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## UP eyes 10 lakh new entrepreneurs in 10 years, offers interest-free loan to youngsters

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has outlined a plan to back young entrepreneurs across Uttar Pradesh. The push aims to reshape the state economy by building a large base of self-reliant businesses.

New Delhi.(Agency)

In a major push to strengthen Uttar Pradesh's economy through entrepreneurship, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's government is expanding opportunities for young people under the Mukhyamantri Yuva Udyami Vikas Abhiyan (MYUVA). The flagship initiative seeks to make young people self-reliant by providing interest-free, collateral-free loans of up to Rs 5 lakh for starting businesses.

With a target of creating one lakh new entrepreneurs every year, the government has drawn up a long-term roadmap to nurture 10 lakh self-reliant entrepreneurs over the next decade, placing the state's youth at the centre of its economic growth strategy. Conceived as an ambitious entrepreneurship programme, MYUVA addresses one of the biggest challenges faced by aspiring entrepreneurs—access to finance.



The scheme is open to permanent residents of Uttar Pradesh aged between 21 and 40 years who have passed at least Class 8.

Applicants must also possess a technical diploma or degree from a recognised institution or hold a government-recognised skill certification, including those issued under programmes such as ODOP, Vishwakarma Shram Samman Yojana or ITI.

### MYUVA'S TWO-PHASE DEVELOPMENT MODEL

To simplify access, applications are processed online through the Directorate of Industries and Enterprise Promotion's UPMSME portal and the official MYUVA portal. The UP government has also instructed banks to speed up loan approvals and improve the state's Credit-Deposit (CD) ratio to ensure timely credit support for eligible entrepreneurs. Officials believe the initiative will encourage innovation, expand self-employment

Unlike conventional lending, the scheme enables eligible applicants to secure loans without furnishing property as collateral or arranging third-party guarantees. In addition, beneficiaries receive a 10 per cent margin money subsidy on the project cost, reducing the financial burden during the initial stages of establishing a business.

### ELIGIBILITY TO APPLY

## Will you compensate? Kejriwal slams Centre on E20 fuel, reduced mileage concerns

Arvind Kejriwal accused the Centre of misleading the public over reported claims that E20 was termed an "experiment" in the Supreme Court, questioning its nationwide rollout amid consumer concerns.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Former Delhi Chief Minister and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convenor Arvind Kejriwal on Friday demanded that the Centre immediately halt the nationwide rollout of 20 per cent ethanol-blended petrol (E20), alleging that the government had imposed the policy despite growing public concerns over fuel efficiency and the impact on vehicles.

He also accused the Centre of misleading people over reports that the programme had been described as an "experiment" before the Supreme Court.

In a video message released on Friday, Kejriwal claimed there was widespread dissatisfaction among vehicle owners and questioned the rationale behind implementing E20 across the country if its long-term impact was still under evaluation.

"There is huge public anger regarding 20% ethanol-blended petrol.



## The Double Game of Kheda Police

# A Facade of Public Awareness While a Syndicate of Scams Thrives Under Corrupt Cops!

Mahanagar Metro

Kheda: "Where there is greed, scammers never starve"—this proverb is proving to be absolutely true in Kheda district, a land known for its sacred pilgrimages. However, the biggest twist in this dark game is that those encouraging the scammers are none other than the guardians of the law themselves. For years, a massive scam syndicate has been operating out of the notorious 'Chalali Vagda,' which falls under the jurisdiction of the Chaklasi Police Station. Recently, the Kheda District Police simply washed their hands of the matter by posting a public awareness message on social media. But the public is asking one glaring question: When will action be taken against the corrupt officials right under whose noses this entire syndicate flourished?

### From 60-40 Splits to Fixed Commissions: Corrupt 'Khaki' Getting Rich!

According to highly shocking information from reliable sources, this black empire of scams is booming with the direct involvement of the district police's notorious middlemen (vahivaddars) and corrupt police officers. The Division of Black Money: Initially, this dirty game operated on a 60-40 partnership—meaning 60% of the loot went to the scammer and 40% to the corrupt



SPECIAL EXPLOSIVE REPORT, KHEDA: THE DOUBLE GAME OF KHEDA POLICE

cops. Now, sources claim a new rule has been implemented: a fixed cut of ₹25,000 goes straight into the police's pockets for every ₹1 lakh looted! Police Stations Turned into Settlement Hubs: Whenever a victimized citizen arrives at the police station to raise an alarm, the police, instead of filing an official FIR, focus on arranging a "settlement." The matter is hushed up by refunding a small portion of the money to the victim. This ensures that the official crime rate remains artificially low while the vaults of corruption keep overflowing.

### Who are the Real Bosses of the 'Corruption Branch'? A CID Probe Could Unearth Dark Secrets!

The Kheda District Police has been preaching on social media, advising citizens: "Do not panic after an incident; file a complaint immediately." But the most biting question remains: When the police themselves are hand-in-glove with the scammers, where is a victim supposed to go to file a complaint? According to local rumors, the Kheda Crime Branch has effectively been turned into a 'Corruption Branch.' Under the alleged protection of Police Inspector K.R. Vekariya, M.J. Barot, defaulter Jayesh Rabari, and Chaklasi's notorious middleman Kuldeep Singh, several massive targets ("parties") have reportedly been looted. Recently, news surfaced of an individual being scammed out of ₹5 lakhs within one of these jurisdictions. Instead of registering an FIR, the police allegedly intervened,

brokered a settlement, and saved the reputations of both the scammers and themselves.

### Key Questions Kheda Police Must Answer:

How many actual, official FIRs have been registered against the scammers of Chalali Vagda to date?

Why are crimes kept off the official records to hide the sins of allegedly corrupt officials like PI Vekariya and Kuldeep Singh? Isn't this directly emboldening the scammers?

Why are con artists, who bankrupt people by luring them with offers of gold and dollars at half price, still roaming free?

### Demand to the State DGP: Immediate Transfer and High-Level Probe!

The water has now gone over the head. There is a growing public demand for a deep, impartial investigation by CID Crime against the controversial Kheda LCB Police Inspectors K.R. Vekariya, M.J. Barot, and defaulter Jayesh Rabari. To break this corrupt nexus, it is absolutely essential in the public interest that these officials be transferred immediately. Only then will the citizens of Kheda district get justice, and their shattered faith in the 'Khaki' uniform be restored.

## BJP vs Prashant Kishor: Why Bankipur is more than just a bypoll in Bihar

Patna.(Agency)

The upcoming Bankipur Assembly by-election is shaping up to be one of Bihar's most closely watched political contests, with the BJP and Jan Suraj preparing for a direct showdown in a constituency long considered a saffron stronghold. The focus of the contest has shifted to whether Jan Suraj founder Prashant Kishor will enter the fray and who the BJP will field to defend the seat vacated by Nitin Nabin after he became the party's national president.

While Jan Suraj is yet to formally announce its candidate, it is widely expected that Kishor will contest the bypoll. He has already announced his willingness to fight to wrest the BJP's strong bastion, calling it a referendum on the Samrat Choudhary-led NDA government. The party is scheduled to take a final decision at its core committee meeting on July 5, with an official announcement likely the same day.

If Kishor enters the fray, the contest is expected to acquire significance beyond a routine Assembly bypoll. The election is being viewed as a test of Jan Suraj's political strength and the BJP's hold over one of its strongest urban constituencies. Following Jan Suraj's poor performance in the 2025 Bihar Assembly election, Kishor is looking to revive the party through the Bankipur bypoll.

Bankipur has remained a BJP stronghold for more than four decades, with the party winning the seat continuously for many years. The bypoll was necessitated after Nitin Nabin became the BJP's national president and vacated the constituency. The BJP is unlikely to want to lose what is considered a prestigious seat.

A completely urban Assembly constituency, Bankipur has a sizeable population of educated, middle-class and business-community voters.

**Jharkhand will host a two-day national consultation in New Delhi on July 8 for its Vision 2050 agenda. The exercise aims to refine new policies, secure investment and deepen global partnerships for jobs and growth.**

# Jharkhand to host 2-day Vision 2050 investment summit in Delhi next week

Ranchi.(Agency)

The Jharkhand government will hold a two-day national stakeholders consultation in New Delhi from July 8 to push its 'Vision 2050' goals, according to an official statement issued on Friday. The state government said it expects the initiative to help attract quality investment, encourage innovation and create new jobs for people in Jharkhand.

The event will be organised by the departments of information technology, industries and tourism under the leadership of Chief Minister Hemant Soren. It will bring together policymakers, industry leaders, investors, technology experts and development partners from India and abroad to discuss Jharkhand's long-term growth agenda and prepare a roadmap for sustainable



industrial, technological and tourism-led growth.

As part of the consultation, the government will release several draft policy frameworks and seek feedback from industrialists and other stakeholders. These draft policies will cover artificial intelligence, investment promotion, tourism, textile, JJADA regulations, public-

private partnership and a concept paper on the Jharkhand foundation, along with other draft policy initiatives.

"The event will mark a significant step towards positioning Jharkhand as a preferred destination for investment in information technology, artificial intelligence, digital governance, industrial investment and tourism, while advancing the state's vision - Explore Infinite Opportunities," the statement said. The statement said the consultation will build on Jharkhand's participation at the World Economic Forum in Davos and the state's subsequent visit to the United Kingdom, with the aim of strengthening momentum for global partnerships and investment in line with its long-term 'Vision 2050' objectives. The first day of the event will have a high-level

session on digital governance and IT infrastructure, followed by Business-to-Government interactions between government officials and representatives from the IT, AI and digital technology sectors. The second day will focus on investment, inclusive development and tourism, with the government presenting Jharkhand's industrial strengths, cultural heritage and tourism potential to domestic and international investors.

The programme will also see the signing of several strategic MoUs with leading industrial houses to speed up investment and economic development in the state. Overall, the consultation is intended to bring together policy discussions, stakeholder feedback and investment outreach to support Jharkhand's broader Vision 2050 plan.

## News box

## Electoral roll revision faces friction in societies, BLOs allege rude behaviour from residents

Gurgaon.(Agency)

Booth level officers (BLOs) conducting the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Gurgaon say they are facing rude behaviour and non-cooperation from residents of several housing societies. A few BLOs told TOI that many residents make mistakes while filling enumeration forms, then blame field staff when asked to correct them. "They are more educated than us, yet they vent their anger on us for their own errors," said a BLO posted on Golf Course Road. Officers said residents often expect frontline staff to resolve every query on the spot. "We are only responsible for distributing forms, collecting them and verifying details. If someone has a query, we have to consult our supervisors. Many residents mistake that for incompetence and become rude," another BLO said, adding that some residents turn aggressive over even minor delays.

Under Election Commission's SIR exercise, BLOs — most of them anganwadi workers and other non-teaching govt staff carrying out election duties alongside their regular jobs — are required to distribute enumeration forms, collect completed applications and digitise voter details. Officials said the process becomes considerably simpler when residents submit forms online, since the information uploads directly to the system and only needs verification, cutting down on manual data entry. District authorities have repeatedly appealed to residents, particularly in urban housing societies, to use this route. "It will take just a few minutes to complete the process. People can fill the form from the comfort of their home or office," said SDM Sanjeev Singla.

Officials acknowledged that many BLOs initially struggled with the digitisation process and have since deployed additional computer operators to assist with data entry and uploads.

## Youth stabbed to death by friends during birthday party

Ghaziabad.(Agency)

A 22-year-old man was stabbed to death by his friends at a birthday party in the Shanti Nagar area of Crossings Republik in what is believed to be the third attempt to kill him, police said. An FIR was registered against six persons, an officer said, three of whom — Gaurav, Dev and Hari — were detained. The deceased, Mohit Sharma, was an autorickshaw driver. According to Mohit's elder brother, Mohit and Gaurav had a dispute about two weeks ago after which Gaurav threatened to kill him. However, a compromise was reached between them and Mohit's family believed the matter was resolved, he said. "But on June 25, all of the accused took my brother to Rajasthan's Khatuashyam town and there, the dispute between them flared up again. Fearing an attack, Mohit made a video call to his cousin and told him that he was with his friends and they would be responsible if something untoward happened to him." Mohit's brother told TOLA similar incident happened a few days later when the accused took Mohit to Haridwar and the latter made a phone call to his cousin to let him know his whereabouts and who he was there with, he added. "I suspect the accused had planned to kill my brother in Haridwar and Khatuashyam but they did not make an attempt because of the video calls," Mohit's brother said.

Around 11.30pm on Wednesday, Dev called Mohit to his house — only 100 metres away — for his birthday party. There, Dev, Gaurav and Hari forced him to drink a large amount of alcohol after which he fell unconscious. Following this, the accused stabbed him more than five times. Mohit managed to escape Dev's house and call his family. His family rushed him to a hospital where doctors declared him dead.

## Jogging tracks, concrete barricades: Ghaziabad footpaths set for a makeover



Ghaziabad:.(Agency)

Ghaziabad Municipal Corporation is upgrading pedestrian infrastructure across three major stretches in the city, with renewed focus on safety and accessibility. The project covers a 7-km stretch from Hindon IAF roundabout to UP Gate, the stretch from Hapur Chungi to Diamond Flyover, and CISF Road to Kanawani Culvert. The revamp, to be taken up at a cost of Rs 10 crore, includes seating spaces with pergolas, green landscaping, light fixtures, jogging tracks and designated vending zones. On June 19, the Supreme Court ruled that walking on well-maintained, demarcated footpaths is a fundamental right. The ruling gives pedestrians priority over vehicles. GMC officials, however, said that a plan to develop these pathways was already in the works prior to the SC ruling. "As per the SC order, if local municipal authorities or govts fail to provide these pathways, citizens can move to court and are entitled to constitutional compensation for safety infringements. It is binding on us not only to develop pathways for pedestrians but also enforce it, and we have already taken steps in that direction," said GMC chief engineer NK Choudhary. According to Choudhary, cemented barricades will be placed to bar vehicles from pedestrian pathways, which will be landscaped and evened. Walkways will get proper seating arrangements, pergolas, green landscaping with light fixtures, a jogging track, and an organised vendor zone under the plan.

The stretches will also get parking facilities on roadsides and stormwater drains to prevent waterlogging. Underground electrical lines at these spots will be relocated so that no excavation work needs to be conducted here in the future.

## MAHANAGAR METRO EXCLUSIVE

## Sand Mafia Rule in Karjan's Fatepur; Crores Scammed Amid Silent Assent from Power Brokers!

## Mahanagar Metro

**Karjan:** While the Gujarat Government makes lofty claims of a corruption-free administration, the echoes of a multi-crore sand mining scam in Fatepur Gram Panchayat of Karjan Taluka have now reached Gandhinagar. According to shocking inputs from reliable sources, democratic norms have been completely trampled in the Fatepur Gram Panchayat. Instead of the legally elected representatives, the panchayat's entire operations are being illegally run by the husband of the sarpanch, causing losses worth crores to the government exchequer.

