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Happy Onam

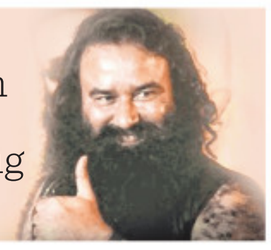
THE FREE PRESS JOURNAL

Women's EQUALITY DAY

Eid milad

INDIA EDITION | www.freepressjournal.in ● Leader in E-paper circulation I E-paper edition is not a replica of the print edition

NATION
Dera chief Ram Rahim gets 21-day parole, his 17th furlough since Aug 2017 conviction



GAMES
Dinusha, Sooriyabandara lead SL resistance despite Prasidh Krishna putting brakes on players

Cinema Actress Malavika Mohanan shares why *Onam* is special

Edit 3 action points for the govt for micro-level reforms

TURMOIL | **Aspirants demand single-stage recruitment, 100% domicile-based hiring, removal of negative marking and cancellation of BPSC examination**

Students, job seekers clash with Patna cops

Dheeraj Kumar
PATNA

Thousands of job aspirants and students clashed with police in Patna on Tuesday as they tried to march towards the residence of Bihar CM Samrat Choudhary, demanding changes to recruitment examinations and action over alleged irregularities in the state's competitive exams.

Police used water cannons and resorted to lathi-charge after protesters broke through barricades at several points along the nearly 5km route from Gandhi Maidan to the CM's residence. Several protesters were detained and some police personnel were reportedly injured in the confrontation. A woman protester was also seen lying unconscious by the roadside.

The march was organised by aspirants protesting the proposed Teacher Recruitment Examination (TRE-4), with their principal demand being that the examination be conducted in a single stage rather than through preliminary and mains examinations. They are also demanding removal of negative marking and 100 per cent domicile-based recruitment for government teaching jobs.

CONTINUED ON NATION

BPSC Examination Controller Rajesh Kumar Singh invoked the Hindi proverb "Haathi chale bazaar, kutte bhoke hazaar" (when an elephant walks through the market, a thousand dogs bark) while addressing a press meet on the students' protest.

Protest in IIT Delhi

Students protesting the death of 31-year-old MSc Physics student Rishikesh Kumar at IIT Delhi have rejected the institute's response to their demands, terming it inadequate and vowing to continue their agitation. On August 24, students boycotted classes and demonstrated at the Lecture Hall Complex, demanding an independent inquiry into Kumar's death and accountability for officials found responsible. They have also sought Rs 1 crore compensation for Kumar's family and reforms to the institute's student-support systems.

CONTINUED ON NATION

FOR COMMERCIAL PILOTS

Year-round drug screening planned

FPJ News Service
MUMBAI

The Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) is actively considering universal, year-round random psychoactive substance testing for all commercial pilots operating in India, according to Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu Kinjarapu. The plan comes as a regulatory shift aimed at tightening safety protocols across the aviation sector after an Air India pilot tested positive for marijuana consumption.

The regulatory push comes in the direct aftermath of the August 4 incident onboard Air India flight AI-2379, a Phuket-to-Delhi Airbus A320 registered as VT-EXO, which suffered a sudden altitude loss of approximately 300 feet during cruise before landing safely in the capital. A subsequent drug test confirmed that the flight's pilot-in-command tested positive for marijuana.

Following the incident, The Free Press Journal reported on August 11 that the Union Government was evaluating immediate structural reforms, including significantly increasing the frequency of unannounced, random pre- and post-flight dope and alcohol testing for flight crews across all domestic hubs. The previous report also stated that MoCA had issued a strict warning to all Indian air carriers, stating that such episodes must never recur.

CONTINUED ON NATION

Pvt sector set to make standard missiles now

PTI
NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has approved the transfer of Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)-developed technologies of all conventional missile systems to Indian private industry for production within the country as part of a larger goal to enhance domestic defence manufacturing.

Under the initiative, the DRDO will transfer missile technologies to eligible defence firms.

Singh's office said he has "approved the transfer of DRDO-developed technologies of all conventional missile systems to Indian industries for production within the country".

"This Transfer of Technology (ToT) marks an important milestone in promoting greater participation of the Indian industries in the defence ecosystem by enabling them to undertake indigenous production, as per applicable qualifications, certifications and regulatory requirements," it said. The Defence Ministry is yet to provide any list of missiles that could be produced by the private sector under the new initiative.

CONTINUED ON NATION

4-MONTH TRAINING ON MARATHI: SARNAIK

Kalpesh Mhamunkar
MUMBAI

The Maharashtra government will continue its initiative to provide practical Marathi language training to non-Marathi-speaking auto rickshaw and taxi drivers, Transport Minister Pratap Sarnaik said on Tuesday.

He said drivers would be given an initial one-month period to learn Marathi, followed, if required, by an additional three months. During this period, their badges would not be cancelled, though suspension action could be taken as per the law. Drivers who deliberately refuse to learn Marathi even after the extended period could face cancellation of their badges, he said.

Sarnaik said around 1.65 lakh auto rickshaw and taxi drivers across the state have been trained in Marathi under a special 105-day programme launched by the Transport Department.

Sarnaik alleged that some leaders were deliberately trying to create a "Marathi-Hindi" controversy in Mumbai and Thane, allegedly with an eye on elections in UP and Bihar. He appealed to citizens and drivers not to believe rumours. "No auto rickshaw or taxi driver has been fined even ₹500," he said, rejecting claims drivers were being forced to pay fines of ₹20,000 to ₹25,000 for not having working knowledge of Marathi.

Sarnaik said Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Nirupam, the party's north Indian face, SP MLA Abu Azmi, auto rickshaw and taxi union leader Shashank Rao and others had contacted him over the issue.

SEE CITY, EDIT

Cab drivers move HC

Mumbai: Four cab drivers in Mumbai on Tuesday filed a petition in the Bombay High Court against the Maharashtra government's decision to make working knowledge of Marathi language mandatory for auto rickshaw, taxi and app-based cab drivers, saying it violated the fundamental rights of citizens. petitioners also challenged provisions allowing authorities to suspend a driver's badge for up to three months.

SEE CITY

'KIRANA HILLS MAY'VE BEEN HIT DURING OP SINDOOR'

Agencies
NEW DELHI

Former Chief of Defence Staff Gen Anil Chauhan on Tuesday said a loitering munition deployed during Operation Sindoor may have inadvertently struck Pakistan's Kirana Hills, an area believed to house nuclear facilities.

Speaking at the Vivekananda Centre in New Delhi, Chauhan said India had deployed several loitering munitions to target radars in and around Sargodha during the operation. Kirana Hills is located about 10 km north of Sargodha.

He explained that such munitions can remain airborne for around two hours while searching for targets. If a suitable target is not detected within that period, the munition eventually descends and strikes an area.

"So the loitering ammunition is looking for radars which are in and around Sargodha... once it does not find a target, it comes down and hits somewhere," Chauhan said.

"It must have come and hit one of those hills," he added, suggesting this could explain reports and images circulated by Pakistani media showing smoke emerging from the Kirana Hills area.

His remarks appear to clarify speculation surrounding whether India had struck Kirana Hills during Operation Sindoor. His statement, however, differs from an earlier clarification by Air Marshal A.K. Bharti, who was Director General of Air Operations during the operation. On May 12, 2025, Bharti had said Indian forces had not targeted Kirana Hills, while responding to speculation that the area had been hit.

