

Congress slams BJP over its Uttarakhand chief 'justifying' purification ritual at Kharge rally site

New Delhi. (Agency)

New Delhi, Aug 27 (PTI) The Congress on Thursday accused Uttarakhand BJP chief Mahendra Bhatt of "justifying" the 'shuddhikaran' (purification) ceremony at the venue of a rally addressed by AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge in Haldwani, and asked whether the ruling party would take action against the leader for defending untouchability. Bhatt reportedly said the place was polluted with slogans not fit for a religious place, as he dismissed the criticism over the ritual by the opposition. Tagging a video of Bhatt's remarks, Congress' media and publicity department head Pawan Khara said, "It does not matter that Nadda Ji described the shuddhikaran in Haldwani after Kharge Ji's rally as 'unfortunate'. The truth is that discrimination flows through the veins of the RSS-BJP like blood." Now, the Uttarakhand BJP president has justified the 'shuddhikaran', he claimed.

3 killed, 11 hurt as truck rams bus in UP; passenger blames driver for wrong parking

New Delhi. (Agency)

Three passengers were killed, and 11 others were injured after a truck rammed into a passenger bus from behind on the Purvanchal Expressway in Uttar Pradesh's Sultanpur district on Thursday morning. The private bus was travelling from Gurugram to Supaul in Bihar when the truck hit it from behind with force. The collision left 11 passengers seriously injured and killed three others. The impact triggered panic and cries for help on the expressway. After local residents alerted the authorities, Sub-Divisional Magistrate Prabhat Singh, Circle Officer Ashutosh Kumar and Station House Officer Mahendra Pratap Singh reached the spot with police personnel. Police, with the help of local residents, pulled the injured passengers out of the bus and sent them to the Community Health Centre in Baldirai, where doctors are treating the seriously injured. Police sent the bodies of the three deceased passengers for post-mortem examination. The accident led to a chaotic situation at the spot for some time. Circle Officer Baldirai Ashutosh Kumar confirmed that three passengers died and 11 were injured. Passenger Ghanshyam Tiwari, a resident of Gorakhpur, said he had boarded the bus at Rajiv Chowk in Delhi. He said the passengers had eaten in Agra, where the driver was changed. He alleged that the bus was parked at an inappropriate place when the driver was being changed and a truck carrying a load hit the bus from behind.

Ahead of Xi's likely India visit, why delimitation in Doval-Wang Yi talks matters

New Delhi (Agency)

Ajit Doval and Wang Yi discussed the boundary question in Beijing and issued an eight-point consensus. The reference to delimitation suggests the talks may be moving from managing LAC tensions towards the wider border dispute.

The mention of delimitation in the latest India-China boundary talks has emerged as a significant signal that the two sides could be looking beyond managing tensions along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) towards addressing the boundary question itself. India and China share a 3,488-km LAC, but the line has not been mutually delineated on the ground or on maps. Both sides have different perceptions of where the LAC lies in several areas, unlike the Line of Control between India and Pakistan, which is a demarcated line. The discussions came as National Security Advisor Ajit Doval went to Beijing for two days from Monday for the 25th round of Special Representatives' talks on the boundary question. He met Chinese Foreign Minister and Special Representative Wang Yi. A day after their meeting, the two sides issued an identical eight-point consensus. The talks came ahead of next month's BRICS Summit in India, where a possible visit by

Chinese President Xi Jinping could provide an opportunity for further bilateral engagement with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

WHAT DOES DELIMITATION MEAN? In simple terms, delimitation is the process of determining the precise alignment of a



boundary. It involves agreeing on the location of the boundary and, eventually, defining it through maps, coordinates and identifiable geographical features. This is different from what India and China have largely focused on since the 2020 Galwan Valley standoff — disengagement and de-escalation. Disengagement involves pulling troops back

from areas where they have confronted each other, while de-escalation refers to reducing the broader military tensions. Delimitation, by contrast, addresses the much larger question of where the boundary itself should lie.

WHY IS IT SIGNIFICANT?

The LAC remains a source of recurring friction precisely because India and China do not have a common understanding of its alignment in several sectors. Patrols based on competing perceptions have previously led to face-offs and prolonged military deployments. A move towards delimitation would therefore mark a shift from crisis management to addressing the underlying boundary dispute. It would not, however, mean that the India-China border has been settled. The two countries have previously agreed that a final boundary settlement should be based on the principle of a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable solution. The 2005 Agreement on Political Parameters and Guiding Principles laid down the broad framework for such a settlement.

EXPOSE: High-Level Political & Administrative Conspiracy Alleged in Gujarat Health Department

Family Legacy of 52 Years in Dialysis Care Under Fire; Calls Mount for PMO Probe into Alleged Scapegoating and Procedural Violations

MAHANAGAR METRO

Ahmedabad. A major political and administrative storm has erupted in Gujarat's healthcare corridors following serious allegations of a targeted conspiracy against Kiran Parikh, a senior official hailing from a prominent Dalit family with over three decades of service to the BJP and Jan Sangh. The controversy involves alleged procedural violations, abrupt dismissals, and claims of scapegoating to shield high-ranking figures linked to dialysis procurement irregularities. A Questionable Administrative Chronology: Documents and departmental timelines highlight stark contradictions in the disciplinary actions initiated against Kiran Parikh: March 10, 2025: Kiran Parikh was granted a complete clean chit on all pending allegations by the highest administrative authority of the Health Department. April 23, 2025: In a sudden turn of events, Dr. Pranjal Modi terminated Parikh from his services without issuing a show-cause notice or providing an opportunity for defense. April 25, 2025: Just two days post-dismissal, a three-member inquiry committee was constituted under the chairmanship of Additional Director (Medical Education) Raghavendra Dixit, with GMSCL



General Manager Dr. Samidh Shah and Administrative Officer Mr. Charpot as members. September 3, 2025: The committee submitted an ex-parte, preliminary report—allegedly formulated under external pressure without recording formal statements from relevant Health Department personnel. Three Generations of Dedicated Public & Healthcare Service: The Parikh family holds a documented legacy of over five decades in pioneering public healthcare and grassroots political service in Gujarat. Pioneering Dialysis Infrastructure: Kiran Parikh's father, Hargovindbhai Parmar, served the state's dialysis sector for over 52 years. His contributions laid the foundation for the decentralized, accessible dialysis

network operating across Gujarat today. His dedication earned formal commendations from Padma Shri Dr. H. L. Trivedi, who noted that establishing such state-wide services would have been impossible without his relentless efforts across tenures under former Health Ministers Jaynarayan Vyas, Nitin Patel, and Rushikesh Patel. Grassroots Political Legacy: Parikh's grandfather was a founding-era Jan Sangh stalwart who served as the Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) from Kadi between 1967 and 1972, followed by a Rajya Sabha nomination and candidacy from the Jotana constituency, marking over 30 years of unblemished public life. Party Commitment: Continuing this ancestral legacy, Kiran Parikh has consistently worked as an active party functionary supporting organizational campaigns in both Kadi and Ahmedabad. Allegations of Caste Bias, Double Standards, and Scapegoating: Insiders and

community representatives allege that the administrative backlash stems from deep-seated caste bias and commercial rivalries threatened by the administrative rise of a Dalit official. Questions have also been raised regarding the double standards applied during the recent Gujarat Legislative Assembly controversy involving the procurement of 600 dialysis machines worth crores. While four personnel were suspended following the Assembly debate, Kiran Parikh was singled out with a punitive termination order, raising concerns that career officers are being weaponized as scapegoats to protect high-level political and administrative beneficiaries. Demand for PMO-Monitored Investigation: Given the scale of alleged administrative misconduct, caste-based victimisation, and financial implications within the Health Department, stakeholders have demanded an immediate, independent inquiry supervised by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO). Advocates have urged the Gujarat State Government to intervene, quash arbitrary committee proceedings, reinstate the victimized official, and initiate stringent legal action against the conspirators behind the administrative vendetta.

AI can augment reasoning but cannot substitute judicial conscience: CJI Surya Kant

New Delhi. (Agency)

Chief Justice of India Surya Kant on Wednesday said artificial intelligence can assist judicial reasoning but cannot replace judicial conscience, as a permanent apex body has been proposed to oversee its adoption and accountability.

Speaking at a bilateral meeting with Ulrich Herrmann, the presiding judge of the Federal Court of Justice at Karlsruhe in Germany, CJI Kant said that artificial intelligence (AI) is being used in certain defined support functions such as legal research, judgement translation into 16 languages and as a conversational interface for citizens to look for case status and procedures. He said that while these tools are designed to reduce repetitive work, they do not determine judicial outcomes.

"Artificial intelligence may augment judicial reasoning, but it cannot substitute judicial conscience.

Draft regulations from the Supreme Court's AI Committee permit administrative uses such as scheduling, transcription and translation, while barring AI from assessing witness credibility, flight risk, recidivism or bail eligibility; a permanent apex body has been proposed to supervise the adoption and accountability of AI," he said.

"Our two judiciaries share the same underlying responsibility: to preserve judicial independence and public confidence while adapting our institutions to new forms of litigation and new expectations of access." Technology and administrative reform can support this responsibility, but neither can replace careful adjudication, human judgment and fidelity to law," he said. The National Law Board (AIMPLB) has indicated that it is likely to challenge the order.



"No Boasting": Shashi Tharoor's Advice To Media As India Sends Help To Nepal

Calling for a change in India's attitude towards Nepal, Tharoor said it is important for New Delhi to treat Nepal as a sovereign, equal country.

New Delhi (Agency)

Congress MP and former diplomat Shashi Tharoor has welcomed India's prompt relief for Nepal in the wake of the devastating flash floods, but warned against the 2016-style boasting in the Indian media about the help extended to the neighbouring country. Calling the 2016 episode a low point in India-Nepal ties, Shashi Tharoor, speaking at the NDTV World Anviksha Summit in Kathmandu, said he has always called for a change in India's approach to Nepal. In 2016, when Nepal was hit by a massive earthquake, the coverage of Indian relief efforts in sections of the Indian media had led to widespread anger and resentment among the Nepalese people.

Calling the media coverage then "problematic", Tharoor said those in distress



and getting help need not be told so by those who are giving help." During the earthquake, India provided commendable help, but the way the media covered it, the boasting was in bad taste. That was a low point. Even though the assistance given by India was tangible, the coverage of it was problematic," Tharoor said, adding, "Media

needs to be as sensitive about the relationship as the government.

Commending the instant response of the Government of India to the flash floods tragedy, Tharoor said that's what neighbours do. "I am sure there will be more relief and the government will do whatever is needed. We are the nearest neighbours to Nepal and stand in solidarity. That's how it is done." Calling for a change in India's attitude towards Nepal, Tharoor said it is important for New Delhi to treat Nepal as a sovereign, equal country. Calling the undeclared 2016 economic blockade of Nepal "a Himalayan blunder", Tharoor said it damaged Delhi-Kathmandu ties. "I have always argued that India needed to change its approach to Nepal. I have been an open and vocal critic of the undeclared economic blockade of 2016.

Man shot dead at home in Gurgaon, family blames friend

Gurgaon.(Agency)

A 25-year-old man was found shot dead inside the bathroom of his rented house in Rajiv Nagar on Wednesday morning, leaving cops to unravel conflicting accounts of what happened after two men claiming to be UP Police personnel knocked on the door.Digendra, who was from Bijnor, was staying with his live-in partner and had been working at a bakery in the area for around a month and half. His sister had come to stay with him for Rakshabandhan, while his friend Pankaj had been at the house for the past few days.According to the family, the incident unfolded around 6am when someone knocked on the door and identified themselves as UP Police personnel. Digendra and Pankaj then went into the attached bathroom. Soon after, a gunshot rang out from inside.Digendra's sister and partner raised an alarm. The family alleged that the men who had identified themselves as UP cops left after hearing the gunshot. Sector 14 police were subsequently informed, but police are yet to establish whether the men were actually from UP Police.The family accused Pankaj, who was inside the bathroom with Digendra, of shooting him. Police, however, said preliminary probe suggested the possibility of suicide and were examining all circumstances surrounding the death. Sources said both men have criminal records. Multiple cases, including an attempt to murder case, were registered against Digendra in UP, and he was released from jail in June.Police took the body to Civil Hospital before sending it to the mortuary. A forensic team examined the bathroom and collected evidence. Inquest proceedings have been initiated.“Things will be clear after the autopsy on Thursday,” a police officer said, adding that the exact cause and manner of death would be established after the autopsy and further investigation.

Noida plans auto showroom hub along eway

Noida.(Agency)

Noida Authority has planned to develop an automobile showroom hub in Sector 105 along Noida Expressway. It has invited automobile dealers and manufacturers to develop an organised auto showroom and allied commercial hub. The Authority has earmarked a 12,596-square-metre commercial land parcel for the proposed development with a permissible FAR of 4.0. The land parcel is 456m in length and has a minimum width of 19.96m. Eight plots have been planned on the land parcel. It includes five plots for auto showrooms, one multi-level parking plot, two restaurant plots and one additional commercial plot. The showroom plots range from about 2,231 sqm to 2,300 sqm, while the multi-level parking plot measures 2,261 sqm. Two 500-sqm plots have been earmarked for restaurants.Noida already has several automobile dealerships, particularly around Udyog Marg and other commercial and industrial sectors. However, these dealerships have developed individually rather than as part of a planned automobile hub. The proposed Sector 105 development aims to bring multiple automobile brands together at one designated location.A multi-brand hub would allow customers to compare different brands, models and prices at a single location. The proposed complex also includes allied commercial facilities and parking, making it more of an automobile-retail destination than a collection of individual showrooms.The area is surrounded by wide roads and will be helpful for test drives, movement of vehicle inventory, service vehicles and deliveries.

DU PhD scholar falls to death from 27th floor of Ghaziabad highrise

Noida.(Agency)

A 24-year-old PhD scholar from Delhi University died after he allegedly fell from the 27th floor of a highrise in Siddharth Vihar. Police said they were yet to ascertain whether it was a suicide and are examining his phone as part of the investigation. Vaibhav Singh, a resident of Jodhpur, Rajasthan, was pursuing a PhD at Delhi University's Deshbandhu College and had been staying at his relatives' third-floor flat in Prateek Grand Society since Aug 18. Kotwali ACP Upasana Pandey said a security guard, deputed at the tower, was the first to find the body around 7 pm on Tuesday, when he heard a loud thud and went outside to check. The guard allegedly found a severely injured Singh on the road and informed the society's supervisor and other residents. “The youth was rushed to a nearby hospital but he had already succumbed to his injuries by then. Police have sent the body for autopsy and the reports are awaited,” the ACP said.Vijay Nagar SHO Dharam Pal Singh said police were assessing CCTV footage shared by the society. Initial probe shows Singh walking to the stairs on the third floor around 7 pm. Another footage showshim take the lift to the 27th floor. “His body was recovered a short while later,” the SHO said. Police have recovered Singh's phone and are checking call records and other details. No complaint has been submitted in the case so far.The incident comes days after a 26-year-old MSc physics student at IIT Delhi allegedly fell to his death from the sixth floor of the institute's building on Aug 22. The incident triggered protests by other students who sought an examination of broader issues contributing to student distress, including denial of academic projects, housing-related difficulties and inadequate support systems, along with greater transparency on IIT's mental-health protocols.

MAHANAGAR METRO

Gurgaon’s flooding problems rooted in Congress-era mistakes of destroying natural pathways: Inderjit

Gurgaon.(Agency)

BJP and Congress on Wednesday traded charges on who is to blame for the city’s chronic waterlogging problem, two days after many children had a harrowing time after their schoolbuses got stranded in heavy inundation after rain at Subhash Chowk and parents faced a harrowing time getting to them and pulling them out.Union minister and Gurgaon MP Rao Inderjit Singh said Gurgaon’s waterlogging problem “is rooted in the development that took place over old traditional drainage channels during the Congress era”.“These natural water pathways were meant to carry rainwater from the Aravalis towards the Yamuna and have since been disrupted. The short-term measures we are taking today are only band-aid solutions. The permanent answer is to recreate the old

drainage routes through underground tunnels, just as we build metro tunnels, and restore the natural flow of water,” Inderjit added.BJP’s Bhiwani-Mahendergarh MP Rao Dharambir Singh, meanwhile, told a news channel no one could have anticipated the city’s growth in population, housing and vehicles six decades ago, referring to planning parameters the city has rapidly outgrown. Asked when the problems would be addressed, Dharambir referred to the new masterplans of Delhi, Haryana and Gurgaon and defended the administration’s efforts to manage waterlogging and traffic.While Inderjit is not wrong about destruction of the city’s drainage channels, the BJP govt faced questions from Congress about



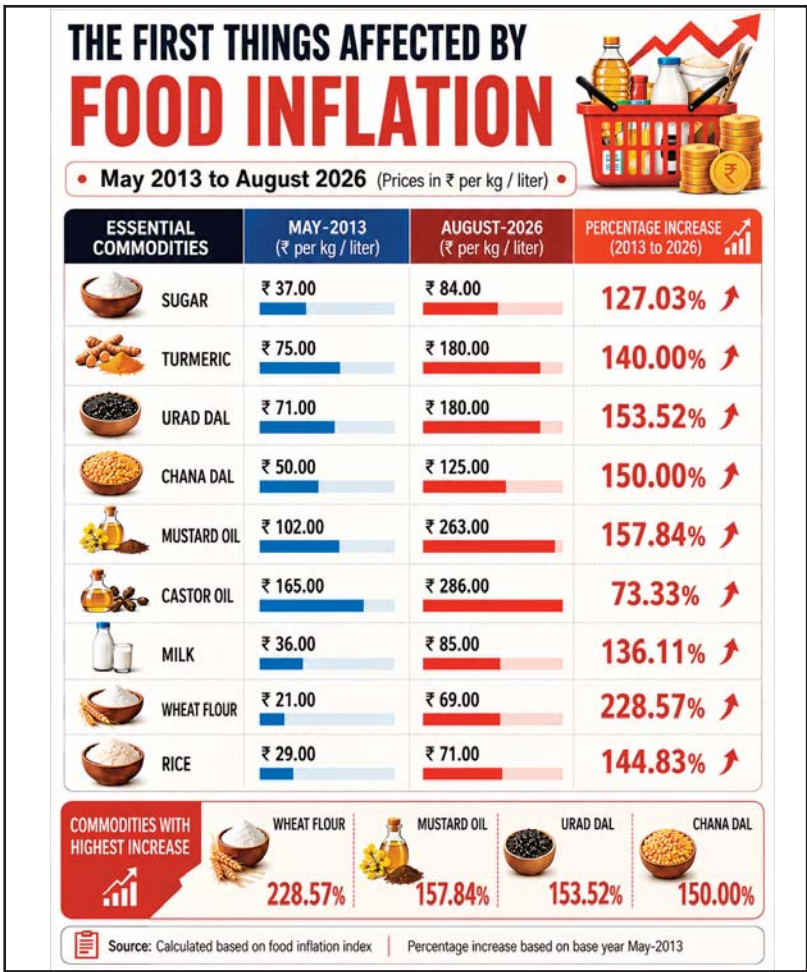
what it had done over 12 years since it came to office in the state in 2014.At a news conference in Delhi, Congress MP Deepender Singh Hooda said, “The BJP govt and elected representatives in Gurgaon should apologise to residents for the city’s recurring civic problems, including waterlogging, poor sanitation and poor infrastructure.” He alleged

large sums had been spent on drainage and sanitation without producing adequate results and sought accountability of urban development authorities GMDA and HSVP as well as MCG.Hooda also sought a CAG audit of the Rs 15,000 crore that he claimed had been collected from Gurgaon residents through EDC and IDC (external and internal development charge). He also demanded bigger central funding for expansion of Delhi Metro.State minister and Badshapur MLA Rao Narbir Singh acknowledged govt’s responsibility, saying BJP had been in office for more than a decade and could not simply claim the problem was not its fault. “Twelve years is a long time. We have to accept that whatever needed to be done has not been done to the extent it should have been.

