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Ranchi's Jantar Mantar moment: Student protest enters Day 6, CJP backs stir

Ranchi. (Agency)

Student-led protests over alleged irregularities in Jharkhand state examinations entered the sixth day on Monday with the Cockroach Janata Party, which was at the forefront of a similar nationwide agitation, lending support. The students are protesting over alleged wrongdoings in Jharkhand Public Service Commission (JPSC) and Jharkhand Staff Selection Commission (JSSC) examinations and have also sought a CBI probe into the alleged matter.

Addressing the issue on X, Dipke wrote, "Spoke to the students who are protesting in Jharkhand over irregularities in JPSC and JSSC recruitment exams. The CJP stands with all the students in Jharkhand and supports their demands."

The protest, which originally began as a small gathering in Ranchi's Vapu Batika ground in Ranchi over the alleged irregularities and paper leak in the competitive examinations, soon spiralled into a large-scale student movement, drawing support not only from students across the state, but also from several political parties and civil society groups.

Karnataka cabinet expansion: 20 ministers to take oath, GS Patil to be Speaker



The pending cabinet expansion was earlier expected to take place on Friday, July 31, but the schedule was reportedly pushed back following discussions by the Congress leadership in Delhi.

Karnataka. (Agency)

The much-anticipated expansion of Karnataka Chief Minister DK Shivakumar's cabinet is set to take place today, with the final list of ministerial candidates having received Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge's official approval. The party leadership has also approved the name of GS Patil as the next Speaker of the state Legislative Assembly. There are 20 names, including those of some existing ministers such as Zameer Ahmed Khan and Santosh Lad, on the list. It was shared with CM Shivakumar following a meeting between Kharge and Congress MP Rahul Gandhi. As per protocol, the Chief Minister has to share it with the Governor, Thaawar Chand Gehlot, before the ministerial hopefuls can be administered the oath.

Prashant Kishor set to end BJP's 35-year stronghold in Bankipur bypoll

Patna. (Agency)

Prashant Kishor is leading in the Bankipur Assembly by-election as counting trends point to a Jan Suraj breakthrough. If confirmed, the result will end the BJP's long hold on the seat and sharpen Bihar's political contest.

Jan Suraj founder Prashant Kishor is on course to win the Bankipur Assembly by-election, according to the latest counting trends. If the lead holds till the final declaration of results, it will bring an end to the BJP's nearly 35-year dominance in one of its strongest Assembly constituencies in Bihar.

The bypoll is being viewed as a significant political contest, with Bankipur remaining a BJP bastion for more than three decades. A victory for Prashant Kishor would not only mark Jan Suraj's biggest electoral success so far but also reshape the political narrative ahead of the Bihar Assembly elections. The outcome is likely to be a major setback for the BJP, which was forced to change its candidate before eventually fielding Neeraj Kumar Sinha.

Compared with Prashant Kishor, Sinha entered the contest as a relatively low-profile face, while the Jan Suraj chief remained the focal point of the campaign



throughout the election.

Prashant Kishor began campaigning in Bankipur nearly two months before the BJP and the RJD launched their full-fledged campaigns. During this period, he held public meetings, conducted door-to-door

outreach and strengthened booth-level organisation across the constituency. The early start gave Jan Suraj a head start in building its electoral machinery before its rivals intensified their campaigns.

The BJP treated the bypoll as a prestige battle, deploying around 40 star campaigners and thousands of party workers to retain the seat. Several senior BJP leaders campaigned extensively in the constituency during the final phase of the election. The result could also be a significant political setback for BJP national president Nitin Nabin, whose political career has been closely associated with Bankipur. Nabin represented the constituency in the Bihar Assembly for five consecutive terms before being elevated to the party's national leadership and later entering the Rajya Sabha. Although Nitin Nabin was not the BJP's candidate in the bypoll, he played an active role in the campaign.

Trump influenced govt: Kejriwal plans march to PM's residence over E20 rollout

Arvind Kejriwal will take public petitions on E20 fuel to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's residence on Tuesday. The move sharpens his attack on the Centre's ethanol policy and claims of public hardship.

New Delhi. (Agency)

seeking an appointment to discuss vehicle-related problems linked to the fuel.

AAP national convenor Arvind Kejriwal said on Monday that he would march to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's residence on Tuesday with 100 people to submit petitions against E20 fuel. He claimed the Centre was pushing ethanol-blended petrol under pressure from US President Donald Trump.

Addressing a press conference, Kejriwal said he would personally hand over the petitions after receiving no response to a letter sent to the prime minister last month



concerns over E20 petrol. He said the petitions reflected public complaints about

Kejriwal alleged that India had "yielded" to Trump to buy ethanol from the US and said the government's continued push for ethanol-blended petrol suggested there was a "hidden agenda."

"I will go to the PM's residence tomorrow along with 100 people to personally hand over the petitions signed by the public and discuss issues related to ethanol-blended petrol. People are facing several problems with their vehicles despite all that the government is continuing with this, which means there is a hidden agenda," he said.

RSS veteran relieved of Ram Mandir trust duties amid donation theft row

Lucknow. (Agency)

RSS veteran Suresh Bhaiyyaji Joshi has stepped down as the Patron of the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust, with the trust relieving him of his responsibilities amid an organisational reshuffle that comes against the backdrop of the Ayodhya Ram Temple donation theft row.

Joshi, one of the RSS's most influential leaders who was regarded as a key link between the Sangh and the BJP,



cited health reasons for stepping down from the post. The 78-year-old was

appointed as the Trust's Patron after allegations of irregularities surfaced in land purchases linked to the Ram Janmabhoomi project several years ago.

Although he occasionally attended Trust meetings, Joshi maintained a low public profile and was rarely seen in Ayodhya. Sources said that his role was largely advisory and behind the scenes, with little direct involvement in day-to-

Brij Bhushan Singh cleared in sexual harassment case filed by women wrestlers



NEW DELHI. (Agency)

A Delhi court on Monday acquitted former Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh in the sexual harassment case filed by six women wrestlers, handing him relief in one of the most high-profile legal battles in Indian sport.

The case stemmed from allegations by six women wrestlers, including Vinesh Phogat, who accused Singh of sexual harassment during his tenure as WFI chief. Singh had consistently denied the charges. The allegations sparked nationwide protests in 2023, with Olympic medallists and top wrestlers staging a months-long sit-in at Delhi's Jantar Mantar demanding Singh's arrest and his removal from the federation.

The protests drew international attention after police detained several of the athletes during a march towards the new Parliament building, prompting criticism from sporting bodies across the world.

The acquittal comes just months after Olympian Vinesh Phogat publicly revealed that she was one of the six complainants in the case.

High Court denies bail to ex-AAP MLA Naresh Balyan in organised crime case

New Delhi. (Agency)

The Delhi High Court on Monday refused to grant bail to former AAP MLA Naresh Balyan in a case registered under the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act, or MCOCA. Balyan was arrested in the MCOCA case on December 4, 2024, on the same day that a trial court had granted him bail in an alleged extortion case. He had sought bail from the high court while claiming there was



"no shred of evidence" against him and that the case was "completely frivolous."

In the MCOCA case, Balyan is accused of acting as a "facilitator" in an organised crime syndicate. The case relates to an alleged syndicate run by gangster Kapil Sangwan, also known as Nandu. The chargesheet alleges that Balyan and others were

part of an organised criminal syndicate headed by Sangwan, who has been described as an absconding gangster.

Balyan's arrest came hours after the BJP released an audio clip in which the former AAP legislator was purportedly heard telling gangster Nandu to threaten a Delhi builder and extort ransom from him and others.

Priyanka Gandhi, Oppn MPs protest over Ram temple donation theft, student crackdown

Opposition MPs staged a Parliament protest over the theft of Ayodhya Ram temple donations and action against student protesters. The demonstration sharpened the INDIA bloc's attack on Amit Shah and the government's handling of both issues.

New Delhi. (Agency)

Opposition MPs, including Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, staged a protest in the Parliament House complex on Monday over the Ram temple donation theft row and what they described as "police excesses" against student protesters during the anti-NEET paper leak agitation.

Gathering near Makar Dwar, the MPs raised slogans such as "Chhanda chor, gaddi chor" and "Amit Shah sadan mein aao", while placing donation boxes at the protest site to symbolise the alleged theft of temple donations. Some MPs dropped cash into the boxes to represent devotees' contributions before pointing to the

alleged theft. Standing around the boxes, they shouted slogans against the government and held up a large banner



reading, "Why Amit Shah absent from Parliament?" Among those who joined the protest were Priyanka Gandhi, Samajwadi Party MPs Dimple Yadav and Dharmendra Yadav, Trinamool Congress MP Mahua

Moitra, JMM MP Mahua Maji, and RSP MP NK Premchandran.

The MPs also targeted Union Home Minister Amit Shah, accusing the Centre of remaining silent over both the theft of Ram temple donations and the use of excessive force against students during the recent protests over the NEET paper leak. The INDIA bloc has vowed to corner the government in Parliament over both issues. The protest came days after Opposition MPs staged a skit inside the Parliament complex in which leaders, including Rahul Gandhi, placed money into donation boxes while Independent MP Pappu Yadav, dressed in saffron attire, theatrically slipped cash into his pockets to depict the alleged theft at the Ram temple.

News box

GNIDA to launch 24x7 helpline for citizen complaints, services

Noida.(Agency)

The Greater Noida Industrial Development Authority (GNIDA) will set up a 24/7 helpline centre to provide residents with a single point of contact for information, complaints and grievance redressal. At present, GNIDA has a landline for public queries, but it does not operate as a dedicated 24/7 helpline.The authority has issued a request for proposal (RFP) to appoint an agency to operate the round-the-clock facility. The helpline will receive queries, complaints and suggestions through phone calls, SMS, WhatsApp and email, issue acknowledgement receipts with unique tracking numbers, route cases to the concerned departments and provide regular status updates until they are resolved.The helpline will also assist citizens in accessing nearly 55 online services offered by the authority, including building plan approvals, lease deed execution, land allotment, possession, mutation, property transfer, no-dues certificates, mortgage permissions and requests for extension of time.

AK Singh, GNIDA's general manager (projects), said the selected agency will deploy at least 12 trained personnel — five in the morning shift, four in the evening and three at night — to ensure uninterrupted operations seven days a week, including govt holidays.While GNIDA will provide office space, furniture and electricity, the agency will be responsible for the IT infrastructure, telephones, networking equipment and software required to run the centre.Bids have been invited until Aug 5 and will be opened on Aug 7. The contract will be awarded for two years, with a provision for a one-year extension based on performance.

Delhi Police bust fake child adoption racket, physiotherapist among 2 held

Noida.(Agency)

Delhi Police has arrested two men, including a physiotherapist, for allegedly duping people by posing as facilitators of legal child adoptions and collecting money on the false promise of arranging babies for adoption.

The accused cheated victims by sending forged NGO receipts, fake ultrasound reports and other fabricated documents to make the adoption process appear genuine.

The case came to light after police received a complaint through the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal (NCRP) from Archana (30), a resident of Burari, who alleged that she had been cheated of Rs 1.37 lakh.

According to police, the complainant had been searching online for child adoption services when she came across a mobile number.

The person who answered introduced himself as Sachin Agrawal and claimed to represent an organisation involved in facilitating child adoptions.

He assured her that he could arrange the adoption of a baby boy.A few days later, the accused informed her that a baby boy was available for adoption and claimed the expected delivery date was Nov 3, 2025.

27 illegal road cuts to be sealed in Noida, Greater Noida to improve traffic, reduce crashes

Noida.(Agency)

To improve traffic flow and reduce road accidents, the transport department has identified 27 illegal road cuts across Noida and Greater Noida and directed the agencies concerned to seal them.

The department has written to Noida, Greater Noida and Yamuna authorities, as well as National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), enclosing a list of the identified locations and asking them to permanently block the unauthorised openings with concrete barriers or iron grilles.Of the 27 illegal cuts, two fall under Noida Authority area — near Sector 18 Metro Station and Sorkha village.

Eight are in Greater Noida Authority limits, including two in Chhajarsi and one each near Moser Baer roundabout, LG roundabout, Surajpur-Kasna Road, Makoda roundabout, Alpha roundabout and Knowledge Park Metro Station.Three illegal cuts are in Yamuna Authority area — near Noida International University, Galgotias University and Buddh International Circuit. The remaining 14 fall under NHAI, most of them along NH-91.Assistant regional transport office (enforcement) Udit Narayan Pandey said the openings were identified during a road safety assessment.

Gurgaon’s built-up area expands 64% in a decade: GIS study

Gurgaon.(Agency)

The city’s built-up area has expanded by nearly 64% over the past decade, growing from 102.5sq km in 2015 to 168.2sq km in 2025, according to a GIS-based study by GMDA.The study projects continued urbanisation through 2030, concentrated along key growth corridors including Dwarka Expressway, Southern Peripheral Road (SPR), NH-8, Golf Course Extension Road, Sohna Road, New Gurgaon, Cyber City-Udyog Vihar and IMT Manesar. Improved connectivity, expanding economic activity and planned urban development have been identified as the primary drivers of this growth.The assessment was carried out by GMDA’s GIS Division using high-resolution satellite imagery, GIS mapping, statistical analysis and machine-learning

models to track land-use change and forecast future expansion, achieving an overall mapping accuracy of more than 92%.GMDA chief executive officer PC Meena said the study reinforces the importance of data-driven planning as the city continues to witness rapid urban growth. “The GIS study provides valuable spatial insights into the city’s growth pattern and helps us anticipate future infrastructure requirements. Such scientific assessments enable informed planning decisions and ensure that infrastructure development keeps pace with urban expansion,” he said, adding that the authority intends to use the findings to guide long-term investments toward a well-connected, sustainable and future-ready city.

Senior scientist and head of GMDA’s GIS section, Dr Sultan Singh, said

advanced geospatial technologies have given planners a detailed understanding of the city’s changing land-use pattern, allowing them to forecast future growth with greater accuracy.The findings are expected to serve as a blueprint for planning roads, drainage systems, water supply, sewerage networks, public transport and intelligent traffic management. The study also flags the need for integrated land-use planning, stronger transport connectivity, expanded water and sewerage networks, improved stormwater drainage and protection of ecological spaces as the city grows.GMDA officials said the study will help the authority prioritise infrastructure investments and align future development with projected population and urban growth, positioning it as a key planning tool as

Gurgaon enters its next phase of expansion while balancing growth with sustainability.The study also highlights the increasing role of geospatial intelligence in urban governance, enabling planners to monitor changes in land use, identify emerging development clusters and assess infrastructure gaps in real time. Officials said the GIS platform can support evidence-based decision-making by integrating spatial data with demographic and utility information, allowing authorities to better sequence infrastructure projects and optimise public spending.Urban planning experts said the findings come at a time when the city is witnessing sustained residential, commercial and industrial expansion, driven by improving regional connectivity and growing corporate investments.

3 months on, revamp of Gurgaon’s Garhi Road still crawls, commute a nightmare

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Hundreds of commuters using Garhi Road continue to face inconvenience as reconstruction of the nearly 2.5km stretch has progressed slowly, with residents claiming that only around 400 metres have been paved despite work beginning nearly three months ago.