India launched Operation Sindoor following the April 22, 2025, Pahalgam terror attack. India subsequently struck terror infrastructure in Pakistan and POK. After Pakistan attempted to escalate the conflict, India also targeted several Pakistani military installations.

BANKE BIHARI TEMPLE

'All donations must go to temple treasury'

FPJ News Service
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday directed that every penny donated at the Banke Bihari Temple in Vrindavan must go into the temple's donation boxes or online treasury, warning that any interference by sewayats or others would be viewed seriously. A bench of Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana also directed the temple's managing committee to introduce a transparent mechanism for receiving donations and take steps to prevent malpractices, Live Law and Bar & Bench report.

"Let there be no doubt, and we accordingly direct that every penny of donation must come through the donation boxes or online [into the] temple treasury. Any impediment created by sevayats (temple servants) or anyone else shall be viewed very seriously," the Court said.

The direction came after Senior Advocate Maninder Singh, appearing for the High-Powered Temple Management Committee, showed the Court photographs and referred to a video allegedly showing three persons collecting offerings from devotees in polythene bags in front of a donation box.

The committee's status report alleged that bhandaris were intercepting donations instead of allowing devotees to put them into donation boxes. It also alleged that openings of some donation boxes were covered with flowers, plates or other material and that QR codes meant for online donations had been destroyed or covered.

"First, the donation must be into the dedication, that is, to the deity. And from that you will get your share as part of the bhandari duties. You cannot appropriate (the money) before the devotee goes to the temple and gives the money into the deity's funds.

– Supreme Court

An intervenor representing the deity disputed the allegations, saying the cash collected by bhandaris was for bhog and that the practice was protected by a civil court decree recognising the usufructuary rights of sewayats.

CONTINUED ON NATION

Courts must record reasons for bail: SC

FPJ News Service
NEW DELHI

The SC has set aside bail granted to two accused in a murder case, holding courts must record justifiable reasons while granting bail in serious offences like murder.

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta allowed the Maharashtra government's appeals and cancelled the bail granted to Pruthviraj Rajendra Shinde and Jyotiraditya Ajitsinh Jadhav. The court said the lower courts had ignored vital evidence, Live Law reports.

FOR SERIOUS OFFENCES LIKE MURDER

Referring to its 2004 judgment in Kalyan Chandra Sarkar vs Rajesh Ranjan, it said: "The law in regard to grant or refusal of bail is very well settled. The court granting bail should exercise its discretion in a judicious manner and not as a matter of course."

It added: "Though at the stage of granting bail a detailed examination of evidence and elaborate documentation of the merit of the case need not be undertaken, there is a need to indicate reasons for prima facie concluding why bail was being granted in a case of serious offence."

CONTINUED ON NATION

Tackle hate crimes: UN panel tells India

FPJ News Service
NEW DELHI

A United Nations watchdog has urged India to urgently tackle hate crimes against Bengali-speaking Muslims and strengthen protections for tribal peoples, disadvantaged castes and other groups facing alleged violence and discrimination.

The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) said it was concerned about reports of extrajudicial killings, torture and other violence by law enforcement officials against several groups, AFP reports.

"The committee was gravely concerned about reports of large-scale violations perpetrated by law enforcement officials against ethnic and ethno-religious groups, Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, including Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes, particularly Dalits, and non-citizens," it stated in a release on its findings on Tuesday.

"These included racially motivated violence, excessive use of force, extrajudicial killings, arbitrary and prolonged detention without due process, torture, ill-treatment and sexual violence."

The committee urged India to investigate all such claims and bring those responsible to justice.

It also pointed to an increase in law enforcement operations targeting Rohingya, Bengali-speaking Muslims, migrants and asylum seekers.

CONTINUED ON NATION

Trump floats idea to rename Lake Ontario 'Lake America'

Agencies
WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump said Tuesday he is considering changing the name of Lake Ontario to "Lake America" as the trade war between the US and Canada escalated, reports AP.

The proposal would echo Trump's unilateral decision last year to rename the Gulf of Mexico the "Gulf of America" through an executive order.

Canada on Tuesday announced retaliatory tariff after Trump administration imposed 50% tariffs on $20 billion worth of Canadian goods over the weekend as trade talks between the two countries broke down. "The US is giving serious consideration to changing the name of Lake Ontario to Lake America in that we don't expect to doing much business with

Ontario any longer," Trump said in a social media post. Ontario is Canada's most populous province and a major centre of the country's auto industry.

Tensions between the two neighbours have risen sharply in recent days. Trump on Monday told Canadian leaders to "fall in line" or face consequences "far WORSE" than the existing tariffs.

Canadian PM Mark Carney has accused Washington of seeking to subordinate Canada, while Trump has threatened an additional 50% tariffs on Canadian vehicles, auto parts and steel. Carney has said the US trade demands amounted to an attempt to "destroy our major industries", including the auto, steel and aluminium sectors.

The latest dispute adds to a growing list of economic and diplomatic tensions between the two longtime allies.

SEE WORLD

US sanctions on 4 Indian companies

PTI
WASHINGTON

The US has sanctioned four India-based companies for importing petroleum and petrochemical products from Iran, according to a press release by the US State Department.

US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent on Monday announced Operation Economic Outcast, involving new sanctions that aim to block all potential sources of revenue for Iran. The US has also told countries to cut economic ties with Tehran or face retaliation. Bessent called it an unprecedented campaign to sever Iran's financial lifelines. It broadens the risk of secondary sanctions for entities continuing to do business with Tehran.

CONTINUED ON NATION

offgrid

3,400 kisses, 5.5 million views and a challan

FPJ News Service
GWALIOR

A Gwalior youth discovered that a car can attract plenty of attention on social media — and a traffic challan in the real world — after turning his white vehicle into a giant lipstick canvas.

Aditya Sikarwar, who makes Instagram reels, had his girlfriend plant around 3,400 lipstick kisses across the car's body in a stunt designed to create a viral video. The process reportedly took three-and-a-half hours. The resulting reel, showing the lipstick-covered car being driven around Gwalior, clocked about 5.5 million views in a single day.

Sikarwar told police that he had not personally kissed the car. His friend had done the honours while the vehicle was parked, after which he filmed the stunt and uploaded it to Instagram in the hope of starting a trend. The internet, at least initially, obliged.

If the "friend" had indeed done the honours, it means he or she was planting a kiss every 4.2 seconds — continuously, for three and a half hours — to deliver those 3,400 kisses. An impressive display of stamina, if nothing else. Of course, this assumes the "friend" remained utterly devoted to the task at hand, without so much as a tea break, existential crisis or sudden loss of enthusiasm. It also assumes the lipstick had the staying power of industrial paint and that micellar water — or any other cleansing intervention — was nowhere in sight. But above all, it demonstrates one thing rather beautifully: the "friend" was clearly a person of extraordinary commitment, discipline and focus.

CONTINUED ON NATION

Xi likely to visit India with large delegation

Agencies
NEW DELHI

Chinese President Xi Jinping is likely to attend next month's BRICS summit in New Delhi with a delegation of around 400 officials, according to three sources, in what would be his first visit to India in seven years and another sign of a gradual thaw between the two Asian rivals, reported Reuters.

India will host BRICS summit on September 12-13, with Xi's presence expected to draw attention not only to the grouping's agenda but also to efforts by New Delhi and Beijing to stabilise ties after deadly border clashes in 2020.