**Wife as Sarpanch, Husband as Supreme Ruler: Bakul Patel's Uncontested Reign Since 2017**



Currently, Harshaben Bakul Patel holds the position of Sarpanch in Fatepur Gram Panchayat, but the actual administrative strings are pulled entirely by her husband, Bakul Patel. This is not an isolated arrangement. Previously, when Bakul Patel's sister-in-law, Nimaben Patel (wife of Jayesh Bhogilal Patel), served as the Deputy Sarpanch, the actual keys to power remained firmly in Bakul Patel's hands. Serious allegations have emerged stating that since 2017, he has flagrantly interfered in the Gram Panchayat's functions, using intimidation tactics to draft fraudulent resolutions. Based on these fake resolutions, illegal mining leases were secured for the sand mafia, paving the way for mas-



sive corruption. Furthermore, since 2021, fraudulent resolutions were passed to grant right-of-way to illegal sand miners through pasture lands (Gauchar land) meant for cattle grazing, resulting in the open plunder of natural resources.

**Zero Village Development, Leader's Wealth Skyrockets to Crores!**

The crores of rupees received in royalties and grants from the sand and gravel excavated from the banks of the Narmada River were meant to be spent on the development of Fatepur village. However, the ground reality is that not a single brick of development has been laid in the village. Where the development funds vanished remains a massive question. Due to this collusion between the panchayat's Talati (village accountant) and the Sarpanch, Bakul Patel—who holds no official post yet controls everything—has amassed crores in benami assets within a short span, becoming the talk of the entire region. An investigation into this matter was previously conducted by the TDO (Taluka Development Officer) and DDO (District Development Officer), which exposed severe financial irregularities and corruption in the Gram Panchayat's Rozmel (daily cash book) accounts. Despite the entire scam reaching the Vigilance Department, no concrete punitive action has been taken against these corrupt individuals to date, allegedly due to unidentified political pressure.



**Gross Administrative Negligence: Complaints Up to the Chief Minister, Result Zero**

Fearless and unchecked illegal mining of sand and soil has been ongoing in Karjan Taluka since 2013. The Vadodara Mines and Minerals Department has received multiple written and verbal com-



plaints regarding this, but the officials choose to turn a blind eye. Local residents also staged aggressive protests and filed complaints with Karjan's Tehsildar and SDM, Shivam Baria, yet the administration refuses to wake up from its deep slumber. Even after complaints reached the Gandhinagar Mines and Minerals Department and the state's Chief Minister, Bhupendra Patel, the mining mafia shows absolutely no fear of the law. Under the cover of darkness, prohibited heavy excavation machinery (Baaj machines) is deployed directly into the bed of the Narmada River to brazenly steal natural resources night after night.



**Serious Questions Mocking MLA Akshay Patel: Protector Turned Predator?**

Sources have leveled grave allegations suggesting that the political mastermind behind this entire syndicate is none other than the MLA of Karjan Assembly constituency, Akshay Patel. Local residents explicitly state that Bakul Patel's godfather is MLA Akshay Patel himself. Despite multiple pleas being brought to the MLA's attention regarding this critical matter, his persistent inaction strongly reinforces the suspicion that he is directly associated with the mining mafia. Akshay Patel, who originally arrived as an outsider candidate during the elections, later joined the BJP. However, neither the party nor the citizens of Karjan benefited from this transition. The sole beneficiary has been Akshay Patel himself, whose wealth reportedly skyrocketed overnight. A sharp question is now being raised by the public: How will an MLA develop the Karjan constituency when he himself stands as the guardian of corrupt individuals and the mining mafia? "Mahanagar Metro" demands answers from every responsible officer and politician—from the local panchayat to the state secretariat: When will the hammer of the law fall upon the kingpins of this multi-crore sand scam? Will the taxpayers' hard-earned money and the nation's natural wealth continue to be plundered to line the pockets of corrupt politicians and middlemen?

## The Real Might of Khaki

## Gujarat's Daring IPS Ravi Teja, Whose 'Singham' Style Strikes Terror into the Hearts of Criminals!

## Mahanagar Metro

**Ahmedabad:** Whenever the conversation within the Gujarat Police department shifts to officers who remain unyielding in maintaining law and order and prove to be a living nightmare for criminals, the name of IPS S. Ravi Teja instantly rises to the top. A brilliant officer of the 2015 batch, he has proven in his relatively short yet highly impactful career that the Khaki uniform is not meant for enjoying power, but for serving the public and eliminating anti-social elements. Due to his iron-fisted decisions and 'action-mode' policing during his various postings across Gujarat, he has captured both the imagination of social media and the hearts of the general public.

## Who is IPS S. Ravi Teja?

Originally hailing from Andhra Pradesh, S. Ravi Teja Vasamsetti was an academic topper since childhood. After earning his engineering degree, he turned toward the Civil Services with a resolute intent to serve the nation and bring a positive change to the system. Clearing the grueling UPSC examination in 2015, he joined the Indian Police Service (IPS) and was allotted the Gujarat cadre.



**Dismantling Criminal Networks Wherever Posted!**

The biggest hallmark of IPS Ravi Teja is his firm belief in ground-level policing. From his probationary period to his current postings, his journey has been exemplary.

Vadodara and Mahisagar: His tenure as DySP in Vadodara Rural and later as SP in Mahisagar was highly distinguished. He slammed the hammer of the law so hard on local bootleggers, gambling dens, and illegal mafias that criminals were forced to either mend their ways or flee the districts entirely.

Junagadh and Porbandar Belt: Whenever a law-and-order crisis emerged in the sensitive regions of Saurashtra, Ravi Teja displayed exceptional administrative capabilities. The public grievance forums

(\*Lok Darbars\*) he organized to liberate ordinary citizens from the terror of predatory loan sharks gave a new lease of life to countless poor and middle-class families.

Ahmedabad and Gandhinagar Radar: Currently handling even more critical responsibilities, he is leading advanced digital and ground operations against cybercrime, white-collar crime, and organized syndicates.

**A Champion of Technology and Modern Policing**

In today's modern era where criminals are going high-tech, IPS Ravi Teja strongly advocates the use of smart technology to curb crime. He has contributed significantly toward preventive policing through CCTV surveillance, data analytics, and social media monitoring. His distinct \*modus operandi\*—striking at the root of a crime to put entire gangs behind bars—keeps his subordinate staff highly motivated and driven.

**A Strict Boss for the Force, a True Friend to the Public**

While the general public often harbors a fear of the Khaki uniform, Ravi Teja operates on a completely

different philosophy. He firmly believes: "The fear of the police must exist in the minds of criminals; in the minds of the common public, there should be nothing but absolute trust for the police."

He never hesitates to take stringent disciplinary action against corrupt or negligent personnel working under him.

Conversely, when a victim or a common citizen seeking justice approaches him, he listens to them with utmost empathy and strives to deliver on-the-spot redressal.

**A Role Model for the Youth**

Thanks to his peak physical fitness, disciplined lifestyle, and spotless track record, millions of youngsters across Gujarat look up to him as an idol. The career of IPS S. Ravi Teja is a shining textbook example of how to elevate the dignity of the Khaki uniform. Operating strictly within the boundaries of the law, free from political pressure, he serves as a living embodiment of how to protect the public in true 'Singham' style. The Gujarat Police takes immense pride in such a brave, honest, and dedicated IPS officer. There is absolutely no doubt that in the times to come, he will achieve even greater milestones in making the state entirely crime-free.

# Panchkula: All street vendors, delivery personnel to be police verified

The decision was taken during a meeting with resident welfare associations (RWA) presidents and general secretaries from across Panchkula to review law and order, traffic management and community policing initiatives.

**Chandigarh. (Agency)**

Ordering food or parcels in Panchkula may soon come with an added layer of security, as the city police has decided to conduct police verification of all delivery personnel working in the district. The move, announced by Commissioner of Police Pankaj Nain, is part of a wider public safety drive that will also see phased verification of street vendors and hawkers, with unique identification numbers to be issued for their carts and vehicles.

The decision was taken during a meeting with resident welfare associations (RWA) presidents and general secretaries from across Panchkula to review law and order, traffic

management and community policing initiatives. Nain said "every individual has the right to earn an honest livelihood, provided it is lawful and does not compromise public safety". "All delivery personnel will undergo police verification, while street vendors, cart vendors and hawkers will also be verified in phases and assigned unique identification numbers to strengthen security and improve accountability."

The meeting also reviewed the ongoing Beggar-Free Panchkula, Crime and Encroachment-Free Panchkula, and



Senior Citizen Safety campaigns, which RWA representatives said had improved public confidence in the police. The Commissioner stressed that active

public participation is crucial to making these initiatives successful at the grassroots level. Among other decisions, CCTV cameras will be installed at vulnerable locations lacking surveillance with support from RWAs, while police patrolling will be intensified in sensitive areas.

To follow up on the issues discussed, a special meeting of senior citizen representatives with SHOs and police post-incharges will be held on Sunday at 4 pm to prepare local action plans. Police officials said such interactions with residents will continue regularly to

strengthen police-public coordination.

Responding to demands raised by residents, Nain said the barricades at Majri Chowk would be removed on a trial basis.

Traffic movement will be monitored during the trial period, and a final decision on their removal or reinstatement will be taken after assessing its impact on both traffic flow and public safety.

RWA representatives welcomed the ongoing campaigns, saying these initiatives had brought visible improvements and strengthened public trust in the police. They also suggested measures to further enhance their implementation at the grassroots level.

## Short news

### Tripura to expand mango cultivation to scale up production for export

**Agartala. (Agency)**

To boost the livelihoods of mango growers and enhance their economic condition in Tripura, the Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Department has decided to expand mango cultivation by an additional 180 hectares of land in the Dhalai district, considering its export potential.

The Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Minister, Ratan Lal Nath, after inaugurating the Monsoon Mango Festival at Narikelkunjia last evening, said that mango imports from other states have reduced substantially over the past few years, and Tripura has become self-sufficient in mango cultivation.

"The mango varieties found in Tripura are truly remarkable – not only Indian varieties, but also a wide variety of American, European, and Asian varieties of mangoes are cultivated on a large scale in Tripura now. The state government intends to promote the Mango Festival further to the global stage," Nath stated.

To further support mango growers, the government has been providing financial assistance to rejuvenate old orchards. The drip irrigation for mango growers was introduced, and plans to set up cold storage facilities to benefit farmers and double their income were made, said the minister.

He advised the farmers to focus on mangoes, pineapples, ginger, bird's eye chilli, and bananas and be sure not to leave land vacant and added, "We have diverse varieties of mango; soil and climate conditions are so favourable, it can easily be scaled up multiple times." Nath pointed out that as soon as the BJP-led government came to power in 2018, agriculture and horticulture became the focal points of the administration, and extensive projects and subsequent support have been extended to the farmers, which has now positioned Tripura on the global map.

### Warkari Tradition and Sanatan Dharma Guide Humanity: Dr. Abhay Tilak Sudhir Gadgil Honoured with Dr. Shripal Sabnis Culture Service Award

**Pune. (Agency)**

The Warkari tradition and Sanatan Dharma both serve as guiding forces for humanity by promoting love, harmony, and universal values, said renowned Sant literature scholar Dr. Abhay Tilak.

He was delivering the inaugural speech at the Dr. Shripal Sabnis Memorial Lecture Series organised by Manohari Maitra Sangh in Pune. Speaking on the theme "Warkari Tradition and Sanatan Dharma, Dr. Tilak explained that while the Warkari and Sanatan traditions are not identical, they share common philosophical roots.

He described Sanatan Dharma as a timeless principle based on the Vedas, while the Warkari tradition represents its practical, inclusive, and accessible expression. Although the Warkari movement accepts the authority of the Vedas, it rejects social discrimination and promotes equality and devotion. Sant literature scholar H.B.P. Prashant Maharaj More said Sanatan Dharma is eternal, without a beginning or end, and has no single founder. He noted that the Warkari tradition, rooted in the Bhagavata tradition and Vedantic philosophy, upholds values such as truth, non-violence, compassion, forgiveness, peace, charity, and universal brotherhood. He added that both traditions encourage selfless service and moral living for the progress of society.

## Women in Haryana more financially independent, yet 1 in 7 wives still faces domestic violence

**The definition of farmer in the Maharashtra Women Farmers Empowerment Bill, 2026, says that any woman resident of Maharashtra engaged in agriculture, irrespective of the nature of the land.**

**Chandigarh. (Agency)**

While Haryana women are witnessing greater financial independence, increased participation in household decision-making, and improved digital access, a sobering reality also holds true — one in seven married women still faces domestic violence, according to the latest National Family Health Survey (NFHS-6, 2023-24). According to the survey, the prevalence of spousal violence among ever-married women aged 18-49 in Haryana has declined from 17.9 per cent in NFHS-5 (2019-21) to 13.6 per cent in NFHS-6, indicating progress but also highlighting that domestic violence remains a significant concern. Of this, 16.1 per cent of women experienced such kind of violence in the urban belt while 12.1 per cent witnessed in the rural belt. Physical

violence during pregnancy has increased from 1.6 per cent in the last survey to 2.6 per cent, while the proportion of young women aged 18-29 who experienced



sexual violence before the age of 18 has reduced from 0.4 per cent to 0.1 per cent in the state.

**Financial independence improves**  
The share of married women in Haryana

participating in household decisions has increased from 87.5 per cent in NFHS-5 to 91.1 per cent in NFHS-6, suggesting a stronger voice within families. Financial independence has also improved, with women receiving cash payment for work rising from 18.8 per cent to 25.1 per cent.

The proportion of women operating their own bank accounts in the state has jumped from 73.6 per cent to 85.2 per cent, while mobile phone ownership has increased sharply from 50.4 per cent to 64.9 per cent, enabling greater access to information, services and opportunities. The use of hygienic menstrual protection methods among young women has also inched up from 93.5 per cent to 94.3 per cent, reflecting continued improvements in awareness and access.

## No-pocket gowns, loo break checks: How Ayodhya Ram temple is guarding cash

**Ayodhya. (Agency)**

Uniforms, repeated frisking, and monitored breaks for counting agents: Several security measures have been introduced at the 'Pilgrim Facilitation Centre (PFC)' inside the Ram Temple in Ayodhya after allegations of theft and embezzlement of donated funds and valuables blew up last month.

Located 200 metres from the main temple, the PFC holds a counting room in the basement where collections from the 35-odd donation boxes from across the shrine premises are brought and counted. Counting is done in two shifts — roughly

8 am to 2 pm, and 2 pm to 8 pm

— by about 20 tellers each.

Eight men — Avinash Shukla, Lavkush Mishra, Anukalp Mishra, Manish Kumar Yadav, Karunesh Pandey, Ramashankar Mishra, Ram Shankar Yadav alias Tinnu Yadav, and Subhash Srivastav — have been arrested so far. Tinnu used to work as a driver for Champat Rai, general secretary of the Shri Ram Janmbhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust. Srivastav, a retired bank employee, was in charge of the donation counting shifts while

the other six were involved in counting work. The most visible change is the new



protocol for counting agents. They now have uniforms: a sky-blue, pocketless gown with a chain around the neck to be worn only inside the

counting area. A dedicated changing room has been set up, where agents can change before entry and before heading home. An official, on condition of anonymity, said counting agents from both shifts have to undergo frisking and security checks and then change into the uniform. Before entering the counting room, they undergo another security check. The same protocol applies if an agent needs to take a washroom break during duty.