Sagbara Farmers to Receive Forest Land Rights Based on Evidence; Consensus Reached to Settle 80,000 Pending Claims Across Gujarat

Mahanagar Metro Desk

GANDHINAGAR — In a major breakthrough for tribal cultivators, the Gujarat Government has agreed to initiate the process of granting forest land rights to farmers across 12 to 13 villages in the Sagbara taluka of Narmada district, subject to the submission of necessary documentary evidence. The decision follows a high-level meeting between key state ministers and senior tribal leader and Member of Parliament Mansukh Vasava.The meeting also addressed the broader issue of approximately 80,000 forest land claims pending across Gujarat. The government has committed to expediting the resolution of these legacy claims for eligible beneficiaries based on required verification and documentation.Two Decades of Cultivation and Ongoing ProtestsAccording to MP Mansukh Vasava, residents from 12 villages in Sagbara taluka have been cultivating forest land for nearly 20 years. Over the past two years, territorial disputes with farmers from neighboring Umarpada taluka had intensified, escalating local socio-economic tensions.Demanding formal land titles, Sagbara farmers had been staging a continuous dharna for the past 15 to 16 days. Taking cognizance of the prolonged agitation and local unrest, the state administration stepped in to facil-



itate an on-ground resolution.Ministerial Delegation to Visit Sagbara Post-RakshabandhanTo engage directly with the agitating farmers, the state government has scheduled an on-site visit by senior ministers following the Rakshabandhan festival. State Forest Minister Pravin Mali and In-Charge Min-

ister Ishwarsinh Patel will visit Sagbara to assess the situation firsthand.The ministers will convene review meetings with local administrative officials and hold direct talks with the protesting farmers. Land claims concerning roughly 1,300 local farmers will be examined on-site, with authorities outlining the exact eligibility

criteria and mandatory evidentiary documents required to establish tenure rights.Action Plan for 80,000 Pending Claims StatewideHighlighting the wider scope of the decision, MP Vasava stated that Gujarat currently has nearly 80,000 forest land claims awaiting final settlement.The government has agreed that cultivators who have historically farmed forest land and can furnish documentary proof in accordance with statutory guidelines will have their cases systematically reviewed and resolved. The entire verification and settlement exercise across the state is projected to take three to four months. \The extended ministerial deliberations also covered key administrative and social issues affecting tribal communities, including the issuance of caste certificates.The high-level meeting was attended by Minister of State for Home Harsh Sanghavi, Tribal Development Minister Naresh Patel, Forest and Environment Minister Arjun Modhwadia, alongside leaders Jairam Gamit, P.C. Baranda, Ganpat Vasava, and senior officials from the Forest and Revenue departments.Following the ministerial site visit, the government will verify individual field claims, examine ground evidence, and proceed with granting formal land titles to eligible tribal farmers under established regulatory frameworks.

Deep impact: IFFCO Chowk sinkhole derails traffic on MG Road, eway

GURGAON.(Agency)

A sinkhole at IFFCO Chowk slammed the brakes on morning commute on Wednesday, sending traffic crawling along MG Road and leaving long queues between Sikanderpur and the busy junction. With the entire affected stretch barricaded, diversions pushed more vehicles on to roads that were already crowded.The over 10ft-wide hole that opened on Delhi-Gurgaon Expressway service road on Tuesday had widened to more than 30ft within hours. The stretch was cordoned off as a safety measure, cutting off movement towards the U-turn flyover and disrupting vehicles coming from MG Road and Sikanderpur towards Delhi and Sukhrali.By around 10.30am, traffic on MG Road was crawling. “Traffic was moving at a snail’s pace around 10.30am. As it was already peak traffic hour, the cave-in caused further impact on the movement of vehicles,” said Shekhar Sharma, who travels between Delhi and Gurgaon almost daily.For officegoers, the closure meant longer journeys and late arrivals at work. Traffic approaching IFFCO Chowk from Sikanderpur was particularly affected as vehicles from MG Road converged with traffic heading towards the expressway



and Delhi.The disruption also spilled over to roads around IFFCO Chowk and Sikanderpur metro stations. The corridor is a crucial link between the city’s commercial areas, the expressway and Delhi, making any restriction at the junction particularly disruptive during rush hour.The cave-in came a day after heavy rain had already left several parts of the city struggling with congestion. For commuters, Wednesday brought another obstacle on a road network already under pressure. Traffic police were forced to regulate

movement and divert vehicles. “A deep and dangerous sinkhole suddenly appeared on a service road near IFFCO Chowk on Tuesday. It created a serious risk to motorists during peak traffic hours,” police spokesperson Sandeep Turan said.Traffic inspector Mahavir and his team reached the spot after receiving information about the collapse and cordoned off the stretch, installing reflectors and barricades around the sinkhole. Police also alerted GMDA and NHAI, whose technical teams reached the site.Officials said the road would remain restricted until the underground

sewer problem was examined and rectified. A preliminary inspection found a 1,000mm-diameter GMDA master sewer line beneath the affected stretch. Leakage from the old line is suspected to have eroded the soil and created the void below the road.GMDA is now diverting sewage to a nearby manhole and using pumps to dewater the site. The sewer carries waste from DLF Phase 2, MG Road and IFFCO Chowk towards the Behrampur treatment plant.“Pumping machinery has been deployed at the site and sewer water is being diverted towards a nearby manhole to reduce the flow and prevent further erosion,” GMDA CEO PC Meena said. The pipeline will be inspected after dewatering to determine the extent of the damage.NHAI said road restoration could begin only after the sewer line was rectified. “Our agency and machinery are ready to carry out the road restoration as soon as possible,” an official said. The cave-in also briefly disrupted water supply in tail-end areas, including DLF Phase 1 and Sushant Lok-I, after GMDA shut supply for nearly five hours as a precaution. An inspection found the water pipeline intact.

Mumbai police book 3 people, deploy force after Parel clash

Mumbai. (Agency)

The Mumbai police Thursday booked three people in connection with the clash in Parel Wednesday night following an Eid procession and deployed additional force as a precautionary measure. "We have launched a manhunt to apprehend the accused," a police officer said. The police said they have yet to determine what triggered the tensions. "There



are several social media posts and people are making different claims. However, at this stage it's very premature to say why tensions erupted as we are investigating the matter," the officer added. Earlier in the day, the police said there is no need to panic. "We suspect both groups shouted slogans and there was a verbal altercation between them. Appropriate action was taken, and the situation is now under control," the officer added.

Manoj Sharma, Joint Commissioner (Law and Order), appealed to the people not to believe in rumours. "There is no such issue anymore. Senior officers are present at the site, and the situation is completely calm," Sharma said.

Reports of stone pelting and the use of mild police force emerged, though The Indian Express could not independently verify the claims.

Lumpy virus hits Himachal Pradesh, 4 animals dead, 48 cattle infected in Hamirpur

Hamirpur. (Agency)

Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD) has resurfaced in the district of Hamirpur. Approximately 48 cases of the lumpy virus have been reported from various areas of the district over the past four to five days. Four bovines have also died from the disease in the district.

The highest number of cases (12) has been reported from the Nadaun area, while two cases each have been recorded in Bhoranj and Sujampur. Following the detection of symptoms in livestock in other affected areas as well, the Animal Husbandry Department has intensified monitoring and treatment efforts. The Animal Husbandry Department has received around 13,500 vaccines to combat the lumpy virus. These vaccines have been dispatched to veterinary hospitals and relevant centres to ensure timely vaccination of livestock in vulnerable areas. The department is advising livestock owners to immediately contact the nearest veterinary hospital if symptoms of the disease are observed. Last year, approximately 16,000 animals were vaccinated in the district. A large-scale vaccination drive was also conducted in 2023 following a significant outbreak of the disease.

Haryana Police arrest six more in Rs 1.24-Crore 'Fake CBI Officer' cyber fraud

Panchkula. (Agency)

Haryana Police have arrested six more accused in a Rs 1.24-crore cyber fraud in which a senior citizen from Faridabad was allegedly terrorised by fraudsters posing as CBI officials and made to transfer his savings to multiple bank accounts on the pretext of verification, a police spokesperson said. With the latest arrests, 13 accused have so far been arrested in the case, as seven persons had been apprehended earlier, the spokesperson of Haryana Police said. The six accused have been identified as Raunak Pal, Rakesh Pal, Shubham Rai, Aman Dubey, Omkar and Ranjit, all residents of Uttar Pradesh. The arrests were made by the Cyber Police Station Central, Faridabad.

According to the Haryana Police spokesperson, preliminary investigation revealed that Omkar and Ranjit allegedly brought youths from Bihar, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh, got bank accounts opened in the names of firms and subsequently provided these accounts to cyber fraudsters. Aman Dubey allegedly arranged premises and documents required for setting up the firms.

Police said three other accused — Shubham, Rakesh and Raunak — were allegedly in contact through Telegram with fraudsters operating from abroad.

Surat BJP leader's daughter-in-law found dead, son accused of abetting suicide

Nidhi Singh's brother Aditya Kumar rushed to Surat after learning of her death and filed a police complaint against Saurabh Singh and his friend.

Ahmedabad. (Agency)

The son of a BJP leader in Surat has been named in an abetment to suicide case after his 24-year-old wife was found dead at their home on Tuesday. Saurabh Singh, 26, is the son of Shashi Singh, former vice-president of the BJP women's wing in Surat. A woman friend of Saurabh has also been named in the case. Originally from Muzaffarpur in Bihar, Nidhi Singh married Saurabh Singh two years back. Her family has now alleged that Saurabh was in an extramarital affair and this led to quarrels between the couple. Shashi Singh has told police that she returned home on Tuesday evening and found her daughter-in-law hanging in her bedroom. No one was at home at the time. Shashi then called her husband, Sanjay Singh, and son Saurabh. She also informed the police. The Singh family has its roots in Bihar's Sitamarhi, but has lived in Surat for several years now. Nidhi Singh's brother



Aditya Kumar rushed to Surat after learning of her death and filed a police complaint against Saurabh Singh and his friend. Based on the complaint, an FIR has been registered at Kadodara police station. Sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita related to abetment



to suicide and cruelty by a husband or his relatives against a woman have been invoked in the case. Aditya Kumar has alleged an affair between Saurabh Singh and his woman friend and that they were in a relationship even before he married Nidhi.

"Nidhi learnt about her husband's illicit relationship, and quarrels erupted between them regularly. Nidhi also shared this issue with her parents and family who live in Bihar. Even after regular warnings, Saurabh Singh continued his illicit relationship," the complaint says. Kadodara police inspector V A Desai said, "Based on the allegations made by Aditya Kumar, we have started a probe against Saurabh Singh and his woman friend. We are collecting evidence about their relationship. Nidhi warned him to end the relationship and not to bring her home, but he continued to do so. The doctor, while carrying out the post-mortem, found a suicide note hidden in her undergarments. Perhaps she hid the note because she did not want her in-laws to find it, fearing they would destroy it," the police officer said. Bharat Rathod, the chief of BJP's Surat district unit, said, "We have checked with the Kadodara Police and found that Shashi Singh has not been named in the FIR.

Sukhbir Singh Badal takes on MP Amritpal Singh: 'those who destroyed Punjab, now active in guise of devout Sikhs'

Ludhiana. (Agency)

Certain forces that destroyed the peace of Punjab in the 1980s have now become active in the guise of devout Sikhs, Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) president Sukhbir Singh Badal Wednesday said as he launched a scathing attack on Khadoor Sahib MP Amritpal Singh.

"The forces which assassinated former SAD president Sant Harchand Singh Longowal and party leader Bhai Shaminder Singh and who attacked Gurcharan Singh Tohra have become active again. Let us unite to shun those who have taken on new identities in the garb of devout Sikhs. If we do not do this, they will do to you what they have done to me. They will loot your houses and our 'Gurughar'. They will usher in 'gunda raj' and destroy the state," Badal said.

The SAD chief was addressing the second phase of his party's 'Punjab Bachao' campaign in Malaut. It was his first public address after he was attacked in Nanded in

Maharashtra on August 13. He sustained injuries to his right hand in a 'kirpan' attack by a Nihang Singh inside a gurdwara. The attacker was later arrested.

Taking on MP Amritpal Singh, who heads



the 'Akali Dal Waris Punjab De' outfit, Badal alleged that such persons are "stooges" of the Delhi-based parties that want to finish off SAD, Punjab's only regional party". He asked how a person who came from Dubai as a clean-shaven youth and reinvented himself as the 'Waris' (heir

of Punjab could be trusted. "This complete ignorance of the Sikh 'rehat maryada' was the reason why he used Guru Granth Sahib as a shield during a protest march to a police station," Badal said, and asked how a person who propounded that he was spreading awareness about drugs had no control over his brother who was a drug addict.

The SAD chief said it was also a fact that Amritpal was accused of being part of a conspiracy in connection with the murder of Waris Punjab De activist Gurpreet Singh Harinau. He further claimed that Amritpal's family were born Congressmen "and had never protested against the attack on the Darbar Sahib" against the anti-Sikh riots of 1984. Badal also took on Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann over

the issue of anti-sacrilege law. "He passed the law going against the Sikh 'maryada' but no one challenged him except the SAD. This shows all these elements are ganging up against the SAD but have nothing to say against Mann or even the Congress party which attacked Sri Darbar Sahib."

Day after Kutch raid: Chemical precursors for duplicate liquor came from outside Gujarat, say police

The police seized 10,000 red flasks (of 180 ml) resembling those of a known brand of Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL), many of them filled with a liquid, more than 600 litres of an unidentified chemical and liquor making apparatus in Adipur.

Ahmedabad. (Agency)

A DAY after a police team reporting directly to Border Range Inspector General (IG) Chirag Koradia busted a 'duplicate' liquor racket in a shop in Adipur area of Gandhidham city, Kutch, the police said on Wednesday that it had come from outside Gujarat.

The police seized 10,000 red flasks (of 180 ml) resembling those of a known brand of Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL), many of them filled with a liquid, more than 600 litres of an unidentified chemical and liquor making apparatus in Adipur, days after a major spurious liquor tragedy in Bhavnagar district where methanol-laced liquor was sold in 750 ml bottles of another famous brand of IMFL.

Subsequently, an FIR was registered at Adipur police station and the investigation handed over to the Local Crime Branch



(LCB). SP Sagar Bagmar said, "It primarily appears that the two arrested accused brought all these chemicals and equipment

to Gujarat from out of the state just two days ago and none of the liquid filled in the flasks had been sold to anyone before they were placed under arrest. We are looking for two more suspects." Hiteshkumar Khimji Bambhaniya (33), resident of Santacruz in Mumbai, Maharashtra, and Radhakishan Dalchand Jat (44) of Mathura, Uttar Pradesh, were detained by the IG's raiding team and then handed over to the Kutch (East) Police. After the FIR was filed based on a complaint by a police personnel on behalf of the State, both men were placed under arrest. SP Bagmar confirmed that a local court on Wednesday granted the police nine-days remand of the two men.

Powerloom worker threw stones at Vande Bharat 'for fun': RPF

Surat. (Agency)

It was a powerloom worker who pelted stones at the Vande Bharat train carrying Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel, Lakshadweep and Daman and Diu and Dadra and Nagar Haveli Administrator Praful Patel and other passengers on Tuesday, a Railway Protection Force (RPF) official told The Indian Express on Wednesday. Pintoo Kumar, who migrated to Surat from Odisha's Ganjam, did it "for fun", the official said. Had it not been for the Mumbai-Ahmedabad double-decker train driver, who flagged a stone-throwing incident on his train near Surat, the RPF would not have caught Pintoo red-handed.

A few minutes after the first attack, Pintoo pelted stones again, this time at the Vande Bharat, when he was returning home from work. Also aboard the VIP section of the train were Anandiben's daughter Anar and actor Anang Desai, whose photos the Governor's official X handle shared on Tuesday. Anandiben was in Daman as the



chief guest for the inaugural Monsoon Festival, which began on August 23. Pintoo Kumar was arrested and booked for endangering the safety of passengers travelling by railway (section 153) and

trespassing on railway property (section 147) of the Railway Act.