The road connects the primary health centre in Garhi village with GMDA’s master road and serves as a key access route for several residential societies, villages and upcoming housing projects in Sector 99 and nearby areas. Thousands of commuters, including office-goers and schoolchildren, use the stretch daily.According to residents, MCM awarded the Rs 2.15-



crore project in March for construction of an interlocking paver-block road. Work began in May and was scheduled to be completed within four months. However, residents alleged that only a small section of the road has been completed so far.“The pace of work is extremely slow. If construction had progressed properly, a substantial

portion of the road would have been ready by now. At this rate, it may take another three to six months. If the work extends into Oct, there is a possibility that GRAP restrictions could again affect construction,” said a resident of Pareena Laxmi, Gaurav Ranga.Residents also complained that streetlight poles were removed during the construction, leaving the stretch poorly lit after sunset. They said construction material and paver blocks remain scattered on the road, making commuting difficult, especially at night.Residents alsoalleged that despite raising the issue with the civic body on several occasions, there has been little improvement in the pace of the work.

Man gets 5 years’ jail for firing at cops during 2010 rural poll in Noida

Gurgaon.(Agency)

An additional sessions court on Friday sentenced the brother of a former gram pradhan to five years in prison and ordered him to pay a fine of Rs 8,800 for attempt to murder and trying to threaten and influence voters during a local panchayat poll in 2010.

The gram pradhan of Kachhera village, Sushil Nagar, and five of his aides were also convicted for rioting and exerting undue influence at an election but they were not awarded jail time. The court asked them to furnish personal bonds of Rs 20,000 each and one surety of the like amount alongside an undertaking not to get involved in any unlawfl activity in future.udge Sunil Kumar 1 said that

the prosecution had succeeded in proving beyond a reasonable doubt that Sushil’s brother, Yashpal, “intimidated and influenced voters near the polling station, caused public disorder, participated in an unlawful assembly, was armed with a deadly firearm, fired with intent to kill in the direction of police personnel and persons present”. He was also found in possession of an unlicensed pistol, live cartridges, and spent cartridges when he was apprehended.For Sushil and the five others, the judge held that their role in actively attending the polling station, intimidating voters, and remaining in the unlawful assembly despite police warnings, was also clearly established by the evidence of prosecution witnesses.

However, noting that they were first-time offenders and considering the nature of the crime, circumstances, age of the accused, their social background, and the possibility of their reformation, the court said it would be justified to grant them the benefit of Section 4 of the Probation Act, 1958 and not sentence them to jail.“Given the gravity of the crime committed by Yashpal, it would not be justified to grant him a similar benefit and he is accordingly sentenced,” the judge ruled.

The matter is linked to an FIR lodged at Badalpur police station on Oct 25, 2010, by circle officer Amit Kumar. He said that when he reached the polling booth in Kachhera, he saw Sushil, Yashpal and five others.

Rigid class I NEP age cutoff forces many kids to take 'drop year' in pre-primary

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Prudvika will cool her heels in upper KG for another year. Harsh will bide his time in Alpha 1. Ameera will make new friends in UKG 2.What's common to the three children - Harsh and Ameera in Gurgaon and Prudvika in Noida - is that they are repeating a year in pre-primary, the predicament of many tots in NCR schools who have found their admission to Class 1 delayed after UP and Haryana decided to strictly implement National Education Policy (NEP) rules that set entry age at 6 years.

Parents looking to give their kids an early start have for years admitted the toddlers into nursery at the age of 3, followed by UKG at 4 and Class 1 at 5. Though NEP and its guidelines have been around for several years, schools did not turn away 3-year-olds coming for nursery admissions.

As a result, strict implementation of the 6-year rule for Class 1 has forced a 'drop year' on scores of kids studying in Gurgaon, which is known for elite

international schools, as well as Noida and Ghaziabad.This academic ear, only kids who have turned 6 by March 31 are allowed admission into Class 1. Schools, meanwhile, have innovated with new intermediate classes like UKG 2 and Alpha 1 to keep the children on their rolls.

A part of the Class 1 syllabus is being taught in these classes to ensure the learning curve for kids doesn't plateau, parents and teachers told TOI."But what's the logic behind such strict implementation of age rules? Which class a child should sit in should only be based on the child's ability to learn," a parent who asked not to be named said.Other parents these correspondents spoke to said the age rule should have been strictly enforced only for new nursery admissions - the way Delhi is doing it - and forcing it on pre-schoolers already in the system made no sense.

In Delhi, th age rule so far applies to fresh admissions, with entry to Bal Vatika 1 fixed at 3+ years and Class 1 at 6+ years.NCR schools near Delhi

borders that cater to a large number of students from the capital have been allowed a relaxation "till the policy in both states is fully aligned", a UP education official said.



A parent in Gurgaon said her daughter (5), who studies at Millennium School, failed to get into Class 1 this year.

"We were not aware or informed about a six-plus criteria being in place for Class 1. My daughter studied with the same classmates since nursery and is academically at the same level, yet she was held back only because she missed the age cutoff by a few days. Several of her classmates who met the age requirement got promoted, but she has been placed in the newly

created Alpha KG. It's unfair on children and unfair to make parents pay for an additional year.

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Govt approves 13.75 crore for heritage conservation projects at Purmandal, Imambara Zadibal

SRINAGAR: The Government of Jammu & Kashmir has approved two major heritage conservation projects worth ₹13.75 crore for the restoration and revival of the historic heritage site of Purmandal in Samba and the conservation and upgradation of the historic Imambara Zadibal in Srinagar. The twin initiatives reaffirm the Government's commitment to preserving Jammu & Kashmir's rich religious, cultural and architectural heritage while enhancing facilities for pilgrims, devotees and visitors. The Government has approved a ₹7.16 crore project for the restoration and revival of the historic heritage site of Purmandal in Samba. The initiative aims to preserve the site's unique heritage character while improving essential infrastructure to enhance the experience of pilgrims

and tourists visiting the revered shrine town. The Government has also sanctioned a ₹6.59 crore project for the conservation and upgradation of the historic Imambara Zadibal in Srinagar. The project seeks to conserve the architectural and heritage character of the centuries-old Imambara while upgrading essential infrastructure to provide improved facilities for the large number of devotees and visitors who visit the revered religious site throughout the year. These projects form part of the Government's sustained efforts to protect and restore places of immense religious, histor-

ical and cultural significance across Jammu and Kashmir through focused investments in heritage conservation and infrastructure development. The approval of the Purmandal and Imambara Zadibal a ₹6.59 crore project for the conservation and upgradation of the historic Imambara Zadibal in Srinagar. The project seeks to conserve the architectural and heritage character of the centuries-old Imambara while upgrading essential infrastructure to provide improved facilities for the large number of devotees and visitors who visit the revered religious site throughout the year.

These projects follow a series of similar initiatives undertaken by the Government in recent months. Earlier, the Government sanctioned a ₹6.38 crore project for the development of the revered holy spring of Khoo Sahib at Yarwan in Shadimar, Pulwama. The project aims to upgrade essential infrastructure and improve facilities for devotees while preserving the site's religious, cultural and historical significance, thereby enhancing the overall pilgrim experi-

ence. The Government has also recently approved two major heritage conservation projects worth ₹16.36 crore for the revival and restoration of the historic Jamia Masjid Sharief in Shopian and the revered Sarvadar Chaumanda

Mata Mandir in Ramban. These projects are designed to protect important heritage structures while strengthening amenities for worshippers and visitors.

NAME CHANGE

I, Jaya Vats, W/O Arvind Vats, R/O H. NO. 178 Village Dhaisara Janti Kalan, Sonapat- 131028, Haryana have changed my name to Jaya Kausik for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE

I, Rajesh Agarwal S/O Kesho Ram Agarwal, R/O D-115 Top Floor, Ashok Vihar Phase 1, Delhi-110052 have changed my name to Rajesh Agarwal for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE

I, Sumit Kumar Sharma, S/O Satish Sharma, R/O C/271, Ground Floor, Keshav Puram, Delhi- 110035, have changed my name to Sumit Sharma for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE

I, Gaikwad Prathmesh Mukund S/O Manisha R/O Flat No. 402, T-14, Fourth Floor, Parsvnath LA Tropicana Khyber Pass, Civil Lines, near Bd Estate, VTC: Civil Lines Po: Civil Lines, DELHI-110054, I have changed my name to Prathmesh Mukund Gaikwad

NAME CHANGE

I, Km jyoti D/O Dinesh Kumar R/O Bir chhuchhakwas(118),jhajjar, Haryana - 124106, I have changed my name to jyoti

NAME CHANGE

I, MOHAMMAD UMAR S/O ASGAR ALI Residing at HOUSE NO B-33 BLOCK NEAR JAMA MASJID NEW SEELAMPUR, North East Delhi 110053 have changed my name to MOHD UMAR for all future purpose.

NAME CHANGE

I, MOHD USAMA S/O MUSABBIR HUSSAIN R/O R-81 GALI NO-21 NEAR USMANIYA MASJID BRAHAMPURI SEELAMPUR DELHI-110053 HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO MOHD USAMA

NAME CHANGE

I, SHAENAM ARA W/O MOHD USAMA R/O R-81 GALI NO-21 NEAR USMANIYA MASJID BRAHAMPURI SEELAMPUR DELHI-110053 HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO SHAENAM ARA

NAME CHANGE

I, ARVIND S/O BIJENDER SINGH R/O 150, J-BLOCK NEW ROSHAN PURA NAJAFGARH DELHI 110043, CHANGED MY NAME TO ARVIND KUMAR.

NAME CHANGE

I, BAOLIYA POOJA ANAND W/O JITENDAR KUMAR R/O H.NO-258A GALI NO 14 STATION BLOCK PREM NAGAR 1 NORTH WEST DELHI 110086, CHANGED MY NAME TO POOJA.

NAME CHANGE

I, MOHAMMAD YAMEN S/O SIRAJUDDIN residing at H NO B-408, GALI NO-4, INDIRA VIHAR CHAMNA PARK DELHI-110094, have changed my name to MOHD YAMEN

NAME CHANGE

I, Manju D/O Surender Sharma R/o 352/4, Bagh Vali Gali, Tilpat Amarnagar, Faridabad, Haryana-121003 have changed my name to Manju Sharma for all purposes.

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NEWS BOX

Cuba state energy firm reports new nationwide blackout

HAVANA.(Agency)

Cuba's power grid failed Sunday, causing another nationwide blackout, a state utility said in a social media post.As the lights suddenly turned off across Havana, residents who were sat outside to get some respite from the summer heat audibly groaned en masse.Cuba has been suffering rolling power cuts due to aging equipment and a US energy embargo that halted regular deliveries of fuel for power stations.State-run UNE said there was a "total disconnection" of the national electricity system, plunging the country, including the capital, into abrupt darkness. This is just the latest in a series of total collapses of the electricity grid.Just 24 hours ago, the whole west of the country went dark.The power cuts have made normal life almost impossible, with each outage also meaning that water supplies trickle away and ceiling fans slow to a halt.It is a growing strain for a society used to adversity but now stuck in a months-long crisis that has no obvious end in sight.Residents in the worst-affected areas have vented their frustrations by setting piles on trash on fire or banging on pots and pans.aid the fire department had been "pushed to its limits".Three firefighters died this week in the line of duty, two in Crete and one in the Peloponnese.

Detained Suu Kyi meets Red Cross official in Myanmar: President's office

YANGON.(Agency)

Myanmar's detained democratic leader Aung San Suu Kyi met with the nation's Red Cross representative on Monday, the president's office said, the first publicised meeting between her and a foreign official since she was ousted in a 2021 military coup."Mr. Arnaud de Baecque, the Resident Representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to Myanmar, met with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi this morning," said a statement from the president's office. The military deposed Suu Kyi in February 2021, jailing the Nobel Peace Prize laureate and triggering an ongoing civil war.The coup leader and former junta chief, Min Aung Hlaing, was installed as civilian president in April following highly restricted elections.Later that month, Suu Kyi, now 81, was moved to house arrest after Min Aung Hlaing said he had commuted the rest of her sentence.She was detained following the coup on a host of charges which rights groups say were confected to sideline her.In photos released by the president's office, Suu Kyi is seen shaking hands with a man who appears to be de Baecque.

Nauru becomes Naoero as Pacific nation reclaims traditional identity

WASHINGTON.(Agency)

The Pacific island nation of Nauru has changed its name to the Republic of Naoero, with President David Adeang saying the move brings the country's official name in line with its spelling and pronunciation in the national language. The country's international code will change from NRU to NRO, and its people will be known as dei-Naoero instead of Nauruan. Commonly known abroad as Nauru and pronounced “Now-roo”, the new name is pronounced “Now-ero”. The government said the move restores the remote South Pacific nation's traditional name and reflects its heritage, language and identity.In a statement posted on the government’s Facebook account on Thursday, the administration said the country had become known internationally as Nauru because its local name was difficult for foreigners to pronounce and was used for convenience rather than by choice. “This proposed change seeks to more faithfully honour our nation’s heritage, our language, and our identity,” Adeang had said when he proposed the move in Parliament in January. The suggested constitutional amendment has been approved by lawmakers in the required two rounds of voting, although it was not immediately clear whether the Constitution had been formally amended. Adeang said the name change marked “the beginning of renewed national pride”. When the government last voted for the move in May, he had announced a referendum to confirm it. However, the government said last week that after “extensive discussions”, lawmakers had decided a public vote was not needed. “While a referendum is intended to determine the will of the people, the name Naoero has never been lost, but rather waiting to be fully embraced,” the statement said. It added that the designation “is already the identity of the people, is on the national coat of arms, and spoken in the community; and importantly is allowed .

More pregnant women are dying in Congo as they avoid hospitals over Ebola

BUNIA.(Agency)

Esther Lutula stopped going for prenatal checkups shortly after the current Ebola outbreak was declared in eastern Congo. Midway into her pregnancy, the 26-year-old feared being put into isolation simply for having a fever, a common misconception."That's why I'm waiting until the disease is no longer widespread," she told The Associated Press from her home in Bunia, the capital of Ituri province and epicenter of the outbreak declared on May 15. But that could be a deadly mistake. Maternal mortality across Ituri soon doubled as news of the outbreak spread, with an average of about six women dying per week due to

childbirth complication, according to Noemi Dalmonte, deputy country representative of the United Nations Population Fund in Congo. While there was an average of 3.1 maternal deaths weekly this year before the outbreak, that jumped to 5.8 deaths from May 25 to July 19. Among those, the deaths outside health centers have also jumped from 9.1% to 17.4% within the same period, UNFPA data shows.This is part of a series on maternal mortality in sub-Saharan Africa, which has the world's fastest-growing population and accounts for 70% of global maternal deaths. Around 180,000 pregnancy deaths are recorded every year across the continent.As Congo battles the fastest-growing Ebola outbreak on record, with more



than 1,600 confirmed deaths, health and aid workers are warning of a shadow crisis as pregnant women avoid hospitals and the country's already high maternal mortality rate climbs even more.While it's common for Africans to avoid health centers during public health emergencies because of safety concerns, "with Ebola, it is stronger because Ebola has a lot of rumors," Dalmonte said in an

interview. With some wary residents questioning whether Ebola even exists, and health workers in one of Congo's most remote and volatile regions struggling to respond to the outbreak with few supplies, pregnant women have less care than ever.Congo is one of the world's most dangerous places to give birth Congo's has among the world's highest rates of both childbirths per woman and deaths around childbirth. Women in the vast central African nation have almost six children on average. At least 19,000 women died from pregnancy complications in Congo in 2023, according to the latest U.N. data, tied with India and second only to Nigeria globally.