## Punjab clears proposal to regularise illegal colonies, tweaks land pooling policy

**Landowners will now get a commercial plot of 210 square yards as against 200 square yards for every one acre of land given under the land pooling policy**

**Mumbai. (Agency)**

The Punjab Cabinet has decided to regularise illegal colonies where 25 per cent construction has taken place. It also gave approval to amend the land pooling policy to offer more benefits to landowners, Finance Minister Harpal Cheema on Thursday said.

The Cabinet, which met under the leadership of Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann Wednesday, approved an amendment to Rule 31 of the Punjab Apartment and Property Regulation Rules to simplify the regularisation process for eligible unauthorised colonies across the state.

This will enable regularisation of unauthorised colonies where 25 per cent of plots have been built upon, Cheema said. For the regularisation of residential

and industrial colonies, a compounding fee equivalent to 5 per cent of the prevailing collector rate on the gross area of the colony will be payable. For



commercial colonies, this is 10 per cent, he said. Where applications are submitted by Resident Welfare Associations (RWA), the provisions of RERA will not apply.

However, the promoter or the RWA will be responsible for obtaining all necessary approvals and No Objection Certificates from the competent authorities and completing the pending development works within the stipulated period, it said.

Cheema said the amended provisions will also apply to eligible colonies situated within notified Local Planning Areas and on agricultural land earmarked under Master Plans, except those falling under the Regional Plan of GMADA. The last date for submission of applications under the amended Rule has been fixed as September 30, 2026. Unauthorised colonies whose applications were rejected under previous regularisation policies will also be

eligible to apply under the amended Rule. Provisional regularisation certificates will be issued within 30 days, while all applications received under the amended Rule will be disposed of within six months.

**Land pooling**

The Cabinet also approved several changes to land pooling policy to address the concerns and practical difficulties being faced by stakeholders.

Cheema said it has been decided that landowners will now get a commercial plot of 210 square yards as against 200 square yards for every one acre of land given under the land pooling policy. Under the existing policy, a land owner is entitled to 1,000 square yards of a residential plot for an acre of agricultural land.

Dangerous shift in the onus to prove citizenship

Kapil Sibal

The ministry of external affairs says that a passport issued to a person by the Republic of India is only a travel document, not a proof of citizenship.

However, there is a presumption in law that the statements of fact found in each of such documents are true unless proved otherwise.

Such a travel document, once issued, is recognised by other member States of multilateral organisations as a valid document.

The statutory presumption arising from a person holding an Indian passport is also significant in the context of the many rights a citizen enjoys in the Republic of India.

There is another aspect that needs attention. The Indian Constitution does not permit dual citizenship.

The kill switch of citizenship

Amid the passport row, it's evident that voter deletion unplugs the citizen from the State

Sanjay Hegde

IN Punjab, the passport is not really a document. It is a lifeline. No state in India holds them in such numbers.

So, the recent statement from New Delhi was heard with particular unease in this part of the country. On Passport Seva Divas (June 24), the Ministry of External Affairs told the nation that a passport is a travel document and not a document of citizenship.

statement of who they were.

So, the timing was cruel. Passport Seva Divas marks the day the Passports Act came into force. It is meant to be a day of quiet pride.



But the real machinery is not in the passport office. It is in the electoral rolls. We have already seen it work. In West Bengal, the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) struck off 63 lakh names from the rolls.

Now, carry that machinery to Punjab. The Assembly election is due in early 2027. The house-to-house enumeration for the SIR has begun.

Takht vs govt : Constitutional supremacy must guide stakeholders

The ultimate test of the Jaagat Jot Sri Guru Granth Sahib Satkar (Amendment) Act will not be the stamp of religious approval but its consistency with the Constitution

THE Akal Takht's directive to the Punjab Government to amend the anti-sacrilege law has brought into sharp focus the complex interplay between religion and the State in India.



society organisations and citizens are entitled to express their views on public policy. Governments may consider such opinions alongside those of other stakeholders.

However, constitutional legitimacy requires that legislative decisions should emerge through democratic deliberation, public consultation and judicially reviewable processes.

Education, the other Shinkansen track

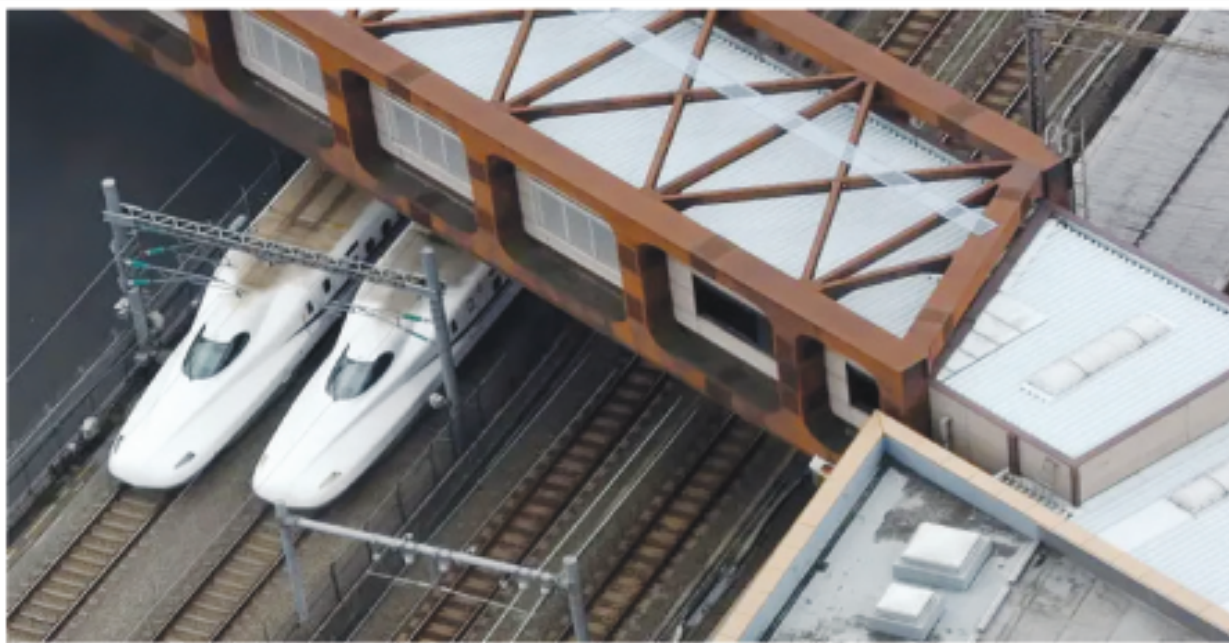
Military reforms are about developing leaders capable of navigating the intersection of warfare, technology and organisational change

S Vaidhyasubramaniam

Little did India imagine that the Shinkansen high-speed rail network launched in Tokyo in 1964 would one day carry a million passengers a day.

If history remembers the partnership only for the HSR, both would have settled for far less. For the Shinkansen, which literally means 'new trunk line', is not just about tracks for trains, but the starting point of new journeys too.

The strategic trust between India and Japan has a legacy that is not driven just by trade and geopolitics. There is also a strong undercurrent of their shared social values, civilisational commons and, more importantly, the contrarian demographic crossroads that bestow on them a rare complementarity.



The deafening silence of the Indian diaspora in business and higher education that I heard during a recent visit to Japan convinced me that a clarion call is needed at the policy level to pivot eastwards.

Introducing Japanese standards of safety, precision and civic discipline to Indians would not be a one-way street. We can infuse the best of Japanese ways to fuel India's progress towards a Viksit Bharat by 2047.

ayurveda, Indian classical arts, cuisine and cinema attract huge audiences in Japan. Equally popular among Indians is Japanese anime, manga, martial arts, architecture, cuisine and design.

Given the excellent diplomatic ties but widening trade and social deficits, stronger multidimensional connections can improve regional stability and global economic resilience at a fraught geopolitical moment.





# Weekends are all about Monsoon Treks



Gautala Autramghat Wildlife Sanctuary, Shuli Bhanjan hill, Brazen Glen group of caves and Gogababa hill are some of the hotspots for trekkers. City based trekking organizations say that monsoon treks over the weekend is quite popular and reveal that this year, enquiries have been pouring in due to early monsoon. Most organisers have decided to prepone their trekking dates. Kishor Gathadi, an experienced trekker says, "This year we are starting our trekking programmes earlier than usual. Generally we start from July as the monsoon is at its peak. But this time due to early rains we start from June 23. There are a lot of engineering students

With monsoon settling in, youngsters are geared up for exciting treks in and around Aurangabad.

who will be part of the treks this year, since most of them have just finished their exams. We have 60 entries so far and the number is increasing on a daily basis." Ravi Choudhary of another organization adds, "More than 50 students have enrolled with us for so far. With early showers it's not a surprise that nature lovers want to get started with adventure activities." For most students trekking is an exciting activity that gets them close to nature and also helps stay fit naturally. Mansi Mahadik, student of

Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University says, "I'm looking forward to having a lot of fun trekking this year as the rains have been good." Kshitija Bardapurkar a student from Marathwada Institute of Technology College adds, "I cherish the memory months later after a trek. It provides a respite from the drab routine of city life. Nature also inspires me to write poetry." But it isn't only limited to being a fun activity

and also provides an opportunity to learn new things and spread environmental awareness for some. Ravi adds, "While conducting treks, we encourage the trekkers to clean the plastic littering the area and also plant seeds." Prakash Kulkarni, a student of Maulana Azad College who is all set to plant 500 neem seeds during his trek says, "Trekking is no doubt fun and a great form of exercise. But I also like to contribute to the environment in my own way.

I have bought 500 neem seeds which I will sow along the stretch that I pass during my trek." Meanwhile Rahul Ingle, another student from Maulana Azad College who has been an avid trekker since past five years, has plans to teach rappelling to new trekkers. Expert trekker Utsav Helambarkar doles out some advice to new student trekkers. "Students should follow all the instructions given by their trekking head so as to avoid any mishap. Sometimes, girls tend to wear incorrect footwear during trekking. Wearing the right footwear, carrying enough food and water and a first aid box is very important. Also trekkers should walk in groups to reduce the risk of losing their way," ashokumarmundetiya.S

The western Grand Canyon was largely carved out by about 70 million years ago when dinosaurs roamed the earth, an analysis of mineral grains lying at the bottom of these hulking shapes reveals.



## Grand Canyon was carved out while dinosaurs roamed

large part by an ancestral waterway of the Colorado River that was flowing in the opposite direction millions of years ago, said Flowers. "An ancient Grand Canyon has important implications for understanding the evolution of landscapes, topography, hydrology and tectonics in the western U.S. and in mountain belts more generally," said Flowers.

The new research pushes back the conventionally accepted date for the formation of the Grand Canyon in Arizona by more than 60

million years, says Rebecca Flowers, assistant professor of geological sciences at the University of Colorado Boulder. The team used a dating method that exploits the radioactive decay of uranium and thorium atoms to helium atoms in a phosphate mineral known as apatite, said Flowers, who co-authored the study with Kenneth Farley, professor at the California Institute of Technology, the journal Science reports. The helium atoms were locked in the mineral grains as they cooled and moved closer to the surface during the carving of the Grand Canyon, she said, according to a Colorado statement. Temperature variations at shallow levels beneath the Earth's surface are influenced by topography, and the thermal history recorded by

the apatite grains allowed the team to infer how much time had passed since there was significant natural excavation of the Grand Canyon, Flowers said. "Our research implies that the Grand Canyon was directly carved to within a few hundred meters of its modern depth by about 70 million years ago," said Flowers. Flowers said the entire modern canyon may not have been carved all at the same time. Different canyon segments may have evolved separately before coalescing into what visitors see today. Over a mile deep in places, Arizona's steeply sided Grand Canyon is about 280 miles long and up to 18 miles wide in places. Visited by more than five million people annually, the iconic canyon was likely carved in



# 9 dead, roads damaged, power snapped as Himachal battles monsoon fury

New Delhi.(Agency)

Incessant rain triggered flash floods and landslides in many parts of Himachal Pradesh, resulting in at least nine deaths and extensive damage to roads, public infrastructure and other properties, as the southwest monsoon covered the northern state.

The monsoon-related fatalities included one death each in Chamba, Kullu and Mandi districts, three in Kangra district and two in Shimla district. Besides these, two rain-related road accidents were reported from Kangra and Lahaul and Spiti districts. As per the latest estimate, the total losses amount to Rs 69.65 lakh.

The continuous rain triggered multiple incidents of landslides, flash floods and other rain-related hazards, resulting in

more than 50 roads being blocked, over 180 electricity transformers becoming non-functional and 27 drinking water supply schemes being disrupted across the state, according to an official bulletin. Transportation was worst affected in Kullu district, with at least 18 roads damaged. Three stretches of NH-13 near Potin and Hoj were also blocked by landslides, leaving several people stranded.

In Keyi Panyor district, five people, including a 13-year-old boy, went missing after a landslide, which also injured 17 others and damaged at least 18 residential units, according to officials. Search and rescue operations are currently underway and those critically injured have been shifted to hospitals. In the same district, an under-

construction retaining wall collapsed due to the heavy downpour, leading to waterlogging in low-lying residential areas in and around the colony. At least 18 residential units were damaged in the incident.

According to senior police officers, six districts such as Keyi Panyor, Kra Daadi, Kurung Kumey, Lower Subansiri, Kamle and Upper Subansiri have been cut off due to monsoon-related disruptions triggered by heavy rain. Major landslides were reported along the Kimin-Ziro route, while damage assessment is underway. The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) has intensified restoration work and connectivity through the Kimin route is expected to be restored by Thursday afternoon, Mehta said.



The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) has been deployed and rescue efforts are underway along with the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), police and other agencies. All available reserve personnel and vehicles within the Yazali jurisdiction have been mobilised and ex-servicemen have also been called in to support emergency operations. As a precautionary measure,

the North Eastern Electric Power Corporation (Neepeco) has begun releasing water from the reservoir of the Panyor Lower Hydropower Project. Power generation at the project has been temporarily suspended.

Meanwhile, weather officials said the southwest monsoon has now covered the entire state of Himachal Pradesh and is expected to remain active over the coming weeks, with intermittent spells of heavy rain likely across several districts.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) further stated that the monsoon is expected to remain active over the state for nearly the next 45 days, although rain activity may witness a brief weakening on July 4 before intensifying again thereafter.

## Delhi orders CAG audit of private power discoms over Rs 38,500 crore in unrecovered regulatory assets

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Delhi government has ordered a CAG audit of the capital's three private power distribution companies to examine how regulatory assets worth nearly Rs 38,500 crore accumulated over the years without being recovered from consumers.

The power department on Wednesday directed the CAG to conduct a "strict and intensive" audit into the circumstances under which BSES Rajdhani Power Ltd (BRPL), BSES Yamuna Power Ltd (BYPL) and Tata Power Delhi Distribution Ltd (TPDDL) continued to

carry the mounting regulatory assets on their books.

According to the order, all concerned authorities, including the

distribution firms, have been asked to extend full cooperation and provide all records, information and assistance required by the CAG and its authorised officers for the audit.

The audit must be completed, preferably within three months of the order date, although the CAG may extend the timeline depending on the scope and complexity of the exercise.