"Chinese officials are busy finalising hotels and security protocols," an Indian source said. Two other Indian sources said Xi was likely to be accompanied by about 400 officials, more than double the fewer than 200 officials who travelled with him during his last visit to India in 2019.

CONTINUED ON NATION

Next-gen pitch sparks Gadkari retirement buzz

Nagpur: A statement by Union Minister Nitin Gadkari, pitching for the new generation to take responsibility for the social work initiatives of his trust, sparked speculation, with some media channels linking it to his possible retirement from public life, a claim denied by his office.

Clarifying his stance, Gadkari's office issued an official statement saying that the minister's remarks had nothing to do with politics and he was speaking specifically about the Laxmanrao Mankar Trust, an organisation established by him that runs Ekal Vidyalayas in tribal areas.

In that context, Gadkari said that he could no longer take on as much work as before and that the younger generation should be given an opportunity to take greater responsibility.

"His remarks were clearly related to the functioning and future leadership of the Trust. However, some television channels are presenting the statement as a political remark, taking it out of its actual context," the statement said.

Gadkari, who has been associated with the trust's work for decades, said he would take a back seat to allow the younger generation to contribute.

Gadkari's office says that the minister's remarks had nothing to do with politics

Prohibitory orders in city

Mumbai: Ahead of festivals, the Mumbai Police have issued an order to prohibit citizens from carrying weapons, explosives and other potentially harmful articles from August 29 to September 27 citing the need to preserve public peace and safety. The order, issued by Deputy Commissioner of Police (Operations) Akbar Pathan under the Maharashtra Police Act, prohibits carrying of arms, such as swords, spears, knives, sticks, lathis and other articles capable of causing physical harm, except where specifically permitted by the competent authority, an official said on Tuesday.

COURT ROUTE | Petitioners say it violates their fundamental rights; seek urgent directions

4 app cab drivers move HC against Marathi mandate

Urvi Mahajani
MUMBAI

Four cab drivers who operate through mobile-based cab aggregator platforms have approached the Bombay High Court challenging the Maharashtra government's decision to make knowledge of Marathi compulsory for auto-rickshaw, taxi and app-based cab drivers.

The petition is expected to be mentioned before the Acting Chief Justice on August 27, seeking urgent directions.

The government introduced the requirement through a notification dated August 12. The petitioners have argued that the decision violates their fundamental rights under Articles 14, 19 and 21 of the Constitution and is beyond the powers granted to the state under the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988.

"The parent Act (Motor Vehicles Act) confers no power upon the state government to prescribe working knowledge of any language as a qualification for a driver, as a condition of a badge, or as a condition of a permit," the plea, filed through advocate Vivek Shukla, states.

The petitioners have also challenged provisions allowing authorities to suspend a driver's badge for up to three months and subsequently revoke it for not having working knowledge of Marathi.

THE PLEA

The notification could affect the livelihoods of lakhs of drivers, particularly poor and migrant workers, by exposing them to suspension of badges and cancellation of permits

The parent Act (Motor Vehicles Act) confers no power upon the state government to prescribe working knowledge of any language as a qualification for a driver

The plea claims that the notification could affect the livelihoods of lakhs of drivers, particularly poor and migrant workers, by exposing them to suspension of badges and cancellation of permits.

It has sought an immediate stay on the notification, pointing out that nearly 9.65 lakh auto-rickshaw and taxi permits and badges have been issued across Maharashtra.

The petition further states that around 1.65 lakh non-Marathi-speaking drivers had attended a 105-day Marathi language campaign conducted through the Konkan Marathi Sahitya Parishad and Mumbai Marathi Sahitya Sangh. However, it claims that many drivers remain vulnerable to action.

The petitioners have also referred to a Transport Commissioner's circular dated August 19 directing RTOs to implement the notification, deploy Vayuvega squads at auto-rickshaw stands, check drivers and issue notices. The circular also provides for suspension and subsequent revocation of badges.

No party, unions opposing rule for auto, taxis: Sarnaik

Kalpesh Mhamunkar
MUMBAI

So far, no political party or auto-rickshaw and taxi unions have opposed the state government's drive to make 'working knowledge' of Marathi mandatory for non-Marathi-speaking drivers, said Maharashtra Transport Minister Pratap Sarnaik on Tuesday.

Shashank Rao, a taxi and auto rickshaw union leader, said he had sought three months from the government for drivers to learn Marathi and the government had agreed.

"There is panic among drivers as centres to learn the Marathi language are not operational after August 15, but the issue has been resolved now," he added.

Sarnaik said that though Rao had sought three months for drivers to learn Marathi, technically, they had been given four months.

Training workshops will continue through the Konkan Marathi Sahitya Parishad and Mumbai Marathi Sahitya Sangh in Mumbai, Thane, Bhiwandi, Nalasopara, Vasai-Virar and Navi Mumbai.

Sarnaik said the government's Marathi language campaign, including the Hinduhṛiday Samrat Balasaheb Thackeray Marathi Language Campaign, would continue. He stressed that the government was committed to creating employment rather than taking away livelihoods and urged people not to be misled by rumours.

Driver attacked for shunning protest

Mumbai: Four auto drivers allegedly assaulted Marathi-speaking driver Prakash Shejwal in Kandivali after he refused to join a protest against the Marathi drive. Police arrested Suresh Yadav, Mahendra Yadav, Anil Kumar Yadav and Noorul Ansari for allegedly attacking Shejwal. The incident occurred when autorickshaw drivers assembled on MG Road to protest the mandate and asked other drivers to stop work. Shejwal continued ferrying passengers, angering some agitators who abused and attacked him.

Commuters take a costly ride

Mumbai: Mumbai's mandatory Marathi proficiency test for auto and cab drivers has hit commuters hard, with the ongoing strike sending fares soaring across the city. On Tuesday, app fares on several routes climbed sharply, with some rides costing nearly double the usual amount. A roughly 10-km autorickshaw ride cost as much as ₹430. Fares on some routes rose by up to 100%. A 15-km trip from Powai to Versova, which earlier cost around ₹350 by autorickshaw, touched ₹589 on Tuesday morning.

Govt axe on 'oral' appointments

Kalpesh Mhamunkar
MUMBAI

Govt flagged the appointment of technical personnel, who may not have adequate experience

The Maharashtra government has ordered cancellation of appointments made on deputation, loan basis or through oral orders in ministerial offices and Mantralaya departments, directing officers and employees to return to their parent departments by September 10.

The decision was announced through a circular issued by the general administration department (GAD) with the approval of chief secretary.

The circular said a defined procedure exists for providing staff to ministers and making deputation or contractual appointments. However, officials have been appointed from outside offices on deputation, loan basis, contract or oral instructions without mandatory approvals.

The government flagged appointments of technical personnel, including doctors, stenographers, teachers and engineers, who may lack experience or training in Mantralaya procedures, affecting both parent and ministerial departments.

Officials appointed through unauthorised arrangements may bypass verification of integrity certificates, character records, confidential reports and departmental inquiries. Retired employees from abolished or "dying" cadres cannot receive extensions through contractual appointments.