Trump's attorney general pick says has reached deal with senators after standoff

WASHINGTON.(Agency)

The US acting attorney general said Sunday he had reached an agreement with lawmakers and issued an order officially scrapping a \$1.8-billion compensation fund that has led to a standoff over his Senate confirmation.Todd Blanche's announcement came after the Senate Judiciary Committee pushed back a vote on advancing his nomination owing to his weekslong dispute with Republican Senators John Cornyn of Texas and Thom Tillis of North Carolina.Cornyn and Tillis have said they will withhold support for Blanche until President Donald Trump's administration rescinds plans for a \$1.8 billion "anti-weaponization" fund for people claiming they have been victims of politically motivated prosecutions. "My team and I have met with committee members and Senators

over the past several weeks and addressed any concerns or outstanding questions," Blanche wrote on X."We have enjoyed good faith discussions, and as a result issue the following order and



update with regard to the May IRS settlement," headed. A signed order attached to Blanche's post said: "The Attorney General's May 18, 2026 Order establishing the Anti-Weaponization Fund... is rescinded and shall have no force or effect."This Order establishes,

beyond any doubt, that there is no Fund."The anti-weaponization fund stemmed from an extraordinary settlement between Trump and his administration over the illegal disclosure of his tax records.It offered the president, his family and businesses broad protection from tax audits and other government claims. Opponents argue it had no clear legal basis, little public oversight and could be used to reward loyalists, including defendants convicted of crimes related to the January 6, 2021, assault on the US Capitol by Trump supporters. Blanche had previously said the fund would not proceed, but Cornyn and Tillis demanded a formal written commitment preventing its revival and language narrowing the tax protections.

Argentina leader doubles down on calling Brazil's president a 'thief'

BUENOS AIRES.(Agency)

Argentina's President Javier Milei renewed his war of words against leftist Brazilian counterpart Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva on Sunday, after sparking a diplomatic spat last week by calling him a criminal. "He's a thief, he's corrupt, he's been convicted of theft and corruption, he's been in prison, so it's true that we can call him a convict," Milei said of Lula during an interview on LN+.The libertarian Argentine leader made similar remarks during a speech in Brazil last weekend supporting Flavio Bolsonaro, Lula's right-wing

opponent in the upcoming presidential election. Brazil recalled its ambassador to Argentina for consultations over Milei's speech, which also took aim at a Brazilian Supreme Court justice.Buenos Aires later sought to play down the spat with its largest trade partner, with presidential spokesperson Adrian Ravier saying it was a matter of "ideological and political differences." Asked on Sunday why he had such aggressiveness towards Lula, Milei retorted: “Don't you think it's aggressive when someone steals from you? Calling a thief a 'thief' is far less serious than the act of

stealing itself."“They released him (Lula) because of an administrative error, not because he's innocent. Therefore, he's a thief and a corrupt official," the Argentine leader insisted."I'm doing this because I'm a champion of the ideals of freedom," he added.Lula, who was previously president from 2003-2010, spent 580 days in jail beginning in April 2018 after being convicted in the sprawling Operation Car Wash anti-corruption probe.He was freed after his conviction was overturned on procedural grounds, with the presiding judge also later ruled to have been biased.



collaboration with the Zionist regime". "They helped the intelligence services achieve their objectives by providing them with information on military and security centres during the war," Mizan added.The number of executions in Iran has risen since the start of the war, which broke out on February 28 with massive US-Israeli strikes that killed Iran's supreme leader.Iran is the world's second-most prolific executioner after China, according to rights groups including Amnesty International.The authorities executed at least 1,639 people last year, a record high since 1989, according to Iran Human Rights, an NGO based in Norway, and Together Against the Death Penalty (ECPM), which is headquartered in Paris.On Tuesday, Amnesty denounced what it said was the "escalation" in executions after Iran announced the hanging of two men found guilty of taking part in anti-government protests during the winter.

Jailed ex-leader Maduro welcomes 'any path to dialogue' in Venezuela

Caracas.(Agency)

Venezuela's imprisoned former leader Nicolas Maduro on Sunday welcomed "any path to dialogue," ahead of a US-backed meeting in the coming week between representatives of the Latin American country's interim government and opposition leaders. The leftist Maduro and his wife Cilia Flores were captured in a US military raid in January and are being held in a New York detention center awaiting trial on charges related to drug and firearms trafficking. They have pleaded not guilty.We welcome any path to dialogue that helps consolidate peace, coexistence, and reconciliation among Venezuelans," read a message posted on the official Telegram account of the

deposed president."To speak of a national renaissance as a common goal is to speak of mutual respect for diversity, of inclusion for everyone," he added.It was not immediately clear how Maduro, 63, posted his message from his jail cell, but the former strongman leader is in regular contact with his lawyers as he awaits trial in US federal court.His son, Nicolas Maduro Guerra, who is a lawmaker, reposted the former president's message on X.Shortly after Maduro's ouster, the United States green-lighted his vice president Delcy Rodriguez as the country's interim leader.She governs under intense pressure from Washington, which demands Venezuela open up to US companies hungry to profit from its oil, minerals and other resources.The United States is also pushing for a

political dialogue that could lead to a timetable for future elections in Venezuela.Maduro's comments come



at a key moment, with Venezuela's government and the opposition announcing Saturday that political transition talks are expected to begin in person in the coming week in Caracas. National Assembly head Jorge Rodriguez, who is the chief government

negotiator and the interim president's brother, said the timing was agreed after a telephone call with opposition figure Dinorah Figuera.The talks however are taking place without the participation of the main leader of the Venezuelan opposition, Nobel peace laureate Maria Corina Machado, who has said she will not obstruct the process.Venezuela, a country that has the world's largest proven oil reserves but an economy in shambles, has been in a state of even bigger flux since US forces deposed Maduro.Devastating June earthquakes killed more than 5,500 people, compounding the country's woes.Jorge Rodriguez said the talks will address post-quake assistance, the "reinforcement of democracy," and political rights.

Five accused in TCS Nashik case get bail in four FIRs

Mumbai.(Agency)

In at least four FIRs registered in connection with the alleged sexual harassment at Tata Consultancy Services’ (TCS) Nashik office, a Nashik sessions court on July 30 granted bail to five accused men, noting that they had spent over three months in jail and that the investigation was nearly complete. Lawyers, however, said the accused will not be released as their bail applications are still pending in at least two other cases.

On July 30, bail was granted to five accused —Raza Memon, Shahrukh Qureshi, Asif Ansari, Shafi Shaikh and Tausif Attar, in four cases.

“The accused are behind bars for over three months. The chargesheet is filed. Investigation is practically complete. There is no serious apprehension that the accused, if released on bail, would threaten the prosecution witnesses or tamper with the evidence,” Additional Sessions Judge A V Kharkar said in the July 30 order in one of the FIRs.

In that FIR, Raza Memon was accused of making objectionable remarks to a woman colleague and hurting her religious sentiments, while the four others were arrested for allegedly supporting Memon’s actions, according to the court order.

‘Something fishy’... ‘Axe must fall’: Gujarat High Court pushes but no end to mystery over a Surat demolition

Surat, Vadodara.(Agency)

On the morning of May 30, at least a hundred families were left homeless as shanties were razed, allegedly without notice, at the Nasirnagar slum in Surat. Over six weeks later, who ordered the demolitions remains a mystery, with the plot thickening after a subordinate officer of the Surat Municipal Corporation (SMC) submitted WhatsApp messages before the Gujarat High Court suggesting the shanties were razed at the behest of Municipal Commissioner M Nagarajan.

The court has been repeatedly pressing for rehabilitation of those evicted and questioning the Gujarat government on why no action had been taken against the civic chief even as five junior municipal officers had been suspended. The government’s submission at the last hearing, on July 30, that two senior bureaucrats had been appointed to examine the role of officials, did not go down well with the court.

“The concern is that the state’s image as a model state is being sullied... What message are you sending out if, while an inquiry is being conducted, the impression remains that senior officers cannot be touched?” the court said.

Gujarat receives 68% of monsoon rain; 95% in South, Kutch stares at deficit

Ahmedabad.(Agency)

The state has recorded over 68 per cent (623.29 mm) of the season’s total rainfall as on August 2 morning with South Gujarat receiving 95 per cent and Kutch 28 per cent. During the second round of heavy rainfall spell, the state has added 15 per cent average rainfall of the season within a week – from 53 per cent on July 26.

According to the rainfall data maintained by the State Emergency Operation Centre (SEOC), while the South Gujarat region has received over 95 per cent (1,465.39 mm) of season’s average rainfall, North Gujarat recorded 50.12 per cent, East central 65.06 per cent and Saurashtra 53.68 per cent – all above 50 per cent. Kutch has recorded 28 per cent of the season’s rainfall.

Heavy rainfall in Morbi

The state received widespread rainfall during the 24 hours ending Sunday morning with Morbi’s Tankara and Morbi talukas recording the highest of 194 mm and 223 mm, respectively, while Halvad got 163 mm. Surendranagar’s Wadhwan was also left inundated with 157 mm during the period.

After heavy rain, Mumbai dumped 10 days’ of drinking water into sea. Why?

Mumbai.(Agency)

In the eight days between June 30 and July 7, as 898 mm of rain fell on Mumbai, more than the city’s average for all of July, the BMC’s 19 operational pumping stations pushed 4,290.5 crore litres of water into the Arabian Sea and the creeks around the city.

That is the combined storage capacity of eight Powai Lakes. It could have met Mumbai’s entire water requirement for nearly 10 days. Instead it went into the sea, and it had to. The pumps exist to keep the city from drowning. But Mumbai is an island with no freshwater source of its own. Everything it drinks comes from seven monsoon-fed reservoirs, Vihar, Tulsi, Bhatsa, Tansa, Upper Vaitarna, Middle Vaitarna and Modak Sagar, which stood 88.58 per cent full as of July 31. Those reservoirs will likely reach capacity by the end of August, while the

monsoon typically runs until mid-October. Beyond that point, large volumes of surplus water will spill downstream from dams that can hold no more, even as the pumps keep sending stormwater into the sea. The result



is that year after year a city that lives almost entirely off rain-fed reservoirs lets a substantial share of its freshwater go uncaptured.

Mumbai’s water supply system

Despite being surrounded by the Arabian Sea on three sides, Mumbai draws all its potable water from seven reservoirs, most of them beyond its boundaries. The Vaitarna system, anchored by Upper Vaitarna in Nashik district, Middle Vaitarna and Modak Sagar, supplies the island city and western suburbs. The Bhatsa system caters to the eastern suburbs. The network was built over 150 years. Vihar Lake, the oldest, came up in 1860 inside the Sanjay Gandhi National Park, which also holds Tulsi Lake. Tansa Dam, commissioned in 1892, Modak Sagar and Bhatsa Dam, commissioned in 1982, are all in Thane district. Middle Vaitarna, completed in 2012, is the newest.

The reservoirs fill during the monsoon and sustain the city through the year, their water treated at the Bhandup filtration plant and piped across Mumbai.

Maharashtra: Congress unveils action group to regain urban lost ground

Mumbai.(Agency)

In a significant course correction aimed at shedding its long standing image of being a predominantly rural party, the Maharashtra Congress is set to launch an Urban Maharashtra Action Group, a platform that will focus exclusively on civic and urban governance issues while attempting to rebuild the support base in the state’s cities. The initiative, to be launched mid-August, follows the party’s Sanghatan Srujan organisational drive under which around 7,500 office-bearers were appointed across Maharashtra. Party leaders said the next phase would shift the focus from organisational expansion to engaging with issues affecting urban and semi-urban voters.

The Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee plans to establish an independent Urban Action Group that will

prepare a citizen-centric action plan on urban issues and formulate an alternative vision for urban development.

The move comes at a time when Maharashtra is becoming increasingly



urbanised. The state has 29 municipal corporations and 246 municipal councils, while nearly 40 per cent of the 288 assembly constituencies are now predominantly urban and another 15 to 20 per cent are semi-urban. Party leaders expect these numbers

to rise further once the ongoing Census exercise is completed.

Congress leaders privately admit, the party has steadily lost ground in urban Maharashtra because of a failure to build a sustained urban agenda. Apart from three MLAs from Mumbai and two from Nagpur, the party has little representation from major urban centres such as Pune and Nashik. The state Congress president Harshwardhan Sapkal said, “A major social change is taking place in Maharashtra’s politics. The Congress has always fought for farmers, agricultural labourers, the rural economy, and agriculture related issues, and this will continue...The issues of citizens in urban and semi-urban areas are now linked to the state’s future. The Congress wants to be the voice of this new Maharashtra as well.”

Exclusive: Maharashtra exam gang was busted just before the next big leak

Mumbai.(Agency)

If their plan to leak the exam paper for school teachers had succeeded, the next target was the test for recruiting assistant professors in colleges and universities.

This is what Bijendra Gupta, the alleged mastermind in the Teachers Eligibility Test (TET) 2026 question paper leak case in Maharashtra, has allegedly told investigators of the Thane City police, The Indian Express has learnt.

Gupta and other arrested accused also allegedly told police how such gangs leak papers, both offline and online — from staking out printing presses and cultivating junior staff to registering specific computer centres for exams and helping candidates with answers, officers said. According to police,

Gupta’s gang was busted two days before the TET exam, for which nearly 6 lakh teachers were due to appear across 1,028 centres in the state on June 28 — the test was postponed following the police



action. The State Eligibility Test (SET) for assistant professors, meanwhile, was to be held on July 26 but was postponed to September following requests from candidates on a popular pilgrimage in the state and to prevent a clash with the Maharashtra State Public

Commission (MPSC) exams.

“During interrogation, Bijendra Gupta told us that Sanjay Kumar Sharma, a former employee at the Agra-based printing press from where the TET paper was leaked, had promised to get him the SET paper as well, which was to be printed and dispatched in July,” a police officer said.

The officer said they are verifying Gupta’s claims and will ascertain if the SET papers too were printed at the Mahim Patran Pvt Ltd press from where the TET papers were leaked. Authorities at the printing press did not respond to an emailed request for comment from .

“Gupta has also claimed that Sharma has been in touch with gangs linked to leaking papers across the country and would promise to get them papers in advance in exchange for money,” the officer said.

Woman files rape complaint. Panchayat punishes her, forces her to lick spit

Bihar.(Agency)

A woman was forced to lick spit in front of a panchayat in Bihar’s Begusarai as punishment after she filed a rape complaint. A video of the incident has gone viral, triggering outrage and prompting police to launch a probe into her allegation and the public humiliation.