Calling it a victory for electricity consumers and honest taxpayers, Delhi Power Minister Ashish Sood alleged that after the privatisation of the city's power sector, several financial decisions, special arrangements and rising liabilities escaped public scrutiny.

He also targeted the previous AAP government, accusing it of protecting the system instead of examining it. "What they failed to do in 10 years, our government has initiated within a few months," he said.

Sood said people have a right to know how regulatory assets kept increasing and who benefited while the financial burden continued for consumers.

## Monsoon hits Delhi five days late

New Delhi.(Agency)

After days of heat wave and humidity, monsoon finally arrived in the national capital on Thursday, five days after its normal onset date. Parts of Delhi received rainfall in the morning and witnessed cloudy skies, while temperatures dropped. Experts said the capital will experience monsoon-like rains by July 5 after the seasonal trough moves northwards again, resulting in another spell of rain over Delhi and other parts of northwest India.

The weather office has issued a yellow alert for Friday, predicting a generally cloudy sky with moderate rain, while the minimum and maximum temperatures are expected to hover at 22 and 32 degrees Celsius, respectively. This also marked the first July onset of monsoon in Delhi since 2021, when rains arrived in the capital on July 13.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) declared the onset of monsoon over the region after favourable atmospheric conditions developed.

According to the IMD, Delhi's base weather monitoring station in Safdarjung recorded a maximum temperature of 33 degrees Celsius on Thursday, 4.4 degrees below normal. The minimum temperature was recorded at 22.8 degrees Celsius, 5.1 degrees below normal. The capital also recorded its lowest minimum temperature since July 21, 2021, when it stood at 22.4 degrees Celsius at the base station.

Palam recorded a maximum temperature of 33 degrees Celsius, 4.8 degrees below normal, and a minimum of 21.2 degrees Celsius, 6.6 degrees below normal. Lodi Road recorded a maximum temperature of 33 degrees Celsius, 3 degrees below normal, and a minimum temperature of 23.6 degrees Celsius, 3.4 degrees below normal. The Ridge station recorded a maximum temperature of 33.8 degrees Celsius, 2.9 degrees below normal, while the minimum settled at 21 degrees Celsius, 4.5 degrees below normal. Ayanagar recorded a maximum temperature of 32.4 degrees Celsius, 5.7 degrees below normal, and a minimum of 22.6 degrees Celsius, 4.2 degrees below normal.

## Dhruv Rathee's video on Ram, Sita: Court sets 15-day deadline to decide on removal

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Delhi High Court on Friday directed the government's Grievance Appellate Committee (GAC) to decide within 15 days on an appeal seeking the removal of a YouTube video uploaded by Dhruv Rathee, where he claimed Hindu deities Lord Ram, Sita and Lord Krishna consumed meat and alcohol.

The GAC under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) allows appeals against decisions made by digital platforms on complaints related to online

content or accounts, including cases where a platform rejects a request, fails to respond or issues a decision that the user is dissatisfied with.

The court also warned that any non-compliance with its order would be viewed seriously. During the hearing,

Additional Solicitor General (ASG) Chetan Sharma, appearing for the centre, argued that YouTube ought to have exercised due diligence and immediately removed the allegedly



"objectionable and hate-inciting content". Rathee, a popular YouTuber with 32.4 million subscribers on the video platform, had argued in a video titled 'Can Hindus Eat Beef? | Kerala Story 2 Exposed' that Lord Ram, Sita, and Lord Krishna consumed meat

and alcohol.

ASG Sharma told the court that the content uploaded by Rathee was "harmful and divisive". He argued that Google should either state before the court that it would comply and remove the video or the court could proceed on the basis of observations made by the division bench.

He further argued that Google's counsel should undertake to remove the content and ensure that material which allegedly creates social discord and hurts the sentiments of the majority community is not allowed on the platform.

Google's counsel informed the High Court that the company had already submitted its response to petitioner advocate Amita Sachdeva and that an appeal had been filed before the GAC.

## Stubborn as mountain, Ghazipur keeps waiting to kiss the ground

New Delhi.(Agency)

As the capital continues to face a structural challenge in terms of its waste management capabilities despite huge plans of infrastructure expansion, a ground check by TMS exposes the status of one of the three landfills in the city and the conditions of the people living around the site.

A 12-year-old Shajia walks barefoot in front of her house near the Ghazipur landfill with an ever-radiant smile on her face. She aims to be a mathematics teacher when she grows up, but her parents give her a reality check that it is a far-fetched dream.

The physical health of most children in the area shows signs of weakness. Her uncle said that like Shajia, many children in this locality have been physically weak since childhood;



many also suffer from breathing problems. Years of biomining and repeated promises to reclaim the garbage mountain continue, and so do foul odour, dust and respiratory discomfort in the lives of residents around the Ghazipur landfill. For the residents, the foul smell has become a usual phenomenon. It doesn't bother them, but when an outsider steps into the locality, the smell compels them to put on a mask.

Even as authorities push ahead with

remediation, the landfill still holds around 67 lakh metric tonnes (LMT) of legacy waste, making it the city's biggest unfinished waste challenge and a stark reminder that the capital's garbage crisis continues to be a public health concern for communities living in its shadow. The Ghazipur landfill is one among the three legacy waste sites that the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has been attempting to flatten through biomining. Even as the civic body continues to make progress at all three landfill sites, official figures show that millions of tonnes of legacy waste still remain to be processed before Delhi can finally get rid of its garbage mountains. Unlike Bhalaswa and Okhla, which are expected to be flattened this year, Ghazipur needs an additional.

## SC says Meghalaya honeymoon murder accused Sonam Raghuvanshi will remain on bail as she's already out

The Supreme Court said that allegations against Sonam Raghuvanshi were "quite serious" and agreed to examine the Meghalaya Police's challenge to the bail order in detail on Thursday. However, after being informed that Sonam had already been released, the bench said it did not wish to interfere at this stage.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Meghalaya honeymoon murder accused Sonam Raghuvanshi will remain out on bail for now after the Supreme Court on Tuesday declined to interfere with the bail granted to her by the High Court, even as it issued notice on the Meghalaya Police's plea seeking cancellation of her bail.

Sonam, a resident of Indore in Madhya Pradesh, was arrested in June last year in connection with the murder of her businessman husband, Raja Raghuvanshi. Police have alleged that she conspired with hired assailants to kill him for financial gains.

The couple had gone missing while vacationing in Meghalaya's Sohra area on May 23 last year. Raja's body was later found in a deep gorge on June 2, 2025.

The top court said the allegations against Sonam were "quite serious" and agreed to examine the Meghalaya Police's challenge to the bail order in detail on Thursday. However, after being informed that Sonam had already been released, the bench said it did not wish to interfere at this stage.

"If she is released already, we would not want to interfere," the bench observed. Earlier during the hearing, the court had indicated that it was inclined to stay the bail order before learning that Sonam had already been released.

Appearing for the Meghalaya Police, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta submitted that Sonam's earlier bail

applications had been rejected and argued that the case did not involve a failure to communicate the grounds of

to respond to the police's plea.

During the hearing, Sonam's lawyer argued that she had not even been provided legal representation when she was arrested and produced for transit remand. The counsel contended that she had not been informed of the grounds of her arrest and had only been served with a blank proforma.

The bench, however, questioned why the issue had not been raised earlier.

"The question comes that when you didn't raise this issue earlier, can you be allowed to raise it at this stage?" the court asked.

The court also asked whether, even if bail had been granted on such a technical ground, the law would prevent the authorities from arresting her again.



arrest. According to him, the issue related only to a clerical error in one section.

Counsel appearing for Sonam sought time

Rupee up 18 paise at 95.21; Sensex rises 480 points, Nifty tops 24,300

New Delhi.(Agency)

Indian markets opened on a firm note on Friday, supported by a stronger rupee and improved global sentiment after weaker-than-expected US jobs data reduced expectations of aggressive interest rate hikes by the US Federal Reserve. The rupee opened 18 paise higher at 95.21 against the US dollar, compared with its previous close of 95.39. Equity benchmarks also started the day in the green. The Nifty 50 opened above the 24,300 mark, while the Sensex gained around 480 points in early trade despite mixed global cues. Earlier, GIFT Nifty futures had signalled a positive start, rising 150 points to 24,414 as of 7:43 am IST. Domestic sentiment has been aided by sustained institutional buying and easing crude oil prices. Domestic institutional investors (DIIs) remained net buyers for an eighth consecutive session on Thursday, helping the Nifty 50 and Sensex gain 1.3 per cent over the previous two sessions. Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs), however, continued to offload Indian equities, selling shares worth Rs 3.12 billion on Thursday, according to provisional data. FPIs have sold a record \$29.46 billion worth of Indian stocks so far this year. Global markets took cues from a softer US labour market report released overnight. Data showed US job growth slowed sharply in June, while payroll figures for the previous two months were revised lower, signalling a cooling economy. Following the report, traders lowered expectations of a September rate hike by the Federal Reserve. Market-implied odds of a hike fell to around 53 per cent from nearly 75 per cent before the data release. In Asia, Japan's Nikkei 225 rose 0.74 per cent to 69,243.68 by the midday break, although it remained on track for a marginal weekly decline. Other regional markets traded mixed as investors weighed signs of slowing US growth against the prospect of a less hawkish Federal Reserve.

Silver price surges Rs 3,796; gold up Rs 1,900; Check the latest rates in your city

MUMBAL.(Agency)

If you are planning to buy gold or silver, today you will have to pay more than before. From the domestic market to the MCX (MCX) both the precious metals are witnessing strong growth. On the MCX, gold rose by Rs 1,902 to Rs 1,47,660 per 10 grams, while silver rose by Rs 3,796 to Rs 2,37,100 per kg. The prices of both the precious metals rose in the spot market too. You should know today's latest rates before shopping. In international markets too, the price of both the precious metals went up. The yellow metal jumped to \$108 per ounce and silver to \$2.26 an ounce.

**Gold, silver price in retail market**  
All buyers of jewellery are guided by the price of gold and silver in the retail market. Today, in the retail market today, the price of gold and silver has increased. According to Bullions, 10 grams of gold rose by Rs 1,930 or 1.32% to reach Rs 1,48,090. At the same time, 1 kg silver is trading at the level of Rs 2,37,210 per kg and it surged by Rs 3,870 or 1.66%. The effect of this increase in the prices of both gold and silver is being seen in the bullion market as well, due to which the customers who buy have to pay more than before.

**Gold, silver on MCX**  
On MCX (Multi Commodity Exchange) both gold and silver are witnessing upward pressure. Gold futures expiring on August 5, 2026 is trading at Rs 1,47,660 per 10 grams. It has recorded an increase of 1,902 rupees or 1.30% compared to the previous closing price. At the same time, silver contracts expiring on 4 September 2026 is trading at the level of Rs 2,37,100 per kg. Compared to the last closing price of silver, a surge of Rs 3,796 or 1.63% has been recorded. It is clear that there is buying pressure in both precious metals on MCX today.

Centre removes BAT-BMS-linked apps from app stores after e-rickshaw remote shutdown reports

NEW DELHI.(Agency)

The government on Friday said two smartphone applications linked to reports of remotely disabling e-rickshaws have been removed from app stores after they came to the authorities' notice. Speaking on the sidelines of a CII Cybersecurity Summit, IT secretary S Krishnan confirmed that action had been taken after reports emerged that some e-rickshaws could be rendered inoperable through the Chinese smartphone application BAT-BMS. "That is right...there are a couple of apps, which came to our notice yesterday and both of them have been taken down from the app stores," Krishnan said, according to news agency PTI. Govt asks app stores to exercise greater scrutiny He also stressed that app stores must exercise due diligence before allowing applications on their platforms and said the government would take up the issue with them to ensure potentially harmful apps are not made available. Earlier, the issue gained widespread attention after videos circulated on social media claiming that some e-rickshaws were being remotely shut down through a feature linked to the BAT-BMS application. The videos raised concerns over the cybersecurity risks associated with internet-connected vehicle management systems. The Delhi government has asked its transport department to verify the authenticity of the BAT-BMS application and investigate claims that it can remotely disable e-rickshaws through Bluetooth connectivity. Transport minister Pankaj Singh said officials had been directed to examine the matter after receiving complaints, although no formal written complaint had been submitted.

High income, upper middle income, lower middle income or low income -- Decoding the World Bank's economic positioning of India

All five major Southeast Asian economies, including Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand, are now at the upper-middle income tier and above, a release from the World Bank has showed.

New Delhi.(Agency)

The World Bank has moved Vietnam and the Philippines into the upper-middle income group as these countries have implemented the export-led growth model and broad-based expansion which reflects "an economy-wide shift." Growth due to gains across all major industries. According to the World Bank, Vietnam achieved development through an export-led growth strategy while the Philippines experienced broad-based expansion, "reflecting gains across all major industries, not a single sector boom, but an economy-wide shift." The gross national income per capita of these countries reached \$4,970 and \$4,850



in 2025, respectively, both exceeding the World Bank's \$4,636 threshold for the upper-middle income group category. The economic progress has potentially strengthened investor confidence in both the countries. All five major Southeast Asian economies, including Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand, are now at the upper-middle income tier and above, a release from the World Bank said on Wednesday. Vietnam had been in the lower-

middle income since 2009 while the Philippines had remained there since the late 1980s, the data showed. Jordan, Micronesia and Sri Lanka also moved to the upper-middle income category while Togo was reclassified to lower-middle income from low income. The World Bank also said that the share of low-income economies has fallen to 11 percent from 30 percent since 1987.

Position of India

India continues to be classified as a lower-middle-income country, a category it has remained in since 2007. The World Bank estimates India's Gross National Income or GNI per capita at around \$2,500 to \$2,700 which is well below the upper middle income threshold of \$4,496. World Bank's classification of countries The World Bank classifies economies into four income groups: high income, upper middle income, lower middle income and low income. The rankings are based on Gross National Income or GNI per capita estimates from the previous calendar year. Countries with a GNI per capita between \$1,136 and \$4,495 are classified as lower-middle-income economies while those with incomes between \$4,496 and \$13,935 fall into the upper middle income category. This year's assessment covered 218 countries and will be used as the global reference until the end of June 2027. GNI measures the total income earned by a country's people and businesses regardless of where that income is generated, unlike Gross Domestic Product or GDP which measures the value of goods and services produced within a country's borders.

Air India cuts fuel surcharge on North America, Europe flights as oil eases

Mistry's resignation from RNT Associates comes months after he was removed from Tata Trusts in November 2025.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Air India has rolled back a part of the temporary fuel surcharge it had imposed during the West Asia conflict, reducing charges on flights to North America, Australia, Europe and the United Kingdom after global oil prices eased in recent weeks, reported. The revised surcharge came into effect from July 1. The airline had introduced the fuel surcharge on April 7, with the revised charges taking effect from April 10, after the conflict in West Asia sent crude oil and jet fuel prices soaring. Airspace restrictions during the conflict had also increased operating costs for airlines. As per the report, the fuel surcharge for

flights to North America and Australia has been reduced to USD 200 per ticket from USD 280 earlier. For services to Europe and the UK, the surcharge has



been cut to USD 125 from USD 205. However, fuel surcharges on domestic flights and other international routes remain unchanged. There was no immediate comment from Air India on the latest revision. **WHEN WAS THE SURCHARGE IMPOSED?** The Air India Group, which comprises Air India and Air India Express, had announced fuel surcharges ranging from

USD 24 to USD 280 on international flights, excluding certain routes, and between Rs 299 and Rs 899 on domestic flights in April as airlines grappled with surging fuel costs. At the time, the airline had said it was adopting a calibrated approach after the government capped the increase in domestic Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) prices at 25%, shifting from a flat domestic surcharge to a distance-based pricing grid.