Departments must cancel such appointments and ensure employees return by September 10, with joining reports submitted by September 15. If an employee fails to report, salary payments must stop and a report be sent to the Chief Secretary's office by September 20. Repeat appointments could invite action under the Maharashtra Civil Services (Discipline and Appeal) Rules, 1979. Their Mantralaya identity cards, face-recognition access and attendance facilities must also be discontinued immediately.

Future appointments to ministerial offices must follow prescribed GAD procedure. Additional staff beyond sanctioned strength will require proposals for increasing or restructuring posts, the Chief Minister's approval and recruitment through established procedure.

Cong rules MLA rankings, questions hit new low

Winners' list

AMIN PATEL (Cong) 1st (**82.89 pts**)

ASLAM SHAIKH (Cong) 2nd (**80.58 pts**)

JYOTI GAIKWAD (Cong) (3rd) **80.30 pts**)

Losers' list

RAM KADAM (BJP) 31st

ASHOK PATIL (Shinde's Sena) 32nd

PRAKASH SURVE (Shinde's Sena) 33rd

Shefali Parab-Pandit
MUMBAI

Congress has emerged as the clear political front-runner in Praja Foundation's Mumbai MLA Report Card 2026, sweeping the top three positions, while Shiv Sena (UBT) secured the next two. However, the report flagged declining legislative engagement, with questions raised by Mumbai MLAs in the Maharashtra Assembly plunging nearly 72% in 15 years.

The report, released on Tuesday, assessed 33 of Mumbai's 36 MLAs on parameters including attendance, participation, number and quality of questions and criminal background. Assembly Speaker Rahul Narwekar and ministers Mangal Prabhat Lodha and Ashish Shelar were excluded from the rankings.

During the 12th Assembly, covering Winter Session 2009 to Monsoon Session 2010, Mumbai MLAs raised 7,955 questions. By the 15th Assembly, covering Winter Session 2024 to Monsoon Session 2025, the figure had fallen sharply to 2,213 questions.

Congress dominated the performance chart, with Mumbadevi MLA Amin Patel topping the list with 82.89 points, followed by Malad MLA Aslam Shaikh with 80.58 and Dharavi MLA Jyoti Gaikwad with 80.30. Shiv Sena (UBT)'s Sunil Prabhu of Dindoshi and Manoj Jamsutkar of Byculla secured fourth and fifth positions, respectively.

At the bottom, Shiv Sena (Shinde faction) Ashok Patil and Prakash Surve ranked 32nd and 33rd, while BJP's Ram Kadam stood 31st.

The report also highlighted ageing political leadership in Mumbai. The average age of MLAs was 52 years in the 12th Assembly, dipped to 51 in the 13th, rose to 53 in the 14th and reached 57 in the 15th Assembly.

Milind Mhaske, CEO of Praja Foundation, said, "An MLA's performance ultimately comes down to one fundamental question: are citizens' concerns being effectively raised on the floor of the House?"

Fadnavis cracks whip on Mahayuti bickering

FPJ News Service
MUMBAI

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has issued a stern warning to leaders of the Mahayuti alliance over continuing differences and infighting at the local level, directing them to maintain coordination and avoid publicly criticising leaders of alliance partners.

The warning was issued at the first meeting of the Mahayuti coordination committee which was held on Monday evening attended by Fadnavis and both Deputy Chief Ministers Eknath Shinde and Sunetra Pawar. The meeting reviewed several contentious issues, including internal disputes, the pending allocation of government corporations and distribution of funds through district planning committees.

Information about the meeting was shared by Maharashtra BJP president Chandrashekhar Bawankule, who said strict instructions had been given to all alliance partners to ensure complete coordination at the grassroots level. MLAs and MPs have been specifically asked not to make public remarks against leaders or parties belonging to other Mahayuti constituents.

According to sources, the committee also discussed a mechanism to resolve disputes over district-level fund allocation. Initially, such differences will be referred to the divisional commissioner for resolution. If the issue remains unresolved, the coordination committee will intervene. In case of further disagreement, the final decision will be taken by the Chief Minister along with the two Deputy Chief Ministers.

Latur CA held in multi-crore overseas remittance case

Latur: A chartered accountant (CA) from Latur has been arrested for allegedly issuing certificates that facilitated the transfer of hundreds of crores abroad through 16 shell companies between April 1, 2022, and March 31, 2026.

The accused, Shyam Kalani, was remanded to police custody for nine days by a court in Udgir on Monday, said Udgir City police inspector Bhusnur. The case was registered on August 21 following an FIR based on findings from a survey conducted by the Income Tax (I-T) Department.

According to the FIR, Kalani allegedly issued 1,810 certificates in Form 15CB under the I-T Rules for the remittance of funds abroad without carrying out the required verification of the underlying documents.

According to the FIR, Shyam Kalani allegedly issued 1,810 certificates without verifying documents for overseas remittances

Form 15CB is issued by a CA in connection with certain payments or remittances to non-residents and certifies relevant taxability and tax-deduction details before funds are remitted through an authorised dealer or bank.

The case has been registered under Sections 318(4) (cheating), 234 (issuing or signing a false certificate), 229 (false evidence) and 3(5) (common intention) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. The investigation has been transferred to the Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Latur Police, officials said.

–PTI

Shukre appointed Maha Lokayukta

Mumbai: Justice Sunil Shukre (retired) was appointed as the Lokayukta of Maharashtra on Tuesday. Governor Jishnu Dev Varma administered the oath of office to him at Lok Bhavan in Mumbai. Shukre retired as a judge of the Bombay High Court in October 2023. The Maharashtra government later appointed him chairperson of the Maharashtra State Backward Class Commission (MSBCC) in December 2023, following the resignation of its then chairperson, retired Justice Anand Nirgude. Shukre headed the rapid statewide survey and submitted the crucial report in February 2024 detailing the backwardness of the Maratha community, which served as the backbone for the state's 10 per cent reservation legislation. Shukre had also been part of a seven-member delegation formed by the state government to hold talks with Maratha reservation activist Manoj Jarange.

Underwater Edge

The Indian Navy will commission Nistar-Class diving support vessel Nipun on August 31 at Naval Dockyard. Indigenously designed and built by Hindustan Shipyard Limited, Nipun will support diving and underwater operations while augmenting the Navy's submarine rescue capabilities —Text: **Dhairya Gajara**

ICICI gets Choksi assets' rental income

Charul Shah Joshi
MUMBAI

The special court has allowed ICICI Bank's plea to receive rental income of ₹33 crore from a store in a Kolkata mall. The plea relates to properties attached in the money laundering case against **Mehul Choksi**.

The bank sought transfer of ₹33 crore received by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) as rental income from attached properties, along with future rentals accruing until completion of the auction, into a fixed deposit maintained with ICICI Bank in the court's name.

The ED gave no objection to releasing the amount, on condition that it would not be transferred for any purpose until final disposal of the matter.

Allowing the plea, the court said ₹33.02 crore was lying in the account and permitting the bank to keep it in fixed deposits would allow accrued interest to benefit the beneficiary. Keeping the amount in the existing account would result in a substantial loss of interest, it said.

The court directed that the fixed deposit be maintained in the name of the Special Court, PMLA Special Case No 9/2018. It shall not be subject to any lien, set-off, appropriation or adjustment by ICICI Bank against any outstanding dues claimed by it.