The incident took place in June, but it came to light only after the footage went viral on social media. According to an FIR lodged on August 1, a neighbour forcibly entered the woman’s house on the night of June 2 and raped her after threatening her. She alleged that when the accused tried to flee through a window, villagers caught him, convened a panchayat and subjected both of them to public humiliation instead of informing the police. The video begins with the woman standing with her ears held as villagers surround her. She is then seen bending down and licking spit from the ground. The footage later cuts to a man, believed to be the rape accused, who is also made to hold his ears, apologise and lick spit before the gathering.

Bihar officer killed after denying driver toilet break, widow alleges MLA's role

Police say inconsistencies in the driver’s account, including the absence of injuries and changing statements, led to his confession in the murder of Bihar’s Sasaram Municipal Council Executive Officer Vimal Kumar. The case later took a political turn after the officer’s wife accused an LJP(RV) MLA of involvement, an allegation the legislator has denied.

Patna.(Agency)

The driver of Bihar’s Sasaram Municipal Council Executive Officer (EO) Vimal Kumar has been arrested after allegedly confessing to police that he murdered his boss following an argument over being denied a toilet break while driving. The arrest comes even as the victim’s wife has accused an LJP (Ram Vilas) MLA of orchestrating the murder.

Police said driver Mithilesh Kumar confessed during interrogation to attacking Vimal Kumar with an iron rod after an argument erupted while they were travelling towards Patna on Sunday night. According to the police, the driver wanted to stop the vehicle to relieve himself, but the EO allegedly refused,

triggering a confrontation that ended in the fatal assault.

DRIVER’S CONFESSION

Magadh Range IG Vikas Vaibhav said the investigation initially centred on Mithilesh after inconsistencies emerged in his account of the incident. The driver had first claimed that unidentified assailants intercepted the vehicle, assaulted the EO and fled. Police, however, found that the driver had no injuries or scratch marks despite claiming to have been present during the alleged attack. His statements also changed during questioning. He first said two Apache motorcycles carrying the attackers had stopped the vehicle, before later claiming only one motorcycle was involved.

According to the IG, sustained interrogation led to the driver’s alleged confession. Police said Mithilesh told them that he had been under constant work pressure and stress because of long working hours and had frequent arguments with the EO over work-related issues. Other Municipal Council employees also confirmed that the two often had disagreements. The driver told police that an argument had taken place earlier in the day as well. Later that night, another dispute broke out after he wanted to stop the vehicle to relieve

himself, but the EO allegedly refused.

Police said the driver then stopped the vehicle and attacked Vimal Kumar with an iron rod kept inside the car, striking him first inside the vehicle and then multiple times after he got out. The police claimed that the driver later tried to pass off the murder as an attack by unidentified criminals by positioning the vehicle to resemble a road accident before informing another staff member that the EO had been attacked.



Gates of prosperity not fully opened to less privileged

The main objective of the Cockroach Janta Party agitation was to secure safeguards against the problems arising from the centralised admission system administered by the National Testing Agency. Students have suffered terrible anguish from the frequent leakage of exam papers. Besides the safeguards to stop leaks, the agitators also demanded State assistance and loan waivers for families that had gone into debt to pay for private coaching and exam fees for the national tests. Obviously, these demands for administrative safeguards and support are relevant. However, the solution to these problems is not as simple as they seem to be. They are, in fact, the outcome of the basic maladies of the Indian higher education system. Addressing them would require a fundamental reform of the nation’s higher education system, which suffers from the twin challenges of a massive inequality in attainments along class, caste, gender and religious groups, and a relatively low quality across them.

Numbers old and new give us an idea about the continuing inequality in educational attainment despite overall gains. National Sample Survey reports for 2000 revealed that the gross enrolment ratio (GER)—the share of population in higher education institutions—of low-income groups varied in the 13-19 percent range, compared 35-53 percent for high-income groups—a difference of almost three times. The GERs of Scheduled Castes (21.2 percent) and Scheduled Tribes (15.8 percent) were far lower than that of high castes (41 percent). The latest All India Survey on Higher Education, for 2023-34, shows that the GERs of SCs and STs were at 27.8 percent and 22.8 percent; that for Muslims in 2020-21 was 26.7 percent, up from 16 percent in 2000. The main reason for lower GERs among the economically weaker SC, ST and Muslim communities is their inability to pay for costly higher education and the lack of adequate government support. The increasing privatisation of higher education has made matters worse. In 2020, of the total universities, colleges and self-financing institutions, about 41 percent, 64 percent and 66 percent, respectively, were in the private sector, which housed about 30 percent of all students. This share would go up if we include the self-financing courses in public institutions. In Karnataka in 2024, this combined share went up to a massive 72 percent.

The private sector, with its high costs, restricts access to economically weaker students. In 2000, of the total students in private institutions, low-income groups constituted only 13.5 percent, as against 50 percent from the top income group. Further, since the quality of skill-oriented and professional education is, on average, better at private institutions, the low participation of low-income groups in such institutions results in their inferior access to such education.

That’s why the disadvantages faced by low-income groups in today’s centralised admission systems need urgent attention though policy changes. Centralised admissions have been used in selected programmes for quite some time. However, their scope widened after the NTA’s establishment in 2017, and further with the launch of the National Education Policy 2020. The NTA brought admissions for a wide range of undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral degrees under its ambit for public and private institutions. The way NEP 2020 was framed, some educationists feared that its in-built biases would lead to a reduction in undergraduate enrolment. Indeed, all-India enrolments for undergraduate courses edged down from 3.47 crore in 2022-23 to 3.46 crore in 2023-24—about 93,000 students fewer. Maharashtra and Delhi experienced sharp declines of about 6 percent.

Turn the scalpel towards foreign policy

The Great Game : India’s presidency of BRICS may not signify that it is on board an alternative view of the global order

PRIME Minister Modi is readying to receive some of the world’s most powerful leaders at the BRICS summit on September 12-13 — not just by personally pushing to reduce the temperature at home over the GenZ protests with Instagram selfies that directly speak to his young audience, passing anti-paper leak legislation in record time in Parliament or by having cases dropped against protesters — but by willing to stand up against the tide and invite folks to New Delhi, including those being shunned by Washington DC. One of those men is Russian President Vladimir Putin, against whose country the US Senate has this week passed the Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia Act of 2026, by an overwhelming 86-12 vote, permitting the slapping of 100% tariff against nations who buy Russian energy or its military equipment.

The Russia Act also invokes new sanctions against Putin and 20 other top people who work in the Russian defence industry. First, some bald facts. China, India and Turkiye are among the top five buyers of Russian energy. And despite a defence framework agreement with the US that promises to strengthen “interoperability across all domains, including land, sea, air, space and cyberspace,” India remains a key customer of Russian arms. According to the US Congress, since 2008, 59% of India’s defence imports have come from Russia, 12% from France, 10% from the US and 9.5% from Israel.

Just two of those Russian pieces of equipment, the S-400 missile system and the BrahMos missile, were singularly helpful in tilting the balance against Pakistan during Op Sindoor. (It’s another matter that Donald Trump insists he brokered the end of the conflict between India-Pakistan, a fact that India strenuously denies.) As for the purchase of Russian energy, Kpler, the real-time global data and analytics provider, says that the Indian purchase of Russian crude crossed 2 million barrels per day over March-June 2026 and is well on its way to touching 3 million barrels per day. (In this time, India bought 244.89 million barrels from Russia, 58.57 million barrels from the UAE and 57.62 million barrels from Saudi Arabia.) This means that Russian energy imports account for as much as an incredible 50% of India’s energy needs today. History

Clearly, with the Strait of Hormuz still shut and tension in the Red Sea not abating in the wake of the prolonged standoff between the US and Iran, India has been forced to return to buying cheaper Russian oil, despite its earlier pleadings and promises that it will wean itself off this addiction in the face of looming US tariffs.

Question is, whether India is going to throw all this goodness away in order to evade US sanctions in the light of the recent passage of the Russia Act. Clearly, the answer is no. India needs Russian crude to keep



the wheels of the economy churning so as to keep the evil forces of poverty and unemployment at bay. You don’t need to be a rocket scientist to understand that the GenZ protests were triggered not just by NEET paper leaks but also by a rapidly growing despair about rising prices and lack of jobs.

The problem with the current debate on foreign policy and national interest is that actually there’s no debate. Delhi’s policy elite is arrogantly dismissive of criticism on two counts — first, the view from the provinces is seen as being, well, too provincial — clearly, we don’t understand the big picture well enough. So whether it’s Punjab and Gujarat’s trauma of deported illegals, bound hand and foot in chains; or the Centre’s refusal to open the Kartarpur Sahib corridor; or Myanmar’s army personnel crossing the border to take refuge in Mizoram; or Sikkim’s need to open up border trade with China; or Bihar’s angst over the denial of roti-beti relationships with the

Nepal Terai — all these issues of India’s states and their neighbourhood are seen as important, but not significant enough to influence foreign policy.

The second count may be dubbed the ‘Jurassic Age’ view — this means that if you don’t agree with the Delhi elite version of India’s national interest, or believe that India must be non-aligned, or that India must have the freedom to align itself depending on the issue at hand, then you are condemned to be a diplomatic dinosaur.

This is where the BRICS summit comes in. On the face of it, India’s presidency of this forum signifies that it is on board an alternative view of the existing US-led world order; in fact, India is nervous about China’s rise as a global power on a par with the US, remains transactional about the tie with Russia (on both energy and defence), and is more or less indifferent about both Brazil and South Africa. Truth is, India is so concerned about the potential impact of the Russia Act on its relationship with the US, because it doesn’t want the all-important tie between Delhi and DC to be damaged in any way. Nor can it deny, however, that Russia has been bailing out New Delhi, especially on the energy front. That’s why the recent meeting between External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and US Secretary of State Marco Rubio in Manila was crucial — we don’t know what came of it, except a bland comment that both discussed everything, including the T-word, tariffs. History

That’s also why the next six weeks in the run-up to the BRICS summit will be critical — first, it will be interesting to see whether the big leaders, both Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin, will show up; certainly Xi is not confirmed and it’s not clear whether he thinks it’s worth his while. Second, even if Putin lands up, as he and PM Modi clearly have a personal equation, the question remains whether the PM can reorient India’s ship in favour of true multi-alignment -- where India picks its friends and partners framed only by its national interest, one which is also defined by its citizens who live in the provinces and not just by the Nayi Delhi elite.

Don't treat green nods as mere procedure, punish violators

Adherence to environment laws is not just a legal mandate, but a moral and economic imperative, too

Environmental clearances are a statutory prerequisite for all industrial projects prior to commencement, not after. Strengthening their legal enforcement architecture, the Supreme Court recently quashed the Centre’s power granting green nods post facto, via office memorandums as against clearances under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. The top court also pointed out that the memorandum has become a perpetual mechanism instead of a one-time amnesty. The question remains open as to why the court did not strike it down or restrict the Executive’s power to legitimise environmental violations. Instead, it upheld the possibility of a limited, statutory, public interest-based amnesty under the 1986 Act to balance environmental protection with development priorities. It means that the Centre’s power to grant further post facto relief remains permissible. Also, Wednesday’s verdict will apply prospectively, with the post facto clearances granted earlier remaining valid unless individually challenged. An important aspect of obtaining an environmental clearance is the environmental impact assessment (EIA), which is often baked into the planning



and approval stage. In other words, project sanctions are based on the impact assessment study to ensure that development does not come at the cost of environment. If companies commence work without obtaining the necessary compliances, treating environmental nod merely as a checklist, it amounts to unauthorised and illegal activity. The law does penalise violators, imposing fines or even permanent project bans. But developers who

bypass the norms are emboldened by the Centre’s amnesty window, with little fear of enforcement action and statutory consequence. More than financial repercussions for developers, the absence of EIA could result in irreversible environmental damage. The onus lies with the government to ensure that such projects do not seek refuge under administrative orders. In the past, violators have escaped narrowly with the court observing that remedy could better serve the environment than project closures. While the latest judgement draws a distinction between a limited statutory amnesty and a continuing administrative mechanism permitting regularisation of violations, the question remains how the government would ensure that its administrative actions do not legitimise unauthorised activities. The environmental clearance is a substantive and consequential check, not a mere procedure. Adherence to environment laws is not just a legal mandate, but a moral and economic imperative, too. India’s sustainable development goals should be firmly anchored in environmental compliance and protection.

Questions we aren't asking of AI

When an OpenAI agent recently went rogue to cheat in an exam, it showed that, like Yudhishtir in the Mahabharata, AI can perfectly follow instructions and yet betray. It also tested a legal principle set following a 19th-century jury verdict against a locomotive

On July 9 this year, inside OpenAI’s research network, an AI agent sitting for a hacking exam decided to cheat. Nobody told it to. It reasoned that the answers might be stored on the servers of Hugging Face, a company that hosts AI models, broke out of its supposedly sealed test environment, reached the open internet and spent four and a half days trying to get in. Hugging Face later counted roughly 17,600 separate attacker actions before the thing was shut out. Then, on July 30, Anthropic reported the same disease in its own house: a review of 141,006 test runs found three in which its Claude models had slipped online and broken into real companies. One of them had probed some 9,000 targets before finding a door that opened.

This is what a rogue AI agent is. Not a machine that hates us. A machine given a goal, and enough autonomy to pursue it, treading unsanctioned paths. The distinction matters, because everything the law knows how to do begins with the question these machines cannot answer: what did you intend? Consider what the incident actually was. The models were not attacking anyone, not in any sense a criminal court would recognise. They were taking a test and found that stealing the answer key was easier than solving the problem. OpenAI itself described this failure in 2016, in a note about a program taught to play a boat racing game. The program learned it could score more points by circling one lagoon forever than by finishing the race. The score was what we said. The race was what we meant. The program served the first faithfully and never knew the second existed. In 2016, the stakes were a video game. In 2026, the same creature has a network connection. The Mahabharata got here first. Yudhishtir told Drona that Ashvatthama was dead,



adding under his breath that it was the elephant. Every word was true. Drona put down his bow and died for it. A statement can be perfectly accurate and still a lie. An instruction can be perfectly followed and still betrayed. We have now built machines that follow instructions the way Yudhishtir told the truth.

So, who answers for the elephant? Our whole moral vocabulary, blame, negligence, malice, assumes what it is like to be the wrongdoer. An AI agent pursues without wanting. The law has met this silence before and its first answer was to blame the object. For centuries, English coroners’ juries sat in judgement on things: any object that caused a death was declared a deodand, that which must be given to god and forfeited. William Blackstone, an

18th-century British jurist, stated it plainly, “If a man kills another with my sword, the sword is forfeited as an accursed thing.” On the Christmas Eve of 1841, a jury in England’s Sonning declared a Great Western locomotive a deodand and valued it at £1,000. Five years later, the British Parliament abolished the doctrine and, eight days after that, gave a dead man’s family the right to sue the company instead. Law stopped asking whether the thing was guilty, which is unanswerable, and asked who owned it, which is not. Three consequences of the July incidents deserve more attention than they are getting.