**WHY IS AIR INDIA CUTTING THE SURCHARGE?** The latest reduction comes after crude oil prices retreated sharply from the highs seen during the West Asia conflict, easing pressure on airline operating costs. Earlier, citing data from the International Air Transport Association (IATA), Air India had said the global average jet fuel price had surged to USD 195.19 per barrel for the week ended March 27 from USD 99.40 per barrel at the end of February, marking an increase of nearly 100%.

Over Rs 9,300 crore lies unclaimed in 31 lakh EPF accounts, enough to build 3 IITs

New Delhi.(Agency)

Even as the Centre has ushered in a new era for provident fund subscribers with the notification of the Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) Scheme, 2026, an RTI (Right to Information) accessed exclusively by India Today has revealed that more than Rs 9,330 crore remains locked in 30.91 lakh inoperative EPF accounts across the country. The EPF Scheme, 2026, which came into effect on June 29 after being notified in the Gazette, replaces the EPF Scheme, 1952. The new framework is aimed at simplifying provident fund rules and making the system more digital for nearly eight crore active EPFO subscribers. Against the backdrop of these reforms, the RTI response offers a snapshot of the volume of workers' retirement savings that continue to remain unclaimed. According to the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO), as of March 31, 2026, there were 30,91,862 inoperative EPF accounts holding an unclaimed balance of approximately Rs 9,330 crore. Over 9,300 crore still awaiting claims. The latest RTI data shows only a modest improvement over the previous financial year. While the number of inoperative EPF accounts declined by around 92,000- from 31.83 lakh on March 31, 2025, to 30.91 lakh a year later- the unclaimed amount fell by 851 crore, from 10,181 crore to 9,330 crore. Despite this decline, the data underscores the scale of the problem, with nearly 31 lakh dormant accounts and thousands of crores of workers' retirement savings still awaiting claim. **WHAT RS 9,330 CRORE CAN BUY?** The magnitude of the unclaimed corpus becomes clearer when viewed against major public spending. The Rs 9,330 crore lying in dormant EPF accounts is almost equal to the Rs 10,169 crore the Centre has spent on the UDAN regional connectivity scheme since its launch in 2016. It is also nearly equivalent to the Union government's 2026-27 allocation for Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY). According to a 2014 government estimate, the cost of setting up an IIT was Rs 1,750 crore. Adjusted for inflation, that works out to around Rs 2,934 crore in 2026, meaning the unclaimed EPF corpus could fund three IITs, with over Rs 500 crore still left over. The comparison is illustrative and highlights the scale of workers' retirement savings lying dormant in EPF accounts.

Mahindra XEV 9e Cineluxe edition gets an update - Check what's new



NEW DELHI.(Agency)

Mahindra has added a new exterior colour to the XEV 9e Cineluxe Edition lineup. The new shade is called Satin Desert Myst, and it joins the existing Satin Black and Satin White finishes that were introduced at launch back in March 2026. The new colour is paired with the Cineluxe Edition's existing interior options: Chestnut Brown and Nocturne Black smooth-grain leatherette. Everything else about the car stays

exactly the same. No mechanical changes, no new features, and no price revision. The XEV 9e Cineluxe Edition continues to be priced at Rs 29.35 lakh (ex-showroom). What you get The Cineluxe Edition is based on the fully loaded Pack Three variant and is powered by a 79 kWh battery pack that delivers over 500 km of real-world range. The feature list is extensive. You get three digital displays including a passenger entertainment screen, a

touchscreen infotainment system, and a digital instrument cluster. An augmented reality head-up display, a 16-speaker Harman Kardon audio system with Dolby Atmos, ambient lighting, a panoramic glass roof, Level 2 ADAS with five radar modules and a camera, a gesture-controlled powered tailgate, auto parking assist, a Digital Key, personalised user profiles and a 360-degree camera system are all part of the package. Also Read | Skoda Kodiaq RS launched in India, but you can't buy it - Here's why For the standard XEV 9e, buyers can opt for either a 7.2 kW AC charger at Rs 50,000 or an 11 kW AC charger at Rs 75,000, both priced over and above the vehicle's ex-showroom cost. The XEV 9e competes with the BYD Atto 3 and Hyundai Ioniq 5 in the premium electric SUV space.

Reliance on coal soars as weak rains drag hydro output by 19.5%

**India's shares in the ship recycling industry rose from 30.1% in 2024 to 35.4% in 2025, which indicates that more and more vessels are being sent to India for dismantling. The country recycled 2.99 million gross tons of ships in 2025, marking almost 60% surge compared to 1.86 million tons recycled in 2024.**

Kolkata.(Agency)

The country is leaning more heavily on coal to meet surging electricity demand this summer, as rainfall deficit has squeezed hydropower output. Hydro generation fell 19.5% year-on-year (y-o-y) to 13,361.96 million units (MU) in June, down from 16,593.07 MU a year earlier, according to data from the National Power Portal. At the same time, coal-fired generation climbed to 117,677.69 MU in June 2026, the highest for the month in the past three years. That was 13.9% higher than June

2025, 3.9% above June 2024, and 14% higher than June 2023. Coal-fired generation increased amid a 40% rainfall deficit in June, while the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast below-normal rainfall for July as well. The weak monsoon has also kept electricity demand elevated for cooling and irrigation, pushing peak power demand to 264.76 gigawatts (GW) in June. This year's situation stands in contrast to last year, when hydroelectric power played a crucial role in meeting evening peak demand during summer when solar output drops. However, rainfall deficit has altered the equation. With hydro generators prioritising reservoir conservation, grid operators are relying more on thermal sources in providing flexible peak-hour generation. **Stress on coal power** Throughout the April-June period this year, coal-fired generation has remained elevated, with output climbing to 352,725.38 MU — the highest for the

period since 2023. The sustained reliance on thermal power also pushed coal consumption at power plants above supplies during the first two months of the quarter. Latest data from the Central Electricity Authority shows the country's

rainfall deficit, a senior official said. However, coal supplies to the power sector gathered some pace in June, with dispatches by Coal India Ltd (CIL) — the country's largest coal miner — rising 7.5% y-o-y, according to company data.



223 GW thermal fleet consumed 156.8 million tonnes (mt) of coal during April-May 2026, against supplies of 147.2 mt, resulting in a drawdown in inventories. The higher thermal generation reflected the need to meet sustained demand from elevated night-time temperatures and agricultural consumption amid a monsoon

That marked a sharp acceleration from the 2.2% growth recorded in May, indicating stronger coal movement to power plants as thermal generation remained elevated. Notably, CIL accounts for about 83% of the coal supplied to the power sector in India, while nearly 80% of its total offtake goes to power utilities. **Grid operators turn to gas-based power** The sluggish progress of southwest monsoon has also prompted the country's top grid operator to turn to expensive gas-based power this summer. On June 29, Grid Controller of India (Grid India) issued an advisory asking gas-based power stations to plan fuel procurement arrangements, anticipating the need for additional gas-fired generation for 10-15 days in July.

## Short news

## Heavy rain batters Mumbai; orange alert in city, red alert for Thane

Srinagar.(Agency)

Heavy rain continued to lash Mumbai and its neighbouring districts of Thane, Raigad, and Palghar Friday morning, with waterlogging reported in low-lying areas of the city, slowing traffic, with an orange alert in place across the region.

The unabated showers also triggered waterlogging across several pockets of the Mumbai Metropolitan region. According to the weather bureau, rainfall is expected to intensify from Friday, when a low-pressure system is forecast to develop along the upper-air circulation.

IMD has stated the possibility of heavy to extremely heavy rain in Mumbai till July 5, while issuing an orange alert in the region and placing Thane district under a red alert starting July 4. An orange alert is issued in the likelihood of 115.6 mm to 204.4 mm of rainfall within 24 hours, while a red alert is sounded amid the possibility of extremely heavy rainfall above 204.4 mm within a day. Several areas in Mumbai received over 100 mm of rainfall within 24 hours on Friday, the fifth consecutive day. While the city remained relatively dry, receiving only 18 mm of rainfall between 8.30 am and 5.30 pm as recorded by IMD observatories, showers gathered pace after evening.

Data issued by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) showed that between 8 am Thursday and 6 am Friday, Mandavi received 150 mm of rainfall, followed by Malabar Hill (145 mm), Fort (140 mm), Andheri (136 mm), Versova (129 mm), Powai (124 mm), and Bhandup (117 mm).

## Court awards life-term to nine cops for custodial death

Mumbai.(Agency)

A special court in Washim on Thursday sentenced nine policemen to life imprisonment for the custodial death of a man belonging to a denotified tribe in 2011. The court found the men guilty of the murder of Begya Nainu Pawar, who had died in custody after suffering 44 injuries including multiple fractures on May 10, 2011 in Risod in Washim district of Maharashtra. The men were also found guilty of attempting to murder Raju Pawar, who was also assaulted in custody. The court said that the two men, who worked as labourers, were tortured for a confession and were beaten brutally. The court also convicted some of the accused under charges including the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act as the victims belong to the Pardhi community, a denotified tribe.

"In this case, ample evidence of prosecution witnesses shows that Begya Pawar was brutally beaten while taking his custody and during interrogation in the police station. The interrogation in the police station was within four corners of police station. Hence, there was no eyewitness to the beating. Evidence of some witnesses shows that when Begya Pawar was taken in the custody his health was good. But post-mortem report...shows that there were 44 multiple injuries, contusions and multiple fractures on the dead body of Begya Pawar," special judge JP Zapate said.

The prosecution led by S N Kaloo had said that between May 9 and May 10, 2011, the accused policemen went to the home of Begya around 3 am, while he was sleeping, with his wife and children, aged 11 and 7, in the house with him. The policemen beat Begya up and also assaulted other members of the community, including Raju.

## Bengaluru-based company tests 700kg e-aircraft

BENGALURU.(Agency)

City-based Sarla Aviation completed a flight-test campaign for Sylla, its half-scale electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) technology demonstrator, on July 1. The demonstrator logged more than 500 tests and over 18 hours of flight testing across six months, making the 700 kg-class, 7.5-metre-wingspan aircraft the heaviest electric aircraft ever to take off in India.

The first version - Sylla 1.0 - is built to validate aircraft-level and system-level integration under real operating conditions. The time elapsed from design to flight was under 12 months, which was conducted within a budget of less than USD 13 million.

"Sylla has given us the data we set out to



capture, and those learnings are already shaping our next-gen aircraft as we move towards transition and sustained wing-borne flight on our journey to our 6+1 air taxi Shunya," said co-founder and chief technology officer Rakesh Gaonkar.

The company is India's first to: build and fly a 700 kg-class electric aircraft capable of vertical take-off; fly a 400-volt electric power-train architecture; demonstrate a distributed-architecture wing system; complete full-stack ground testing in accordance with airworthiness regulations.

## Ram Temple accused's wife gets notice over 'illegal construction', bulldozer action looms

## Ayodhya Police get 24-hour remand of key accused, say fresh searches at his home led to recovery of Rs 20.39 lakh

Lucknow.(Agency)

Ayodhya Police on Thursday got 24-hour custody of Avinash Shukla, one of the eight arrested accused in the Ram temple donation theft case, a day after he was questioned in jail following the alleged seizure of cash and incriminating documents from his home. Seeking two-day custody of Shukla, the police told the court that they want to take him to some of the places for the recovery of cash.

Sources said that fresh searches at his home had led to the recovery of Rs 20.39 lakh in denominations of Rs 500, 200, 100, 50, 20, and 10; and USD 1,121 in the denominations of 100, 50, 20, 10, 5, and 1. The maximum cash was in Rs 500 denomination - over 3000 currency notes. "The court had earlier granted permission to interrogate Shukla inside the jail to corroborate the recovery of the cash

from him earlier by the trustees and verify the details about his duty in the temple. Following the verification along with his questioning inside the jail, we filed the



application in the court on Wednesday seeking his custody for recovery of cash," said a senior police officer involved in the probe. The police are believed to be taking Shukla to his native village, Babupur, in the

Maheshganj area of Pratapgarh district, and later to Kaushalpur locality in Ayodhya city, where he used to live with his elder brother Amit, who is a teacher.

Police have so far arrested eight people, including Shukla, in connection with the alleged embezzlement of donation money. The other seven are Lavkush Mishra, Anukalp Mishra, Manish Kumar Yadav, Karunesh Pandey, Ramashankar Mishra, Ram Shankar Yadav alias Tinnu Yadav, and Subhash Srivastav. Ramshankar Yadav alias Tinnu, considered to be close to the general secretary of the Temple Trust, Champat Rai, had exercised his influence to recruit his nephew Manish in the counting job, while Lavkush Mishra, Anukalp Mishra, Ramashankar Mishra, Karunesh Pandey, and Subhash Srivastav allegedly got the help of trustee Anil Mishra to get the job of counting cash.

## Advocate fee paid by accused client not 'proceeds of crime': Allahabad HC

## The petitioner had approached court against the State Bank of India freezing his account on the cyber cell's instructions citing alleged fraudulent transactions.

Lucknow.(Agency)

The Allahabad High Court has come down heavily on the Uttar Pradesh Police's cyber cell for freezing the bank account of a lawyer on the ground that the fee paid to him by his client might be part of the amount the accused was charged with siphoning off, and directed the state government to file an affidavit so as not to interfere with the "dispensation of justice in courts".

The division bench of Justices JJ Munir and Arun Kumar, in its order dated June 25, observed, "The petitioner is an Advocate. He can be paid his fee by the Government, by a respectable man or a man who is not so respectable. An Advocate could be defending an accused who is indeed involved in a big scam or fraud but when fee is remitted

by such an accused to his learned Counsel in account the money cannot be said to be proceeds of crime." "It is the lawful



remuneration of the learned counsel which would be duly earned after the engagement is discharged. If for the remittance of any sum of

money, an Advocate's account is frozen describing it as a cyber fraud or the money as proceeds of a cyber fraud or other crime it could become very difficult for Advocates to discharge their professional duties under the Advocates Act. The functioning of the Court itself would be embarrassed," the bench further noted. The court directed the Additional Chief Secretary (Home) to file an affidavit within two weeks, clarifying how seizure of an "advocate's account, made by sundry officers of the police, is to be dealt with so as not to interfere with dispensation of justice itself in Courts". The bench stated, "It would be quite a different matter, if an advocate is himself involved in a criminal offence and has credits of money to his account that are proceeds of his own crime."

## School van, tanker slip into 'holes' as Surat roads break down after 1st showers

Surat.(Agency)

The first bouts of rain on Tuesday and Wednesday have taken a toll on the city's roads, at least six of which have given way to potholes and cave-ins that caused several accidents, but no injuries, luckily.

These six roads were re-carpeted in the last six months. Flooded with complaints, Surat Municipal Corporation (SMC) has issued notices to the four contractors who had won tenders for the six roads.