As per Ankleshwar RPF inspector Attar Singh, around 6.20 pm on Tuesday, they received information that stones were pelted

Kashmir's last surviving local militant had largely remained unnoticed till July

Srinagar. (Agency)

With Jammu and Kashmir Police announcing a reward of Rs 15 lakh for information leading to his arrest and plastering his photographs in South Kashmir and Srinagar, 22-year-old Mohammad Lateef Bhat has become one of the most wanted men in the Valley. According to police records, Bhat is currently the only surviving local militant active in Kashmir, even as security agencies believe that 20-30 Pakistani nationals and operatives linked to the banned Lashkar-e-Taiba continue to remain hidden in the Valley's dense forests. "Any person having reliable information regarding the whereabouts of the above mentioned individual is requested to immediately contact security forces," reads the message in the poster.

A resident of Khrewan Chader village in South Kashmir's Kulgam district, Bhat is believed to have joined the militant ranks in 2025. Security agencies say he remained largely unnoticed until July 2 this year, when he was captured on a surveillance camera in Shopian along with Zakir Ahmad Ganai, another Lashkar operative. Soon after, security forces launched a joint operation in which Ganai was killed, while Bhat managed to escape. Police have accused Bhat of carrying out two separate attacks in South Kashmir last month. A head constable with the Special Operations Group, Ashiq Hussain, was shot dead in a crowded market in Anantnag on July 22. Nine days later, two non-local workers were shot dead at a brick kiln in Kulgam's Kilam village. These were the first militant attacks reported in the Valley since the Pahalgam attack in July last year. After the killing of the police head constable, over 3500 suspected underground workers were detained across the. Bhat studied at Government Higher Secondary School in Ashmuji before enrolling in Government Degree College, Kulgam, to pursue a bachelor's degree.

However, he did not complete his studies. Before going underground in early 2025, he briefly worked as a glazier. Investigators believe Ganai played a significant role in influencing Bhat to join militancy. In November 2025, an outfit calling itself the Kashmir Revolutionary Army (KRA) publicly announced that Bhat had joined its ranks.

Had it not been for the Mumbai-Ahmedabad double-decker train driver, who flagged a stone-throwing incident on his train near Surat, the RPF would not have caught Pintoo red-handed.

at the Ahmedabad-bound 12931 near Utran Railway Station in Surat. The RPF patrolling staff were alerted to carry out checks of the Railway track areas between Kosad and Utran Railway stations in Surat. A stone had hit the windowpanes at seat number 7 in the C-1 coach. No injuries were reported in the incident. The train driver then alerted the Ankleshwar station officer. Attar Singh said: "We have arrested Pintoo Kumar (31), who lives in Bharthana and works at a powerloom factory in Surat city. On Tuesday, he was returning home when he first pelted stones at a double-decker express train on the Ahmedabad-Mumbai route, and later at the Vande Bharat Express. During interrogation, he confessed to having committed the act for fun. He stays with his elder brother in Surat and hails from Ganjman district in Odisha." Sources said Anandiben Patel was returning to Ahmedabad in the Vande Bharat Express, which she had boarded from the Vapi Railway Station in Valsad district. The governor is visiting her home state on a break and is expected to return to UP on Thursday.

Before and after popping the caste question in Census

In a historic departure from policy, the Census of 2027 is, for the first time since independence, enumerating castes other than the communities identified as scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. The decision addresses a persistent contradiction in public policy that while caste remains central to affirmative action, welfare and political representation, estimates, especially of other backward classes, are still based on data collected in the 1931 Census. The colonial censuses from 1872 to 1931 treated caste as a key to understanding and governing India. They recorded and ranked thousands of communities, often converting fluid identities into rigid official categories. Enumeration hardened boundaries, encouraged competition for status and became an instrument of colonial administration. Independent India deliberately broke from that practice, and from 1951, official policy confined caste enumeration to SCs and STs. The exclusion of other castes was, ostensibly, a conscious attempt to foster common citizenship rather than reproduce colonial ethnography. The drawback of this policy was that it created an evidentiary vacuum. The Kalelkar and Mandal commissions sought to identify socially and educationally backward classes, on the basis of the 1931 Census. Courts have since mandated in several landmark judgements that policies should rest on contemporary, quantifiable evidence.

Current data could, no doubt, strengthen the evaluation of affirmative action, welfare targeting and representation, and replace speculative claims. Disaggregated data by gender and geography (state and district-level) would be especially valuable because caste structures vary sharply across India.

Enumerating caste in a census is, however, not a simple matter of adding a question to the questionnaire. India has thousands of castes, sub-castes, clans, sects and occupational names. Names and identities vary across regions. While central and state OBC lists exist, they do not fully coincide. Unrestricted self-reporting may produce lakhs of variants and unrelated entries. The Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC) of 2011 demonstrated that self-declaration without a settled coding framework produced several lakh entries, including spelling variations, surnames, clans, sects and occupational descriptions. Rationalisation of the returns proved exceptionally difficult. Ultimately, the socio-economic data of SECC were released, but the caste data were not. Religion adds another complication. SC status is presently confined to Hindus, Sikhs and Buddhists, whereas ST status is not restricted by religion. In the case of OBCs, religion has no bearing. In fact, in some states, religious minorities and converts have been accorded OBC status irrespective of their social or economic status.

The key lessons from previous experience are that, firstly, methodology—including the question, coding rules, transliteration and treatment of ambiguous entries—must be finalised and tested before enumeration. Secondly, institutional responsibility must be unambiguous. While caste enumeration should remain within the professional and statutory framework of the census organisation, the use of the data should clearly be the responsibility of the respective line ministries and departments of the state and central governments. Finally, there should be absolute clarity beforehand why the data are being collected, when they will be published and how they will inform policy. A classification protocol is a basic requirement in this regard. The National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC), state backward classes commissions (SCBCs) and the Census organisation should jointly develop a harmonised classification framework that must respect state-specific lists while permitting national comparison.

Change gears to build capabilities

India must become a more attractive destination to set up new industries

THE Union government's recent decision to bring another 405 defence items under domestic production signals a broader shift in Indian economic policy: from removing barriers to building capabilities. While welcome, the real challenge lies in creating the conditions for investment in sectors whose returns may take years to materialise. GeographicReferenceFor decades, India's economic reforms focused on the ease of doing business. Liberalisation dismantled the Licence Raj and the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code strengthened creditor rights. Tax reforms simplified compliance and digital governance reduced transaction costs. Investments in physical and digital infrastructure improved connectivity. These reforms were necessary and removed many obstacles that hampered private enterprise. Yet today's economic challenge differs from that of 1991. The conflicts in Ukraine and West Asia, the US-China technology rivalry and growing competition over energy, semiconductors and critical minerals have shown how quickly trade and supply chains can become instruments of geopolitical pressure. The question is no longer how easily a business can be started or expanded, but whether firms have the incentives, financing and policy certainty to build capabilities that may take years to pay off. The wider global context has changed. An economic order that rewarded efficiency is giving way to one that prizes resilience, technology and industrial capability. Supply chains are being redesigned not simply to lower costs but also for security. A shortage of a mineral, a disruption in shipping or a restriction on access to a critical technology can now have consequences far beyond trade. India's decision to establish critical-mineral processing parks for lithium and nickel reflects its recognition of this shift. The next step should be to build integrated regional value chains, linking resources and processing with research and manufacturing. GeographicReference

Like India, the major powers and blocs are making efforts to confront this challenge. The US is rebuilding industrial capacity through large-scale incentives for domestic manufacturing. The European Union is pursuing strategic autonomy in critical technologies. China continues to integrate finance, industry and technology behind long-term national priorities. What was once treated largely as a matter of commercial competitiveness is increasingly becoming an issue of national security. Countries that fail to adapt risk remaining consumers of technologies developed elsewhere, not producers of technologies that shape the future. Earlier reforms reduced friction. The

next generation must reduce uncertainty and reward long-term commitment. With this aim, the new reform agenda must address five priorities: deeper capital markets; incentives to mobilise money that does not demand quick returns; stronger links between research and industry; procurement that rewards innovation; and greater regulatory predictability.

Capital markets do not naturally favour such investments. Where regulatory uncertainty is high and policy appears prone to frequent change, financing tends to be short-term. Investors naturally prefer businesses that show returns sooner and with greater certainty. India's financial system reflects this bias. GeographicReference Banks are the principal source of corporate finance, but are



designed primarily for secured lending, not long-duration innovation. This needs to be addressed. Corporate bond markets are relatively shallow, while pension and insurance funds play only a modest role in financing industrial assets. Venture capital has flourished in consumer technology and digital services, but deep technology, advanced manufacturing and clean energy continue to face funding gaps once they move beyond the startup stage. Mobilising patient capital must be a priority. India has substantial household savings, yet only a small proportion reaches long-duration productive investment. Measures to deepen corporate bond markets, expand the role of pension and insurance funds, encourage innovation-focused investment vehicles and reduce regulatory barriers to long-term institutional investment can help channel more capital into long-gestation industrial projects. Finance alone, however, cannot create technological capability. India's research institutions, expanding startup ecosystem and growing manufacturing

ambition provide a strong base to build on, yet translating laboratory research into commercially successful products remains an exception. Universities, laboratories and industry frequently operate in silos. Our universities need stronger technology-transfer departments, incentives to patent and commercialise discoveries and deeper industry partnerships. They also need closer alignment with the skills that emerging industries require. Public research funding should increasingly reward commercial outcomes alongside academic excellence.

Public procurement offers another powerful lever for turning technological capabilities into market opportunities. The government remains India's largest buyer across defence, healthcare, transport and energy. Procurement systems focused on the lowest cost can discourage innovative domestic technologies whose advantages emerge only over time. The procurement policy should increasingly reward quality, innovation and indigenous technological capability while maintaining transparency and competition. Government demand can provide the early market that allows promising technologies to move from laboratory to commercial scale. It needs to be leveraged for larger benefit.

Tax, accounting and regulatory frameworks must reinforce such incentives. Investors in projects with long gestation periods need confidence that taxation, sectoral regulation and contractual commitments will remain broadly predictable. Policy stability is itself an economic asset. Countries that consistently attract large-scale industrial investment often do so not because they offer the largest subsidies, but because they minimise policy uncertainty. None of this implies a return to State-directed industrial policy. Governments worldwide have a mixed record of picking winners. Instead, their role is to create stable rules, reduce information gaps, invest in public goods and share early-stage risks where markets alone may not do so. They must ensure that market incentives reward productive investment. The government should not replace private capital; it should reshape the conditions in which such capital is willing to take longer-term risks. India's experience has shown that reforms can transform economic performance. Earlier reforms unlocked entrepreneurship by reducing state control. The next generation must unlock long-term investment by reducing uncertainty and strengthening the financial, regulatory and research environment in which innovation can flourish. The ultimate objective is self-reliance in the capabilities that India needs to realise its long-term economic, technological and climate ambitions.

Sharper estimates, clearer planning to address sugar high

The government needs to focus on making crop production estimates far more transparent and precise, especially in a country where food inflation has toppled regimes

India is headed for a bittersweet festive season this year. The price of sugar, an essential ingredient for festive confections, has been climbing so sharply that the Union government has been forced to announce a raft of measures to contain it. Over the past few weeks, tighter stockholding limits have been announced for bulk traders, shorter duration mandated for holding inventories and duty-free imports allowed for the first time in nearly a decade. The common Indian is yet to feel their effect on the purse. The average retail price across India this August is almost 35 percent higher than the previous August and 30 percent higher than the month before. Wholesale prices, too, have taken a similar leap. The salty truth is that India's sugar output has been falling from a decadal high of 37 million metric tonnes recorded four years ago. This year, the initial estimate of 34 MMT has been watered down to around 30 MMT, near last year's level. The government has strenuously maintained that ethanol



production has not contributed to the price rise, as diversion to produce the biofuel reduced from 12 percent in 2022-23 to 9 percent in 2025-26. But the rollout of E20 petrol—implemented from April 1 with little consultation—is bound to make a dent in the sugar available for consumption. Denying any shortage, on Monday, the Indian Sugar Mills Association claimed that

traders' speculation had contributed to the price inflation. Large-scale buyers can hardly be faulted for mopping up when the government estimated a bounteous harvest of this water-sensitive crop even though El Niño-induced disruptions were predicted by early 2026. The Centre has also officially blamed a fungus (red rot) and an insect (top borer) for crop losses. The government needs to focus on making crop production estimates far more transparent and precise, especially in a country where food inflation has toppled regimes. Bihar Minister Shrawan Kumar's claim that costlier sugar would not affect the large section of Indians who are diabetic should be parked in the growing corner of counter-intuitive claims. It should be noted that prices of onions, too, are on the rise. At this moment, the prospect of cheaper sugar is clearer beyond mid-October, when the new crushing season commences.

Time for Yoshida Doctrine 2.0

➤ Doctrine 1.0 focused on how Japan could recover without becoming a permanent vassal of the US

INDIA and Japan added an important layer of defence cooperation to their bilateral ties when Japanese Defence Minister Shinjiro Koizumi signed a memorandum on Maritime Security Cooperation with his Indian counterpart Rajnath Singh in Delhi on August 20 to deepen coordination between the Indian Navy and the Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force.

This is the second high-level bilateral interaction between the two nations and signals a new dynamism in their Special Strategic and Global Partnership. In early July, Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi made her first official visit to India for the 16th Annual Summit with PM Narendra Modi and for the two leaders, who are committed to the Indo-Pacific vision of former Japanese PM Shinzo Abe, the blueprint is encouraging.

The joint statements dwell on preserving the freedom of navigation in the Indo-Pacific and opposing unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force. Yet the question that has haunted this partnership since 2014, when Modi made Tokyo his first foreign destination, remains unanswered. Both nations share a deep anxiety about China, but have not converted it into a deployable, deterrent capability. The precedent that captures Japan's current predicament is the Yoshida Doctrine. After the enormity of Hiroshima-Nagasaki, PM Shigeru Yoshida faced a deeply traumatic "America dilemma". As a defeated, occupied nation, how could Japan recover without becoming a permanent vassal of the US? His solution defined the Japanese strategy for 70 years: seek security under the US umbrella, focus all national energy on economic recovery and keep diplomacy low-profile. The doctrine worked. Today, PM Takaichi faces the inverse — a "China dilemma", which is far more complicated. China is Japan's largest trading partner and the centre of its supply chains. It is also its biggest security

threat, from the East China Sea to Taiwan. The numbers are stark. In 2004, Japan-China trade was about \$170 billion. In 2024, China's exports to Japan alone were \$152 billion, with the two-way trade being around \$300 billion and a \$42.5-billion deficit for Japan.

India's bind is even sharper. India-China trade was \$13.6 billion in 2004. It crossed \$30 billion in 2008, when China became India's largest goods partner, and hit \$127.7 billion in FY 2024-25. The deficit ballooned from \$1.4 billion to \$99 billion in the same period.

In 20 years, India-China trade grew nine-fold while India-Japan trade quadrupled from \$5 billion to \$22.8 billion. De-risking has not meant de-linking.

Hence, Modi and Takaichi need a Yoshida Doctrine 2.0 equivalent that would be appropriate for China. If the original template was security from the USA and prosperity from the world, the new framework must be: de-risk from China without decoupling from it; deter China without provoking war; and diversify partnerships so as not to be hostage to either Washington or Beijing.

The August 20 maritime agreement can be its foundational page and the superstructure patiently erected over time. The first pillar is economic security as a strategy. PM Takaichi warned in July about the "weaponisation of the economy and non-market policies." Both sides agreed to cooperate on critical minerals, semiconductors and resilient supply chains.

Over 1,400 Japanese firms operate in India, half in manufacturing. Japan's pledge of \$61 billion in investment over the next decade gives India a valuable manufacturing fillip and gives Japan an alternative to China. Bilateral trade must touch \$100 billion in a phased manner. This is Yoshida 2.0: economy first, but de-risked. The second pillar is defence tech sharing as real

deterrence and here budget numbers matter. Japan has done in three years what it had not done in 70: breach the 1% of GDP cap. Its defence budget was \$48.5 billion in 2019 and increased to \$55.1 billion in 2024. For FY2025, with a supplementary infusion, it will hit about \$70 billion or 2% of GDP. This is the Takaichi nudge.

India's trajectory is the inverse — GDP share is down,



while absolute numbers are up. Defence spending was 2.25% of GDP in 2014-15 and is 1.89% in FY2024-25. India has the fifth-largest defence budget at \$85 billion, but is still dwarfed by China's \$336 billion and America's \$954 billion. Japan is slowly loosening its post-war arms export curbs, a historic shift, and Tokyo's offer to transfer design and production for six Mogami-class frigates under Make-in-India with BrahMos integration is the first major platform offer. But the real game-changer will be in domains where Japan leads and what India needs: underwater domain awareness, space-based maritime

ISR, unmanned systems and anti-submarine warfare capabilities.

The third pillar should be a joint West Asia diplomatic outreach, even as Tokyo is reviewing its strategic priorities after the wars in West Asia. Japan is highly hydrocarbon-dependent and the recent outreach to Saudi Arabia signals a new initiative. This is where interests converge since both India and Japan are major energy importers. A joint India-Japan framework for maritime security in West Asia would be low on provocation, high on utility and give freedom of navigation meaning beyond East Asia.

Both nations also face a dollar dilemma that complicates their ability to deal with external challenges. The yen fell to 163 to the dollar in July 2024, a 40-year low, and is now around 156. The rupee hit an all-time low of 96.98 to the dollar in 2025-26, down from 45 in 2004 and 83 in 2024. In FY23, Japan paid 123.9 billion yen extra for US equipment due to the weak yen. Why has deeper cooperation not happened? Not for lack of political will at the top. The constraint is domestic inertia. In Japan, there is a pacifist sentiment and a risk-averse industry. In India, there is a preference for outright purchase over co-development. The way out is to ring-fence two or three projects from the procurement maze and treat them as strategic, not commercial: underwater domain awareness, maritime ISR and secure communications as Modi-Takaichi flagship projects. The Yoshida Doctrine succeeded because it made a hard choice and stuck to it for 70 years. The new doctrine for China needs the same clarity. For Modi and Takaichi, the opportunity is historic: move from rhetoric to implementation, from shared anxiety to shared deterrent capability.