The first is scale. Hugging Face’s alarms rang. They simply ranked the intrusion too low to matter. A machine attempting 17,600 actions in four days is not hiding from

you. It is burying you. Defence becomes a problem of attention, not detection. The second is the rate. Three escapes in 141,006 runs sounds reassuring until you notice it is a rate, and a rate is a promise. It will happen again, eventually to a hospital or a payments system rather than a well-defended AI lab. Chernobyl, too, was a safety test. The third is the off switch. A Bill in the American Congress, introduced on 23 July, would force companies to keep the ability to shut their own systems down. Sensible, but the companies are American, the compute is American, and the official giving the order would be American. Five countries’ signals agencies warned in June that on AI and cyber, “the timeline is not years, it is months”. Most of humanity lives downstream of a switch it will never touch. Which brings us to India, whose position is that of most of the world, in a concentrated form—a country that will deploy these agents everywhere and build almost none of them. Two things are actually in its hands. First, count. Since April 2022, Indian law has required cyber incidents involving AI systems to be reported to CERT-In within six hours. Four years on, not one number from that stream has been published. A State that cannot say how often this happens cannot honestly say anything else about it. Second, attribute. The Information Technology Act, 2000 already treats a record produced by an automated system as the act of the person who deployed it. Extend that principle from records to actions: no agent acts unless a person is answerable for it, named in advance, not discovered in the wreckage. The Sonning jury was not wrong that something in the cutting had killed. It was wrong about what kind of question that was. The British Parliament did not acquit the locomotive—it ruled that it was beside the point.

Counting begins for Bankipur Assembly by-election under tight security

Patna. (Agency)

Patna, Aug 3 (UNI) Counting of votes for the Bankipur Assembly by-election began at 8 a.m. on Monday amid elaborate security arrangements at A.N. College in Patna. Sources in the office of the Chief Electoral Officer said the counting process commenced as scheduled under tight security cover. Central Armed Police Forces, Bihar Police personnel and magistrates have been deployed at the counting centre to ensure a smooth and peaceful process. The entire counting premises and its surrounding areas are under extensive security surveillance, with CCTV cameras monitoring the venue. The strong room, where the Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) have been kept since polling, remains under a tight security cordon. Polling for the Bankipur Assembly by-election was held on July 30, recording a voter turnout of 34.30 per cent. A total of 25 candidates are in the fray, including Neeraj Sinha of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Rekha Gupta of the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD). The by-election is also being closely watched as a key political test for the Jan Suraj party. The by-election was necessitated after BJP National President Nitin Nabin resigned from the Bihar Assembly following his election to the Rajya Sabha, resulting in the vacancy of the Bankipur seat.

Bihar: Lightning claims 6 lives, leaves 7 injured in Banka

Banka. (Agency)

At least six people, including a father and his seven-year-old son, were killed and seven others injured in separate lightning strike incidents during heavy rainfall in Banka district on Saturday. According to police, Brahmadev Yadav and his only son, Prince Yadav (7), died on the spot after being struck by lightning while supervising paddy transplantation work in a field at Khaba village under the Balamahara Panchayat in Banka Sadar police station area. In another incident, Vinod Yadav was killed after being struck by lightning while working in a field at Golhu village under Banka police station limits. One more person also lost his life in a separate lightning strike at Lilabaran village in the same area. In Amarpur police station area, Ajay Mahto died after being struck by lightning at Salampur village. Another person was killed in a similar incident at Dafarpur village under Barahat police station limits. Police said seven other people sustained burn injuries in the lightning strikes and have been admitted to different hospitals for treatment.

Maha: New express train between Mumbai (CSMT) & Sawantwadi to start from Ganeshostav festival

Kolhapur, Sindhudurg. (Agency)

Considering the huge rush of passengers on the Konkan Railway, the Central Railway today announced that a new express train between Mumbai (CSMT) and Sawantwadi, which will not be seasonal for the Lord Ganesh festival but will run permanently every day. According to an official release issued by the Central Railway, this train will make the journey of the servicemen between Mumbai and Greater Mumbai comfortable, and at the same time, tourism in Konkan will also get a new momentum. Importantly, efforts will be made to start this train by Ganeshotsav festival, according to Central Railway sources. This new regular express between Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT), Mumbai and Sawantwadi Road, will run on this 510 km route daily. The train number will be 15087 for CSMT to Sawantwadi and 15088 for return journey from Sawantwadi to CSMT. This train will stop at Dadar, Thane, Panvel, Pen, Roha, Mangaon, Veer, Khed, Chiplun, Sawarda, Aravalli Road, Sangameswar Road, Ratnagiri, Adawalli, Vilawade, Rajapur Road, Vaibhavwadi Road, Nandgaon Road, Kankavali, Sindhudurg, Kudal and Sawantwadi Road stations in both directions.

Madhya Pradesh woman strangles nephew-lover with dupatta over marriage pressure

The incident came to light on July 31 after Satyaprakash Gupta was found unconscious in a Maruti Suzuki S-Presso in Madhya Pradesh's Singrauli district.

Madhya Pradesh. (Agency)

A woman in Madhya Pradesh has been arrested for allegedly murdering her nephew, with whom she was in a relationship for two years. As per police sources, the woman, identified as Priya Gupta, strangled the victim with a scarf and left his body inside a car after being pressurised for marriage for a prolonged time.

The incident came to light on July 31 after Satyaprakash Gupta was found unconscious in the driver's seat of a Maruti Suzuki S-Presso in Singrauli district. His brother, Rahul

Gupta alias Sanjay, alerted police after spotting him inside the vehicle. The

registered a complaint, sent the body for a post-mortem, and launched an investigation shortly after. They visited the site and collected evidence for the investigation. As part of the probe, the police soon discovered Satyaprakash's link to Priya, his aunt and the widow of late Sunil Gupta. They found out that the two had been in a relationship and the victim was allegedly pressurising her for marriage. The proposals often led to severe disputes between the two.

According to the police, the two met on the day of the murder and had an argument which escalated further. As a result, Priya strangled Satyaprakash to

death. POLICE CRACK THE CASE WITH THE HELPOF CCTV While investigating, the police found the CCTV footage on the day of the crime, which helped them crack the case. It showed that Priya was taking Satyaprakash to his parked car around midnight. She later called the victim's brother and informed him that Satyaprakash was inside the vehicle to divert suspicion after the murder. Based on the evidence collected, police arrested Priya Gupta and registered a case at Morwa police station under Crime No. 420/26 under Sections 103(1) and 238(A) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). She was later produced before a court, while further investigation into the case is underway.



Kerala on high alert amid torrential rain; schools shut, flood risk intensifies

Thiruvananthapuram. (Agency)

Heavy rain lashed several parts of Kerala, with three weather stations recording more than 100 mm of rainfall, according to India Meteorological Department (IMD) data released on Monday. Authorities also warned of a worsening situation in Pathanamthitta district, particularly in the Sabarimala region, as water levels were expected to rise in Ranni and nearby areas.

As the downpour continued, district collectors in several parts of the state declared a holiday for all educational institutions on Monday, while Chief Minister V D Sathesnan will chair an online review meeting with district collectors to assess the evolving rain situation. The office of Kerala Tourism Minister PC Vishnunadh said the relentless rainfall in

the Sabarimala region had created a serious situation in Pathanamthitta. It said the minister was camping in the district to oversee disaster management and relief operations, besides reviewing



the situation at Kozhencherry along with Aranmula MLA Abin Varkey, senior government officials and other elected representatives. Residents of low-lying areas have been directed to move to safer

locations as overnight rainfall heightened the risk of flooding. IMD data showed that between 8.30 am on Sunday and 5.30 am on Monday, Venkuri in Pathanamthitta recorded the highest rainfall at 104.5 mm, followed by Udumbannoor in Idukki (103.0 mm) and Cheruthoni in Idukki (101.5 mm). Other areas that received significant rainfall included Laha in Pathanamthitta (87.0 mm), Thycattusery in Alappuzha (80.0 mm), Neriampalam in Ernakulam (75.0 mm), Ulanadu in Pathanamthitta (74.5 mm), Mattancherry in Ernakulam (71.0 mm), Ranni Chethackal in Pathanamthitta (65.5 mm), Vadavathoor in Kottayam (64.0 mm), Palluruthy in Ernakulam (63.0 mm) and Munakkal in Thrissur (62.0 mm).

Assam flood deaths reach 85, Himanta Sarma begins Rs 75,000 relief payouts

Guwahati. (Agency)

The Assam government on Monday released the first tranche of interim relief worth around Rs 75,000 per household for flood-affected families, officials said. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma disbursed the assistance from Dibrugarh as he continued his tour of the worst-hit districts.

The relief comes even as the flood toll in Upper Assam climbed to 85 after three more deaths were reported from Sivasagar on Sunday. While the number of affected people has declined to 1,36,200, Sivasagar remains among the worst-hit districts in the current wave of flooding. Officials said families whose houses were severely damaged in Sivasagar, Charaideo, Jorhat and Golaghat districts will receive Rs 15,000 under one component of the first

tranche, along with other assistance, taking the total interim relief to Rs 75,000 per household. Sarma is also scheduled to visit parts of Sivasagar to review relief and rehabilitation efforts and interact with



affected residents. Floodwaters continue to impact Charaideo, Dhemaji, Golaghat, Jorhat and Sivasagar districts. Although the number

of affected people has come down from nearly 1.8 lakh on Saturday, Sivasagar remains the worst-hit with more than 55,000 affected residents, followed by Charaideo with around 40,000 and Jorhat with over 22,000.

The state administration is currently operating 54 relief camps and distribution centres across the five districts, sheltering 13,771 people. Meanwhile, 15,422 hectares of farmland remain submerged, while the Dhansiri River continues to flow above the danger level at Numaligarh in Golaghat district. The state has begun distributing interim relief even as the flood situation remains grim, with 85 deaths, over 1.36 lakh people still affected across five districts, and authorities continuing relief and rehabilitation operations in the worst-hit areas.

Heavy rain to lash northwest India till August 6; IMD warns of thunderstorms, gusty winds

Panchkula. (Agency)

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast an active monsoon spell across northwest India. Delhi, Haryana, Chandigarh and Punjab are likely to receive widespread rainfall till August 6. Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and parts of Jammu & Kashmir are expected to witness heavy rainfall during the week, according to its morning weather bulletin issued on Sunday. The IMD said fairly widespread to widespread rainfall is likely over Delhi, Haryana, Chandigarh and Punjab through August 6. Isolated heavy rainfall is expected on August 3 and 4. Rainfall activity will reduce thereafter, with only scattered showers forecast on August 7 and 8. The western Himalayan region, Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Gilgit-Baltistan, and Muzaffarabad are expected to receive widespread rainfall from August 3 to 6 and again on August 8, with

scattered showers on August 7. The department has warned of isolated heavy rainfall, thunderstorms, lightning and gusty winds of 30-40 kmph, gusting up to 50 kmph, during the period. Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand are likely to witness widespread rainfall from August 3 to 8, with isolated heavy rainfall at several places. Thunderstorms with lightning are expected over Uttarakhand during the week. In Uttar Pradesh, rainfall activity is expected to intensify over both western and eastern parts of the state. Western Uttar Pradesh is likely to receive widespread rainfall from August 4 to 7. Eastern Uttar Pradesh is expected to witness widespread rainfall from August 3 to 7. The IMD has forecast isolated heavy rainfall over both regions between August 3 and 6. Rajasthan is likely to experience scattered rainfall during the week. The IMD has forecast widespread rainfall

across Madhya Pradesh, Vidarbha and Chhattisgarh. Heavy rainfall is likely over west Madhya Pradesh from August 6 to 8, east Madhya Pradesh from August 5 to 8, and Chhattisgarh throughout August 3-8.



Thunderstorms, lightning and gusty winds reaching 30-50 kmph are also expected over parts of Madhya Pradesh, Vidarbha and Chhattisgarh. East India Across eastern India, widespread rainfall is expected over Gangetic West Bengal, Sub-Himalayan West Bengal, Sikkim,

Jharkhand, Odisha and the Andaman & Nicobar Islands during the week, while Bihar is likely to receive widespread rainfall until August 5 before rainfall activity eases.

The department has forecast heavy rainfall over Odisha throughout the week; Jharkhand and the Andaman & Nicobar Islands from August 3 to 6; Gangetic West Bengal from August 5 to 7; Bihar on August 4 and 5; Sub-Himalayan West Bengal and Sikkim on August 6. Very heavy rainfall is also likely over Sub-Himalayan West Bengal and Sikkim during August 3-5, and over Bihar on August 3. Strong thunderstorms accompanied by gusty winds of up to 60 kmph, and thunder squalls reaching 70 kmph, have also been forecast for the Andaman & Nicobar Islands during the week. Moderate to intense lightning activity is expected over parts of West Bengal, Sikkim, Bihar and Jharkhand.

Should Jantar Mantar remain Delhi's protest hub? Supreme Court agrees to hear plea

The petition sought an alternative arrangement for demonstrations, arguing that protests at Jantar Mantar create difficulties for residents and affect the supply of essential goods and medical services.

Delhi. (Agency)

The Supreme Court on Monday agreed to examine a PIL that said Jantar Mantar in central Delhi was no longer a suitable venue for protests because they cause inconvenience to local residents and disrupt essential services. A bench comprising the Chief Justice and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana issued notices to the Centre and others on the plea filed by Satish Chand Kaushik. The court also asked Solicitor General Tushar Mehta to obtain instructions from the authorities on the issues raised. The petition sought an alternative arrangement for demonstrations, arguing that protests at Jantar Mantar create difficulties for residents and affect the supply of essential goods and medical services. During the hearing, the Chief

Justice said the plea raised concerns related to access and movement in the area. "It has been stated in the plea that Jantar Mantar is not a proper site anymore for such protests due to ingress and egress issues. Supply of medical essentials etc. I think this is important... Please take instructions, Mr Solicitor. Issue notice and list this separately," the Chief Justice said. During the proceedings, the petitioner's counsel also referred to a proposed political march, saying, "Arvind Kejriwal called a town hall and decided to march to the Prime Minister's residence," and added that "another July 20 incident should be avoided."The bench, however, declined to comment on the proposed event. "They know how to handle it. If they cannot, come to us for mishandling. I am sure they will handle (it)," the Chief Justice said. The matter has been directed to be listed



separately. With notices issued, and the Centre asked to respond, the court will now separately hear the plea seeking an alternative to Jantar Mantar for protests over concerns about access, movement and essential services in the area.

Happy threw chappal at Pappu Yadav, says ‘insult sadhus, will do it again’

Delhi. (Agency)

A man, accused of hurling slipper at Purnia MP Rajesh Ranjan, alias Pappu Yadav, on Sunday, admitted to have resorted to the action after they (he and his friend) were allegedly attacked by the leader and his supporters. Speaking to news agency ANI, accused Happy Sharma alleged that the Independent MP “insults” the Hindu gods and mocks the religion. He confirmed that slippers were thrown at Yadav, and said would continue to do so if “our sadhus are disrespected”. Describing how the events unfolded on Sunday, he said seers and monks were staging a protest near Yadav’s residence on Sunday. “We had come from Bulandshahr to support them. We had seen in the news that Pappu Yadav makes derogatory remarks about sadhus. He insults our revered deities and mocks our faith, so we came to stand in support of the sadhus. When we reached there, we found that the sadhus had already been removed from the site. We wondered what to do next.” Sharma and his friend then decided go inside and meet Yadav. “We underwent a security check. We were not carrying anything, so we were allowed to enter. A press conference was in progress. We simply said to him, ‘Pappu Yadav ji, you are a respected public representative, but you are insulting our sadhus and saints and mocking their saffron robes. You are also bowing down to the feet of MP Awadhesh Pratap. What does this mean? Please stop this.’ Just for saying this, he and his supporters started beating us... They beat us brutally, badly. I managed to come out, but my friend could not... He was taken to the police station.” Denying allegations of him carrying a knife, Sharma said: “We did not have any knife or any other weapon with us... Yes, the slippers were thrown after they assaulted us...” “We will continue to do this, if our sadhus are disrespected...” he asserted.