Cave-ins were noticed at three locations on a freshly laid 400-metre road in Mota Varachha, trapping a truck and a car. A van carrying schoolchildren fell into a sinkhole in Limbayat on Wednesday. Locals rushed to the scene and rescued the kids. No one was hurt.

On Thursday, a water tanker found itself trapped at a cave-in road portion in Dindoli; in Udha, a truck's wheels slipped into a pit. The Dindoli incident saw a traffic jam since the hole was in the middle of the road. It took a few

hours for officials to remove the tanker. The roads that suffered damages were reworked after the completion of a Surat Municipal Corporation project to lay water supply pipelines for newly added areas



and where drainage lines were laid.

SMC's hydraulic wing issued the notices to contractors Hindustan Fabrication (Udhna Zone), SVR Construction Company (Rander), P. Das Infrastructure Pvt. Ltd (Sarhthana), A V Patel (Athwa), for the alleged substandard work, directing them to repair the roads or bear the expense if the corporation carries out the repairs.

SMC hydraulic department executive engineer SC Vasava said: "The work to lay drinking water distribution pipeline for the newly added areas started in October 2025 and was completed in the first week of June this

year. A total of 83,293 metre of the water distribution line was laid by roadside, and 11.99 km of water distribution line was laid with a trench beneath the existing roads in the city. We have noticed and received complaints about cave-ins at portions where the trench in the stormwater drainage and drinking water networks collapsed."

Meanwhile, SMC standing committee chairman Rajan Patel noted, "We received complaints from citizens about cave-ins, and issued notices to four contractors. They should bear the expenses incurred.

In the notice, we have told the contractors to stay alert and ready with materials to repair such cave-ins should they appear."

## Surat SOG DCP among six officers promoted to IPS

## Twenty-six Nasir Nagar residents who moved the court have alleged that SOG personnel were at the site when the demolitions were being carried out.

Surat.(Agency)

One of the six Gujarat police officials appointed into the Indian Police Service (IPS) on Thursday is a respondent in a petition in the Gujarat High Court filed by the people displaced by the demolition of over shanties in Surat's Nasir Nagar on May 30. Rajdeepsinh Nakum is currently posted as the deputy commissioner of police of Special Operations Group (SOG) in Surat. Along with Nakum, three more police officers, including new Ahmedabad police chief Anupam Singh Gahlaut, have been named as respondents in the case.

Twenty-six Nasir Nagar residents who moved the court have alleged that SOG personnel were at the site when the demolitions were being carried out. While Nakum refused to comment on the demolitions, stating that the matter was sub

judice, he said he was "very happy" about his promotion. A native of Wadhwan in Surendranagar district, Nakum's father was a drawing teacher in a government school in Lakhtar taluka. Nakum has studied English literature at the Gujarat University and worked as a teacher at a government school for three years. Later, he was employed as a deputy section officer at the Gujarat High Court, where he served from 2006 to 2011. After first assuming the role of a police officer, he was made a probationary officer in Anand district in 2013. He then worked with the State CID Crime in Veraval. He was also posted in Dang (from 2016 to 2018) and Botad. He was appointed to his current role in 2022. He is the father of three children. The promotions of five other DCPs along with Nakum were cleared to be

inducted into the IPS as per the July 2 notification signed by Sanjeev Kumar, Under Secretary



notification to this effect was issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on Thursday.

These officials will remain on probation for a year. The notification says, "Under sub-section (1) of Rule 9 of the Indian Police Service (Appointment by Promotion) Regulation, 1955. Six police officers of Gujarat holding Deputy Commissioner of police rank in the Gujarat Police Service have been appointed into the Indian Police Service on probation, and they have been allocated to the Gujarat cadre under sub-

rule 1 of rule 5 of the Indian Police Service (Cadre) Rules, 1954, as mentioned in the notification. The officials will remain on probation for one year and will also be inducted into training for the Indian Police Service..."

## IIT Gandhinagar to develop country's first own cooling tech for EVs, AI infra, trains

Ahmedabad.(Agency)

An Indian Institute of Technology Gandhinagar (IITGN) research team has won a Rs 20 lakh seed grant to develop the country's first indigenous cooling technology for electric vehicles (EVs), trains, high-performance electronics, and artificial intelligence infrastructure. The technology can address two major issues: cooling of the fast-growing AI-driven data centres, and safety concerns around EV battery thermal management, IITGN stated.

The researchers won the grant on Tuesday at 'MATRIx (Materials Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Expo) 2026', organised by the Indian Institute of Metals (IIM), the professional body for metallurgists.

"This indigenous manufacturing technology could help address industrial thermal management through a new generation of liquid cold plates. Titled 'Advanced Chill Tech,' this innovation rethinks how liquid cold plates are manufactured, creating an avenue for an affordable, scalable and sustainable innovation," the research team claimed.

The team has also filed a patent application jointly with its industry partner, Epsilon Engineering Pvt. Ltd. The technology has also reached Technology Readiness Level (TRL) 7, with prototypes successfully validated in an operational environment. The largest prototype can withstand pressure of more than 35 bars (well above industry requirements) and has passed fatigue and tensile testing.

The project was led by Amit Arora, an associate professor at IITGN's Department of Materials Engineering, together with Prachi Sharma and Rizwan Qureshi, a final-year doctoral student in the department.

## A five-minute drive from Nariman Point to Cuffe Parade? Mumbai's next sea link is back

Mumbai.(Agency)

Three years after it was shelved following opposition from local fishermen, the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) has revived its proposed coastal bridge linking Nariman Point and Cuffe Parade, a project expected to dramatically alter connectivity in south Mumbai's business district.

The 1.869-km, Rs 588-crore bridge, which promises to reduce peak-hour travel time between the two neighbourhoods from nearly 25 minutes to just five, has entered the environmental clearance stage. After securing the Maharashtra government's approval for a revised alignment in December last year, the MMRDA has now approached the Maharashtra Coastal Zone Management Authority (MCZMA) for permission to build the project in the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ).

The proposed bridge will begin from Dorabji Tata Road at Nariman Point, run along reclaimed land for a short stretch before extending over the sea on stilts in a double-decker configuration, and terminate at Captain Prakash Pethe Marg in Cuffe Parade.

The project was originally tendered in 2022, with Larsen & Toubro awarded the contract the following year. However, work was abandoned in 2023 after residents and fishermen objected to the alignment, saying it would pass through one of the city's last remaining traditional fishing bunds.

NEWS BOX

India series win boosts Ireland's status in international cricket: O'Donnell

New Delhi. (Agency)  
Cricket Ireland president Bryan O'Donnell believes Ireland's historic T20I series victory over India has transformed the team's standing in world cricket, saying the breakthrough will make the side a more attractive opponent for leading nations and pave the way for bigger international opportunities.  
Ireland stunned reigning T20 world champions India 2-0 in Belfast to register their first-ever bilateral series victory over India in any format. O'Donnell believes the landmark triumph will have an immediate impact on Irish cricket, both on and off the field. "It is going to be fairly instantaneous because it is a huge lift for our players and on that basis, they will probably become available in other areas of the game," O'Donnell was quoted as saying by PTI.  
"It has a huge impact because it elevates the players. It lifts the potential performance of Irish cricket hugely," he added. According to O'Donnell, the biggest gain from defeating a powerhouse like India will be the shift in how Ireland are perceived internationally.  
"I think we would be more acceptable as opposition than we may have been heretofore. It is a moving elevation."  
"It is showing a return on the level of input that Cricket Ireland are willing to put into the game in this country with the help of the ICC. At present, a large investment is going on into the infrastructure surrounding Irish cricket," he said.  
O'Donnell also expects Ireland's participation in the upcoming European T20 Premier League to accelerate the team's growth while providing players with valuable financial opportunities.  
"Absolutely. Providing the opposition is of a certain level, it has to be beneficial. It is also opening potential for other income streams for the players at the higher end of the game," he said.  
He believes Irish players stand to gain significantly from the presence of cricket greats Steve Waugh, Rahul Dravid and R Ashwin, who will be involved with the tournament.  
"They will learn from observation. They will learn from meeting these legends and picking their brains and possibly pick up tips for the benefit of our players." They are very anxious to move with the game and bring Irish cricket up to speed. If that carries through to players across the system, then I think we're on the right path," he said.  
Indian-born fast bowler Jai Moondra emerged as the star of Ireland's series win over Shreyas Iyer's side, and O'Donnell reiterated that Cricket Ireland remains open to players who qualify through residency or ancestry.  
"We're open to all talent, provided they qualify either through living in Ireland or through grandparents or other family connections. We're an open book."

Riyad Mahrez's final World Cup campaign cut short as clinical Switzerland reach R16

Women's T20 World Cup, ENG vs SA:  
England have lost their last two knockout matches against South Africa and will be eager to snap that streak when the two sides meet in the second semi-final at The Kennington Oval in London on Thursday.

New Delhi. (Agency)  
Algeria captain Riyad Mahrez was sent into international retirement after Switzerland knocked his side out of the FIFA World Cup 2026 on Friday, July 3. Playing at BC Place in Vancouver, the Swiss dominated large spells of the game, sealing a clinical victory over the Atlas Lions. Facing a technically gifted Algerian side, Switzerland survived the early pressure and struck through Breel Embolo in the 10th minute. The goal, created by Johan Manzambi after a dazzling solo run, completely changed the complexion of the contest. Manzambi picked up the ball in the centre of the pitch and dribbled past multiple Algerian players before entering the box from



the left. He then squared a low cross from the byline to Embolo, who was perfectly positioned in front of goal. With Luca Zidane rushing out to close down Manzambi, Embolo simply tapped the ball into an empty net to give Switzerland the lead. Switzerland

doubled their advantage in the opening minute of the second half after Algeria defender Rafik Belghali's attempted clearance fell straight to Dan Ndoye. Stationed on the edge of the box, the winger wasted no time in unleashing a powerful low drive into the bottom-right

corner beyond Luca Zidane, making it 2-0. The early second-half goal took much of the momentum out of Algeria, who struggled to create clear-cut chances in response.  
Switzerland had the opportunity to extend their lead in the 81st minute when Denis Zakaria's cross evaded a sliding Embolo and reached an unmarked Fabian Rieder at the far post. However, despite having an open goal in front of him, Rieder could only make weak contact with his left heel, allowing Zidane to recover and make the save. Algeria's best chance arrived in the 88th minute when Anis Hadj Moussa unleashed a left-footed effort from outside the box. Gregor Kobel parried the shot away, but the move was eventually ruled out for offside. Speaking after the game, one of Algeria's greatest-ever players, Riyad Mahrez, announced his retirement from international football. The captain started the match but was unable to make a significant impact. Although he delivered a couple of dangerous crosses into the penalty area, Algeria's forwards failed to capitalise as his international career came to an end with a Round of 32 exit.

Wimbledon Day 5 schedule: Full order of play featuring Novak Djokovic and Naomi Osaka

The third round of Wimbledon begins on Friday, July 3, with Novak Djokovic, Naomi Osaka and Aryna Sabalenka leading the day's action, while defending champion Jannik Sinner is set for a surprise switch from Centre Court to No. 1 Court for his third-round clash.

New Delhi. (Agency)  
Third-round action takes centre stage at Wimbledon on Friday, July 3, with 24-time Grand Slam champion Novak Djokovic, former World No. 1 Naomi Osaka and defending men's champion Jannik Sinner among the biggest names in action at the All England Club. For viewers in India, play on the outside courts begins at 3:30 PM IST, while Centre Court action starts at 7:00 PM IST. Matches on No. 1 Court are scheduled to begin at 6:30 PM IST. The headline act on Centre Court is Djokovic, who opens the day's play against France's Arthur Rinderknech as the seven-time Wimbledon champion continues his pursuit of a record-extending 25th Grand Slam singles title.

World No. 1 Sabalenka follows against Latvia's Jelena Ostapenko before Canada's Felix Auger-Aliassime takes on American Michael Zheng. However, one of the biggest talking points ahead of Day 5 is Sinner's



absence from Centre Court. The defending champion, who traditionally opened the Championships on Centre Court on Monday, has been moved to No. 1 Court for his third-round clash against American Jenson Brooksby. Sinner also played his second-round match on Centre Court, defeating Portugal's Nuno Borges in straight sets after surviving a five-set scare against Miomir Kecmanovic in the opening round.

The decision to schedule the World No. 1 away from Wimbledon's premier court has raised eyebrows, especially given his status as defending champion. Instead, No. 1 Court will begin with a high-profile women's singles clash between Osaka and Australia's Daria Kasatkina before Sinner takes to the court. The Italian enters the match in formidable form, carrying a 40-3 record in 2026 as he continues his bid for a fifth Grand Slam title. The final singles match on No. 1 Court will see American stars Coco Gauff and Claire Liu face off for a place in the fourth round. Court No. 2 also boasts a strong line-up. Brazilian teenager Joo Fonseca opens against Roman Safiullin before Jessica Pegula meets Spain's Jessica Bouzas Maneiro. The day's play concludes with an all-seeded clash between Hubert Hurkacz and Tommy Paul.  
On Court No. 3, Belinda Bencic faces Anna Kalinskaya before Daniil Medvedev takes on Germany's Jan-Lennard Struff in a match scheduled not before 5:00 PM IST. Karolina Muchova then rounds off the singles action against Thailand's Mananchaya Sawangkaew.

Goodbye 21 points: India racing ahead with badminton's new scoring system

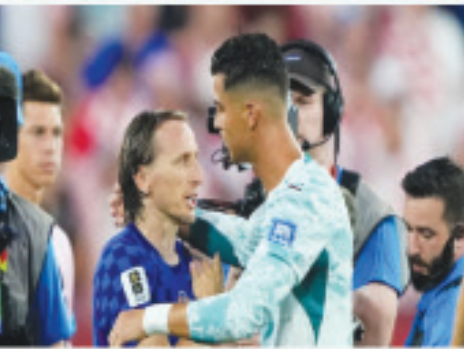
New Delhi. (Agency)  
In a bold, strategic masterstroke to maintain its status as a global badminton powerhouse, the Badminton Association of India (BAI) has announced the immediate introduction of the Badminton World Federation's (BWF) new 3x15 scoring matrix across the entire domestic structure. Rather than waiting for the mandatory international transition in January 2027, the new format will make its official debut at the All-India Senior Ranking Tournament in Emakulam from July 7 to 14, 2026.  
WHY INDIA IS MOVING EARLY?  
The early rollout is a calculated move to insulate Indian players, coaches, and technical officials from "format shock". By embedding the system into all age groups - from Under-11 up to the Senior and Masters Nationals - BAI is providing a critical competitive cushion.



BAI General Secretary Sanjay Mishra highlighted the necessity of this transition: "This decision has been taken to ensure that players across all age groups develop familiarity and competitive adaptability to the revised scoring format, thereby ensuring a smooth transition when the system is adopted internationally." THE RULE SHIFT EXPLAINED: 21 DOWN TO 15  
While matches remain a best-of-three, rally-point affair, the internal mechanics have significantly tightened: The Cap: Games are won at 15 points instead of 21. The Setting: A two-point margin is required from 14-all. If a stalemate occurs, sudden death kicks in at 20-all, capping the game at 21. The Intervals: Mid-game structural breaks drop from 11 points to 8 points (accompanied by a 60-second interval and a change of ends in the deciding third game).