CBI court rejects former PNB manager's wife's discharge plea

Court says Ashalatha acquired properties worth crores

Charul Shah Joshi
MUMBAI

The special CBI court has rejected Ashalatha's plea seeking discharge in a disproportionate assets case registered against her and her husband, former Punjab National Bank (PNB) deputy manager Gokulnath Shetty, following his arrest in the PNB fraud case linked to Nirav Modi and Mehul Choksi.

The court said Ashalatha had allegedly acquired disproportionate properties worth crores of rupees, as stated in the charge-sheet, and there was sufficient evidence to frame charges against her.

Advocate Sandeep Karnik, appearing for Ashalatha, contended that as a clerk, she was not required to declare her properties to her department or bank. He argued that Shetty, accused No 1, had included her name while purchasing flats, which did not establish that she amassed disproportionate assets.

CBI prosecutor Manphool Bishnoi opposed the plea, arguing that Ashalatha's approximate income during the check period from April 1, 2011, to May 31, 2017, was ₹48 lakh, while she purchased properties worth over ₹88 lakh, resulting in disproportionate assets of ₹40 lakh. Her salary income was ₹22.60 lakh, against earnings of ₹40 lakh, he said.

The court said the couple amassed properties worth approximately ₹2.63 crore, 238.44% disproportionate to their known sources of income.

The court further said Ashalatha, accused No 2, did not inform her bank or department about booking flats and making payments beyond her known sources of income. The court consequently rejected her discharge application.

3,756 get engg seats in round 3

Mumbai: A total of 3,756 fresh students have been offered admission in the third Centralised Admission Process (CAP) round for Direct Second Year Engineering courses in Maharashtra. According to the CET Cell, 3,790 students received preferred colleges under 'Auto Freeze', while 20,127 opted for betterment. Of 70,038 registered students, 36,803 submitted college preferences within the deadline for consideration in round three.

Tata Power's upgrade plan gets mangrove-safe HC nod

Urvi Mahajani
MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court has allowed Tata Power Company Ltd to upgrade its 75-year-old Kalwa-Kalyan transmission line from 110 KV to 220 KV to meet the "increased electricity demand in Greater Mumbai and Thane districts", making it clear that the project will not involve cutting or destruction of mangroves.

A division bench of Acting Chief Justice Ravindra Ghuge and Justice Gautam Ankhad said replacement of the existing transmission infrastructure was an integral and necessary part of the upgradation. The court granted Tata Power permission to replace transmission towers, including two located within 50 metres of the mangrove buffer zone.

The project, estimated to cost ₹488 crore, involves diversion of 4.5773 hectares of forest land. Tata Power has obtained the necessary statutory approvals from the Maharashtra Electricity Regulatory Commission (MERC), a recommendation from the Maharashtra Coastal Zone Management Authority and CRZ clearance. The court noted that none of the authorities had opposed the project and that the necessary permissions had been granted by the competent authorities.

Tata Power had also filed a compliance affidavit showing that it had paid ₹2.04 crore to the Forest Department towards net present value and compensatory afforestation. Of the 4.5773 hectares of forest land proposed to be diverted, 82 trees are proposed to be felled over 3.8503 hectares in the Thane Forest Division.

However, no mangrove trees are proposed to be felled in the 0.727-hectare Mumbai Mangrove Conservation Unit, the court noted.

The company has paid another ₹82.70 lakh towards compensatory afforestation over 9.20 hectares of degraded forest land in Murbad.

The court said failure to file the reports or applications would be treated as contempt and allowed Tata Power's petition.

Airport guard beaten up for halting wrong side Haj bus

Megha Kuchik
MUMBAI

A CSMIA airport security guard was assaulted after a father-son duo allegedly attacked him for stopping their tourist bus, driving wrong-way near the restricted Multi-Level Car Parking (MLCP) entry gate at Terminal 2 on Monday night.

The Sahar police detained Ravindra Jadhav and his son, Kunal Ravindra, after abusing and assaulting guard Sadik Darveshi, 24. At 8.30pm, Jadhav drove, carrying Haj pilgrims from different parts of Maharashtra to Mumbai airport to fly to Makkah.

Darveshi said Panigrahi alerted him when the bus attempted to enter the MLCP through a restricted gate. Jadhav drove onto an elevated bridge wrong-way, endangering vehicles and passengers, then went to Level P10.

Darveshi stopped the bus. Jadhav called his son, who allegedly abused and assaulted him with his hands and a belt and pulled his identification card. Guards and CISF intervened and handed them to Sahar police.

The police booked them for rash driving and criminal intimidation. They were released on notices. Bus was impounded. The police will recommend RTO suspension of Jadhav's licence and vehicle permit. Licence suspension could extend to six months.

Iron rod falls on student during BMC demolition work

Shefali Parab-Pandit
MUMBAI

A 17-year-old student was injured after an iron rod reportedly fell on his head during BMC demolition work for road widening in Vidyavihar East on Tuesday. Deven Jain, a first-year Somaiya College student, was rushed to the civic-run Rajawadi Hospital in Ghatkopar, where his condition is said to be stable.

The incident occurred around 3.50pm on Station Road, opposite R N Gandhi School, where the BMC has intensified road-widening work at a bottleneck to accommodate traffic. As part of the drive, 28 structures were demolished last week, while demolition of another 19 structures began on Tuesday.

According to BJP-nominated corporator Pravin Chedha, Jain was returning home from college when he was walking past the demolition site and an iron rod fell

and struck him on the head. "The boy sustained a head injury and received 15 stitches. His condition is now stable," said sources.

Chedha alleged that the BMC's 'N' Ward maintenance department carried out the demolition using JCB machinery without adequate safety precautions. He claimed that proper barricades, warning signs and a designated safe passage for pedestrians were not provided, despite the work being undertaken on a busy road. The accident has triggered criticism of the civic administration.

Chedha has written to Municipal Commissioner Ashwini Bhide, demanding intervention and urging the civic administration to ensure Jain receives immediate medical treatment at BMC's expense, and medical support until full recovery.

Senior police inspector Santosh Dhemare of Tilak Nagar police station said the incident has been recorded and further investigation is underway. Police suspect negligence during demolition may have led to the accident.

Jaydeep More, assistant municipal commissioner of N ward, did not respond despite repeated attempts.

– With inputs from Avadhut Kharade

Carter Rd LED hoarding tender plan put on hold

FPJ News Service
MUMBAI

The tender for 35 LED hoardings proposed along Carter Road promenade has been put on hold following the intervention of Mumbai Suburban Guardian Minister Ashish Shelar, who cited the absence of permission for commercial hoardings in the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) area.

The hoardings were proposed under a public-private partnership (PPP) model. Shelar said the Maharashtra Coastal Zone Management Authority had not granted the required permission, prompting the decision to keep the tender in abeyance.

The decision was taken at a high-level meeting attended by senior officials from the BMC, Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation (MSRDC) and Maharashtra Maritime Board (MMB). As different agencies manage various stretches of Mumbai's waterfront, including Worli Promenade, Marine Drive, Reclamation Promenade, Carter Road and Bandstand, Shelar directed the BMC to prepare uniform and comprehensive standard operating procedures (SOPs) for all promenades.

The SOPs will set common rules and standards while incorporating suggestions and objections from citizens. Shelar intervened after residents raised concerns over commercialisation of promenades and its possible impact on environmental norms. He said commercial activity and beautification of Mumbai's waterfront must not compromise environmental safeguards or inconvenience citizens.

Until the required permissions and common policy framework are in place, the Carter Road hoarding tender will remain on hold.