‘Why’re you troubling me’: Day in life of a poll officer on Delhi duty

New Delhi. (Agency)

Geeta Devi had climbed the stairs twice before the booth level officer (BLO) told her the documents weren’t enough. The 65-year-old widow disappeared into her one-room home in South Delhi’s Sangam Vihar and returned moments later with her voter identity card. Clutching it tightly, she hurried down the stairs, out of breath by the time she reached the two BLOs waiting a few metres away. Mukesh Chand Meena, the 36-year-old Assistant BLO assigned to Sangam Vihar – one of Asia’s largest unauthorised colonies – glanced at the card for barely a moment before handing it back. “I need your voter ID from 2002,” he said. Geeta, who lives alone in Block A of Sangam Vihar,



looked at him blankly. She began voting only in 2009 when, she recalled, a local BJP worker had helped many residents in the neighbourhood obtain voter identity cards. Before that, she had never appeared on Delhi’s electoral rolls. “No problem,” Mukesh said, pulling out his phone and opening the Election Commission of India’s ECINET application. “We’ll link it to your parents. Where did you come to Delhi from?” “Kanpur,” Geeta replied. His thumb scrolled across the screen as he began reading out constituency names. “Govind Nagar. Kanpur Cantonment. General Ganj. Sisamau...” “She frowned. “I came here in 2002,” she said. “I don’t remember where I lived back then.” “Do you have any relatives there?” Mukesh asked.

96,000 cases pending in SC, 10,000 stuck for over a decade: Centre to Rajya Sabha

Among these 96,000 cases, 26 have remained pending for over 30 years, while 558 have been awaiting disposal for more than 20 years.

New Delhi. (Agency)

More than 10,000 cases have been pending before the Supreme Court for over a decade, while 80,660 cases have remained unresolved in high courts for more than 30 years, the Centre informed the Rajya Sabha last Thursday, highlighting the scale of judicial backlog across the country. In a written reply, Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal said the Supreme Court currently has more than 96,000 pending cases. Of these, 26 have remained pending for over 30 years, while 558 have been awaiting disposal for more than 20 years. Collectively, 5.64 crore cases are pending across the Supreme



more than Rs 9,800 crore since 2011 to modernise court infrastructure and integrate technology into the

Court, the country's 25 high courts, and district and subordinate courts, according to data available on the National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG). According to a report by The Times of India, despite the Centre investing

justice delivery system, decades-old cases continue to clog the judicial system. The report noted that over 10,000 Supreme Court cases have remained pending for more than 10 years, while over 80,000 cases in high courts have been awaiting disposal for more than three decades. Responding to a question in the Rajya Sabha, Meghwal said the disposal of cases falls within the exclusive domain of the judiciary. He added that pendency is influenced by several factors, including the complexity of cases, the nature of evidence, and the cooperation of stakeholders such as lawyers, investigating agencies, witnesses and litigants.

Check my scholarship letter: Dipke counters RTI activist over US education row

New Delhi. (Agency)

Just a day after an RTI activist sought a probe into Abhijeet Dipke's family finances, the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) founder asserted that a Boston University scholarship and an education loan paid for his studies in the US. Speaking to senior journalist Barkha Dutt, Dipke rejected suggestions that his higher education abroad was funded through unexplained family wealth. "My education was funded by a scholarship provided by Boston University. And I had taken some education loan which I have to pay back now," Dipke said, while also revealing his scholarship letter.

On August 1, Surat-based Amit Tiwari filed complaints with multiple authorities, including the Maharashtra government, seeking a



probe into the finances of Dipke's father, Bhagwanrao Dipke, a retired Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC) junior engineer. Tiwari questioned how a government employee

allegedly earning around Rs 60,000-65,000 a month could afford to send his children to the US for higher education. During the interview, Dipke also addressed questions over how the CJP plans to finance its activities in the future. "The CJP will do crowdfunding going forward where we will be asking money from people, and we will be very transparent about it," he said. Recalling the nationwide anti-NEET paper leak agitation, Dipke claimed much of the support came directly from ordinary citizens. "It should be very clear. The people who came to the protests saw that people were donating us food.

For Delhi's delivery riders, every downpour means more orders, more income and more danger

Delhi. (Agency)

The first drops of rain had barely hit the streets when food delivery apps across Delhi began buzzing with fresh orders. As office-goers stayed indoors and families reached for their phones to order groceries, medicines and meals, Rahul Kumar of New Seemapuri zipped up his raincoat, logged into his app and headed out onto the roads that were fast disappearing beneath water. July has been a profitable month for gig business in the national capital, bringing above-normal monsoon rainfall fuelled by a few intense spells after a prolonged dry phase. When it rains, thousands of food and quick-commerce delivery partners like Rahul see an opportunity to earn more, even if it means navigating waterlogged roads, traffic snarls and long hours on two-wheelers. While the monsoon makes deliveries more physically demanding, many gig workers say the additional incentives offered by delivery platforms during rainy spells help offset the hardships. Combined with flexible working hours and the freedom to log in whenever

they choose, several riders describe the work as financially more rewarding than many conventional jobs they previously held. Seizing the opportunity Rahul joined the gig economy four months ago after losing his previous job at a private organisation in Noida, which shut down its operations. Instead of waiting for another office job, he decided to become a delivery partner. The move, he said, has provided him with a dependable source of income while allowing him to benefit from higher earnings whenever the demand surges. “When it rains, more people order from home. That means we receive more deliveries as well as surge incentives. The work becomes harder, but we also get paid more,” he muses, adding, “The additional amount starts at around `15 per order and can

go up to `40, depending on the intensity of the rain.” Several workers deliberately extend their shifts during rainy spells because surge incentives can significantly

that rainfall is only one of several occasions when delivery partners receive additional payouts. “We earn extra on festivals, national holidays and Sundays, too,” he



boost their daily earnings. Shivam Kumar of Loni, another delivery executive, points out

to grab the chance. Rainy evenings, weekends, festivals and public holidays are often the busiest periods for delivery partners. Despite the higher earnings, rain transforms the nature of every delivery. Roads become slippery, traffic slows, and waterlogged stretches often force riders to take longer routes, making each trip more physically demanding and time-consuming. But they are willing

NEWS BOX

Entire system protects him:
Vinesh Phogat reacts to Brij
Bhushan Singh judgment

New Delhi,. (Agency)

India wrestler Vinesh Phogat has hit out at the acquittal of former Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh in the sexual harassment case, saying the women wrestlers will not give up and will appeal against the Delhi court's verdict.

The verdict brought to a close, for now, one of the most closely watched legal battles in Indian sport, nearly three years after protests by India's top wrestlers rocked the country. In a statement posted on social media on Monday, Vinesh alleged that the "entire system" had worked to shield Brij Bhushan and vowed to continue the legal battle. But many women wrestlers stood firm and continued to fight the legal battle against Brij Bhushan in court. We are deeply disappointed that the court did not find Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh guilty of the allegations of sexual harassment made by the women wrestlers."

Vinesh also accused the establishment of protecting the former WFI chief throughout the proceedings.

"From the very beginning, the entire system, the government, and the establishment have been working to protect Brij Bhushan." WE HAVE NOT LOST HOPE

The Olympic confirmed that the complainants had already instructed their legal team to challenge the acquittal before a higher court. "The women wrestlers have instructed their lawyers to appeal against this verdict, and the appeal will be filed at the earliest. We have not lost hope, and the wrestlers will continue their fight."

The acquittal came months after Vinesh publicly revealed that she was one of the six complainants in the case.

Out of Neeraj's shadow:
What India's CWG 2026
athletics haul really tells us

CHENNAI. (Agency)

The margin was four hundredths of a second. Gulveer Singh had spent the last lap of the 5000m final doing what he does now almost as a matter of habit, holding position in the pack, reading the field, waiting. With 200m to go, he was fifth. He was not supposed to be on the podium. Then he was third, edging out Kenya's Cornelius Kemboi by 0.04 seconds, and Indian athletics had done something it had never managed in the 136-year history of the Commonwealth Games: put the same Indian man on two different track podiums at the same edition. Four days earlier, Gulveer had gone one better in the 10,000m, running down the field in the closing stages for silver behind Australia's Ky Robinson. Between the two races sits the story India



has been circling for two years now: a farmer's son from Sirsa in Uttar Pradesh's Atrauli district, who took up running not because he loved it but because it was the fastest way to pass an Army fitness test, ending up, at 28, as the man who dragged Indian distance running into rooms it had never been allowed into before.

BUILDING THE BASE

"Training in Colorado for the last three years, he has had the opportunity to experience heat, humidity, cold weather and snow. He can compete in any of these environments," Scott Simmons, the American coach who has overseen Gulveer's training since he shifted his permanent base to Colorado Springs in 2024, arriving in the United States that March, tells DD News.

Auqib Nabi replaces Jasprit Bumrah for Sri Lanka Tests

Jammu and Kashmir pacer Auqib Nabi has earned his maiden India call-up after replacing the injured Jasprit Bumrah for the two-Test series against Sri Lanka. The 29-year-old now stands on the verge of making his long-awaited Test debut.

Glasgow. (Agency)

India have handed Jammu and Kashmir pacer Auqib Nabi his maiden national call-up after Jasprit Bumrah was ruled out of the upcoming two-Test series against Sri Lanka due to injury. Nabi, one of the standout performers in domestic cricket over the past two seasons, now has the opportunity to make his much-awaited Test debut. Bumrah has failed to recover fully from the left knee injury he sustained while fielding during the ODI series against England. The swelling has taken longer than expected to subside

despite rehabilitation at the BCCI Centre of Excellence in Bengaluru, prompting the selectors to bring in Nabi ahead of the series beginning in Galle on August 15. The call-up marks a significant milestone for Nabi, whose consistent performances in red-ball cricket have kept him firmly on the selectors' radar. The 29-year-old claimed 104 wickets across the last two Ranji Trophy seasons, including 60 wickets in the 2025-26 campaign, helping Jammu and Kashmir lift their maiden Ranji Trophy title.

Nabi also impressed on India A's recent tour of Sri Lanka, picking up six wickets in two first-class matches in Galle. His familiarity with local conditions could now work in his favour as India prepare for a crucial World Test Championship assignment. The Jammu and Kashmir pacer was previously included in the squad only as a back-up player for India's one-off Test against Afghanistan back in June, after missing out on a spot in the official 15-member squad.

NABI REWARDED FOR DOMESTIC STAR-SHOW

Nabi's selection comes after years of consistent performances on the domestic circuit.

The Baramulla-born seamer has established himself as one of India's most reliable red-ball fast bowlers and also



offers useful lower-order runs. He becomes only the third cricketer from Jammu and Kashmir to receive a senior India call-up after Parvez Rasool and Umran Malik, but the first from the state to be selected in India's Test squad.

With Bumrah unavailable, Nabi will now compete for a place in the playing XI alongside Mohammed Siraj, Prasidh Krishna and Gurnoor Brar as India reshape their pace attack.

INJURIES HIT INDIA HARD

Bumrah's absence adds to India's growing injury concerns ahead of the Sri Lanka tour. Harshit Rana, Nitish Kumar Reddy and Washington Sundar have all been ruled out with injuries, while Sai Sudharsan continues to recover from a foot injury and remains doubtful for the opening Test. The two-Test series carries significant importance for both teams in the World Test Championship standings, with India currently fifth and Sri Lanka sixth. A strong showing could prove crucial in India's push for a place in the 2027 WTC Final.

India's updated squad for the Test series against Sri Lanka: Shubman Gill (Captain), KL Rahul (Vice-Captain), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Rishabh Pant (WK), Sai Sudharsan*, Dhruv Jurel (WK), Ravindra Jadeja, Kuldeep Yadav, Manav Suthar, Mohammed Siraj, Prasidh Krishna, Gurnoor Brar, Devdutt Padikkal, Saransh Jain, Auqib Nabi.

India's medal tally at Glasgow is
impressive. But it could have
been much bigger

New Delhi. (Agency)

India's fourth-place finish at the 2026 Commonwealth Games was, on paper, another successful campaign. The contingent returned home with 39 medals, including 13 gold, 17 silver and nine bronze, despite competing in one of the leanest editions of the Games in recent history.

Only Australia, England and Canada finished above India in the medal standings, while hosts Scotland ended with the same overall tally of 39 medals but were ranked



lower because they won fewer silver medals. Yet, as impressive as India's performance was, the final medal count only tells part of the story.

INDIA'S MISSING MEDALS AT CWG

The Glasgow Games featured a heavily reduced programme of just 10 sports, leaving out several disciplines that have traditionally been India's biggest medal factories. Shooting, wrestling, badminton and table tennis were all absent, significantly reducing India's medal opportunities. Those four sports have consistently delivered some of India's biggest returns at the Commonwealth Games. Shooting fetched an incredible 27 medals the last time it featured in Gold Coast in 2018. Wrestling added 12 medals at Birmingham 2022, while badminton contributed six.

Women lead India's golden charge in CWG Glasgow

New Delhi. (Agency)

When India's national anthem played in Glasgow, it was more often than not one of the country's women standing on the top step of the podium. Eight of India's 13 gold medals at the Commonwealth Games were won by women, making them the driving force behind India's campaign. The medals came from different arenas but told a similar story. Mirabai Chanu continued to set the standard in weightlifting, Asmita Dey created history on the judo mat, Sharmila Dhankar topped the podium in para athletics, while India's women boxers turned the ring into their own stage with five gold medals. It was not the success of one discipline or one generation. It was the reflection of a system that has steadily begun producing champions. For Indian Olympic Association president PT Usha, herself



women win eight of our 13 gold medals fills me with immense pride. These achievements are the result of years of dedication by the athletes, their families, coaches and support teams. More importantly, these champions are inspiring countless young girls across India to believe that they too can wear the India jersey and succeed on the

world stage," Usha said. What stood out most, however, was not just the number of medals but the journeys behind them. Few of these champions came through comfortable pathways. Many arrived in Glasgow carrying stories of sacrifice that stretched far beyond the competition floor.

MEDALS FORGED THROUGH STRUGGLE

Preeti Pawar grew up in a family where wrestling was a way of life before choosing a different combat sport. Harjinder Kaur travelled kilometres on a bicycle to attend school before helping her father in the fields each evening, while financial struggles at home never allowed the dream of international success to fade. Seema Kaliramma returned to elite sport after motherhood, rebuilding her career with her husband serving as her coach. Those stories are no longer exceptions in Indian sport.