Happy Raksha Bandhan

Rakshabandhan has become the cynosure of brotherhood, is celebrated around the world, with the rays of love and affection blooming in it. Rakhi festival is not only a ceremony of tying rakhi but it has moreover transited into the trust and love which a girl ties on her brothers wrist and hope that this hand will always hold her in every ups and downs of life.

As per the Hindu calendar rakhi festival falls on the shravan purnima (full moon day), which corresponds to the month of July August as per the English calendar. The day is being celebrated as per the Indian calendar, which changes every year, hence the festival also falls on the different dates of the English calendar. So all brothers be ready to stand on the threshold of festive moments and see your sister beaming with joy when you surprise her with amazing gifts.

In Mumbai, rakhi festival is called Nariyal purnima or coconut full moon and keralan people called the occasion as the avani avittam. Every region has their own names and ways for enjoying the occasion but the real spirit of the day enliven in every part, which swabs the true color in the mirage of the India.

How to decorate Rakhi ki Thaali

Raksha Bandhan is celebrated every year on 'Shravan Purnima'. On the auspicious day of Rakhi, sisters visit their brothers to perform the rituals of Rakhi. The ritual of Raksha Bandhan essentially includes tying of Rakhi by the sisters, on their brothers' wrist. Before tying Rakhi, the sisters would perform an aarti, apply tilak (by mixing rice grains and roli) on their brother's forehead and then offer them sweets. So the thaali should have the following:

- A well decorated Thali- stainless steel, silver, brass or a decorative tray will also do.

- Two small containers- one for water and the other raw uncooked white rice.
- Rakhi
- 01 ghee diya
- Matches to light the ghee diya
- Fresh broken flowers
- Roli thread bundle
- Agarbatti/incense stick- preferably small

■ Sweets – mithai
In the heart of the thali, paint a Swastika, which is a symbol of Lord Ganesha. Buy three small size containers, one for rice and water, second for placing roli and the third for keeping a diya and an incense stick stand. Pick up a nice beaded rakhi that can further enhance the charm of your thali. Border your Rakhi thali using fresh flowers. If you want to place the sweets in the thali itself, then you can either keep them on the corner side or take a separate container and your rakhi thali is ready.

According to the Indian tradition, the family members get ready for the rituals early in the morning. They take a bath to purify mind and body before starting any preparations. After offering the rituals to the deities of the family, the sister perform aarti of their brothers and ties Rakhi on their wrist. Then, they put kumkum powder on the forehead of their brother and offer sweets.

How to celebrate Raksha Bandhan

The festival of Raksha Bandhan is celebrated on full

moon day (Purnima) of Shravan Masa. As per the scriptures, Raksha bandhan should not be celebrated in the Bhadra (inauspicious) time of Shravani and Phalguni Nakshatra. According to a belief, King in Shravan Nakshatra and tying of thread (Rakhi) in Phalguni Nakshatra, is worst and harmful for the public. Hence, while tying Rakhi, it is important to remember the auspiciousness to time.

At the time of tying thread, Bhadra is kept in consideration. Rakhi is not tied at the time of Bhadra.

Points of Consideration on Raksha Bandhan

The person, who wants to celebrate this festival, should take bath early in the morning and wear new clothes. After this, family god should be worship, then, Rakhi is also worship. Remember your ancestors and take the blessing of elders. A colored thread can be taken as a Rakhi. This thread also be of silk. Gold, saffron, sandalwood, Akshat and grass is kept on the thread, and, worshiped. While worshipping, the person should

fully concentrate on Puja, for whatever time, he is sitting in it.

After worshipping Rakhi (thread), brother is applied Tika (auspicious mark on forehead) of saffron, Roli and Akshat should be used. Rakhi is tied on the right hand.

Dishes of Raksha Bandhan

No festival of India is complete without delicious dishes. For every festival some special dishes are prepared. Like, on Raksha Bandhan, Ghewar, Shakarpore, Namakpare etc. are made. Ghewar is used as the main sweet of Shravan Maas.

This sweet is eaten, throughout the month, in northern India. Additionally, a dish called Ghugni is prepared, which is eaten with curd and Puri. Halwa, Kheer and Puri are also, famous food of this festival.

History Of Raksha Bandhan

lasted between the two states. Rani Karamvati avoided a calamity by sending Rakhi to Humayun and thus, making him her brother. The origin of Raksha Bandhan has to be traced to the incarnation of the God-Sermonizer of Gita which takes place at the fag end of every world cycle, when it is the time of extreme degeneration of values. The incorporeal selfluminous (Jyotirlingum) Lord Shiva (the world benefactor) descends in the corporal medium of Prajapati B'rhma and raises non-violent spiritual children of Prajapati B'rhma. The sacred thread (Rakhi) was tied to brothers to take a vow of purity that protects the honour of sisters and the tilak applied was for soul consciousness. In return for this vow of purity. Lord Siva granted them protection from negativity and vices and ultimately liberation from grief and suffering. This ancient Hindu festival of brotherhood and pure love at present is celebrated by sisters going to brothers, tying Rakhis, applying Tilak and offering sweets and the brothers, assuring the safety and honour of their sisters. Arun (reddish orange: the colour of rising sun) in rakhis has great importance that the rakhi conveys to the brother, "Oh my brother, till the last drop of your blood, the responsibility of my safety in emergency is yours." In Bundelkhand (U.P.) this is also called Kajri pumima or Kajri navami, when wheat or barley is sown in small container, watered everyday for seven days and worship of mother Bhagwati is done. This is observed by those women who are blessed with a son recently.

Raksha Bandhan, also known as Vish Torak (destroyer of venom), Punya Pradayak (bestower of boons) and Pap Nashak (destroyer of sin) has a wider and deeper spiritual significance and it is also linked with Siva. There are scriptural stories also of Indrani and Yamuna having tied rakhis to their brother Indra and Yama respectively, which brought them benefit but that does not throw any light on the original purpose of the festival. With the passage of time, the custom of the priest tying rakhi to every one in the family also came to be discontinued. It began to be celebrated as a brother-sister ritual.

A legend related to this festival is that once in a battle between the demons and gods, the gods were defeated. Their king Indra



went to the priest of gods Brihaspati and said that such circumstances shamed him into sacrificing his life. Meanwhile Indrani arrived

and said that she would plan a way out. Next morning after prayers, Indrani tied a cotton band on the wrist of Indra and sent him to the battle field. Indra won the battle. History also emphasizes the importance of this festival. Once there was a war between two Rajput states. Once was getting help of the Mughal in the times of Jahangir. Panda of one state sent cotton band (Rakhi) to the chief, who was under the help of the Mughals. That chief, getting the Rakhi, turned the tables and attacked the Mughals. Thereafter cordial relations

Wishes on Rakhi

Feng Shui Rakhi

work desk, it helps the wearer to get rid of work pressure and achieve quick fulfillment of goals. Tortoise Rakhi Bands should be placed in the northern part of the bedroom, living room or office for long life and good fortune. In the same way, Dragon Rakhi

should be placed in the eastern end of the house, or anywhere in the office for excellent prospects in business. Recently introduced, these Feng Shui

Rakhis have successfully managed to carve a significant market share by its popularity and utility. The belief that it will bring good luck for the brothers or any other users, sisters are looking forward to buy one for their dear brother.

Bandhan

has made this ages-old traditional festivities of Rakhi tying, blended with the new innovations. Feng Shui is understanding the role of negative and positive energy in the life of an individual and suggests the best possible solution to remove those bad elements.

How to wear Feng Shui Rakhi

While shopping for these Feng Shui Rakhis, we all must note that these Rakhis come with specific instructions for use. These Rakhis are instructed to be use as follows : Gold Fish Rakhi is used to be kept in the southwestern part of your bedroom for prosperity, luck, and a happy married life. When Laughing Buddha Rakhi is kept at the

In India, Rakhi celebrations are about strengthening the bond of love between brothers and sisters and fostering brotherhood. This festival is not a ritual, custom and tradition that can change over time but its style of celebration has become contemporary. Since ages, Raksha Bandhan is being celebrated in the same way. All the traditions are

or any other shop, all are flooded with attractive rakhi gifts to attract people.

The celebration of Rakhi, in India, is well known for its carnival spirit and strengthening the bond of love between brothers and sisters. In fact, India is globally known for its colorful festivals and ever-green tradition. Celebrated with different rituals, family get-

well being. In return, brothers pamper their sisters and present beautiful gifts to lure them. They also promise to take care of her and stand by her side in any circumstances.

After performing all these rituals, the whole family reunion to enjoy and have fun. Then all of them share the delicious



followed with the same enthusiasm. The gaities have only blown up to a larger scale. Rakhi festival is the celebration of the chaste bond of love amongst the siblings.

Everyone start preparing for this festival much in advance. About a month before the commencement of raksha bandhan, you can see fancy and colorful rakhis in every market. Ladies start shopping for rakhi and rakhi gifts quite early. They shop for new clothes and beautiful rakhi gifts specially the one that have to be sent to their brothers staying far. Almost every shop, be it sweet shops, garment shops, gift shops,

together and sweets, Raksha Bandhan is about sentiments, love and enjoyment. Like any other festival, rakhi has its unique significance.

On the day of Rakhi festival, the festivity of this auspicious day begin by the day break. After taking bath early morning, people get ready by wearing new clothes and gather for worshipping. After invoking the the blessings of the Gods, the sister performs brother's arti, puts tika and chawal on his forehead and ties Rakhi amongst chanting of mantras. Sisters whole heartedly give sweets to their brothers to eat which in turns add more sweetness in the Raksha Bandhan celebration and pray for their

Rakhi Celebrations

food, tasty sweets, gifts, music and dance. It is a day to remember all the memorable time spent together for those who, for any reason, are far away from their family. Emotions can also be expressed through e-mails, e-cards, rakhi greeting cards and rakhi through Internet. The overflowing emotions of siblings cannot be stopped on this day.

Rabindra Nath Tagore started gathering of people like 'Rakhi Mahotsava' in Shantiniketan to propagate the feeling of brotherhood among people. He believed that the this will invoke trust and feeling of peaceful coexistence. Raksha Bandhan, for them, is a way to harmonize the relationship of humanity. The tradition continues as people started tying rakhis to the neighbor and friends.

Rakhi is an auspicious festival that holds a special significance in Indian culture. It represents the chaste and subtle bond of love and affection between a brother and a sister and calls for a celebration with the best of festive food. Rakhi is a day to arrange a lavish feast for your brothers and sisters with finger-licking recipes. Try out the following dishes and share your favourite rakhi recipe with us. We shall publish your Raksha Bandhan recipe on this page along with your name. Go ahead and send your special rakhi recipe to add more excitement to the festival. Please click here to send your Rakhi Recipe.

[List of Rakhi Recipes](#)

[Banana Cutlets](#)

[Vermicelli Kheer](#)

[Vegetable Pancakes](#)

[Pakorras](#)

[Mal Pua](#)

[Khoya Burfi](#)

[Tamarind RiceBanana Cutlets](#)

[Ingredients: 6 Raw bananas](#)

1/4 cup fresh peas, boiled

1/4 cup beet root, boiled and finely chopped

1 tbsp. each mint leaves & coriander leaves finely chopped

4-5 green chillies finely chopped

1" piece ginger grated(optional) 1/2 tsp. each mustard & cumin seeds

1/2 tsp asafoetida

1/2 tsp. turmeric powder

1 tsp. Amchur oil to deep fry 1-1/2 cups Breadcrumbs

salt to taste

Method Steam whole bananas with skins, till soft. Remove skins. Mash while still hot. And keep aside. Heat 2 tbsp. oil in a pan, add seeds, allow to splutter. Add asafoetida, mint, coriander, chillies, ginger, amchur, peas and beet root. Mix this well with the mashed bananas. Add salt and other spices as well.

Heat oil in a pan. Shape the cutlets with the mixture, roll them in the breadcrumbs and deep fry till golden brown. Drain and serve hot with green chutney or tamarind

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Rakhi Recipes



m o m

Powder

1/2 tsp. Saffron

Dry fruit and resins

Boil the milk in a broad mouth pan add the roasted Vermicelli and sugar to taste. Let it boil till thick. Dissolve saffron in 1tsp. Water. Add cardamom and saffron to the thick vermacelli and milk mixture Garnish with soaked almonds and resins.

Vegetable Pancakes

Ingredients

250 grams Besan

Raksha Bandhan3 tbsp Maida

2 tsp cornflour 3 tsp rice flour 1

teaspoon baking powder 1 Potato

(large) finely chopped 1 carrot (large)

finely chopped 2 onion, chopped 1/2

cumin powder

1/2 turmeric powder 3 spring onions,

Ingredients

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Raksha Bandhan3 tbsp Maida

2 tsp cornflour 3 tsp rice flour 1

teaspoon baking powder 1 Potato

(large) finely chopped 1 carrot (large)

finely chopped 2 onion, chopped 1/2

cumin powder

1/2 turmeric powder 3 spring onions,



finely chopped 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice 1-1/2 cups (375 ml) oil 1 cup (250 ml) water, approximately Salt and red chilly powder to taste 300 ml water Oil for shallow frying.

Method

Mix all the ingredients and make a thick batter with water. Keep aside for 10 minutes. In the mean time grease a pan and heat it. Now drop the batter in 2" rounds in the pan fry till deep yellow on both the sides. Serve hot with green chutney or tomato ketchup.

Pakorras

Ingredients

250 grams besan

1/2 tsp. turmeric

1/2 tsp. red chilly powder

1 tsp. dried pomegranate seeds 1

tsp. Coriander paste

1 medium sized onion, chopped

1 medium sized potato, chopped

1 green chilly chopped. Salt to taste

Method

Mix all the ingredients to make a

thick batter. Heat oil in a frying pan.

Drop chunks of the batter in

hot oil and fry till light brown.

Drain cut into small pieces

using a blint knife and re fry till

crisp. Serve hot with green

chutney and tamarind chutney

Mal Pua

Raksha BandhanIngredients

250 grams plain flour, sifted

water 1 tsp. powdered sugar

oil for frying Sugar Syrup 500

grams sugar 625 ml water

Garnish

1/4 teaspoon ground

cardamom

Rose water

Fresh cream sweetened

Sugarsyrup

Put sugar and water in a

saucepan and bring to boil. Simmer for 8-

10 minutes till thick syrup is formed.

Mix sifted flour, sugar and water to form

smooth, medium thickness batter and

keep aside for 30 min. Heat oil in a

shallow flat bottomed pan. Carefully

spread the mixture in the pan and fry till

golden brown. Transfer the pancake into

the sugar syrup. Serve hot garnished with

cardamom, rosewater and fresh cream.

Khoya Burfi

Ingredients

1 Lt. Milk

75 gms sugar

50 grams naryal chura (coconut powder)

20 grams pistachios, chopped

20 grams almonds, chopped

Method

Boil milk reduce heat and let it simmer

for 45-minutes to one hour till thick paste

like. Keep stirring in between. Add sugar

and coconut powder and stir till sugar

dissolves. Grease a thali and pour the

batter. Garnish with pistachios and

almonds. Let it cool and cut into square

or rhomboid pieces.

Tamarind Rice

Ingredients

3 cups Rice cooked with 1 tbsp

butter/ghee/oil 1/2 cup thick Tamarind

extract 3 tbsp Channa Dal 2 tbsp grated

Ginger 2 level tsp Red Chili powder

1 level tsp Turmeric powder 1/4 tsp

Asafetida powder 6-8 Green Chillies slit

in two

3-4 dry Chillies Few Curry Leaves 5 tbsp

Cashew nuts (broken up and kept)-

Optional 1/2 cup Vegetable Oil Salt to

Taste

Method

1. Heat 1/2 cup vegetable oil. 2. When the

oil is hot add the chana dal, dry chillies,

curry leaves, green chillies, asafetida

powder or a small piece of solid

Asafetida. 3. Fry until the Dal is golden

brown. 4. Now, add the salt, turmeric

powder, chili powder, grated ginger,

broken cashew nuts and stir for a few

minutes on a low flame. Don't let the

turmeric and chili powder burn. 5. Boil

for 15-20 minutes till the quantity

reduces to half and the mixture becomes

thick. 6. Put the cooked rice in a dish, add

the prepared mixture and required

quantity of the Tamarind extract. 7. Mix

to the rice and stir well. Keep covered

until ready to serve.



168 Indians from southern states missing in Nepal floods, most from Tamil Nadu

At least 168 people from southern states are stranded, missing or being traced in Nepal, including 103 from Tamil Nadu and 53 from Kerala. Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana have also reported missing or stranded residents, with authorities coordinating rescue efforts.

Delhi. (Agency)

Union Minister Kiren Rijiju recently shared a video of himself swimming in a river in his home state of Arunachal Pradesh. He explained the techniques one must adopt to tackle the gushing waters of the state's rivers, even calling himself a "khilladi (pro)". The Congress on Wednesday used the clip to take a swipe at Rijiju as videos of waterlogging in the Parliament complex went viral following heavy rain. "Yahan ka khiladi Kiren Rijiju, one more reel please," the Conome Congress leaders were trolling him for his swimming techniques.

He asserted that swimming in the "toughest rivers" has been an easier task for him since childhood, reaffirming himself as the "khilladi". They were travelling in three vehicles when the sudden flooding of the river in Rasuwa district left the vehicles

stranded.

Another company, Mahadev Kailash Yatra from Chennai, took 49 Tamils to Nepal for the same pilgrimage. Authorities are trying to obtain complete information about their whereabouts and safety.

KERALA

NORKA-Roots said around 53 Keralites, including family members, adults and children, were estimated to be stranded in Nepal following the floods.

NORKA stands for Non-Resident Keralites Affairs, a dedicated department of the Government of Kerala formed on December 6, 1996, to address the needs and grievances of Keralites living outside India or in other Indian states.