World Cup: Ronaldo consoles Modric as Portugal knock Croatia out in late VAR drama

New York. (Agency)  
Cristiano Ronaldo embraced a tearful Luka Modric after Portugal ended Croatia's FIFA World Cup campaign with a dramatic 2-1 victory in the Round of 32 on Thursday. Moments after a lengthy VAR review denied Croatia a stoppage-time equaliser, Ronaldo walked across to comfort his former Real Madrid teammate as Modric acknowledged the traveling fans in what could prove to be his final World Cup appearance. "I played many years with Modric. It's great to see him still playing at the top level," Ronaldo said after the match. "I told him: Congrats, Luka. Good luck for the future of your career."  
The emotional scenes followed a dramatic



finish in Toronto, where substitute Goncalo Ramos headed home Rafael Leao's cross in the fourth minute of added time to send Portugal into the Round of 16.  
Croatia believed they had forced extra time when Josko Gvardiol found the net deep into stoppage time, but VAR ruled the goal out after Mario Pasalic was adjudged offside when Igor Matanovic flicked the ball on. Portugal will now face Spain in the Round of 16 after the European champions beat Austria 3-0 earlier on Thursday. Croatia had taken the lead in the 53rd minute through Ivan Perisic, who finished after Josip Stanisic's cross took a deflection off Ruben Dias. The goal saw Perisic move past Davor Suker as Croatia's highest scorer in World Cup history.  
Portugal dominated possession for long periods but struggled to find a breakthrough until VAR awarded a penalty for Nikola Vlasic's foul on Renato Veiga. Ronaldo stepped up in the 68th minute and calmly converted, becoming the oldest player to score in a men's World Cup knockout match at the age of 41. It was also the first knockout-stage goal of his World Cup career.

Were Croatia robbed? Why VAR disallowed dramatic equaliser vs Ronaldo's Portugal

New Delhi. (Agency)  
Croatia's FIFA World Cup campaign ended in heartbreaking fashion after a dramatic stoppage-time equaliser against Portugal was ruled out following a VAR review in their Round of 32 clash on Thursday.  
Josko Gvardiol thought he had rescued Croatia in the 103rd minute when he turned the ball home from close range, sparking jubilant celebrations among the players and fans. But moments later, the referee was sent to the pitchside monitor before overturning the goal for offside, allowing Portugal to hold on for a 2-1 victory and book a Round of 16 meeting with Spain. Earlier, Ivan Perisic had handed Croatia the lead by converting Josip Stanisic's cross at the back post. Cristiano Ronaldo responded from the penalty spot, calmly sending the goalkeeper the wrong way to score his first-ever goal in a World Cup knockout match across six editions of the tournament.



With the match heading towards extra time, Portugal coach Roberto Martinez made the bold decision to replace Ronaldo with Ruben Neves. The move paid immediate dividends as Rafael Leao delivered an inch-perfect cross for Goncalo Ramos, who powered a header past the goalkeeper to restore Portugal's lead. Croatia threw everything forward in search of another equaliser and believed they had found it in the dying seconds. Instead, they were left stunned by one of the most debated VAR interventions of

the tournament.  
CROATIA'S EQUALISER DISALLOWED  
Croatia thought they had forced extra time when Gvardiol bundled the ball into the net after Ivan Perisic whipped a dangerous cross into the penalty area. Initially, there appeared to be nothing wrong with the move. The assistant referee kept the flag down and Croatia's players celebrated what they believed was a dramatic equaliser. However, VAR immediately began reviewing the attacking phase. Officials concluded that striker Igor Matanovic had made a slight touch on Perisic's cross before it reached Mario Pasalic. While the touch was barely noticeable on the available television angles, it fundamentally changed the offside decision. Once Matanovic redirected the ball, Pasalic was in an offside position when he received it.

Nagelsmann quits Germany job after World Cup disaster, Klopp favourite to take over

Julian Nagelsmann has stepped down as Germany's head coach after the four-time world champions crashed out of the FIFA World Cup 2026 in the Round of 32, ending his nearly three-year tenure in charge.

New Delhi. (Agency)  
Julian Nagelsmann has resigned as Germany head coach following the team's shock exit from the FIFA World Cup 2026, ending his nearly three-year spell in charge. The decision comes just days after Germany were knocked out by Paraguay in a penalty shootout in the Round of 32, with former Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp now the favourite to take over.  
Nagelsmann, who took charge in September 2023, had a contract until Euro 2028. However, Germany's disappointing World Cup campaign put his future under serious doubt. Reports said the German Football

Association (DFB) asked the 38-year-old to consider stepping down after the defeat to Paraguay or risk being sacked. The former Bayern Munich and RB Leipzig coach has now chosen to resign. By leaving on his own, Nagelsmann is expected to receive around A£5 million in compensation instead of being dismissed. His departure ends a tenure that began with high expectations. Germany appointed Nagelsmann to rebuild the national team after a series of poor performances at major tournaments. Instead, another early World Cup exit has raised fresh questions about the team's direction and the DFB's long-term plans. Speaking after Germany's elimination, Nagelsmann admitted his team had fallen well below the standard expected of a four-time world champion. "If you are eliminated by Paraguay, you are just not a first-class football team. I am very disappointed," Nagelsmann said. Despite the criticism, he had made it clear that

he wanted to continue if the DFB backed him. "If the DFB wants me to continue I am going to continue. I know the mechanics of



football. I know how the industry works," he said. "I know a lot of people will want me to leave but I would love to continue if the football association wants me to." Attention has now turned to Jurgen Klopp,

who has long been linked with the Germany job. Klopp stepped down as Liverpool manager in 2024 and has been working as a television pundit for German broadcaster Magenta during the World Cup.  
Earlier in the tournament, Klopp said he would be willing to coach Germany if the opportunity came. "I am available. If the DFB wants it, then I will do the Euro 2028, and if not then they have to tell me. I'm not someone who runs away," Klopp said. After Germany's exit, however, he refused to discuss the vacancy in detail. "I understand that my name is being mentioned. But this isn't the moment to talk about it, and certainly not with me," Klopp said. Klopp was one of Germany's strongest critics during the tournament. He questioned the team's performances and said they failed to show the quality expected from a side with players such as Florian Wirtz and Jamal Musiala.

# Richa Chadha

**Backs Dia Mirza After Son Aavyaan Is Trolled: 'She Gifted Me 1100 Trees'**

**D**ia Mirza recently found herself at the receiving end of online trolling after a clip from Soha Ali Khan's podcast went viral. In the video, the actor spoke about an incident involving her 5-year-old son Aavyaan, who scolded a delivery agent for bringing coconut water in plastic bags with plastic straws. While Soha praised the child's conviction, several social media users criticised Dia and her son, with some calling the episode an example of "entitled arrogance."

Amid the backlash, actor Richa Chadha has now come out strongly in support of Dia. Taking to X, Richa defended the actor's long-standing work in the field of environmental awareness and also called out people for attacking a child.



**Richa Chadha Defends Dia Mirza Amid Trolling**  
Richa reposted a note by a social media user who accused Dia of preaching ecological consciousness while allegedly driving a Jaguar. Responding to the criticism, Richa wrote a long note on X and

questioned why actors are often discouraged from speaking up. "Y'all wonder why actors don't speak up? (Damned if you do, damned if you don't!) Apart from the routine haranguing by the usual, brain-dead suspects, there's also this! Of course punch up yaar, actors ki mental health ka kya hai. Aaye din suicides kar ke salacious news cycles ko feed bhi karna to artist ka kartavya hona chahiye. Haina? Women with privilege will be shamed if say anything outside the syllabus. Lipstick, bikini, GRWM, OOTD, make-up haul et al," she wrote.

Richa then highlighted Dia's environmental work and said that people trolling her could at least do a basic search before making accusations. "Just FYI, @deespeak is involved with a bamboo paper company, means no trees are cut to manufacture paper, and WITHOUT, a plastic recycling start up that makes very cool sunglasses. She's also produced a lovely short on the climate, it screens at PardaFaash, Mumbai, tomorrow 3.07.26. Check these things out, because if you can bully a 5 year old, you can also run a basic google search na," Richa added.

**Richa Chadha Says Dia Mirza Does Not Own A Jaguar**  
Richa also dismissed the claim that Dia owns a Jaguar. She said that she has only seen Dia use electric cars and added that the actor has personally inspired her through her environmental gestures.



**'I'm An Artist, Not A Politician': Diljit Dosanjh On Being Asked About CJP Protest**



**S**inger-actor Diljit Dosanjh recently interacted with fans during an Instagram Live session, where he answered questions on a variety of topics. Among the many queries, one fan asked him about the ongoing protest at Jantar Mantar led by the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP). While reacting to the question, Diljit made it clear that he prefers not to comment on it. He said that he was unaware of the situation due to his busy Aura Tour schedule. He also urged people to keep him out of protests, stating that he is not a politician and would rather remain focused on his work as an entertainer.

**Diljit Dosanjh's Reaction When Asked About CJP Protest At Jantar Mantar**

When asked about the CJP protest at Jantar Mantar, Diljit appeared surprised, admitting that he was unaware of it as he had been occupied with his Aura Tour. He then urged people to keep him away from protests and political discussions because he considers himself an artist and not a politician. "Bro, keep me away from protests and such things. I am an artist. I am not a politician," he said.

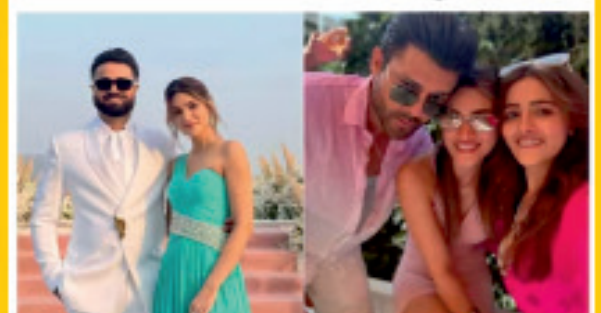
He further added that it is impossible for everything in the world to be perfect or entirely right. "Everything can never be right. Everything in this world can never be right," he said.

He also quoted a line from the Guru Granth Sahib, "Nanak dukhiya sab sansar, so sukhiya jis naam adhaar." Diljit further said that while his name is often dragged into such matters, he wishes well for both sides involved. He reiterated that he was not familiar with the issue and therefore did not have anything more to add.

**Diljit Dosanjh's Work Front**

Diljit Dosanjh was last seen in the Imtiaz Ali directorial Main Vaapas Aaunga, a period drama set against the backdrop of the India-Pakistan Partition. The film, which also stars Naseeruddin Shah, Sharvati and Vedang Raina, has emerged as one of the notable successes of 2026, earning strong audience appreciation and steady box office growth on the back of positive word of mouth.

**'Until She Feels She Has Found...': Stebin Ben On Kriti Sanon's Wedding Buzz Amid Kabir Bahia Dating Rumours**



**A**s rumours continue to swirl about Kriti Sanon's relationship with businessman Kabir Bahia, the actress has received support from singer Stebin Ben, who is also her brother-in-law. Addressing the ongoing speculation around her personal life, Stebin said that choices related to marriage or relationships should never be made under societal pressure. He also praised Kriti's journey in the Hindi film industry, commending her hard-earned success and growth as an actress.

Recently, while speaking to Galatta India, Stebin Ben, who is married to Nupur Sanon, reacted to the ongoing discussions around Kriti's marriage and her relationship buzz. The conversation gained momentum after her younger sister Nupur got married earlier this year. Stebin shared that he is frequently asked about when Kriti intends to get married, but stressed that the decision should be entirely hers, without any outside expectations or pressure. He said, "I don't know why people keep asking this. After her younger sister got married, everyone started saying, 'Now it's Kriti's turn.'"

Commending Kriti's inspiring rise from a small-town girl to one of Bollywood's top actresses, he said that someone who has worked so hard to build her career should never feel compelled to hurry such a significant life decision. Stebin added, "She is doing exceptionally good in her career. A girl coming from a small town who did well for herself and has grown on her own... Give her time. Until Kriti feels that she has found the best boy and is sure about marriage, she should not take that decision. Until you get that certainty, why do you have to rush into marriage? There is no hurry. Life is not running away."

Stebin further shared that he sees several similarities between his own journey and Kriti's, noting that she carved her own path in the industry through hard work and determination. He praised her for achieving stardom on her own while remaining humble and deeply connected to her family. Expressing confidence in her future, he said her career looks exceptionally promising, adding that she has an impressive slate of films lined up until 2030 and continues to deliver back-to-back hits.

# Shreya Kalra's

**BF Rishabh Jaiswal Defends Her For Revealing Akanksha Chamola's Bisexual 'Secret'**

**S**hreya Kalra's boyfriend, Rishabh Jaiswal, has come to her defence after she revealed that Akanksha Chamola is bisexual. The revelation was made on Netflix's Lock Upp 2, and Rishabh took to social media to explain to fans how the "secret" had already been revealed by Akanksha to the show's makers, and could likely be revealed eventually anyway.

unhone 3 secrets khud se creative team ko, Netflix team ko, Lock Upp team ko diye hain. As a lifeline use honge bakayda unhe bataya gaya hai." He added that in Lock Upp 2, contestants can use these secrets as "lifelines" which can be revealed to stay on the show.



"Log keh rahe hain Shreya ne Akanksha Chamola ka secret reveal kar diya ki 'She is bisexual', 'Uska haq nahi hai kisi ki sexuality pe baat kame ka'... Abhi main bata doon, mujhe internal baat pata hai." Rishabh said in a video posted on Instagram. He said that Shreya did not reveal Akanksha's personal information as she had already revealed it to the makers as a lifeline. Rishabh said, "Dekho jitney contestants gaye hain na,

Rishabh added, "Shreya ne uska wo lifeline bata diya, so it's a part of the game." She then claimed, "She is bisexual." The camera immediately cut to Akanksha. Citing the rules of the show, Shreya said that the "secret" had now been used as part of the game; two of Akanksha's lifelines were over, leaving her with only one remaining.



NEWS BOX

Florida Woman's Driveway Stolen As Part Of Nigerian Scam

World.(Agency)

A US woman has caught social media's attention after becoming an unwanted victim of a scam that originated in Nigeria, after she returned home to find her driveway ripped up and hauled away. In February earlier this year, Luz Lenzi came back to her house in Sanford, Florida, about 30 miles north of Orlando, to discover a pile of rubble where her driveway used to be, which she had got repaired for a minor crack a few weeks earlier. According to police, someone posing as a representative of a real estate company hired a contractor to redo Lenzi's driveway. The job stopped abruptly when a \$15,000 check meant to cover the work bounced. That check had been issued by a company called SOIL Realty LLC, listed in New Mexico, but investigators eventually traced it back to Nigeria. "I didn't hire them, I didn't need to have my driveway redone," Lenzi was quoted as saying by News 6. Police said the contractor never actually met the client and never filed a permit before starting the work. Investigators pieced together the scam's true origin by following bank transactions and Google records connected to an email address used in the deal, which led them to internet addresses in Nigeria. "I said, Nigeria, like in Africa? And he said, yes," Lenzi said. "I said, how? I was shocked." "I Was A Loser" It remains unclear exactly how the scammer stood to profit. Investigators suspect the goal may have been to extort money from the contractor. They also believe Lenzi's house was targeted because it was listed for sale at the time.