Meanwhile, Furkan Shaikh welcomed the move but said merely keeping the project on hold cannot be the final outcome. He reiterated the demand to cancel the proposed hoardings and preserve Carter Road and its seafront as a public space. Shaikh also called for meaningful citizen participation in framing the new policy governing such projects.

State nod for ₹1,722cr Bandra Fort Connector

4-lane link planned alongside Sea Link as congestion rises amid luxury redvpt in Bandra West's Pali Hill

Sweety Adimulam
MUMBAI

The state has granted administrative approval for a 3.55km Bandra Fort Connector, a four-lane (2+2) road to be constructed adjacent to Bandra Fort, opposite Hotel Taj Lands End, aimed at easing traffic congestion for commuters travelling towards Taj Lands End, Bandra Fort and Pali Hill from the under-construction Swatantryaveer Savarkar Sea Link, also called the Versova-Bandra Sea Link.

The project, to be implemented by the Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation (MSRDC) as part of the ongoing sea link project, has been approved at an estimated cost of ₹1,722.40 crore, including a civil construction cost of ₹1,183.79 crore, along with allied provisions and GST. It is expected to provide an alternative route for motorists entering Bandra West, particularly those travelling towards Pali Hill and the Bandra Fort-Taj Lands End stretch.

THE PROJECT

- Length: 3.55km
- Configuration: Four lanes (2+2)
- Estimated cost: ₹1,722.40 crore
- Main carriage way: 1.269km
- Loop 1: 0.175km
- Ramp 2: 0.214km
- Ramp 3: 0.261km
- Ramp 4: 0.365km
- Current Sea Link toll plaza-Pali Hill stretch: 2.6km
- Current travel time: 20-30 minutes

Currently, roads connecting the Sea Link toll plaza to Pali Hill are largely one-plus-one lane roads. According to the project details, motorists travelling the approximately 2.6km stretch from the Sea Link toll plaza to the Pali Hill area can take 20 to 30 minutes owing to heavy traffic.

The four-lane connector is intended to increase road capacity and improve traffic movement in an area where existing approaches are constrained by narrow carriageways and heavy traffic volumes. The proposed structure will have a total length of 3.55km, including ramps and loops.

The demand for the connector was raised by Adv Ashish Shelar, Cabinet Minister and Guardian Minister for Mumbai Suburbs, who sought its inclusion in the ongoing sea link project.

The MSRDC had submitted a proposal for the additional connector to the public works department at Mantralaya on August 19, 2024. Subsequently, the government resolution dated July 28, 2026, formally approved the project, allowing the MSRDC to undertake the additional connector linking the Swatantryaveer Savarkar Sea Link bridge at Bandra Fort. Bungalow redevelopment and luxury housing are reshaping Bandra West and Pali Hill, driven by limited large plots, demand for sea-facing homes and redevelopment potential.

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- Preferred if Redevelopment Experience of any MHADA Projects

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Last date of collection : 6th September 2026

Last Date of Submission : 21st September 2026

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For Prathmesh Leela CHS LTD.

Mr. Vilas Yeram (9867277751) Chairman | **Mr. Sunil Kadam (9892488790) Secretory**

Education access key to bridging disparities

Shreya Jachak
MUMBAI

Salman Ansari

AISA's Neha Bora and model Rhiya Ahir

Ensuring equal access to education is essential to addressing social disparities and promoting inclusive development, speakers at an event organised at the Mumbai Press Club said, stressing the need for greater attention to students from marginalised and disadvantaged communities.

The discussion, conducted by National Women in Media (NWMI), was moderated by senior journalist Kalpana Sharma and featured Neha Bora, President of All India Students Association (AISA), and Rhiya Ahir, a model who became the face of a protest in Mumbai. It focused on education's role in reducing inequalities and creating opportunities for social advancement.

AISA leadership said education remains an important instrument for challenging social and economic inequalities. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds face multiple barriers, requiring stronger support systems and policies addressing their concerns. Speakers said access must go beyond enrolment to include affordability, quality, and the ability to continue and complete education.

They stressed that institutions must remain accessible irrespective of socio-economic background, as disparities in access to quality education can reinforce existing inequalities and restrict social mobility. Greater focus, they said, is needed on economically weaker and socially marginalised sections so financial constraints do not prevent students from pursuing higher education.

The discussion also highlighted broader concerns around equitable access to education in India, including affordability, public investment, social inclusion and quality of educational opportunities. Participants said policies must ensure students can remain in education and benefit from meaningful learning.

Speakers added that inclusive education can promote individual advancement and wider social development by creating opportunities for communities that have historically faced barriers to education.

Rustomjee Crown complex razing continues

Devashri Bhujbal
MUMBAI

The BMC's crackdown on unauthorised alterations at Rustomjee Crown, a three-basements-plus-63-floors luxury residential complex at Crown Mill Compound, Prabhadevi, continued for the second day on Tuesday. After demolition in B wing on Monday, action was underway on the 23rd and 38th floors of A wing on Tuesday, sources said. Following complaints of unauthorised construction and FSI violations, the BMC issued notices under Section 53(1) of the MRTP Act. "A total of 138 notices have been issued to the owner over the last six months. The other party was given sufficient time and hearings to present their side and all Supreme Court guidelines were followed," a senior BMC officer said. The BMC said nine unauthorised constructions/alterations were removed in two days.

Rustomjee Group said construction complied with sanctioned plans and 1991 DCR, had an occupation certificate, and that the developer had no violations.

Test finds drunk-driving charge against sr citizen lacked evidence

Megha Kuchik
MUMBAI

Weeks after 70-year-old Andheri resident Sharad Kadam landed in hospital after suffering a stroke following an alleged drunk-driving incident, an inquiry report submitted to DCP (North Zone-1) Purushottam Karad has found that the drunk-driving charge against him was added without scientific evidence.

The case has upended Kadam's family, with his wife and son rushing from Canada to Mumbai after learning of the incident last month. Kadam has since suffered paralysis on his right side and was discharged from Nanavati Hospital on Monday night before being shifted to a nursing home. "This is a very serious thing for us. Our son and I are also not feeling well," his wife said.

Kadam was booked by Versova police on July 25 after his car brushed against a female veterinary doctor's vehicle. Police initially relied on a preliminary note from a Cooper Hospital doctor who stated that Kadam appeared drunk. The doctor later told the inquiry that he had written the note after Kadam merely nodded his head and without conducting a blood test.

The inquiry found that Kadam's blood sample, tested at Cooper Hospital, showed "NIL" alcohol content. A separate test at Nanavati Hospital the following morning also found no alcohol. Witnesses, including lawyer and friend Nitin P, reportedly said Kadam was not intoxicated and had suffered a stroke. Two traffic constables also failed to complete a breathalyser test.

Karad is expected to forward the report to the Joint Commissioner of Police (Law & Order), MLA Ameet Satam said. Kadam's nephew Rohan Rathod said the family was seeking action over the handling of the case.

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Walk-in-Interview

Ref. No. IPSCDL/CITIIS2.0 Component 2/Recruitments/2025-26/1710 Date : 24th Aug, 2026

IPSCDL hereby invites individual professionals for the walk-in interview for the following positions purely on a contractual basis for a period of one year.