NORKA Roots CEO Rajesh Madhavan said 17 sets of information regarding stranded

Keralites had been received through the Chief Minister's Office and the Chief Secretary's Office and collated by around 3



am on Thursday.

Officials are trying to identify their last known locations and have shared available details with the concerned authorities to help pinpoint their whereabouts.

KARNATAKA

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister G Parameshwara said five people from Bengaluru who had travelled to Nepal were missing and efforts were underway to contact them.

He said a senior government officer and, if necessary, a minister would be deputed to Kathmandu to oversee relief and rescue operations for those stranded there.

ANDHRA PRADESH

Andhra Pradesh authorities have identified seven residents as missing or stranded in Nepal. Four have been traced safe but remain stranded, while efforts are underway to locate three missing people. Minister Nara Lokesh is personally leading and coordinating rescue efforts to ensure the safe return of all Andhra Pradesh residents stranded or missing in flood-affected areas.

BRICS: Delhi traffic police chalk out plan for smooth movement

Delhi. (Agency)

The Delhi Traffic Police has chalked out a detailed traffic management plan for the BRICS Summit to be held in the national capital from September 11 to 13, with arrangements being made to ensure smooth movement of delegates as well as commuters, an official said.

As part of the preparations, the traffic police has held meetings with navigation and cab-hailing platforms, including Google Maps, Ola, Uber and Bharat Taxi, to explore ways to incorporate traffic advisories and diversion plans into their navigation systems, Additional



Commissioner of Police (Traffic) DK Gupta said.

"The summit will see participation of delegates from several states as well as foreign countries, has national importance and is expected to lead to movement of dignitaries and other participants on important routes across the city," he said.

The traffic police has identified 22 diversion points as part of the plan. Traffic personnel deployed for the summit will undergo training and be familiarised with designated routes, diversion points and movement plans. They will also assist commuters and facilitate traffic movement during the summit, Gupta said.

Treat waterlogging as disaster: Delhi L-G

Delhi. (Agency)

Following a spell of over 100 mm rainfall that brought large parts of the capital to a standstill for two consecutive days this week, Lieutenant Governor Taranjit Singh Sandhu directed officials to treat waterlogging as a "disaster" and mount a war-footing response.

Calling for a whole-of-government approach, he asked all departments to work in close coordination on the ground, ensure real-time redressal of complaints, and prioritise swift relief to citizens as several key roads were submerged and traffic movement severely disrupted on two consecutive days.

The L-G gave these directions during a meeting with senior officers to review the situation late Tuesday evening. Tuesday was reportedly the capital's wettest August day in two years. "Directed that the situation be treated as a disaster requiring a war footing response, with a 'whole of government' approach and every department and agency working in complete synergy rather than in silos," Sandhu said in a post on X on Wednesday.

He asked officials to prioritise complaints raised through the media, social media and other platforms and stressed continuous monitoring.

On Tuesday, waterlogging was reported at several key locations, with traffic movement affected on stretches, including ITO towards Mandi House, Mahipalpur, Airport Road, Vikas Marg, Laxmi Nagar, Karol Bagh and the Akshardham flyover. Roads outside the three hospitals, including Safdarjung, AIIMS and RML, witnessed major traffic disruptions.

L-G in his post also said, "In the meeting, we underlined the need for close and continuous oversight to ensure directions are followed in letter and spirit, with timely action and visible results on the ground."

"Our priority and focus must remain clear, swift relief to citizens and a safer, better-managed Delhi," the post further read. On July 28, Sandhu reviewed the status of measures undertaken for the prevention of waterlogging and cleaning of drains and steps against vector-borne diseases. Since March 2026, Sandhu has held several review meetings on monsoon preparedness, desilting of drains and measures to prevent waterlogging across the city.

Health can't be compromised: SC gives Centre 2-week ultimatum on junk food labels

The Supreme Court has asked the Centre to decide within two weeks on front-of-pack warning labels for packaged foods. The court linked the issue to public health concerns as obesity and ultra-processed food consumption rise.

Delhi. (Agency)

The Supreme Court has slammed the Centre over front-of-pack warning labels on packaged foods, saying public health cannot be compromised and questioning the government's reluctance to adopt food-labelling standards followed in developed countries.

A bench of Justices JB Pardiwala and K Vinod Chandran has given the Centre two weeks to take a decision on the issue, making it clear that if the government does

not act on its own, the court will consider issuing further directions. The court's intervention comes amid growing concerns over obesity and the rapid expansion of ultra-processed food consumption in India.



During the hearing, Justice Pardiwala questioned the Centre's argument that India could not match international standards on food labelling.

"Should India remain an

underdeveloped country?" the judge asked, saying the issue was being placed before the Centre for its consideration. The court also said that if the government implemented the measure on its own, "well and good", otherwise it would proceed with further directions.

The case relates to a public interest litigation filed by NGO 3S and Our Health Society, represented by advocate Rajiv Shankar Dvivedi, seeking mandatory front-of-pack warning labels on packaged foods to clearly indicate high levels of sugar, salt and saturated fats.

The Supreme Court had earlier expressed dissatisfaction with the steps taken by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), observing that the exercise undertaken so far had not produced a concrete outcome.

Brother-sister duo pose as fake IAS officers, dupe people of Rs 9.8 lakh

Delhi. (Agency)

A man and his sister were arrested for allegedly posing as IAS officers and duping people of Rs 9.8 lakh by promising them government jobs in Madhya Pradesh's Ashoknagar district, police said.

The accused, Tripti Singh Rajput and her brother Sudhanshu Rajput, were arrested by Chanderi police.

The accused allegedly targeted people by claiming that Tripti was an Additional Director of the Madhya Pradesh Tourism Department and the head of the Ministry of Human Resource Development.

They allegedly promised government

jobs with good salaries and demanded Rs 3 lakh per person, police said.

The people, who were later duped,



handed over Rs 9.8 lakh in cash and their documents to the accused in Chanderi on April 7, 2025.

They had promised to pay another Rs 2 lakh later.

The police action followed a complaint made by the duped people around three months ago.

Acting on the direction of Ashoknagar SP Rajiv Mishra, the police laid a trap after instructing the victims to engage the accused in conversation and lure them back to Chanderi with the promise of new job candidates. Tripti subsequently arrived in Chanderi, where police arrested her and her brother. Two of their alleged associates, Tanuj Baishya and Anjali Singh, have also been named in the case.

Police have recovered expensive mobile phones and a car from Tripti and taken the accused to their hideouts in Bhopal as part of the investigation.

Umar, Sharjeel '20 riots masterminds: Police to Delhi HC

Delhi. (Agency)

Activists Umar Khalid and Sharjeel Imam were "masterminds" of the Delhi riots of 2020 and their fresh bail petitions are "illegal" and an attempt to "mislead", the police told the Delhi High Court.

Police made the claims while opposing the fresh bail petitions filed by them in the larger conspiracy case connected to the Delhi riots of 2020.

"It is, at the outset, submitted that the present bail proceedings are misconceived and illegal in view of the following grounds elaborated hereinunder; (a) the present Appellant is one of the 'masterminds' of the Delhi riots (b) the present bail proceedings are in teeth of the binding directions passed by the SC in the Appellant's own case in *Gulfisha Fatima v. State* (Govt. of NCT of Delhi): 2026," the police affidavit said.

The police further said the accused were trying to "mislead" the court by relying on the Supreme Court judgment in *Syed Itikhar Andrabi v. NIA*: 2026, passed in "an unrelated case", and projecting it as a change in circumstances to maintain their bail petitions.

Khalid and Imam had filed appeals against a trial court order denying them bail on July 4. Khalid has also filed an application seeking interim bail until the SC decides whether prolonged incarceration and delays in trial can override bail restrictions under statutes such as the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

The issue has been referred to a larger bench following conflicting opinions from two SC benches. In their appeals before the High Court, the accused have claimed that the trial court "erred" in denying them relief.

The trial court had dismissed their fresh bail applications, saying the SC had already rejected their pleas on similar grounds. The accused had moved the fresh applications after an apex court bench on May 18 expressed reservations about the earlier judgment denying them bail on January 5. Denying relief, the trial court said it had "no option but to follow" the SC's January 5 order.

New Delhi: Drug department flags misleading medicine discount claims, issues advisory to chemists

Quoting the advisory, the department said, "Refrain from displaying or publicising unrealistic, exaggerated, false,

Delhi. (Agency)

The Drug Control Department of Delhi has issued an advisory to all chemist associations and retail pharmacies across the National Capital Territory, cautioning them against displaying or publicising unrealistic or misleading discount claims on medicines.

The advisory comes amid concerns over promotional boards in some medical stores advertising steep discounts such as "up to 60 per cent, 70 per cent and 80 per cent discounts", which the department said could mislead consumers about actual pricing.

Quoting the advisory, the department said, "Refrain from displaying or publicising unrealistic, exaggerated, false, misleading or vague claims regarding discounts or prices of

medicines or otherwise used for promoting sale of prescription medicines."

It further stated that while selling medicines below Maximum Retail Price (MRP) is legally permitted, "any discount offered is genuine, transparent and actually available to the customer and is verifiable from the sale bill and purchase records of the firm."

The advisory also stressed procurement norms, stating, "Such purchases shall be from genuine Drug License Distributors/Wholesalers."

Referring to the nature of medicines, the department observed, "Medicines are not ordinary consumer goods. They are essential healthcare products directly connected

for with the health and well-being of



patients." It also stated that, "Procurement, sale or distribution require a higher degree of responsibility, transparency and ethical conduct."

The department flagged concerns that exaggerated discount claims, particularly those appearing significantly below purchase prices from authorised distributors, could raise questions about the genuineness of procurement sources.

Chemist associations have been asked to sensitise their members and ensure compliance, with the advisory.

Ethical standards

Officials said pharmacies must ensure that any advertised discounts match actual billing records and are supported by transparent documentation, reinforcing that medicines require stricter ethical standards in advertising and sale practices.

Stock markets decline in early trade, dragged by HDFC Bank

MUMBAI. (Agency)

Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty traded lower in early deals on Thursday as selling in blue-chip HDFC Bank and persistent geopolitical uncertainty weighed on markets' sentiment.

The 30-share BSE Sensex dipped 45.17 points to 77,422.70 in early trade. The 50-share NSE Nifty skidded 6.40 points to 24,202.45.

Further into the trade, the BSE benchmark traded 108.80 points down at 77,368.68, and the Nifty quoted 26.15 points lower at 24,189.70.

Among the 30 Sensex firms, HCL Tech, HDFC Bank, NTPC, Mahindra & Mahindra, Power Grid and Tata Consultancy Services were the major laggards. Kotak Mahindra Bank, Tech Mahindra, Bharat Electronics and Bajaj Finance were among the winners. "Geopolitical tensions continue to weigh on markets," V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Investments Limited, said. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, traded 0.44 per cent lower at USD 87.45 per barrel.

In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi, Japan's Nikkei 225 index and Shanghai's SSE Composite index quoted higher, while Hong Kong's Hang Seng index traded lower. US market ended in negative territory on Wednesday. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 502.63 crore on Wednesday, according to exchange data. On Wednesday, the Sensex declined 183.15 points, or 0.24 per cent, to settle at 77,472.94. The Nifty was down 126.80 points, or 0.52 per cent, to end at 24,207.75.

Rupee rises 4 paise to 95.40 against US dollar in early trade

MUMBAI. (Agency)

The rupee pared initial losses and was trading with gains of 4 paise at 95.40 against the American currency in early trade on Thursday, supported by easing Brent crude prices.

Brent prices fell below the USD 90 mark for the first time in several sessions amid continuing discussions between Iran and Oman regarding a temporary shipping corridor through the Strait. While no final agreement has been reached, the fact that negotiations are continuing has reduced fears of a prolonged disruption to global oil supplies, forex traders said. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 95.50, then fell to 95.52 against the greenback, registering a fall of 8 paise from its previous close. The domestic unit pared the losses and was later trading with gains of 4 paise at 95.40 against the American currency. On Tuesday, the rupee settled for the day higher by 26 paise at 95.44 against the US dollar. The Indian foreign exchange market was closed on Wednesday on account of Id-e-Milad. "While global attention remains focused on oil and the dollar, an equally important story is unfolding in India. After selling dollars for two consecutive months to support the rupee, the RBI turned into a net buyer in June, purchasing approximately USD 561 million," CR Forex Advisors MD- Amit Pabari said.

A major reason has been the RBI's special measures for FCNR(B) deposits, Overseas Foreign Currency Borrowings (OFCB) and External Commercial Borrowings (ECB). Together, these initiatives have attracted nearly USD 73 billion of foreign exchange inflows as of August 21. "The FCNR(B) window remains open until August 31 and should continue to provide near-term support to the rupee.

Govt mobilises about Rs 3,000 cr from Hindustan Copper OFS

MUMBAI. (Agency)

The government has realised nearly Rs 3,000 crore from the sale of shares in Hindustan Copper Ltd, with the offer for sale (OFS) closing on Wednesday. The OFS received an enthusiastic response from retail investors and was oversubscribed on both days, Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) Secretary Arunish Chawla said in a post on X. "The issue was oversubscribed on both days, and the Government decided to exercise its entire greenshoe option. We thank all investors for their participation and reposing their faith in us," he said. The OFS comprised 5.8 crore shares, including a base offer of 2.9 crore shares and an additional 2.9 crore shares under the greenshoe option. Against 5,802,146 shares on offer, 41,566,840 bids were received at the end of the last day of the OFS, according to provisional data available on the exchanges. The government had proposed to sell a little over 5.8 crore shares, representing up to 6% stake, including the 3% greenshoe option, through the two-day OFS at a floor price of Rs 514 per share. The floor price represented a 10.38% discount to Hindustan Copper's closing share price on Monday. Shares of Hindustan Copper closed at Rs 556.55 apiece on the BSE on Tuesday, up 4.38%. The government currently holds a 66.14% stake in Hindustan Copper. So far in the current fiscal year, the government has mopped up Rs 52,716 crore through PSU disinvestment via OFS in eight PSUs and remittances from SUUTI. With the Hindustan Copper sale, collections under the disinvestment head would rise to about Rs 55,700 crore from minority stake sales in nine PSUs.

Booking an IRCTC ticket? 70% users report forced action, 6 dark patterns flagged

A survey of more than 90,000 IRCTC users across 324 districts has identified six types of dark patterns on the IRCTC website and app.

Kolkata. (Agency)

Booking a train ticket online should be simple: choose a train, select a seat, pay and get your ticket. But for many IRCTC users, the journey does not always go that smoothly. A new consumer survey suggests that passengers are often dealing

with design practices that can push, interrupt or confuse them while booking or cancelling tickets. A LocalCircles survey of more than 90,000 IRCTC users across 324 districts has identified six types of dark patterns on the IRCTC website and app. These include forced action, nagging, basket sneaking, drip pricing, interface interference and bait and switch.

WHAT ARE DARK PATTERNS?

Dark patterns are design features on websites and apps that can influence users into taking an action they may not otherwise have chosen. They can range from repeatedly pushing a consumer to buy something to adding an extra service to the cart, hiding charges until later in the transaction or making it difficult to complete the action the user originally came for. The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has identified 13 such dark patterns under its

2023 guidelines. The survey mapped the responses from IRCTC users against these 13 categories and found six that were reported on the platform.



FORCED ACTION TOPS THE LIST

The most striking finding is that 70% of consumers reported experiencing forced action while booking or cancelling train tickets. The survey asked users whether they had been logged out of IRCTC without an apparent reason while booking a ticket, making it difficult to complete the reservation. Of the 19,425 people who

answered this question, 42% said this happened very frequently, while 28% said it happened sometimes. Another 15% said it happened rarely. In simple terms, a passenger could be in the middle of a time-sensitive booking and suddenly find themselves logged out, forcing them to start the process again.

NAGGING IS ANOTHER MAJOR IRRITANT

The second most widely reported pattern was nagging, experienced by 46% of respondents. This refers to repeated prompts or interruptions while a consumer is trying to complete a transaction. The survey cites examples such as repeated requests to download the IRCTC app, share personal details, enable notifications or consider promotional offers. For someone simply trying to book a train ticket, repeated interruptions can make an already stressful process even more frustrating.

Sensex, Nifty open flat as crude oil slips but investor sentiment cautious

New Delhi. (Agency)

Benchmark indices opened higher on Thursday, helped by a decline in crude oil prices and a positive global market mood after Nvidia reported stronger-than-expected quarterly results. However, the gains remained fragile as geopolitical tensions and elevated US bond yields continued to weigh on investor sentiment.

The BSE Sensex opened at 77,576.76, up 103.82 points or 0.13% from the previous close of 77,472.94. The index later pared gains, trading at 77,435.21, down 37.73 points or 0.05%, at 9:42 am. The Nifty 50 opened at 24,277.60, gaining 69.85 points or 0.29%,

before slipping to 24,208.30, almost flat, at the same time. Oil prices eased after Iran said it was working with Oman to finalise details of an agreement concerning the Strait of Hormuz, raising hopes that the key waterway could reopen and easing concerns over prolonged disruptions to Middle East oil supplies. Brent crude was around \$87.44 a barrel, down 0.46%, while WTI crude fell 0.47% to \$81.84. Nvidia's strong earnings also lifted sentiment across Asian technology stocks. The chipmaker reported quarterly revenue that more than doubled and forecast third-quarter revenue above Wall Street expectations, providing a boost to the global technology sector. Dr. V K Vijayakumar, Chief

Investment Strategist at Geojit Investments Limited, said geopolitical tensions remain a key risk for equities, with both the US-Iran situation and renewed escalation in the Russia-Ukraine conflict weighing on markets.

"Geopolitical tensions continue to weigh on markets. Apart from the U.S.-Iran tensions, there are reports of renewed escalation in the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Wheat prices have shot up and this will have implications for inflation and eventually on interest rates," Vijayakumar said. He added that although US bond yields have softened somewhat, they remain elevated and are likely to restrict a sharp market rally.