Nearly 3,000 Evacuated As Wildfires Sweep Across France

Washington. (Agency)

Nearly 3,000 people have been evacuated in southern France and water-bombing helicopters deployed to battle wildfires after a record-breaking heatwave last month, officials said Thursday. Tourists and local residents had to be moved after a wildfire broke out in the town of Sainte-Marie-la-Mer and spread to Canet-en-Roussillon on Thursday. Firefighters said nearly 3,000 people were evacuated with half of them from three campsites in the affected area. Two firefighters suffered minor injuries, said Pierre Regnault de La Mothe, the top regional official for the southern department of Pyrenees-Orientales. Two hundred firefighters and four water-bombing aircraft were deployed to put out the blazes. "We are mobilising a large network of volunteers," said the prefect. In June, France experienced a record-breaking heatwave which lasted 11 days and saw temperatures climb above 40C in many places. Apart from having "major impacts" on human health, ecosystems, agriculture, and infrastructure, the extraordinary heatwave worsened the risk of wildfires, the World Meteorological Organisation said last week. Interior Minister Laurent Nunez said 1,200 firefighters had been mobilised since Wednesday to battle forest fires. "Weather conditions remain particularly unfavorable," he said on X. The Meteo-France weather agency said a new spell of elevated temperatures would hit the country next week, although they are not expected to be extreme like in June. Some French politicians have denounced what they call the authorities' inadequate measures to help France face rising temperatures, and the Greens on Thursday filed a no-confidence motion against the government.

How A 100-Hour Mission By 8 Countries Saved Venezuelan Man After Earthquake



world.(Agency)

For eight days, 43-year-old security guard Hernan Alberto Gil Flores lay trapped beneath the rubble of a collapsed building in Venezuela, unsure if he would survive. When rescuers finally reached him, his first request was heartbreaking: "He asked not to tell his wife that he was alive, just in case he wouldn't make it." Early Thursday, Gil Flores emerged from the ruins covered in dust, lying on a stretcher and surrounded by helmet-clad rescue workers. His rescue brought a rare moment of hope after a devastating earthquake disaster that has killed more than 2,200 people across northern Venezuela. Trapped Beneath A Collapsed Building Gil Flores, a night-shift security guard, was inside his small security cabin at the Galerias Playa Grande shopping centre in Catia La Mar, in La Guaira state, when two powerful earthquakes struck on June 24. The back-to-back earthquakes, measuring magnitudes 7.2 and 7.5, brought down a seven-storey building and damaged tens of thousands of structures across northern Venezuela. More than 11,000 people were injured, with La Guaira among the worst-hit areas. While the concrete structure collapsed around him, Gil Flores's security cabin remained intact, shielding him from falling debris and creating a small pocket of air that helped keep him alive. A specialised team from the Costa Rican Red Cross first detected signs of life and established contact with him on Sunday. His wife, Gusbimar Gonzalez, said she had struggled with despair before learning rescuers had found him alive.

Supreme leader's body arrives at Tehran religious complex for funeral

**Khamenei's body will be taken to the Iraqi holy cities of Najaf and Karbala before his burial on July 9 at the shrine of Imam Reza in the northeastern Iranian city of Mashhad, his birthplace.**

TEHRAN.(Agency)

The body of Iran's supreme leader who was killed in US-Israeli strikes that triggered the Middle East war arrived at Tehran's Grand Mosalla on Friday ahead of his funeral, state media reported. Millions of people and a coterie of foreign dignitaries were expected to attend Saturday's official ceremony for Ali Khamenei, with Tehran's chief negotiator calling for a massive turnout to

avenge his death. Photos showed mourners carrying Khamenei's coffin, emblazoned with Iran's tricolour flag, into the Grand Mosalla, one of the Islamic republic's most important ceremonial venues. Others show crowds at a pre-funeral ceremony clad in black, as the coffin is set down against a backdrop of red flowers and white butterflies hanging in the air. Preparations for Khamenei's public funeral, initially delayed at the height of the war, are taking place as Iran and the United States observe a fragile ceasefire after signing a preliminary deal to halt the conflict. Pakistan, a key mediator in the US-Iran talks, said its Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif would be attend the ceremony. China, Afghanistan and Iran's neighbours in the Caucasus region said they would also be sending representatives. Workers were readying the Grand Mosalla on Thursday, while security teams stopped passing cars and curious bystanders looked on. "We are planting flowers and watering the shrubs for

the farewell ceremony of our martyred guide," said worker Hossein Moghadassi, clad in a hat and a scarf to cover his face as the temperature soared.



"People will come from all over Iran. There will be huge crowds." Tehran's chief negotiator Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf had called on Thursday for "all the Iranian people...to write a glorious page in the history of Islamic Iran through your presence." "The nation's call for vengeance must ring in the ears of the whole world," Ghalibaf, who is also Iran's parliament

speaker, added in a statement. Khamenei, a spiritual figure for many Shias, was killed at the age of 86 in strikes on his compound in the centre of the Iranian capital. He will lie in state for three days at the colossal Grand Mosalla, which has been draped in banners featuring images and quotes of Khamenei. Multi-city commemorations The ceremonies are expected to draw between 15 and 20 million mourners, according to officials, which would make it the biggest state funeral in the country's history. Ghalibaf called it "one of the most significant moments" in Iran's history. Tehran, as well as the holy cities of Qom and Mashhad, which will host later stages of the funeral and burial ceremonies, will observe public holidays while the events are underway. Authorities have ordered public and private offices in Tehran to close from Saturday through Monday, while traffic restrictions will make much of the city centre inaccessible to private vehicles.

Mojtaba Khamenei to skip father Ali Khamenei's funeral due to Israeli threats, security risks

World.(Agency)

Iran's Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei, will skip the funeral ceremonies of his father, former Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, citing security concerns, said his representative in India, Ayatollah Hakim Elahi. Elahi attributed the decision to Israeli threats and surveillance risks that would make public attendance dangerous, ANI reported. Earlier on Wednesday, Iran's Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi issued a sharp warning to the United States, urging President Donald Trump to "muzzle its pets" in Israel after Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz said that Iran's Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei was "marked for death". In a post on X, Araghchi said the United States had committed itself under the terms of the 14-point memorandum of understanding (MoU) reached to end the hostilities in West Asia, as well as restraining Israel, warning that any threat against Iran's

leadership would draw an immediate response. "The terms of the Islamabad MoU are crystal clear and public for all to see. POTUS has committed the US to muzzling its pets in Tel Aviv. If they



ignore their master, Iran will school them. Any threat against our People and Leadership will receive Immediate Powerful Response," Araghchi said in the post while sharing the text of Katz's remarks from a report. His remarks came after Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz on Monday reportedly referred to Iran's Supreme Leader Khamenei and

said he was "marked for death". Katz also called the Iranians "good merchants", attempting to extract concessions during negotiations and reiterated that Israel would not allow Iran to develop nuclear weapons. "If they do it through an agreement, all the better," Katz said, as per the text shared by Araghchi. Earlier on July 1, Qatar and Pakistan concluded separate meetings with US and Iranian negotiators in Doha, with "positive progress" reported on issues related to the 14-point Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). In a post on X, Majed Al Ansari, adviser to Qatar's prime minister and official spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said that the parties agreed to continue discussions over the coming period, with the next meeting to be scheduled at the earliest possible time following the funeral processions of the former Iranian Supreme Leader.

Putin shrugs off fuel shortages in Russia as he ramps up attacks on Ukraine

World.(Agency)

Despite severe fuel shortages across Russia, President Vladimir Putin appears unbothered by Ukraine's increasing attacks on his country's oil refineries. He has shrugged off the setback for one of the world's leading oil producing nations as "not critical," dismissed ceasefire proposals and insisted the war will continue until his goals are met. Putin has described the attacks on Russian energy as an effort by Ukraine to distract attention from its losses on the battlefield, although analysts say the advance of Russian forces has been stymied in recent months. The Russian leader appears to believe his government can keep the fuel crisis from eroding his authority and support for the war he launched more than four years ago. The Russian military unleashed a massive 11-hour barrage on the Ukrainian capital overnight into Thursday morning that killed at least 21 people. It was one of the deadliest attacks on Kyiv since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion. Here's a deeper look at the latest exchange of strikes and Putin's refusal to halt the fighting: Gas shortages worsen in Russia as more oil facilities are hit There have been more than 50 reported Ukrainian attacks on oil refineries and other energy facilities in Russia and the occupied Crimea since March — a barrage Ukrainian leaders have said is intended to pressure Moscow to end the war. At the very least, the attacks have brought the war home even more poignantly for millions of Russians, shattering Putin's narrative of the conflict as something that doesn't affect the lives of ordinary people in his country. An estimated one-third of Russia's refining capacity has been cut off, according to Chris Weafer, CEO of the consultancy Macro-Advisory. The attacks have inflicted lasting damage that will be costly to fix. Despite significant air defenses protecting Russia's capital, a top refinery in Moscow has been hit twice. The second strike on June 18 set it ablaze, damaging key equipment that will reportedly take until the end of the year to repair. With gasoline production in Russia reduced by roughly 17% to 850,000 barrels a day, according to government statistics, rationing has been introduced in many regions, and motorists have had to wait in line for hours to refuel. Crimea, which Russia illegally annexed from Ukraine in 2014, has faced the worst fuel shortages. Gasoline sales to individuals have been halted there altogether. Putin downplays the impact of Ukrainian strikes Putin chaired a meeting of government officials last weekend to discuss the fuel shortages. In televised statements, he acknowledged the country was going through a "difficult period." He pledged to accelerate repairs of energy facilities and said Russia would consider importing gasoline to help make up for what he described as "temporary" shortages. He also said Russia's arms industry will boost production of air defense systems to fend off future Ukrainian attacks. Putin portrayed the Ukrainian strikes as an attempt to divide Russian society, halt Moscow's offensive and try to force the Kremlin into negotiations on "terms advantageous to our adversary."

US feared Israel could target Iran's top negotiators, warned West Asian nations of possible attack

WASHINGTON.(Agency)

The US has reportedly asked countries in West Asia to warn Iran about a possible attack by Israel targeting Tehran's top negotiators during the ceasefire negotiations that began in April. According to a New York Times report, Washington was concerned about the targeting of two officials -- Abbas Araghchi, Iran's foreign minister, and Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, the speaker of the Parliament. The US was afraid that an Israeli assassination effort would doom the negotiations to reach an interim peace deal and lead to renewed fighting in the Gulf region, the New York Times reported, citing current and former American officials. Killing senior Iranian leaders had been part of Israel's strategy from the start of the war. The war started on February 28 with an Israeli strike that killed Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and other top officials. The officials acknowledged that during the intense phase of the war,

Araghchi and Ghalibaf could have been considered legitimate targets for Israel, which was intent on toppling Iran's hard-line government. But after the negotiations started in April, American officials believed that any attempt to kill the Iranian leaders would end the talks and reignite the fighting, the report said. While US strikes were primarily aimed at Iran's naval and missile capabilities, Israel focused its early military campaign on targeting Iran's leadership, seeking to eliminate as many high-ranking officials as it could. Among those killed in Israeli airstrikes were Iran's top national security official, Ali Larjani, and former foreign minister Kamal Kharazi, both considered relatively pragmatic figures whom the Trump administration had hoped to engage in negotiations. The two were involved in US-Iran talks at the time of their deaths. The Trump administration's concerns over a possible Israeli plot to assassinate the two lead negotiators underscored

how US and Israeli war objectives, initially closely aligned, rapidly diverged. While Washington pushed for a peace agreement, Israel remained sceptical even after the initial cessation of hostilities in April. The initial two-week ceasefire in April received reluctant backing from Israeli officials, while many in Israel feared the United States was ending the war prematurely. Instead of weakening the Iranian leadership, the conflict hardened the country's theocratic establishment, with the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps further tightening its grip on power. Araghchi and Ghalibaf have led Iran's diplomatic efforts with countries to secure a ceasefire and work towards a broader peace agreement with the US. In June, Washington and Tehran reached a framework deal aimed at reopening the Strait of Hormuz and laying the groundwork for subsequent negotiations on Iran's nuclear programme.

Death toll from massive strikes on Kyiv rises to 30

**Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said his forces would "definitely" retaliate for the Wednesday to Thursday overnight pummelling, as he inspected an apartment block that was partially destroyed.**

KYIV.(Agency)

Ukraine said on Friday that the death toll from a massive barrage on its capital had risen to at least 30 people, as both Kyiv and Moscow vowed fresh assaults. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said his forces would "definitely" retaliate for the Wednesday to Thursday overnight pummelling, as he inspected an apartment block that was partially destroyed. The European Union's top diplomat proposed new sanctions on Moscow, as Zelensky pressed the United States for licences to manufacture Patriot air-defence missiles. UN chief Secretary-General Antonio Guterres condemned Russia's barrage and repeated a

ceasefire call. "Attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure wherever they occur are a clear violation of international humanitarian law and must stop immediately," said his spokesman Stephane Dujarric. But the Kremlin vowed to further ramp up "pressure" on Kyiv, sticking to its no-compromise rhetoric. "Most massive attack" Russia has routinely launched waves of missiles and drones during its invasion, Europe's deadliest conflict since World War II. AFP journalists in central and eastern Kyiv heard more than a dozen explosions and saw residents rushing to shelter in metro stations. In the morning, locals stood on the rubble of destroyed apartment blocks ripped apart by the barrage, as smoke poured over the Kyiv skyline. Blasts started echoing out late on Wednesday, lasting into the early hours of Thursday as Russian missiles and drones rained down on residential areas in the city centre. Mayor Vitali Klitschko described it as the "enemy's most massive attack on the capital". Ukraine's state emergency service

said that the strikes had killed 30 people, increasing an earlier toll after three more bodies were pulled from the rubble. The head of the city's military administration Tymur Tkachenko said 91 people were



wounded. The Ukrainian branch of the Red Cross said its key warehouse had been destroyed and around USD 2 million worth of humanitarian aid lost. Debris also damaged a building "hosting a number of diplomats", EU spokeswoman Annita Hipper told AFP, adding that the EU diplomats were safe. And in Kryvyi Rig, two people were

wounded when a missile struck a densely populated area, the head of the central city's military administration said early Friday. Kyiv urged its allies to send more air defence. "We also very much count on a decision by the United States regarding licences for Patriots," Zelensky said in a post on Facebook on Thursday. Later, after talks with Finland's President Alexander Stubb, he added: "Defending against ballistic missiles is impossible without a sufficient number of missiles for Patriot systems." Ukraine wants to manufacture munitions for the US-made missile interceptor system, but defence experts say it would take time to set up production domestically. A US official told AFP President Donald Trump wanted a peace deal to end the "senseless killing" in Ukraine. Struggling to sleep Russia fired 496 drones and 74 missiles, including hard-to-intercept ballistic projectiles, Ukraine's air force said. It said it shot down 48 of the missiles and 476 drones. AFP reporters met several Kyiv residents outside an apartment building largely destroyed in the attack.