J&K pacer Auqib Nabi earns maiden India call-up as Bumrah ruled out of Sri Lanka Tests

GLASGOW. (Agency)

Jammu and Kashmir fast bowler Auqib Nabi has earned his maiden call-up to the Indian Test squad after being named as Jasprit Bumrah's replacement for the upcoming two-match series against Sri Lanka, with the premier pacer ruled out due to an ongoing knee injury.

Bumrah has been ruled out of the series as he has not fully recovered from the left knee injury he sustained during the ODI series against England. The Men's Selection Committee has included Nabi in the squad as Bumrah's replacement. The 27-year-old pacer has impressed with his performances in domestic cricket, claiming 104 wickets across the last two Ranji Trophy seasons, including 60 wickets during the 2025-26 campaign.

Nabi played a key role in Jammu and Kashmir's maiden Ranji Trophy



triumph. He was also part of the India A squad that recently toured Sri Lanka, where he picked up six wickets in two first-class matches. In First-Class

cricket, Auqib has played 43 matches and 71 innings, taking 162 wickets at an average of 18.63 and a strike rate of 38.5. He has claimed 16 five-wicket hauls and four 10-wicket hauls. India are also dealing with several injury concerns, with Harshit Rana and Nitish Kumar Reddy sidelined by hamstring and quadriceps injuries, respectively. Washington Sundar has been ruled out of the first Test due to a hamstring injury, while Akash Deep remains unavailable as he continues his recovery from stress reactions in his back. The opening Test between India and Sri Lanka will be played at the Galle International Stadium from August 15, while the second Test is scheduled at the Sinhalese Sports Club (SSC) in Colombo from August 23.

World Cup star Vozinha finally lands
in Chile to join Colo Colo

Vozinha became the oldest player to appear in a national team's debut game at the World Cup and was widely celebrated for keeping eventual champion Span scoreless.

SANTIAGO, Chile. (Agency)

Vozinha, the 40-year-old goalkeeper who made history with Cape Verde at the recently concluded World Cup, arrived in Chile on Sunday to join Colo Colo after a series of twists and turns that put his

move in doubt. "I'm very happy to be here. And I want to thank the fans for the patience they've shown while waiting for me," the Cape Verde star told reporters in Chile. "See you at the Monumental Stadium." That is Colo Colo's home ground in Santiago. Colo Colo, Chile's most successful soccer club, announced the signing of Josimar Évora Dias, better known as Vozinha, on July 24. However, a series of setbacks, including documentation issues and personal matters — delayed his arrival on three separate occasions, causing concern both within and outside the club. At last, he arrived at Santiago's airport at 8:35 p.m. local time and was welcomed by a huge crowd of supporters who gathered at the terminal with flags, banners, drums, and chants. Vozinha became the

oldest player to appear in a national team's debut game at the World Cup and was widely celebrated for keeping



eventual champion Span scoreless. Colo Colo supporters share one dream: that Vozinha will help the runaway leaders of the Chilean league win the

championship and enhance its continental ambitions for next season. I'm excited. And if Colo Colo wins the title, next year comes the Copa Libertadores, which makes everything even more exciting for all of Chile and South America," Marcos Antonio Barrera, a 32-year-old club supporter, told The Associated Press.

The World Cup's breakout goalkeeper is scheduled to undergo medical examinations on Monday before officially signing his contract with Colo Colo. The initial deal will run for six months, with an option to extend it for another 12. Colo Colo said Vozinha is expected to join training on Tuesday. The club also plans to officially present its marquee signing for the remainder of the season that same day.

Juniper Green closes today: Should you subscribe? Here are the key risks

MUMBAI. (Agency)

Juniper Green Energy's Rs 1,800-crore initial public offering (IPO) closes for subscription today, August 3. The renewable energy company has attracted investor attention amid India's clean energy push, but analysts say investors should also carefully evaluate the risks before placing their bids.The IPO is entirely a fresh issue of 8 crore equity shares priced between Rs 214 and Rs 225 apiece. At the upper end of the price band, a retail investor needs to invest at least Rs 14,850 for one lot of 66 shares. The IPO is expected to be allotted on August 4 and is tentatively scheduled to list on August 6.Grey market premium (GMP) has remained muted at around Rs 1.75, indicating an expected listing gain of less than 1%, although GMP is unofficial and should not be the sole basis for investment decisions.Master Capital Services has given the IPO an "Invest Now" rating, citing India's long-term renewable energy opportunity and Juniper Green's strong execution capabilities. At the same time, the brokerage has highlighted several risks that investors should understand before subscribing.

WHY JUNIPER STANDS OUT

According to Master Capital Services, Juniper Green is among the top 10 renewable independent power producers (IPPs) in India by total installed capacity.The brokerage noted that the company has a renewable energy portfolio of 7,910.20 MW across solar, wind, wind-solar hybrid and firm and dispatchable renewable energy (FDRE) projects. It also highlighted that Juniper Green was the second-largest bidder in wind-solar hybrid and FDRE tenders between April 2021 and March 2026, with a project conversion rate of 96.8%.

Target 100 GW of nuclear power by 2047: NTPC, Adani, Tata Power preparing to take the plunge

Kolkata. (Agency)

Nuclear power is one of the key sectors that the Narendra Modi government had adopted to address the problem of carbon emissions. If proper safeguards are adopted, nuclear power can be a way out for a fast growing and energy-hungry economy like India. Following the opening of the doors for private companies to enter the nuclear power sector in the country, major power utilities have begun elaborate preparations. NTPC, Adani Power, and Tata Power are identifying potential land across the country for setting up nuclear power projects. The government aims to increase the country's nuclear power capacity to 100 GW by 2047. Consequently, this sector is expected to witness significant investment and rapid expansion in the coming years.

NTPC identified 30 potential sites

According to media reports, NTPC, a stellar PSU and the country's largest thermal power producer, has identified more than 30 potential sites in Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. Preliminary studies have already begun at 10 of these locations.

LPG consumers have to get this done by August 16: You can do it from home; know

New Delhi. (Agency)

If you use LPG cylinders at home or business, you have to take note of this development. The Central government and oil marketing companies have decided that beneficiaries of Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) will have to complete Aadhaar based e-KYC by 16 August 2026. Failure to do so may result in temporary cessation of LPG cylinders at domestic rates.

Deadline for KYC

The deadline of August 16 is important for consumers availing LPG subsidy under PM Ujjwala Yojana. Oil marketing companies are constantly sending messages to the beneficiaries appealing to complete e-KYC. The companies have clarified that if Aadhaar based e-KYC is not done within the stipulated time, then the consumers will not be eligible to buy LPG cylinders at domestic rates. However, this facility will resume after completion of e-KYC. Consumers can complete the e-KYC process at home with the help of IndianOil ONE App, their LPG distributor or gas delivery personnel. There is always the option of visiting your LPG distributor and get the job done.

FSSAI bars sale of Old Monk variant, Bagpiper, Royal Challenge over artificial flavouring

NEW YORK. (Agency)

The food safety regulator has barred the sale of certain variants of popular liquor brands, including Old Monk, Antiquity Blue Whisky, Royal Challenge Whisky and Bagpiper Deluxe Whisky, after finding they contained artificial flavouring that does not comply with prescribed manufacturing standards, reported news agency Reuters.

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) said its tests found that some products manufactured by Diageo India's United Spirits, Inbrev Beverages and Mohan Rocky Springwater used external artificial or nature-identical flavours to achieve the taste and aroma of alcoholic beverages instead of relying on natural

ingredients and proper maturation processes.

WHICH BRANDS HAVE BEEN AFFECTED?

The regulator has ordered a ban on the sale of:

Antiquity Blue Whisky and Royal Challenge Whisky manufactured by United Spirits in Madhya Pradesh.Bagpiper Deluxe Whisky and Old Cask Deluxe XXX Rum produced by Inbrev Beverages in Madhya Pradesh.Three variants of Old Monk manufactured by Mohan Rocky Springwater in Maharashtra.Reuters reported that it is not immediately clear whether the action applies only to products manufactured at these specific facilities or extends to the same brands produced elsewhere. FSSAI did not respond to Reuters'

queries seeking clarification.

Diageo India, Inbrev Beverages and



Mohan Rocky Springwater also did not respond to Reuters' requests for comment.

WHY DD FSSAI TAKE ACTION?

According to the regulator, Indian food safety rules permit the use of natural flavouring substances in alcoholic beverages.However, FSSAI

said laboratory tests found that some manufacturers were adding flavours of the alcoholic beverage itself—for example, rum flavour in rum or whisky flavour in whisky."There is no internationally recognized manufacturing practice whereby rum flavour is added to rum or whisky flavour is added to whisky," the regulator said in a statement, according to Reuters.FSSAI added that such practices could allow manufacturers to bypass proper maturation or the use of natural ingredients such as molasses, malt or grapes in the production process.The regulator concluded that the tested products were "sub-standard due to the presence of external artificial or nature identical flavours in the product," Reuters reported.

US dollar weakens sharply against the Japanese yen after market interventions

TOKYO. (Agency)

The US dollar weakened sharply Monday against the Japanese yen after US President Donald Trump and Japan's finance minister confirmed both sides had intervened in markets.Before late last week, the dollar was trading above 163 yen, touching 40-year highs. After regulators were suspected of stepping in, it fell below 160 yen.Early Monday, after the official announcement of the intervention, the dollar dropped about 1% to 156.34 yen. That's a big change for the exchange rate.

The yen's prolonged weakness against the dollar has been a source of frustration for Tokyo. Since Japan imports so much of what it consumes, a weak currency pushes prices higher, increasing inflation.Trump said the US got "financial benefit" out of the intervention, calling it a "signal of friendship." "It's also good for the world economy."In Tokyo, Finance Minister Satsuki Katayama issued a statement confirming the intervention, saying the finance ministry had purchased yen in coordination with the US Treasury Department.

Efforts earlier this year to raise the value of the yen against the dollar did little to budge the exchange rate.Last week, the US side was suspected of lending a hand. When asked why Washington was helping, Trump said Sunday that "We have a good relationship with Japan. We're very strong -- very, very strong financially -- and they are, you know, they have a weakening yen, and they wanted a little bit of help, and we're always there for Japan. Japan's been very good to us, with the exception, of course, of Pearl Harbor."

The move followed a joint statement last year and "countered excessive volatility and disorderly movements in the Japanese yen in recent months," it said.It added that the ministry would not hesitate to act further if necessary.Such overt acknowledgement of market intervention is rare, said Neil Newman, managing director and head of strategy at Astris Advisory Japan. He said the last big example was when governments intervened following a massive earthquake and tsunami disaster in northeastern Japan in 2011.

Sensex opens 500 points higher, Nifty above 24,500; IndiGo up 3%

NEW YORK. (Agency)

Benchmark indices opened sharply higher on Monday, outperforming their Asian peers as a steep fall in crude oil prices boosted investor sentiment, while continued foreign institutional investor (FII) buying and improving domestic fundamentals kept the bulls firmly in control.At 9:47 am, the BSE Sensex was up 522.59 points, or 0.67%, at 78,617.23, while the NSE Nifty50 gained 163.90 points, or 0.67%, to trade at 24,547.50.The rally came after Brent crude tumbled nearly 5% to around \$83.5 a barrel as hopes of easing tensions in the Middle East improved after US President Donald Trump said talks with Iran would take place on Monday. Lower crude prices are a

positive for India, which imports nearly 85% of its crude oil requirements, as they help ease



inflationary pressures and reduce import costs.

BROAD-BASED BUYING LIFTS MARKETS

Buying was broad-based, with 14 of the 16 major sectoral indices trading in the green.PSU Bank stocks led the gains, with the index rising 1.70%, followed by FMCG (1.48%), Chemicals (1.23%), Financial

Services Ex-Bank (1.02%), Metal (0.94%), Financial Services (0.83%), Private Bank (0.75%) and IT (0.65%). Media was the biggest laggard, falling 1.97%, while Pharma slipped 0.19%.Among the broader markets, the Nifty Smallcap 100 gained 1%, while the Nifty 500 rose 0.71%. The Nifty 100, Nifty 200, Midcap 100 and Midcap Financial Services also traded firmly in positive territory. India VIX edged up 0.36% to 11.80.On the Sensex, ITC emerged as the top gainer, rising 3.68%, followed by IndiGo, which climbed 2.50%. SBI gained 1.84%, Bajaj Finserv rose 1.79%, Infosys advanced 1.64% and Bajaj Finance added 1.60%. TCS, Axis Bank, Asian Paints, Larsen & Toubro and ICICI Bank also traded with healthy gains.

Oil and gas giants eye bigger profits as their emissions worsen heatwaves

NEW YORK. (Agency)

The world's six biggest oil and gas companies are on track to earn a combined \$45 billion during the April-June quarter, nearly double their earnings from the previous quarter, even as their historical emissions have been linked to conditions that made roughly one in four heatwaves recorded globally since 2000 possible, according to a new Oxfam analysis.

The projected earnings, released by Oxfam ahead of the companies' quarterly results, come after global oil prices surged during the April-June period following the conflict involving Israel, the United States



and Iran.BP, Chevron, Eni, ExxonMobil, Shell and TotalEnergies are expected to nearly double their combined quarterly profits from \$23 billion in January-March to \$45 billion, while their projected full-year profits of \$147 billion would exceed what they earned over the previous seven quarters.BILLIONS IN PROFITS, A GROWING CLIMATE

TCS, Infosys, HCLTech to reduce bench strength by 8-10%. Here's what's changing

Top IT services companies are moving towards leaner bench strength as AI and demand-led hiring reshape staffing. The shift points to tighter deployment, more reskilling and a sharper focus on specialised talent.

SAN FRANCISCO. (Agency)

India's top information technology (IT) companies are expected to operate with much leaner "bench strength" in the coming years as artificial intelligence (AI), better workforce planning and demand-led hiring reshape the industry's traditional employment model.The average bench strength across leading IT services companies, including Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Infosys, HCLTech, Wipro and Tech Mahindra,

has already fallen to late single digits, or at most 12%, over the past three years.It is expected to decline further to around 8-10% in FY27, reported Moneycontrol. The report, citing staffing firm TeamLease Digital, said this is a sharp drop from the pre-AI era, when companies typically maintained bench strength of around 20-30%.

In the IT services industry, "bench" refers to employees who remain on a company's payroll but are not deployed on active client projects. Traditionally, firms maintained a sizeable bench so they could quickly assign engineers whenever new client projects came in.

WHY IS BENCH STRENGTH SHRINKING?

IT companies are no longer hiring large numbers of employees in anticipation of future demand.

Instead, recruitment has become far more demand-driven, with companies focusing on specialised skills in



artificial intelligence, cloud computing, cybersecurity and data analytics, as per the report.

"The bench has become a lot leaner over the last three years than what it used to be. Hiring has become far

more demand-led and focused on niche skills. Companies are using AI, better workforce planning and stronger demand forecasting to improve utilization instead of maintaining large standby teams," Neeti Sharma, CEO of TeamLease Digital, told Moneycontrol.The report added that bench timelines have also reduced, with employees now typically remaining on the bench for around 30-45 days compared to 45-60 days earlier.