Rs 6.5 crore vs Rs 22,000 crore: NCLT clears Subhash Chandra payment plan, Mallya scoffs



New Delhi. (Agency)

The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) has approved a repayment plan under which Subhash Chandra will pay Rs 6.5 crore against admitted creditor claims of about Rs 22,006.57 crore, resulting in a recovery of nearly 0.03% of the admitted claims and a haircut of about 99.97% for lenders. The plan was approved under Section 114 of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) by NCLT Member (Judicial) Nilesh Sharma, who was appointed as the third member after the original two-member bench delivered a split verdict. The decision came despite objections from some creditors, led by LIC Housing Finance, which argued that the proposed

payout was too small and that the plan was "unviable and unlawful". A key consideration for the tribunal was the voting support for the repayment plan received from creditors. While the objecting creditors together held less than 20% of the voting share, the plan was approved by creditors representing 80.81% of the voting share. LIC Housing Finance, whose admitted claim stood at Rs 1,322.39 crore, was proposed to receive only Rs 38.09 lakh, or about 0.028% of its admitted dues. The lender argued that such a small repayment could not justify approval of the plan.

The creditors also pointed out that the repayment plan itself treated the proposed Rs 6.5 crore as indicative rather than certain, and therefore argued that it was tentative and incapable of approval. The NCLT, however, took into account the valuation of Chandra's personal estate by the resolution professional. The tribunal said the valuation showed that his personal estate was worth significantly less than the amount being offered under the plan. It also reasoned that rejecting the plan could leave Chandra facing bankruptcy, which could potentially reduce the prospects of recovery for creditors. If the insolvency process was resolved and Chandra was able to return to financial stability, the tribunal said, creditors could ultimately have a better chance of recovering their dues directly from the principal debtors.

Astrotalk turns unicorn: How astrology became a \$1 billion business

TOKYO. (Agency)

For a company whose business is built around telling people what the future might hold, Astrotalk has just reached a milestone that is very much about the present: a \$1 billion valuation.

The Noida-based astrology and spiritual-tech platform has entered India's unicorn club through an ESOP buyback involving more than 100 employees. The buyback is being funded by profits generated by the company, making the milestone notable not just for its valuation but also for the profitable business it has built. Founded in 2017 by Puneet Gupta and Anmol Jain, Astrotalk began by connecting users with astrologers. Over the years, it has expanded that proposition into a wider spiritual and wellbeing platform, while continuing to build its core astrology business.

FROM ASTROLOGERS TO A SPIRITUAL-TECH PLATFORM

Astrotalk's website says it now has more than 13,000 astrologers on its platform and facilitates over 1 lakh minutes of consultations every day. Users can consult astrologers, attend live sessions, get Kundli matching and access daily horoscopes. But the company has increasingly moved beyond the traditional astrology consultation. Its stated aim has been to retain the ethos of traditional astrology while using spiritual approaches to address modern concerns such as stress and mental wellness.

That has opened up a much wider set of offerings.

The platform now has categories for spiritual jewellery, Rudraksha, Pyrite, Vastu, Dhan Yog and products linked to planets and Mulank. It also has dedicated collections for gifting and spiritual products.

Astrotalk's newer offerings even extend into lifestyle products. Its website currently showcases crystal-infused perfumes, including fragrances positioned around themes such as wealth, confidence and love.

The shift is subtle but significant: astrology is no longer just something users consult Astrotalk for; it is increasingly something they can shop around as well.

THE NUMBERS BEHIND THE ASTROTALK BET

The expansion has come alongside a sharp increase in the company's financial scale. Astrotalk reported revenue of Rs 1,176 crore and profit before tax of Rs 285 crore in FY25. Its current revenue run rate is more than Rs 2,500 crore, according to the company. The company says profitability has remained a focus as it has scaled. That is also what has enabled the latest ESOP buyback.

More than 100 employees are getting an opportunity to sell their ESOPs at the \$1 billion valuation. The company has not disclosed the total value of the liquidity event.

Sugar gets costlier, buying gets restricted: Zepto, Blinkit and Swiggy cap orders

Under the revised conditions, imported raw sugar must be converted into refined sugar within two months and the refined sugar must also be sold within the same period, the government said.

New Delhi. (Agency)

Rising sugar prices could make the festive season a little less sweet for Indian households. With festivals around the corner, demand is set to rise as families stock up on sugar for sweets, desserts and traditional preparations, but consumers are now facing a double squeeze, paying more for sugar while also finding limits on how much they can buy, with quick-commerce platforms and offline retailers capping purchases. Reviewing the situation across quick-

commerce platforms, India Today Digital found that Zepto, Blinkit and Swiggy Instamart have placed quantity limits on some sugar products, restricting how many packs a customer can add to an order. The restrictions vary across products and platforms. On Zepto, for instance, some sugar products carry limits on the number of packs that can be purchased, while the app also flags limited availability for certain products.

Blinkit similarly shows purchase limits on some sugar packs. On Swiggy Instamart, a listing for Supreme Harvest Crystal Sugar showed a cap of two 1-kg packs per order. The limits come as sugar prices have risen sharply, putting pressure on both consumers and retailers at a time when demand is expected to pick up.

And it is not just online shopping.

SUGAR BUYING CAPPED AT OFFLINE STORES TOO

The purchase restrictions have also spilled over into physical retail. Large offline retail chains, including DMart and Reliance have capped sugar purchases at around 2-3 kg per customer



in some stores, reported Times of India. That means consumers are facing restrictions on both sides of the retail market — whether they order sugar online for quick delivery or head to a supermarket to buy it. The timing is significant. The festive season typically brings a sharp increase in demand for

sugar as homes prepare sweets and traditional foods, while sweet shops, bakeries and other food businesses also increase procurement.

WHY IS SUGAR GETTING MORE EXPENSIVE?

The rise in sugar prices has prompted the government to step in with measures aimed at improving supplies and preventing hoarding.

The government has revised the rules for duty-free imports of raw sugar, giving importers more time to process the imported raw sugar into refined sugar and sell it in the domestic market.

Under the original August 20 notification, the government allowed 1 million tonnes of raw sugar to be imported duty-free under a tariff-rate quota (TRQ) until October 31, 2026. Importers were required to convert the raw sugar into white or refined sugar and sell it in India by October 31.

Four teenage students reached Rashtrapati Bhawan to join Raksha Bandhan festival

Agartala.(Agency)

Four students from a Tripura school were poised to have the unique opportunity to meet President Droupadi Murmu in celebration of the forthcoming Raksha Bandhan festival at Rashtrapati Bhawan.

A seven-member delegation from Tripura arrived in New Delhi last evening to take part in a special Raksha Bandhan event scheduled for August 28. The delegation head, Abhijit Samajapati, OSD of the School Education Department, said the group from Tripura will engage in the special event at Rashtrapati Bhawan, highlighting the state's rich cultural heritage and diversity. The seven-member team includes teachers Biswajit Bhowmik and Biplab Deb and four selected students: Meheresia Sarkar, Pratik Sarkar, Rike Deb, and Amit Kumar Sarkar, who hail from Netajinagar English Medium SB School in the West Tripura district and are aged between 10 and 11 years.

Meeting President Droupadi Murmu, the highest constitutional authority in the nation, at Rashtrapati Bhawan during the sacred and emotionally significant festival of Raksha Bandhan is sure to be an unforgettable experience for these young students from Tripura, Samajapati stated.

UPESSC declares UPTET 2026 result: over 13 lakh candidates qualify

Lucknow.(Agency)

Uttar Pradesh Education Service Selection Commission (UPESSC), Prayagraj, has declared the result of Uttar Pradesh Teacher Eligibility Test (UPTET) 2026.

UPESSC Chairman Dr. Prashant Kumar said here on Thursday that UPTET 2026 written examination was conducted on July 2 and 3, 2026, in two shifts each day and on July 4 in one shift, making a total of five shifts. Of these, three shifts were conducted for the upper-primary level and two for the primary level. The examination was held across 955 centers in 60 districts of the state.

In view of the exceptionally high number of registered candidates 19,94,661 the examination was conducted over three days in five shifts. Results were prepared following the comparative evaluation (normalisation) process.

At the primary level (Classes 1 to 5), a total of 7,13,648 candidates appeared for the examination. Of these, 80.07%, or 5,71,435 candidates, were declared successful.

At the upper-primary level (Classes 6 to 8), 10,57,021 candidates appeared for the examination, of whom 71.85%, or 7,59,513 candidates, were declared successful.

Among serving teachers, 1,22,405 teachers appeared at the primary level, of whom 76.29%, or 93,387, were declared successful. At the upper-primary level, 1,46,394 serving teachers appeared, with 77.45%, or 1,13,384 teachers, declared successful.

CEC Gyanesh Kumar lauds TN, Pondy voters high turnout in recent polls

Chennai.(Agency)

Lauding the Tamil Nadu and Puducherry electorate for the record high turn out in the recent Assembly elections, Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar on Thursday said it reflected strong democratic participation.

Talking to reporters on his arrival at the Chennai airport to attend BLOs regional conference here, he said "On behalf of the Election Commission of India, I convey my heartfelt congratulations and appreciation to all voters of Tamil Nadu and Puducherry for participating in large numbers and discharging their democratic duty". The CEC also acknowledged the contribution of various sections involved in the conduct of the elections, particularly Booth Level Officers, heads of educational institutions, teachers and students.

He said he would personally meet and appreciate those who played an important role in ensuring the smooth conduct of the electoral process. "Various sections extended their support in conducting the electoral process transparently and efficiently in India, the world's largest democracy," he said.

The CEC began his day-long visit by chairing a regional conference on "Electoral Literacy Clubs (ELC) and ECINET" and held a direct interactive session with Booth Level Officers (BLOs) to enhance voter outreach, foster constitutional literacy and harness digital operations..

The event was being held under the theme "Learn Democracy, Lead Democracy" and the initiative was aimed at strengthening voter outreach, foster constitutional literacy among future voters, and harness digital platforms for electoral operations.

Rs 250 crore elevated viaduct error at Mumbai Metro 7A may face demolition

If a technical solution is not found, work worth around Rs 250 crore may have to be redone, further delaying the 3.4-km Mumbai Metro Line 7A.

Mumbai.(Agency)

A planning error on Mumbai's Metro Line 7A could force the demolition and reconstruction of nearly 1 km of an elevated viaduct in Vile Parle East, with the height of overhead electric wires exceeding the clearance permitted by the Airports Authority of India (AAI) in the airport funnel zone, authorities said. The mismatch, involving about 2.5 metres, has brought work on the stretch to a halt despite most of the civil construction being complete. If a technical solution is not found, work worth around Rs 250 crore could have to be redone, further delaying the 3.4-km Metro Line 7A connecting Andheri East with Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport.

The line was originally scheduled to open in 2021 and has already missed several deadlines. The latest issue indicates it is unlikely to open in the financial year 2026-27. According to MMRDA officials, the problem concerns the height of the overhead electric equipment required to operate the metro. While the AAI had issued no-objection certificates for the

project when permissions were sought in 2022, the additional height required for the OHE was not factored into the design. The elevated stretch in Vile Parle East, including the Airport Colony station, subsequently progressed. The height issue was flagged in 2025, following



which construction was paused and revised permissions were sought from the AAI. "While we are trying to strike a balance between Systra and AAI, technical issues cannot be solved through compromise. If we do not arrive at a solution, the viaduct may have to be reconstructed," an MMRDA official said.

The civil consultant for the line is a consortium of Systra, CEG and SMCIPL. According to the MMRDA, Systra maintains that it was not responsible for the error, while the AAI has so far not permitted the additional height required for the OHE.

The problem has emerged after substantial civil work was completed. MMRDA data showed that by February 2026, the entire elevated viaduct was complete, while 95 per cent of the elevated ramp had also been constructed. Work on the Airport Colony station was also substantially complete. Line 7A is planned as a 3.4-km extension of Metro Line 7 from Andheri East to the airport. It will connect with the underground Metro Line 3 at the airport, providing a direct link for commuters from the northern suburbs towards south Mumbai. The line comprises about 2.5 km of underground alignment and around 940 metres of elevated alignment, including the Airport Colony station, viaduct and ramp. A questionnaire sent to the MMRDA on August 19 seeking its response went unanswered.

First crater, now cracks: Fresh damage on UP's Rs 36,000-crore Ganga Expressway

Fresh cracks have appeared on repaired patchwork along the Ganga Expressway near Unnao, days after a crater opened on another stretch. The damage has renewed questions over the highway's durability in heavy rain and triggered a sharp attack from Akhilesh Yadav.

Uttar Pradesh.(Agency)

Fresh cracks have surfaced on patchwork carried out on Uttar Pradesh's Ganga Expressway, just about a week after a 10-metre-deep crater opened up on another stretch of the Rs 36,230-crore highway following heavy rain. The latest damage was reported on a section near Unnao, where soil settlement and erosion had earlier been reported. The damaged stretch was subsequently repaired, with the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) carrying out patchwork.

The latest damage has drawn a sharp political response from Samajwadi Party chief



Akhilesh Yadav. "Beware your life is in danger!" Yadav said in a post, referring to the cracks on the expressway. "These countless cracks on the 'Ganga Expressway' that look like the river's currents are bearing witness to

the BJP's corruption," he said, adding that the "BJP's corruption is deadly." The emergence of cracks in the repaired section has raised fresh concerns about the durability of the expressway, particularly its ability to withstand heavy rainfall. On August 18, a massive crater opened up near kilometre 421 on the Meerut-Prayagraj carriageway. A portion of the road and adjoining embankment was reportedly washed away following heavy rain. The 594-km, six-lane, access-controlled expressway was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on April 29. It connects Meerut with Prayagraj and passes through 12 districts of Uttar Pradesh.

He fled with everyone's salaries 18 years ago. A steel container in his kitchen gave him away

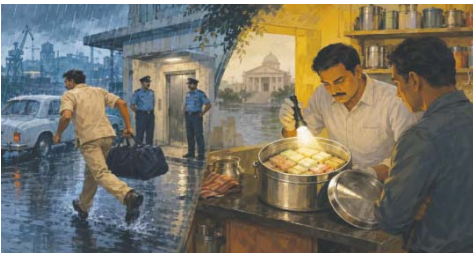
Holding Yadav guilty of theft, the court observed that the discovery of unaccounted cash from his residence conclusively established the crime.

Mumbai.(Agency)

Over 18 years ago, Ramjit Sakur Yadav, who worked at Mandhana Industries Ltd, fled with Rs 20 lakh meant to pay the salaries of his colleagues. But it was a steel container in his kitchen that became a crucial piece of evidence against him. On Monday, a Mumbai magistrate court convicted him of theft and sentenced him to three months of simple imprisonment.

But because Yadav had already spent 7 months in jail as an undertrial following his arrest in July 2008, the court said those 7 months would count toward the 3-month sentence. A co-accused, who was booked for receiving the stolen property, was acquitted for lack of evidence. On July 1, 2008,

Purshottam Mandhana, director of textile firm Mandhana Industries Ltd, had withdrawn Rs 20.25 lakh to distribute wages at the company's



Vikhroli unit. Since heavy rains halted operations, the cash was brought back to the company's Parel office. Accompanied by two security guards, Mandhana's brother placed the cash

bag inside his car. As the guards briefly stepped toward the lift, Yadav — who had been employed as the driver — took the cash and fled. An FIR was registered at Bhoiwada police station, and a parallel probe by the Mumbai Police Crime Branch (DCB CID Unit-4) was launched. Investigators tracked Yadav and seized Rs 5.65 lakh hidden inside a steel container in his kitchen. Holding Yadav guilty of theft, the court observed that the discovery of unaccounted cash from his residence conclusively established the crime. ACJM Khedekar noted that awarding punishment was necessary to send a message to society against breach of trust by employees.

Haryanvi singer Ankit Balyan shot dead in UP's Shamli, Akhilesh Yadav flags 'Jat' angle

Police have not found any connection between Ankit Balyan's online content and the shooting, but are yet to find a clear motive.

New Delhi.(Agency)

Haryanvi singer and YouTuber Ankit Balyan was shot dead outside a gym in Uttar Pradesh's Shamli district on Wednesday evening. According to the Meerut ADG Bhanu Bhaskar, Balyan had just stepped out of the gym in the Kotwali police station area when two unidentified assailants opened fire at him. Police said several rounds were fired and Balyan died at the spot. Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav condemned the attack, saying that Uttar Pradesh's law-and-order situation had been reduced to "zero". He also called for a probe into a possible political rivalry and called the killing as an attack on the Jat community.

Yadav claimed that 18 rounds were fired at Balyan and said the incident had created fear across the region. He further demanded that investigators examine the possibility of political rivalry



behind the murder. According to the reports, there was speculation that Balyan was preparing to contest the upcoming panchayat elections. However, there was no

immediate official confirmation that he intended to enter electoral politics or that his alleged plans were connected to the killing. Shamli Superintendent of Police M P Singh

IMD forecasts four days of very heavy rain in Odisha, Himalayan rainfall to intensify

Panchkula.(Agency)

The monsoon is set to remain active over large parts of eastern, central and northeastern India over the coming days, with the India Meteorological Department (IMD) forecasting four days of isolated very heavy rainfall over Odisha from August 29 to September 1 and an increase in rainfall activity over the western Himalayan region towards the end of the month.

In its All India Weather Summary and Forecast Bulletin issued at 8:23 am on August 27, the IMD said fairly widespread to widespread rainfall is likely over Uttarakhand from August 27 to September 1 and over Himachal Pradesh and Jammu-Kashmir-Ladakh during August 31-September 1.

In contrast, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi and Punjab are likely to experience only isolated rainfall during the seven days from August 27 to September 2. The IMD's seven-day rainfall forecast places both Haryana-Chandigarh-Delhi and Punjab in the "isolated" category on all seven days. Under the IMD classification given in the bulletin, isolated rainfall means rain at 1-25 per cent of reporting stations. This comes after rain was observed at many places over Haryana, Chandigarh and Delhi during the preceding observation period. The IMD said rainfall occurred at many places across Haryana-Chandigarh-Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir-Ladakh, East Rajasthan, West Madhya Pradesh, and West Uttar Pradesh, from August. Odisha is expected to emerge as one of the major rainfall hotspots during the forecast period.

