts with a soft bun parted neatly, with a few strands falling gracefully on her face.

### Fans Hail Disha's Look

Disha's outfit featured a sweetheart neckline, which added a touch of glamour to her look. As Disha posted the pictures, fans started reacting to it. One wrote, "Always on fire." "Proof that aesthetic > everything," another one wrote. A third fan shared, "Angel in white glow + grace + glam = perfection."

### Why Disha Patani Was In News?

While her fashion choices are winning hearts globally, Disha's family has been dealing with a deeply unsettling episode back home. On September 12, unidentified assailants opened fire outside her father Jagdish Patani's residence in Civil Lines, Bareilly. Eyewitnesses reported that around 8-10 rounds were fired during the incident.

"Two unidentified assailants fired at my residence. Police are making all possible efforts. Bareilly Police, SSP, and ADG are all working on it. The gunshots are not indigenous. I think 8-10 rounds were fired. I came to know through social media that Goldy Brar has taken responsibility, but it is not clear yet," Jagdish Patani told ANI.

The shocking attack was later linked to alleged remarks made by Disha's sister, Khushboo Patani, about popular spiritual leader Aniruddhacharya, which were misunderstood by many. Even as her family deals with this grave situation, Disha has managed to maintain her professional commitments and continues to make her presence felt internationally.

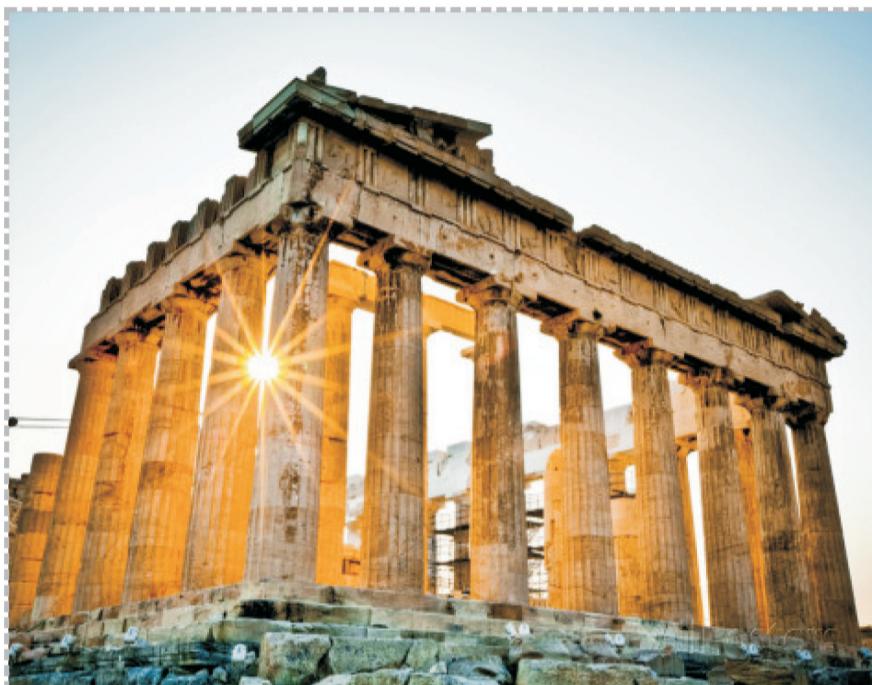
These places offer more than just photo opportunities. Many of them have been significant for people throughout history as places of pilgrimage and worship. Even if the faith isn't your own many of them resonate with an atmosphere of reverence and solemnity that will touch the least religious soul. You will often leave feeling connected, if not to the whole of nature, at least to the chain of human history.

Machu Picchu, Petra, Angkor Wat, the Parthenon and the Pyramids appear in this list, proving that it's not just the meditative perspective of remote mountain tops that pilgrims seek out in order to connect with their spiritual side. These wondrous monuments are attractions from a purely historic and architectural viewpoint as well, and many people don't realise until they arrive how much of the atmosphere survives beyond the visitors and their cameras.

You may have already planned to visit one of these sacred places on your holiday - even to us modern folk many of them have a certain regenerative and restorative power. Could it be the perspective they give on human history, or is it just seeing such a revered spot in person and feeling the atmosphere that gives you something to think about and share with friends and family when you return?

Many of the places on this list are worth building a holiday around so trawl though and plan yourself a mini pilgrimage and recharge your spiritual batteries.

## Stonehenge



studies also revealed the extraordinary mathematical sophistication and engineering abilities with which the stone rings were built.