Sr. No.	Designation	No. of Posts	Interview Date and Time
1	Subject Expert 01- Climate Change	01	02/09/2026 10:00 - 12:30 PM
2	Subject Expert 02 – Social and Gender Expert	01	02/09/2026 02:00 - 3:00 PM

All applicants are requested to report one hour prior to the interview time.

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For more details about the position, please visit www.imaginepanaji.com/careers.

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Self-funded varsities must set up Marathi language depts

Shreya Jachak
MUMBAI

All self-financed universities in the state will have to establish dedicated Marathi language departments, higher and technical education minister Chandrakant Patil directed on Tuesday, while reviewing implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) and academic standards across the institutions.

Patil also discussed providing a 50% fee concession to 10% of students, particularly those from low-income groups. He said universities should take necessary measures while upholding their social responsibility and keeping student welfare at the centre of their functioning.

The meeting at Dr Homi Bhabha State University in Mumbai covered NEP implementation, academic quality, administrative functioning and student-centric initiatives. It also assessed progress on internships and four-year undergraduate degree programmes.

Universities were directed to regularly update gross enrolment and participation ratio on the All India Survey on Higher Education portal and the department's dashboard. Patil asked institutions to accelerate efforts to secure NAAC and NBA accreditation and increase participation in National Institutional Ranking Framework.

They were further directed to ensure every enrolled student receives an APAAR ID and that all IDs are mapped with the Academic Bank of Credits, alongside registration on relevant state and national portals. Additional Chief Secretary B Venugopal Reddy directed universities to submit annual reports within prescribed timelines.

CONVICTION | Sajid Electricwala, who was kidnapped last year over alleged disputed payment, convicted along with 4 others

11 yrs on, 5 convicted in Oshiwara drug making case

Charul Shah Joshi
MUMBAI

A special court under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act on Tuesday convicted five men for their involvement in manufacturing Mephedrone (MD) at a flat in Oshiwara in June 2015. The convicted accused are Sajid Electricwala, Sachin Bagul, Chandrakant Katade, Rahul Salunke and Ayub Khan alias Lala.

The court also held that Bhanudas More alias Bhavesh Patel was guilty. It observed that Rajjak Rupani alias Chacha, who died while the trial was pending, had been heading the gang.

Earlier this month, the special Thane court convicted Patel in a Directorate of Revenue Intelligence case involving the seizure of around 238.20kg of MD from his factory in 2017.

The June 2015 case relates to an Anti-Terrorism Squad raid following information about MD manufacturing. Officers first apprehended Bagul near Hotel Shreeji in Oshiwara and recovered 1kg MD from him. His interrogation led investigators to a flat in Ekdant Building, where they found a drug manufacturing unit.

The raid resulted in the seizure of 25.50kg of finished MD, 25kg of unfinished MD and 100 litres of chemicals allegedly used to manufacture the psychotropic substance. Electricwala, Bagul, Katade and Salunke were subsequently arrested from the flat.

Special public prosecutor Avdhut Chimalkar examined 44 witnesses during the trial. The prosecution argued that Patel was the mastermind and trainer, while Lala acted as a conduit for the sale and disposal of the drug. It was alleged that Lala and another accused provided money to Electricwala to set up the unit.

While convicting the accused, special judge Sudhirkumar Bukke accepted the prosecution's case regarding their respective roles. The court adjourned the matter to Thursday to hear the prosecution and the accused on the quantum of sentence before pronouncing the punishment. The prosecution has also sought enhanced punishment for Patel citing his previous conviction.

ABOUT SAJID ELECTRICWALA

- A Surat-based drug manufacturer/ dealer
- Trained by Bhavesh Patel to make drugs
- He remained in Arthur Road Jail as an undertrial for years following his 2015 arrest
- In June 2025, he was allegedly kidnapped and held captive for nearly a month after a disputed ₹50 lakh payment. His lawyer has prayed that he be lodged in a jail outside the state due to alleged threat to his life from rival gang members

Four snags in a day hit city rail services

RoRo wagon derailment, repeated opening of Diva crossing delay trains

Abhishek Pathak
MUMBAI

A series of unrelated incidents across Mumbai's suburban and long-distance rail network on Tuesday caused delays and inconvenience to passengers, with a RoRo wagon derailment, repeated opening of the Diva level crossing, a brake-binding incident on a Virar-Churchgate local and problems with AC local door closers affecting train operations. A technical snag also briefly trapped six passengers inside a lift at the underground Metro station at Churchgate, though all were rescued safely.

On the Konkan Railway, the last wagon of a RoRo train derailed on the main line towards Goa around 11pm, leading to a temporary disruption. Railway officials immediately began restoration work. A track-fit certificate was issued around 1.30am after the affected stretch was inspected and declared fit for train operations. While officials said there was no major operational impact, several trains were delayed by around one to two hours. The affected services included several Mumbai-bound express trains.

Central Railway also faced disruption at Diva level crossing, where the gate was opened repeatedly for road traffic because of heavy vehicular movement. The crossing remained open from 12.11pm to 12.21pm, affecting a sequence of suburban and long-distance trains. It had earlier been opened twice for more than 12 minutes, around 10.35am and 11.10am, resulting in further delays.

On Western Railway, a Virar-Churchgate local developed brake-binding at Bhayandar around 11.30am. The incident was followed by repercussions on services. AC local trains also faced problems with door closers during the peak period.

Meanwhile, on the Metro network, a lift at Churchgate underground Metro station developed a technical snag in the afternoon, trapping six passengers, who were rescued within five minutes.

EVENTS

- RoRo wagon derailment
- Traffic at Diva level crossing
- A brake-binding incident on a Virar-Churchgate local
- AC local door closing problem
- A technical snag in lift of Metro at Churchgate

Protest against BEST depot plan

Mumbai: Citizens' group Aamchi Mumbai Aamchi BEST will stage a protest at BMC headquarters tomorrow (Aug 27) at 3.30pm against the proposed redevelopment of 22 BEST depots. The group has accused the civic administration and state government of putting the future of the city's public transport system at risk "in the name of 'Kayakalp' redevelopment". The group has questioned the need for theatres, hospitals and museums on BEST land when several government schools and hospitals are already facing infrastructure problems. Its coordinators, Vidyadhar Date and Husain Indorewala, have appealed to BEST employees, workers' organisations and Mumbaikars to participate in the protest.

Dangerous manhole

A broken manhole cover is posing danger to motorists on P D'Mello Road near Sindoor Bridge – Salman Ansari

CR to undertake blocks at Titwala

Mumbai: Central Railway commuters on the Kasara route will face disruptions for 15 consecutive nights from August 28-29 to September 11-12 as special traffic and power blocks are undertaken at Titwala to extend the platform for 15-car suburban rakes.

The first phase, from August 28-29 to September 1-2, will involve a five-hour-40-minute block every night from 11.30pm to 5.10am between Kalyan and Vasind on the Up and Down North East lines. Several late-night and early-morning suburban services will be cancelled, short-terminated or originate from alternative stations.

The CSMT-Asangaon local departing at 8.56pm will be short-terminated at Titwala, while some Dombivli-CSMT and Kalyan-CSMT services will terminate at Thane. The last CSMT-Kasara local before the block will leave at 10.47pm.

The blocks will last nearly 6 hours every night for almost a fortnight

From August 29-30 to September 1-2, Titwala-bound services will be extended to Asangaon, with originating services shifted there. Some trains will terminate at Thane or Kalyan. Mail and Express trains will also face delays of up to 20 minutes. Central Railway has advised passengers to plan their journeys accordingly.