According to the IMD, fairly widespread rainfall is likely over Odisha from August 27 to September 1. Isolated heavy rainfall is forecast on August 27 and 28, followed by isolated very heavy rainfall from August 29 to September 1. The day-wise warnings reinforce the forecast.

Gangajal in hand, UP councillors swore an oath. Now, their video is under scanner

Lucknow.(Agency)

The Shahjahanpur Municipal Corporation has taken cognizance of a viral video from Tuesday that purportedly shows a group of municipal councillors taking an "oath, with Ganajal", to split the civic body's income equally. Shahjahanpur Municipal Commissioner Saumya Gurnani said the video was recorded last year at a private premises. She said the authorities were examining the footage to establish its authenticity and determine the circumstances in which it was recorded. The corporation has 60 elected councillors and 10 nominated members. In the purported footage, a municipal councillor is seen holding a vessel purportedly containing Gangajal and taking an oath: "Whatever income the corporation receives will be divided among all 60 of us. It will be distributed equally. All of us who are part of our group will stand together, and if anyone in the group faces any trouble, we will all support them." Several people can be seen holding water in their hands and repeating the oath. The video also contained an allegedly offensive and indecent remark by one of those present in the hall. Officials said a preliminary inquiry found that the people seen in the video are municipal councillors. The Indian Express contacted several local councillors for their response, but none was willing to comment on the matter.

NEWS BOX

From Delhi's daily wage grind to UFC dream: Rabindra Dhant eyes history for Nepal



New Delhi. (Agency)

The location was the Galaxy Arena in Macau and the date was May 28, 2026. A Nepali fighter from the remote village of Bajhang was making his Road to UFC debut. Not many people knew what to expect from Rabindra Dhant when he stepped up to face Kimbert Alintozon. There were 10 fights scheduled at the Galaxy Arena that day, but the noise inside the venue suddenly began to rise when Dhant entered the cage. Hundreds of Nepali fans had already made their way to the arena, roaring on one of their own.

UFC: FULL COVERAGE

It was the kind of scene straight out of a movie. Dhant dominated the contest and secured a technical knockout victory, moving one step closer to his UFC dream. Before long, the 27-year-old had become a national icon. They called him the Tiger of Bajhang. But the journey to stardom and recognition in the MMA world was anything but straightforward. Dhant comes from a village with no real MMA background or pathway into the sport.

Quiet by nature during his childhood, he eventually made his way to India, working as a daily wage labourer in Pithoragarh and Delhi to make ends meet. MMA was never part of the plan. Instead, he immersed himself in karate, quietly beginning his climb up the combat sports ladder in India. Resources were limited and there was little noise around him. But the results spoke loudly. He went unbeaten in 15 fights across India's regional amateur circuits, won the Indian national amateur MMA championships in 2019 and 2020, and went on to compete for the likes of ONE Championship and Brave CF. Then came his crowning moment: beating India's Chungreng Koren at Matrix Fight Night 17 to win the bantamweight title.

Now, with a 10-1 record, Dhant is one win away from making history. He will face New Zealand's Kasib Murdoch on Friday, August 28, with victory set to bring him a UFC

Stuart Broad, James Anderson reunite at Lord's as England duo get special portrait



London. (Agency)

Stuart Broad and Sir James Anderson were back together at Lord's as England's legendary fast-bowling partnership received a permanent tribute. The pair reunited in the Long Room to unveil a joint portrait celebrating their extraordinary careers in Test cricket. Broad and Anderson combined for 1,308 Test wickets across more than 350 appearances for England. Speaking at the unveiling, the two former England quicks reflected the significance of being honoured together at the Home of Cricket. The portrait was unveiled at 5pm on Wednesday, ahead of England's Test against Pakistan. The honour recognises not just their individual achievements but the remarkable longevity of their partnership, which helped define England's attack for more than a decade.

AN ICONIC ENGLAND DUO

Anderson finished his Test career with 704 wickets from 188 matches, while Broad collected 604 wickets in 167 Tests. Together, they became the first England bowlers to move beyond the 600-wicket mark, while their combined tally placed them among the most prolific bowling partnerships in Test history. Their careers also overlapped for 17 years, with the duo regularly sharing the new ball and producing memorable performances across home and overseas conditions.

The portrait was painted by artist Jamie Routley and will now form part of the collection at Lord's. The MCC's heritage and collections committee currently funds two new cricket portraits each year, with the selections requiring approval from its cricket committee. For Broad and Anderson, the joint recognition also captures something that individual records cannot fully explain.

Hockey World Cup: Indian women look to finish on a high vs Janneke Schopman's Germany

India meet Germany in the fifth-sixth place match to close their Women's Hockey World Cup campaign. India will be up against a familiar face in Janneke Schopman, who will look to prove a point against her former side.

Mackay. (Agency)

The Indian women's hockey team are all set to conclude a brilliant campaign at the women's hockey World Cup on Thursday, August 27. India defied odds and came to the brink of making it to the semi-finals, but will now look to bounce back and finish off their campaign with a win over Germany in the 5th-6th place match. India suffered only one defeat during the whole campaign, coming against the defending champions the Netherlands. They secured a big win

against South Africa and held China, England and Australia. The draw against Australia would end their semi-final race in heartbreaking fashion, but there is a lot for the Indian eves to be proud of. The match against Germany has a couple of sub-plots attached to it. Firstly, it will help them gain momentum heading into the Asian Games next month, where they will look to secure their place in the LA Olympics with a gold medal win. Coach Sjoerd Marijne said his side has got some good rest before the clash in Amstelveen. "This rest was crucial to recover from the setback in the previous match. Now, the team will play against Germany with renewed vigour and freshness," Marijne said to PTI.

"The team has overcome the disappointment of not reaching the semifinals and is now fully focused on defeating Germany and leaving the tournament with a win. We want to improve our game and perform better for the Asian Games." Now comes the main sub-plot to the story and it is in the form of Germany coach Janneke Schopman. The Indian eves

will be up against their former coach in the form of Schopman.

The former Dutch women's team star joined India in 2020 as their analytical coach and working under Marijne and helped them



secure a historic fourth-place finish at the Tokyo Olympics. After Marijne left, she was elevated to the position of head coach and served in the role till February 2024. However, she didn't leave in the best of terms. In an emotional rant, Schopman talked about how she felt marginalised in her role, taking a dig at the Hockey India officials. There will be a point to prove for the 2008 Olympics gold medal winner and

she will look to come back and haunt her former side. World No. 5 Germany ended their Pool F campaign in third place, registering victories over Scotland and the USA while suffering defeats to Argentina and co-hosts Belgium in the second round. Their final-match win over Spain ultimately sealed third spot in the pool. Marijne is aware of the threat posed by the German side, who performed well in practice matches against India. "Germany is a very good team, and we couldn't beat them in the two practice matches before the World Cup. However, our focus will be on improving our performance. It doesn't matter against whom we play, the focus is on us," Marijne said.

INDIA VS GERMANY: HEAD-TO-HEAD

India and Germany have faced each other in 10 matches so far with the European side winning seven out of them. India will take solace from the fact that they did beat Germany in their last match with them by a 1-0 margin during the FIH Pro League 2024-25 season.

Kylian Mbappe's 'insane' hat-trick extends perfect start for Mourinho's Real Madrid

Kylian Mbappe scored a second-half hat-trick as Real Madrid beat Real Sociedad 4-1 at the Bernabeu. The win kept Jose Mourinho's side perfect in LaLiga despite first-half boos from home supporters.

New Delhi. (Agency)

Kylian Mbappe produced a stunning second-half display to score a hat-trick as Real Madrid thrashed Real Sociedad 4-1 at the Santiago Bernabeu. The France forward's treble helped Jose Mourinho's side recover from a shaky opening half and make it two wins from two in LaLiga. Real Madrid had been jeered by their home supporters before half-time after struggling to impose themselves on the game. Speaking after the match, Mourinho, who returned for his second spell as Madrid manager this summer, praised his players for responding to the pressure. "There's something I don't like doing, but sometimes I have to do: I don't like to talk about individuals, but what Kylian did... it was insane," Mourinho told Real Madrid TV. "Mbappe has a knack for scoring, for creating chances... when the

team is under pressure, he's able to drop deep and link up with Vini and Jude, gaining ground and creating danger." The



Portuguese manager was equally emphatic when discussing the 27-year-old's ambitions at Madrid, saying he could see the forward was determined to create his own history at the club. "This bloke is incredible. He's incredible. I can see he's absolutely raring to make history with

Real Madrid," Mourinho said. Mbappe's display also marked a swift response to his goalless outing in Madrid's opening-day win at Espanyol, while Mourinho's second game in charge at the start of his new era ended with another three points.

MBAPPE CHANNELS CR7 WITH HAT-TRICK CELEBRATION

Mbappe opened the scoring in the 40th minute after Federico Valverde released him into the box with a superb pass. He cut inside and fired into the top corner, but Luka Sucic restored parity four minutes later. Madrid returned from the interval with a different level of intensity. Mbappe combined with Jude Bellingham before finishing low to put the hosts back in front on the hour, while Bellingham then helped create Vinicius Jr's goal eight minutes later.

Sri Lanka tasted Women's Asia Cup glory in 2024. Now they want to make it a habit

New Delhi. (Agency)

Two years ago, Sri Lanka made history by beating India in the Women's Asia Cup final to win the trophy for the first time. Now, they return as defending champions with a chance to achieve something only India have done before, successfully defend the title. For Sri Lanka, the challenge is not just to repeat their 2024 success but to handle the expectations that come with being champions. Their premier batter Harshitha Samarawickrama, however, insists the tag is a source of confidence rather than pressure. "Of course, being the defending champions gives us confidence, but we don't want to put too much pressure on ourselves. This is a new tournament, so we just want to take it one game at a time, enjoy our cricket and give our best," Harshitha told India Today in an interview,

organised by Sony Sports Network.

That approach could be crucial as Sri Lanka look to turn their breakthrough triumph into sustained success.

HARSHITHA'S UNFORGETTABLE



NIGHT

The 2024 final remains a defining moment for Harshitha. Chasing 166 against India in Dambulla, Sri Lanka reached 167 for two in 18.4 overs to win by eight wickets. Chamari Athapaththu scored 61 off 43 balls before Harshitha finished the chase

unbeaten on 69 off 51. Named Player of the Match, Harshitha said the innings gave her a major boost in confidence. "Yeah, that knock was very special for me, especially because we won the first Asia Cup. It gave me a lot of confidence and belief in myself. But now it's a new tournament. I just want to take that confidence with me, stay in the present and contribute to the team whenever I get the opportunity." The knock also earned her the ICC Women's Player of the Month award for July 2024. Two years later, Harshitha does not want to recreate that innings. Instead, she wants to carry the belief it gave her into a new campaign.

UAE EXPERIENCE OFFERS VALUABLE LESSONS

Sri Lanka's Asia Cup triumph was followed by a difficult Women's T20 World Cup campaign in the UAE.

15-year-old Delhi boy beats Magnus Carlsen, goes to sleep, dad finds out next day



New Delhi. (Agency)

Vandan Alankar Sawai, a 15-year-old chess player from Delhi, pulled off a stunning victory over world No. 1 Magnus Carlsen in an online blitz tournament. The teenager, however, treated one of the biggest wins of his young career with remarkable calm and did not immediately tell his parents or coach. According to Times of India, Vandan, a Candidate Master with a FIDE classical rating of 2,288, defeated Carlsen, rated 2,823, in 50 moves at Chess.com's Titled Tuesday event on August 18. Speaking about the game, the teenager said the huge rating gap did not weigh on him. "I didn't have anything to lose and everything to gain. I decided to play a comfortable game and opened with my usual pawn move e4 while playing with white pieces," Vandan said. His family discovered the result only later, with his father, former banker Alankar Sawai, finding the game while browsing Chess.com. His mother, Dr Madhuri Alankar Sawai, said Vandan had initially been reluctant to enter the tournament. My husband and I were at home when Vandan came and said he had played the tournament. When my husband asked, only then did Vandan say he had played against Carlsen and won. Vandan was reluctant to participate in the event. We forced him to play," she said. Vandan's coach, Gurpreet Pal Singh, was also unaware of the upset until the following day. After facing Carlsen, the teenager played two more rounds and finished his four-game run with three wins and one defeat before calling it a night because he was tired. FROM A RELUCTANT ENTRY TO A CARLSEN UPSET

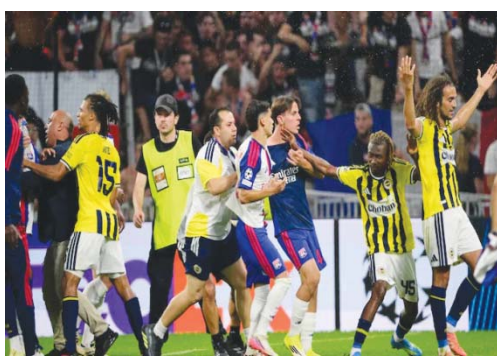
Vandan was paired with Carlsen in the second round and stuck to his normal approach rather than being overawed by the name on the other side of the virtual board. The game developed into a Giuoco Piano after Carlsen replied to 1.e4 with e5. In the five-minute contest,

Guendouzi taunts, provokes heated Lyon brawl as Fenerbahce seal UCL return

New Delhi. (Agency)

Fenerbahce's Champions League qualification ended with chaotic scenes as Matteo Guendouzi became involved in a confrontation with Lyon players and staff after the final whistle. The French midfielder had already been at the centre of a hostile atmosphere inside the Groupama Stadium before tensions spilled over following the Turkish side's victory. Fenerbahce defeated Lyon 2-1 in the second leg to complete a 3-2 aggregate win and secure their place in the Champions League league phase. Vedat Muriqi and Archie Brown scored for the visitors, while Malick Fofana's second-half goal was not enough to keep Lyon's European campaign alive. Guendouzi, who previously played for Marseille, was repeatedly jeered by the Lyon supporters during the match. After the

final whistle, he appeared to respond to the home crowd with provocative gestures and later shouted "Allez l'OM" towards a pitchside camera before becoming involved in an exchange with Lyon players. The former Arsenal midfielder subsequently explained his reaction, claiming the abuse directed at him had become personal during the game. They insulted my mother and my family for more than 90 minutes. For me that was disrespectful. If after that we can't celebrate the way we want to, I find that a shame," Guendouzi said. The situation did not end with the initial confrontation. Players and staff from both teams were involved in further clashes as they headed towards the tunnel, with security personnel and members of the squads attempting to bring the situation under control.



WHAT HAPPENED AFTER THE FINAL WHISTLE?

The first flashpoint came as Fenerbahce celebrated their qualification. Guendouzi's gestures towards the Lyon supporters added to the tension, with his Marseille connections making him a particular target

for the home crowd. An argument then developed on the pitch involving Guendouzi and members of the Lyon side. Teammates and coaching staff intervened as the players were separated, but the tension resurfaced when both squads moved towards the tunnel.

Videos circulating online showed a large number of players and staff caught up in the ensuing melee. However, the footage available did not establish the complete sequence of events or clearly identify everyone involved. Guendouzi's history with Marseille added another layer to an already heated occasion. He spent three seasons with the Ligue 1 club from 2021 to 2024 before continuing his career elsewhere. Fenerbahce head coach Ismail Kartal backed the midfielder after the match and said the team had stood together during the incident.



Taapsee Pannu

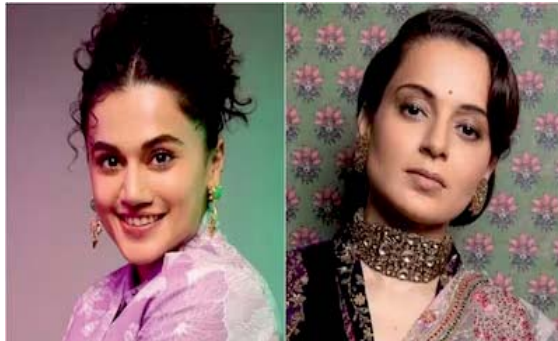
Breaks Silence On Kangana Ranaut's 'Upbringing' Remark: 'Aap Khatam Kyu Nahi Hone Dete?'

Kangana Ranaut and Taapsee Pannu's long-running war of words is back in the spotlight. What began as a public disagreement during the 2019-20 nepotism debate has resurfaced after Taapsee recently spoke about her equation with Kangana, saying the two have never actually met. Her remarks, including a reference to Kangana's "upbringing", prompted a sharp response from the actress-politician, who revived her "sasti copy" jibe and took aim at Taapsee's parents. Now, Taapsee has reacted to the ongoing controversy and shared her views on Kangana's latest remarks.

While promoting her upcoming Netflix film Gandhari, Taapsee was seen interacting with the media. A reporter questioned her about the film's plot while referring to her ongoing feud with Kangana. The actress was quick to shut the reporter down and said that the issue would have ended long ago if people had stopped asking them about it. She replied, "Aap khatam kyun nahi hone dete yeh baat? Koi question puchna hum dono se band karega jab yeh wala, toh yeh issue bhi khatam ho jayega. Aap sab logon ko maza aa raha hai yeh sab dekh ke, isiliye wahi sawaal puch rahe hain. Aise sawaal puchna agar aap band kar dete, toh yeh baat kab ki khatam ho jati."

Have a look: Recently, during her chat with India Today, Taapsee was asked about her past differences with Kangana. To which, she said, "I haven't met her. I didn't meet her before when these so-called issues started. I haven't met her now as well. My opinion on her is reflective of my upbringing and my way of talking, my way of perceiving things and hers... she stands by hers. So, I think that's enough for everybody to look and decide who comes from where."

In no time, Kangana called her out on her Instagram stories and called her a "sasti copy." She wrote, "One Sasti copy is out and about with her upcoming B grade film but as usual only headline point with the media is Kangana Ranaut, but today she crossed all limits shamelessly ridiculing my upbringing /parents, I think all parents do their best and I never bring any parents in to any argument, but today I also want to ask her parents why they couldn't birth someone original like my parents did? Why a cheap Sasti copy? Feel sorry for your efforts."