Stonehenge, the most well known stone ring, is a composite structure built during three periods from 3100 to 1100 BC. Constructed with massive stones weighing as much as twenty-five tons and transported from quarry locations hundreds of miles away, Stonehenge was a structure with multiple purposes. It was a monument of nearly imperishable nature located at a specific site of terrestrial energetic power and celestial significance. It was an astronomical observation device used to predict, in advance of their occurrence, particular

periods in the annual cycle when the earth energies were most highly influenced by the sun, moon and stars. It was a temple, built by and for the people, in which festivals of renewal were held at those energetic periods determined by astronomical observations. It was a structure built with certain types of stones, positioned according to sacred geometry, which functioned as a sort of battery for gathering, concentrating and emanating the earth energies of the site. It was also an eclipse predictor of astonishing accuracy.

## Bagan Temples

There are two enormous ancient temple complexes in Southeast Asia: Bagan in Burma and Angkor in Cambodia. Both sites are remarkable for their expanse of sacred geography and the number and size of their individual temples. For many visitors Bagan is the more extraordinary because of its wonderful views.

Scattered across a vast dusty plain may be seen scores of exotic Buddhist temples. The kingdoms of Bagan date to the early 2nd century AD, yet the region entered its golden age during the reign of King Anawrahta in 1057 AD. From this time, until it was overrun by Kublai Khan's forces in 1287 AD, more than 13,000 temples, pagodas and other religious structures were built. Today, seven centuries later, approximately 2,200 temples remain standing. The river Irrawaddy has washed away nearly one-third of the original city area, thieves have torn apart many temples in search of treasures, while earthquakes and the ravages of time have reduced hundreds of other temples to piles of crumbling stones.

Two of the loveliest temples are the Mahabodhi and



Gawdawpalin. The Mahabodhi, a smaller replica of the famous Bodhi temple in Bodh Gaya, India (where the Buddha attained enlightenment), was built during the 13th century reign of King Nantaungmya and is covered with niches containing seated Buddha figures. The 60 meter tall Gawdawpalin temple, built in the 12th century by King Narapatisithu, was badly damaged in a 1975 earthquake but has since been reconstructed. Many of the temples of Bagan are still functioning and large numbers of pilgrims visit the ancient holy place.

## Baalbek

In the hills of Lebanon stands the temple complex of Baalbek, one of the most enigmatic holy places of ancient times. According to orthodox archaeological theory, the story of Baalbek goes back approximately 5000 years. Excavations around the Roman Temple of Jupiter have uncovered remains dating to the Early Bronze Age (2900-2300 BC). During the 1st millennium BC, the Phoenicians chose the site of Baalbek for a temple to their Sun-god Baal

and legends tell that Baalbek was the birthplace of Baal. Next came the Seleucid and Roman Empires and it is to the Romans (64 BC - 312 AD) that archaeologists attribute the many and massive temple foundations of Baalbek.

The Roman city at Baalbek, called Heliopolis or the City of the Sun and dedicated to the sun god Jupiter, does contain the largest stone structures ever built in the Roman Empire. The Romans, however, did not have the engineering or construction skills necessary for the carving and placement of the enormous blocks of stone which underlie their own constructions. The courtyard of the Jupiter temple, completed around 60 AD, is situated upon a platform, called the Grand Terrace, which consists of a pre-Roman outer wall formed of immense, finely crafted and precisely positioned blocks. These blocks of stone, ranging in weight from 450 tons to 1200 tons, are the largest pieces



of stonework ever crafted in the world. Why these stones, as large as 69 feet long by 14 feet wide, are such an enigma to contemporary scientists is that their method of quarrying, transportation and placement is beyond the technological ability of any known ancient or modern builders. These great blocks of stone show extensive evidence of wind and sand erosion that is absent from the Roman temples, indicating their construction dates from a far earlier age. Finally, the stones of Baalbek show stylistic similarities to other cyclopean stone walls at verifiably pre-Roman sites such as the Acropolis foundation in Athens, the foundations of Myceneae, and the megalithic constructions of Ollantaytambo in Peru and Tiahuanaco in Bolivia.

## Canterbury Cathedral

Mother church of the Anglican communion and the seat of the Archbishop of Canterbury, this wonderful cathedral has featured heavily in English history—most notoriously in 1170 when Archbishop Thomas Becket was murdered in the cathedral, since when the cathedral has attracted thousands of pilgrims. It also featured in Geoffrey Chaucer's Canterbury Tales. The Cathedral was founded in 597AD by St Augustine—sent to convert the heathens of Britain by Pope Gregory the Great.

Augustine's original building under the nave was extensively rebuilt and enlarged by the Saxons, and the cathedral was