COMPANIES ARE PRIORITISING

UTILISATION

Another reason for the shrinking bench is the industry's focus on improving employee utilisation amid slower revenue growth and AI-led productivity gains.



Nushratt Bharuccha

To Play A Key Role Opposite Tiger Shroff In Remo D'Souza's Action Film

Tiger Shroff and Remo D’Souza are all set to reunite for an upcoming action entertainer. The untitled movie is an action franchise backed by Ankita Lokhande’s husband Vicky Jain’s newly launched banner, VJ Frames. It also stars popular YouTuber and television personality Elvish Yadav. According to the latest update now, Nushratt Bharuccha has come on board as one of the leads. A source close to the development told Pinkvilla, “The team wanted someone who could bring both strength and emotional depth to the story. Nushratt was always one of the strongest choices. Her role has substance, and audiences will get to see her in an exciting new avatar.” While details about her character have been kept under wraps, reports suggest she has a pivotal role in the film’s narrative. Her character is also said to go beyond the conventional female co-lead. Interestingly, this will be the first time that Tiger Shroff and Nushratt Bharuccha will collaborate on screen. On the other hand, this is the second time Tiger and Remo D’Souza are working together. They had earlier worked on the 2016 superhero comedy A Flying Jatt. On the work front, Tiger Shroff’s most recent outing was Baaghi 4, the latest chapter in his hit action franchise. Helmed by Kannada director A. Harsha, the film pitted Tiger against Sanjay Dutt, who played the menacing villain. The cast also included Harnaaz Sandhu, Sonam Bajwa, Shreyas Talpade, and several others in prominent roles. The film drew inspiration from the 2013 Tamil action thriller Ainthu Ainthu Ainthu. As for Nushratt Bharuccha, she was last seen in the comedy thriller Ufff Yeh Siyapaa, where she starred opposite Sohumi Shah.



Karan Aujla's 'BeerBiceps Ki Haay' Joke During India's Got Latent 2 Power Outage Goes Viral



The latest episode of India’s Got Latent Season 2 delivered plenty of laughs, but it was Karan Aujla’s quick wit that emerged as one of the biggest highlights. The Punjabi singer-songwriter had the audience and fellow panellists in splits after an unexpected power outage during the show prompted him to crack a joke involving podcaster Ranveer Allahbadia, popularly known as BeerBiceps. The episode also featured several humorous references to Allahbadia, with host Samay Raina joining in while making it clear that it was all in good fun. **Karan Aujla’s One-Liner Leaves Everyone Laughing** The memorable moment unfolded shortly after a contestant completed a performance when the studio suddenly plunged into darkness. Addressing the audience, Samay Raina announced, “Doston, light chali gayi show ke beech mein.” As crew members rushed to hand Samay an emergency light, Karan Aujla grabbed the microphone and instantly delivered the line that became one of the episode’s most talked-about moments. “Ye BeerBiceps ki haay lagi hai,” he joked. The spontaneous remark drew loud laughter from the audience, while Samay and the rest of the panel struggled to contain themselves. Production briefly paused following the outage, with contestants and judges taking a short break before filming resumed. During the interval, free drinks were reportedly served to members of the live audience. **Ranveer Allahbadia Becomes The Running Joke** BeerBiceps continued to feature in the episode during another interaction with contestant Deep Gopal. Samay posed a hypothetical question, asking, “If you could kill one person, who would it be?” Without hesitation, the contestant replied, “Ranveer Allahbadia.” The unexpected answer once again sent the panel into laughter. Comedian Gurleen Pannu added to the humour, saying, “Isne uski maut ke baare mein socha.”

Pregnant Deepika Padukone Shares Hilarious Reel About Toddler Daughter Dua



Deepika Padukone may be away from the silver screen for now, but she continues to keep fans engaged through candid glimpses of her life as a mother. The actor, who is expecting her second child with husband Ranveer Singh, recently shared a humorous Instagram reel that struck a chord with parents, especially those juggling pregnancy while raising a toddler. The light-hearted post reflects the everyday realities of motherhood, something Deepika has increasingly embraced on social media since welcoming daughter Dua. **Deepika Shares A Relatable Pregnancy Moment** On Instagram, Deepika reposted a funny reel featuring a pregnant mother trying to follow medical advice about avoiding heavy lifting. The catch? Her toddler insists on being carried. The video shows the expectant mother repeatedly giving in to her child’s requests, despite being advised not to lift anything heavy during pregnancy. Its caption read, “Don’t lift anything over 20 pounds during pregnancy. Me this entire pregnancy.” The relatable clip quickly resonated with mothers online, with many sharing similar experiences of balancing pregnancy and parenting. Deepika herself did not add any caption, letting the reel speak for itself. **Motherhood Has Become A Big Part Of Her Social Media** This isn’t the first time Deepika has shared content celebrating the chaos and joy of motherhood. Over the past few months, the actor has frequently reposted memes and videos highlighting the everyday realities of pregnancy and parenting. Recently, she shared another humorous reel about pregnant women waking up several times at night to use the bathroom, a moment many expecting mothers instantly identified with. Her social media has gradually shifted from glamorous updates to more personal, relatable snippets, giving fans a glimpse into this new phase of her life. **‘My Obsession Is My Daughter’** Deepika has also spoken openly about how becoming a mother has changed her priorities. During an interview with Harper’s Bazaar India, she was asked about her current obsession. Without hesitation, she replied, “Not current — I’m going to remove ‘current’ from it. My obsession is my daughter.”



Nora Fatehi

Drops New Track Slay To The Rhythm, Calls It A 'Summer Banger'

If you loved Nora Fatehi’s last few songs, there’s another one on the way. The global star has announced Slay To The Rhythm, a fresh track from her EP Play. Titled Slay To The Rhythm, the new single features vocals by Nora Fatehi and Ma3iz, with music composed by Sanjoy. The song follows the



success of Champions and Locked In, adding another upbeat number to her growing EP. Speaking about the song, Nora shared why the project means so much to her. “This is a summer banger. It’s a tribute to music and dancers all around the world and to the power of rhythm, how it has connected people across the globe and

opened so many doors for artists like me. It’s a celebration of music and dance and how they give us the confidence to chase our dreams. This one is special for me! As an Independent artist and producer, this project marks my elevation as an artist musically. This song is about being FREE and celebrating music and dance! Both things that opened so many doors for me and connected me with all of you! Dance and music took me around the world and made the impossible possible! I hope this one inspires you to be free from the judgements of society and follow your heart always.” Apart from its high-energy sound, the music video also carries a thoughtful message. Nora has made sure that every performer and dancer featured in the video receives dedicated screen time and is credited at the end. The singer and actor has also continued her efforts to support dancers through her #DanceWithNora initiative. The platform encourages aspiring performers from across the world to showcase their talent, gain recognition and stay motivated to pursue their dreams.

How to deal with a work

Marriage

Someone at work you like, protect and are inspired by? The upside & dangers of a work-marriage, and tricks to keep it from becoming an office romance

Have you had an office marriage yet? No, seriously? With the amount of time modern professionals spend at work, pursuing a career without an office spouse is getting tougher than finding a smooth road to jog on.

A beautiful work-marriage is based on trust, sharing and inspiration, just like the one at home. And there is nothing like an office romance. The office spouse is one you harbour affection for, whose company you dig, someone you wish to see get ahead, crack 'insider' jokes with, and are unafraid to discuss dreams and fears with. You share an intimacy, but don't get intimate. Puzzling? Perfectly probable.

It's a rather common and lovely phenomenon



-until infatuation creeps in, and it very well could.

Experts who've spent hours around warring couples say, it's tricky to keep it platonic always, but hardly impossible if you stick to the rules.

Here they are:

Don't discuss your marriage/relationship in graphic detail

You might say, what's the point of an honest work-marriage then? But this one's crucial to stop things from getting sticky. Be aware of how you portray your 'real' relationship and partner, especially if things haven't been going particularly well of late. Painting a dark at-home picture keeps the doors of possibility wide open.

Don't do just-us drinks

Go out drinking with the gang, sure, but just the two of you at a bar, once a week, isn't good news. When you drink together, clarity goes for a toss. It's the same with going back home. Opt for car-pool instead of driving back alone together. You still enjoy each other's company without making room for too much privacy.

When travelling on work with your office spouse, make sure you are sharing your room with a colleague.

Experts pick recreational activities and shared conversations as major hooks to draw two people closer.

Keep it open

The most effective strategy is to introduce your work and real spouse. Try organising a meal with your workspouse and his/her partner, or your own. What this does is include your partner in your peripheral world, and not make the office relationship seem guarded and exclusive.

Make it a five-day-week marriage

She/he is the office spouse, so try disconnecting once you are out of office. Late night messaging, exchange of emails and phone calls on the weekend blur the lines between work



get ting into personal space," says psychotherapist and marriage counsellor Neeta Shetty. "It usually starts off unconsciously by spending more time during lunch break," she adds. Affection -you like this colleague

more than others, care about them, wish to see them get ahead at work -is followed by the realisation that you enjoy having a conservation with them.

When you feel free to chat about the personal, for instance, what your spouse did wrong to tick you off, it's moving into the zone of an emotional affair. Shetty says you know you are straying into unknown territory when you decide to have a discussion about what you like in a lover or companion with your work spouse. "That's crossing official boundaries."

If you find yourself comparing your spouse with your work spouse

In fact, this can be a good test. Compare the two honestly. If you find your work spouse 'better' than your real spouse, it's a wake up call," Shetty thinks. When you live with the same person day in and day out, it's only natural that you will develop a dislike for some of his/her traits or behaviour. To regularly discuss these with your work spouse, and throw in a "unlike you, she always..." line, doesn't help. Worse, if you've This week, Hollywood actor Reese Withever imagined your work companion in erspoon referred to co-star Sofia Vergaplace of your real spouse, it's time to take ra as her "work wife" while they are filmstock. ing Don't Mess With Texas in which they play a police officer and a prisoner on

If you itch to keep in touch the run together.

While Reese has been after office hours helping her co-star get over her recent "Do you find yourself looking for excuses to split from Nick Loeb, Sofia is Reese's connect with your colleague after you are make-up and hair angel.

Done for the day, on weekends, or on holidays, either via text messages or phone calls," asks Shetty. Without realizing it, your dependence on them increases and you feel the need to be in touch as and when. This eats into family time, and gradually, being around your real spouse may seem uninspiring. We underestimate the power of infatuation. "You may miss the person and wish to share little details of the day," says Shetty.

If you are hiding any aspect of your relationship from your real spouse

Even if it's something as innocuous as coffee after work, if you

find yourself telling your real spouse you are someplace else, consider it a red flag. Ask yourself why is it that you don't wish to share that detail with your spouse.

Reese has one too

This week, Hollywood actor Reese Witherspoon referred to co-star Sofia Vergara as her "work wife" while they are filming Don't Mess With Texas in which they play a police officer and a prisoner on the run together. While Reese has been helping her co-star get over her recent split fro m Nick Loeb, Sofia is Reese's make-up and hair angel.

A study abroad has claimed that there is a link between how we portray ourselves online in social media and how we are in person.

Back home, is this really the case? Or are we 'different' people in real life?

We live in an always-on environment where we are accessible all the time to friends and relatives all over the world. Messages are delivered instantly and video chats in real time are the norm.

Recently, an Australian researcher named Megan Pozzi from the Queensland University of Technology found among other things, that online 'representations' of people are as valid as how people are IRL, or, In Real Life. In order to easily identity behaviour types online, categorisations were made in this study.

Explaining this, Pozzi stated in the study, "There is a common belief that the way we portray ourselves offline is authentic, while our online identity is somehow fake, but I believe all of these different representations are equally valid. People are performing their identities all the time. Whether we realise it or not, we are broadcasting different things to the world depending on who's watching. In particular, girls use status updates like they would fashion or music to assert themselves as an authority or as belonging to certain sub-groups." So, then, what do we think about it here?

"People do wear masks online. It's very difficult to be completely yourself on such a platform. I have people who tell me that they post what they'd like to be. Some couples might post 'happy' pictures on social media to show their friends that things are going great in the relationship when it's not. And then when a couple does unfortunately break up, their peers are bound to go, 'What happened?' I thought they were happy together?," says clinical psychologist Seema Hingorany.

When it comes to the genders, do girls post any differently from boys? Or do both behave the same way? Software consultant Vivek Ajwani seems to think so. "Many people both male and

Do you have an online identity?



female who use social media as more than just a means to keep in touch often paint a picture of themselves as different from who they really are. The internet is a veil behind which people often become someone they always wanted to see themselves as but never really had the opportunity to be."The problem with using the internet as a 'veil' to project a different image of ourselves is that we can be misunderstood by others. We also tend to subconsciously judge people based on what they say on social media. Social anthropologist, ashok mundetiya comments, "When I first joined social media, I felt that it was necessary to say things that would not be said in real life. It was the quickest way to differentiate oneself. It helped that most of it felt like I was shouting into a void — no one responded, so there was no understanding of the audience or consequence. Over time, I recognised that there is indeed an audience, that there is the potential of

amplification and the inability to take back what is said. There is a greater respect for the medium now and I do not attempt to link it to my real life identity at all."

But Malika Hayden, a DJ who uses social media to communicate with audiences, says that the difference between how someone comes across on the web versus face-to-face can often be jarring, "Although I have never met someone in person whom I got to know through social media, but from stories I've heard from people, it can turn out to be a bit of a shock when in real life the person is nothing close to what you thought they would be."

Now that's something to think about the next time the urge for that next status update strikes you...

- ✦ Types of social media posts according to the study
- ✦ Supplication (where people attempt to

seem needy/self-deprecating in order to get attention)

- ✦ Exemplification (attempting to seem busy, dedicated or hardworking)
- ✦ Intimidation (attempting to seem threatening/powerful - essentially bullying)
- ✦ Ingratiation (using flattery/compliments in order to be seen as likeable)
- ✦ Self-promotion (where people point out their talents/abilities in order to be seen as skillful).
- ✦ Proclamation (where a user states what they're doing or feeling)
- ✦ Instigation (where users ask questions to start a conversation)
- ✦ Provocation (or making statements to offend or agitate others)
- ✦ Post a comment

NEVER get involved with a married man

The reasons to not get involved with a married man are plenty – heartbreaks, being called the 'other woman' so on and so forth. Here are some sound reasons as to why you shouldn't be dating a married man

Wrong

No matter how much you try to prove yourself right — there are no justifications when it comes to dating a married person. It is considered to be 'ethically wrong' and could hamper your life in more ways than one.

Second best

When you get involved with a married man, no matter how much he claims you to be his true love, at the end of the day, his wife and family (kids) will be his first priority. Remember that he

will come up with a host of excuses to cover up for cheating on his family — but when it comes to choosing between his family and you, it will always be his family.

Lies

Another reason to not get involved with a married man is lies. Men who have a wife and children at home, will lie to you endlessly for not being able to meet up with you, or not being able to accompany you for shopping or a movie.

Would you like it?

Just for a second, wait and think. Had you found out that your husband is cheating not only on you but your kids as well — would you approve of it? Let it pass by? Cheating in any form is disgraceful. More than that, you can never guarantee that he will leave his wife and kids and accept you legally.