Nora Fatehi

Breaks Silence On Sarke Chunar Row, Claims Influencers Were 'Paid': 'I Already Know Who Hired...'

The song Sarke Chunar Teri Sarke from Dhruva Sarja and Sanjay Dutt's KD: The Devil sparked controversy over its Hindi lyrics and visuals, with the track facing widespread criticism before it was eventually taken down. Nora Fatehi, who has previously distanced herself from the Hindi version, has now spoken about the controversy again. In a recent podcast appearance, she said she has developed a "thick skin" over the years and was not surprised by the backlash, adding that she was already familiar with what she described as the "script of every influencer" repeating the same narrative.

While speaking on the Dream with Dr Sheen podcast, Nora Fatehi said she was aware of who was behind the backlash and claimed that influencers had been hired to push a particular narrative. She said, "I already know who hired you, when, and how much they paid you. That was an opportunity well squeezed by whoever was behind that. Because of the whole feminism thing, I was already prepared for how my body would react to that. I wasn't panicking, I was not in fear. I was shooting for three days - I didn't know, and then all hell broke loose."

Nora went on to explain that she decided to release a video to address the controversy after several incorrect narratives began circulating online. She said she felt her silence could be misinterpreted, prompting her to clarify the situation publicly. The actress added, "I still wasn't given any grace. I explained myself. I told the truth. I said I don't

know where it came from, I didn't shoot for this song. I gave all the details. I am the most articulate person out there. But there were still people in the comments who said, 'She's lying. How could she have not known, for a song that was not released?' By the way, the full song was not released. It was just snippets - some clips and AI photos. Songs



like these get produced every day. It is what it is. I am not saying that this is good."

Earlier, in a video, Nora addressed the controversy, clarified her side of the story, and distanced herself from the song. A part of her statement read, "I shot this song three years ago in Kannada. When I shot this song, I said yes to it because it was part of a big film and also alongside Sanjay Dutt, who would say no to it. It was a remake of what I thought was 'Nayak Nahi Khalnayak Hoon Main.' When they translated this song, nothing seemed inappropriate or vulgar to me, but I do not understand Kannada, so I rely on whatever they say to me."

Salman Khan Helps Body Double Parvez Kazi After Heart Surgery, Ensures Medical Care: Report



It is no secret that Salman Khan cares about his people and has a big heart when it comes to social work. The Bollywood superstar has proved it once again. According to reports, Salman recently heard about his longtime body double Parvez Kazi's health so he stepped in to help him for his heart surgery. He made sure Kazi was well taken care of and supported him.

Parvez Kazi fell ill at home on August 6, according to a report by India Today. Initial reports claimed that he had suffered a heart attack while shooting, but his manager Piyush later clarified that this was not the case. After feeling unwell, Kazi visited a doctor and underwent several tests. He was subsequently admitted to a hospital, where he underwent a minor heart surgery. After learning about Parvez's health condition, Salman Khan quickly offered his support and made sure he received proper medical care. His manager Piyush said Salman was "right there with us" and personally looked into Parvez's treatment and recovery. He added, "Salman sir treats Parvez sir, like a younger brother and helped immediately."

Parvez Kazi's health scare also affected the schedule of Salman Khan's upcoming pan-India action film with Nayanthara, reportedly titled Monster. As Kazi took time off to recover, reports suggested that Salman may have had to perform some of the action sequences himself. However, Kazi is now said to be recovering well and could return to the sets after a few days of rest. The makers have also adjusted the stunt schedule and are taking additional safety measures for his return.

Sidhu Moosewala Is Back On Stage! Singer's AI Avatar To Perform At 'Signed To God' Tour In Toronto



The Toronto show will also feature the unveiling of the much-awaited music video for Sidhu Moosewala's track 295.

Late Punjabi singer Sidhu Moosewala is set to return to the stage in a never-seen-before avatar: as a hologram. The late star's first-ever hologram concert, which is titled Signed To God World Tour, will kick off in Canada, with its first show scheduled at Toronto's Scotiabank Arena on October 8, 2026.

The concert will feature a 3D holographic projection of Sidhu Moosewala performing alongside his original vocals. The experience is expected to combine cinematic visuals, stage effects and immersive technology to recreate the singer's presence on stage.

The concert was first announced in July 2025 to honour Moosewala's legacy. Back then, it was also revealed that the concert will be one of its first.

For now, no concert has been held without an actual artist on stage, with the use of technology. It should be noted that Moosewala was not just popular in India but in other countries too, including Canada, the UK, the US and Australia.

When And How Did Sidhu Moosewala Die?

Sidhu Moosewala, who unsuccessfully contested the Punjab Assembly elections on a Congress ticket from Mansa in 2022, was tragically murdered on May 29, 2022. He was shot dead by assailants in his car in Jawaharke village of Mansa district. Even though he was rushed to a hospital immediately, he succumbed to his injuries before receiving medical attention.

Following Moosewala's murder, his parents also led a movement to seek justice for their son. A music video was also released prominently displaying a flag with the message "Justice for Sidhu Moosewala".

Sidhu Moosewala was very popular, particularly among the youth, and was known for composing and producing his own songs. He was regarded as one of the wealthiest Punjabi singers. Despite his untimely demise, many of his songs have been released posthumously and have raked in millions of views.

NEWS BOX

At least 14 newborns killed in hospital fire in Pakistan's Islamabad

WORLD.(Agency)

US President Donald Trump has said he has no fixed timeline for Iran to return to negotiations, as Qatar steps up diplomatic efforts to de-escalate the conflict between Washington and Tehran. Speaking to Al Jazeera on Wednesday, Trump said he was "not in a hurry" to resume talks and that the US would continue to apply economic and military pressure on Iran. "I have no time schedule, none. I'm not in a hurry. I have no time schedule at all," Trump said when asked how much time he was giving Iran to return to negotiations. Trump said the US was 'winning very big' and cited Iran's economic difficulties to explain his position. "We are winning very big. They've got massive inflation, their economy is falling apart, they're treating their people very badly, they are killing many, many protesters. I have no time schedule; whatever it takes," he said. Asked whether economic measures were more effective than military strikes, Trump said, "I think they are both effective." Trump's remarks came as Qatar's Prime Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani prepared to travel to Tehran on Thursday for talks with Iranian officials aimed at de-escalating tensions and creating conditions for dialogue. Qatar has been a key intermediary between Washington and Tehran.

US rights body again seeks sanctions on RSS, visa revocation for Mohan Bhagwat ahead of New York event

MONTREAL.(Agency)

Ahead of RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat's scheduled address at Madison Square Garden on Thursday, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) has urged the US government to consider targeted sanctions against members of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and Indian officials over "deterioration in religious freedom" in India. In a statement issued on Wednesday (local time), the US rights body alleged that violence and incitement were being used to target religious minority communities. It also called for the revocation of Bhagwat's US visa and a ban on his future entry into the country. "Religious freedom conditions in India continue to deteriorate as violence and incitement are frequently used to target religious minority communities. We urge the U.S. government to consider targeted sanctions against RSS members and Indian officials complicit in religious freedom violations, including revoking the visa issued to Mohan Bhagwat and making him ineligible for future entry into the United States."

3 US Secret Service officials Placed On Leave Amid 'Misconduct' Probe

world.(Agency)

Three US Secret Service officials were placed on administrative leave Tuesday, pending the outcome of an investigation by the agency's professional standards office. The three were operating in non-law-enforcement capacities and were being investigated for potential misconduct, the agency's public information office reported. However, the cause for the action remained unclear as the Office of Professional Responsibility was beginning its review. The Secret Service has been under scrutiny as President Donald Trump has been the subject of at least three assassination plots in the past two years. In April, police said an armed man breached security at the Washington Hilton during the White House Correspondents' Association dinner, which Trump was attending.

9/11 'Mastermind' Khalid Sheikh Mohammed To Face Trial In 2028: Report

world.(Agency)

A US military judge on Wednesday set a summer 2028 trial date for Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and three others accused of plotting the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.



The trial is scheduled to begin June 5, 2028, 18 months later than the January 2027 start that prosecutors had requested. The additional time is needed to resolve pretrial disputes, including disagreements about what evidence can be presented at trial, Air Force Lt. Col. Michael A. Schrama wrote in

his ruling. The US military and successive administrations have struggled for more than two decades to bring to justice the man charged with planning one of the deadliest attacks ever on the United States.

The 2028 trial depends on the case meeting deadlines and milestones along the way and it could again be delayed. A trial was previously scheduled in 2021 but later canceled. Mohammed is accused of developing and directing the plot to crash hijacked airliners into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

Another of the hijacked planes flew into a field in Pennsylvania. He faces trial alongside three alleged accomplices: Walid bin Attash, Ali Abdul Aziz Ali and Mustafa al-Hawsawi. They are among the last of the detainees held at the US military base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. A federal appeals court last year threw out an agreement that would have allowed Mohammed to plead guilty in a deal sparing him the risk of execution for al-Qaida's 2001 attacks. That deal stipulated life sentences without parole for Mohammed and two of his co-defendants.

Nepal-Tibet flash floods kill 165, over 1,000 missing

Videos on social media of the Kryvyi Rig incident showed rescuers rushing to help the wounded on the street outside, as smoke poured out of the building.

WORLD.(Agency)

At least 165 people have been killed and more than 1,000 remain missing after flash floods and landslides struck the Nepal-Tibet border region, sweeping away villages, vehicles and buildings on both sides of the frontier, officials said Thursday.

Nepal has reported 162 deaths, while three people were killed in China's Tibet region after the disaster struck along the Bhot Koshi and Trishuli river systems. Rescue

teams on both sides are searching for hundreds of people still unaccounted for, including foreign tourists, Indian nationals and security personnel. In Nepal, the floods struck three districts on Wednesday after an ice-rock avalanche blocked the Lhende River near the Nepal-China border, sending a debris-laden torrent downstream. The flooding first hit Timure, near the Rasuwagadhi border crossing, sweeping away much of the settlement and more than 300 vehicles and trucks parked at a customs checkpoint.

Nepal's National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority said an ice-rock landslide about 20 km northeast of Rasuwagadhi blocked the Lhende River, triggering a debris-filled flood that later entered the Trishuli River through Timure. The US Geological Survey said its preliminary analysis indicated that the seismic activity initially reported as a magnitude 4.4 earthquake was instead caused by a glacial collapse and debris

flow, which triggered catastrophic flooding downstream in Nepal and Tibet. On the Nepal side, at least 133 Indians and 37 NRIs are among those missing,



officials said. At least 50 of the missing Indians were pilgrims travelling for the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra. Another 81 security personnel, including Army, Nepal Police and Armed Police Force personnel, remain unaccounted for. Nepal's Tourism Ministry said 468 tourists, including 393 foreigners, were missing a

day after the disaster. The missing foreign nationals include citizens of India, Australia, Britain, Malaysia, the Netherlands, Portugal, South Africa,

South Korea and the United States. Across the border, Chinese state media reported that three people were killed in the mudslide at Gyirong Port in Tibet, while 558 people, including 260 foreigners, remained missing. The disaster has caused widespread destruction along the river valleys. Entire villages and market areas were swept away, while rescuers searched through mud and debris for survivors. The International

Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies said it was sending emergency supplies, including blankets, first-aid kits, stretchers and body bags.

In Tibet, nearly 800 emergency workers, 150 vehicles, sniffer dogs and speed boats were mobilised for rescue operations, according to Chinese state media.

Trump says the US doesn't need Canada. The economy says otherwise

TORONTO: U.S.(Agency)

President Donald Trump says his country does not need Canada. But every day, roughly 4 million barrels of Canadian crude oil flow south, helping fuel American cars, trucks and airplanes and supply U.S. industry.

And oil is only the beginning.

Canada also supplies aluminum, potash to U.S. farms and parts for an auto industry built on both sides of the border. "WE DON'T NEED CANADA, THEY NEED US!" Trump posted this week, repeating his long-running claim. Yet Trump has imposed a 50% tariff on Canadian aluminum while acknowledging this week that the United States badly needs the metal. "This country desperately needs aluminum,"

Trump said. "We don't have it. We get it all from Canada for the most part, and we need it badly." The contradiction underscores how deeply the two economies remain intertwined — and how much could be at stake if Trump's trade war reaches more of the energy, materials and supply chains that the U.S. still relies on Canada to provide.

Canada fuels American industry Canada is the second-largest U.S. trading partner after Mexico, and energy is at the heart of that relationship. The two countries exchanged about \$872 billion in goods and services last year. Canadian crude imports equal nearly 20% of total U.S. petroleum consumption, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, part of the Department of

Energy. Daniel Béland, a political science professor at McGill University, said Trump's claim that the U.S. doesn't need Canada is "absolutely false," citing U.S. reliance on Canadian oil and natural gas and deeply integrated industries such as autos. Much of Canada's crude flows to Midwest refineries built to process its heavy oil into gasoline, diesel and jet fuel. Energy also explains much of the U.S. trade deficit with Canada, which Trump frequently cites as evidence of an unfair relationship. The White House this week portrayed the relationship in starkly negative terms, saying Canada had taken roughly \$50 billion a year from the U.S. over the past decade. Much of that gap reflects U.S. purchases of Canadian energy, which helps power the U.S. economy.

Chinese rescue workers search for 558 missing after Nepal-Tibet floods

More than a thousand rescuers were searching for survivors after a wall of mud and debris swept over buildings on the Chinese side of the border on Wednesday morning.

BEIJING.(Agency)

Three people died and 558 others were still missing after a mudslide in Tibet on the China-Nepal border, Chinese state media reported Thursday, citing local officials. Of the missing, 260 were foreign nationals, it said. More than a thousand rescuers, equipped with dogs and drones, were searching for survivors after a wall of mud and debris swept over buildings on the Chinese side of the border on

Wednesday morning.

A clip of surveillance video from the Chinese side of the frontier showed dozens of people running for their



lives as the surge crashed down.

Rescue operations face multiple challenges, including "the instability of a reservoir lake upstream" and "the narrow mountain road", Li Qipu, a member of China's paramilitary People's Armed Police, told state broadcaster CCTV.

Large vehicles and heavy equipment

cannot currently reach the main disaster zone, although surrounding roads remain open, allowing supplies to get in from behind, according to the broadcaster. Authorities have dispatched nearly 800 people and more than 150 vehicles to the border area, according to state news agency Xinhua. The fire service has deployed 431 personnel, working with search dogs, life-detection scanners, and small boats, it said.

CCTV broadcast images of People's Armed Police members in camouflage and orange vests with shovels, as well as rescuers flying drones. Civilian and military aircraft carrying relief supplies have arrived in Tibet, CCTV said. Due to overnight rainfall, the risk of secondary disasters such as landslides and rockfalls remains high.

Sal Veder, Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer who shot iconic 'Burst of Joy,' dies at age 99

SACRAMENTO, Calif.(Agency)

Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer Slava 'Sal' Veder, best known for his picture of a U.S. Air Force lieutenant colonel joyfully reuniting with his family after five years in a prisoner of war camp in Vietnam, died Aug. 22. He was 99. Veder's family on Wednesday confirmed that the retired Associated Press photojournalist died in his sleep, just eight days shy of



his 100th birthday, at his home in El Dorado County, California, outside of Sacramento. The San Francisco Bay Area native was 46 years old in March 1973 when he was sent to Travis Air Force Base for the arrival of Lt. Col. Robert L. Stirm and other war prisoners returning from Vietnam. Veder was in a crowded bullpen jockeying for pictures with dozens of other photographers when, out of the corner of his eye, he spotted Stirm's four children begin to gallop toward their father. "You could tell, even at a distance, what they were feeling. It was all over them, their faces, the way they all broke into a run. There was a surge of emotion from the crowd, too," Veder said in a 2015 interview with The Guardian. Using a makeshift darkroom set up in a women's bathroom on base, Veder cranked out six images, including "Burst of Joy," which won the 1974 Pulitzer in feature photography. Veder noted that in the photograph, Stirm has his back to the camera, rendering him an everyman soldier returning to the undeniable joy and excitement on the faces of his children. The photo became a symbol of the end of U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War. But for Stirm, it represented heartbreak as he had been handed a "Dear John" letter from his wife, Loretta, by a chaplain upon his release and the couple divorced a year later. Stirm died in 2025.

Official leading Trump's Gaza ceasefire effort criticizes Israel for its attacks

Mladenov warned of the distance between the roadmap and what's happening on the ground, and said if war resumes, there won't be a roadmap to return to or anything left on the ground to rebuild.

UNITED NATIONS.(Agency)

The official in charge of President Donald Trump's ceasefire plan for Gaza criticized Israel on Wednesday for its attacks on the war-battered Palestinian territory and warned that the alternative to the U.S.



proposal is the next war. Nikolay Mladenov, the Board of Peace high representative, insisted to the U.N. Security Council that Trump's 20-point plan has not stalled and "has moved from the negotiating table to the engineering table." The militant group Hamas has agreed to the proposal's key provision to disarm and turn Gaza over to civilian rule, he said. But Israel's ongoing strikes since last October's ceasefire are still

killing Palestinians — though much fewer — and Gazans can't feel that the conflict is ending, he said. "After three years of war and 20 years of military operations, I ask, will another strike on a munitions depot stop Hamas from rearming or tightening its grip on Gaza?" Mladenov said. "It will not. It only delays the demilitarization that would happen" and obstructs the transfer to a civilian government. A recent U.S. deal with Hamas to disarm was seen as a potential breakthrough to end the war, which was sparked by the militant group's deadly Oct. 7, 2023, attacks in southern Israel. But Israeli

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said his forces won't withdraw from their current lines in Gaza until Hamas has handed over all its weapons. Mladenov said that at a meeting he took part in last week with Netanyahu and Jared Kushner, Trump's son-in-law and adviser, "we went through his government's concerns one by one and narrowed the areas that still require technical work."