2nd MRI machine at JJ sought

Mumbai: Seeking urgent intervention to address mounting pressure on patients at JJ Hospital in Byculla, Congress MLA Amin Patel has urged medical education minister Hasan Mushrif to ensure installation of a second MRI machine, adequate supply of medicines and filling of vacant staff posts at the state-run hospital. He also raised concerns over the prolonged waiting period for MRI investigations. He said discussions had been held with the secretary of the medical education department and Assembly Speaker Rahul Narvekar, during which assurances were given that two MRI machines would be made operational to substantially reduce the waiting period.

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Prosperous Farmers Empowered Madhya Pradesh

Prosperity through cooperation: Initiatives ranging from seed marketing & dairy societies to strengthening district cooperative banks transforming rural landscape

Focus on rural economy; all 4,536 PACS institutions in state fully digital

Madhya Pradesh emerges as a leading state in financial inclusion

The state government has achieved significant success in strengthening Madhya Pradesh's rural economy.

All 4,536 Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS) in the state have been made 100% digital.

With this historic computerisation, Madhya Pradesh has emerged as a leading state in the country.

This digital revolution will soon enable farmers to connect with their societies via mobile apps.

They will be able to easily handle financial transactions and loan-related tasks from the comfort of their homes.

Special action plan for weak co-op banks

The Madhya Pradesh government has set a three-year target to make weak district cooperative banks self-reliant. Moving rapidly in this direction, major steps have been taken over the past two and a half years to improve the financial health of six out of the 18 weak district cooperative banks.

CM Dr. Mohan Yadav at a meeting of the Cooperative Department

14L quintal certified seeds marketed in 2 yrs

A major agreement has been signed between the Bharatiya Beej Sahakari Samiti Limited (BBSSL) and the state's cooperative seed federation to achieve self-reliance in seed production. This partnership has generated a business turnover of ₹17 crore so far. Additionally, 844 PACS institutions have become members. Under this system, a record 14 lakh quintals of certified seeds have been produced and marketed nationwide over the past two years.

1,102 new dairy societies formed in rural areas

Expanding the scope of cooperation, 1,102 new dairy cooperative societies have been established in rural areas. The total number of dairy societies in the state has now risen to 5,562. To boost the rural economy, savings accounts of 76,000 new milk-producing members have been opened directly with District Cooperative Banks.

Digital co-op revolution

- **Banking from home:** With the digitisation of all 4,536 PACS, farmers gain direct and transparent access to loans and supplies (fertilisers and seeds) without the need for repeated visits.
- **Easy access to certified seeds:** The marketing of a record 1.4 million quintals of certified seeds ensures farmers receive improved, high-quality seeds on time.
- **Strengthened banking infrastructure:** Improvements in the financial health of six district cooperative banks are providing farmers with better banking services at the local level.
- **Support for milk producers:** With bank accounts of 76,000 new members opened, proceeds from milk sales are credited directly to their accounts without delay.

Roadmap ready: Daily milk collection to go up from 10L to 50L litres

MP to become country's 'Milk Capital'

Historic agreement with NDDB; record hike of up to ₹8.50 per litre in procurement prices by milk unions

Government plans to increase the number of milk-collecting villages from 9K to 26K 000 in next 5 years

The state government has taken a major step towards establishing Madhya Pradesh as the country's leading 'Milk Capital'. The government has signed a historic agreement with the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) to strengthen the 'Sanchi' brand globally and boost milk production. Under this initiative, a roadmap has been prepared to increase the daily milk collection capacity to 50 lakh litres. To ensure livestock farmers receive fair value for their hard work, milk unions have implemented a massive, record hike in milk procurement rates, ranging from ₹2.50 to ₹8.50 per litre. Consequently, milk unions have made direct payments to producer farmers that are more than 15 per cent higher compared to the previous year. Currently, the state has achieved a historic milestone of an average daily milk collection of 9.67 lakh kilograms. Over the next five years, the number of villages involved in milk collection will be increased from 9,000 to 26,000. Additionally, primary dairy cooperative societies will be established in at least 50 per cent of the state's villages.

Market issues settled; focus shifts to self-employment and higher pay

CM welcoming Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah during the agreement signing with NDDB.

- **Guaranteed procurement:** With the network expanding from 9,000 to 26,000 villages over the next 5 years, livestock farmers will have a reliable market for selling milk right within their own villages.
- **Greater direct benefits:** An increase of up to ₹8.50 per litre in procurement rates and a 15% rise in total pay-outs have boosted the daily cash income of rural households.
- **Support for commercial dairy:** Substantial government subsidies of up to 33% on loans amounting to ₹42 lakh have made it easier for the youth to start self-employment ventures in the dairy sector.
- **Production through breed improvement:** The development of improved cattle breeds under the 'Hiranyagarbha Abhiyan' (campaign) is set to significantly boost milk production capacity per animal in future.

Vrindavan Gram Yojana & Dr. Ambedkar Kamdhenu Yojana

To make animal husbandry profitable in rural areas, one village in every development block is being developed as a model 'Vrindavan Gram'. Under the Dr. Ambedkar Kamdhenu Yojana, loan assistance of up to ₹42 lakh is being provided to set up new commercial dairy units with 25 milch animals. This scheme includes provisions for substantial subsidies ranging from 25% to 33%. Additionally, the government is providing special grants for rearing more than 10 cows.

Biogas-CNG plant established in Gwalior

For the welfare of livestock, the country's first biogas-based CNG plant with a 100-tonne capacity has been successfully established at a model gaushala (cow shelter) in Gwalior. To extend medical facilities to remote areas, a modern 'Animal Care and Wellness Centre' is being set up in Gwalior and a new high-tech veterinary hospital is being established in Dabra. Simultaneously, the "Hiranyagarbha Abhiyan" is being effectively implemented across the state to improve cattle breeds.

Blue revolution : Historic ₹7,430cr pact with Kuwait company

Fisheries sector scales globally; policy targets ₹9,000 crore investment

Annual state fish exports eye ₹6,000cr milestone

The Integrated Fisheries Industry Policy-2026 has been implemented to accelerate the 'Blue Revolution' and boost the income of fishermen in Madhya Pradesh. Driven by the far-reaching impact of this new policy, proposals for massive industrial investments exceeding ₹9,000 crore in the fisheries sector are now being realised on the ground. The state's vast water expanse of 4.40 lakh hectares is now being utilised using scientific methods, earning Madhya Pradesh a distinct identity on the global map of inland fisheries. The state has achieved significant international success under the new fisheries policy, securing a historic business agreement worth ₹7,430 crore with a renowned global company from Kuwait. This agreement targets the export of high-quality fish worth approximately ₹6,000 crore directly from the state to international markets. It is expected to generate over 35,000 new employment opportunities in rural and semi-urban areas. Efforts are also underway to align fisheries with modern and global standards. This includes the rapid expansion of cage culture, fish processing units, smart fish parlours and cold chain infrastructure across the state.

Additionally, special financial and technical assistance is being provided to paddy farmers to encourage fish farming in their fields.

Benefits for fishermen

- **New employment opportunities:** The agreement with the Kuwaiti company will create over 35,000 new direct and indirect employment opportunities in the state.
- **Source of dual income:** Integrating fish farming with paddy cultivation provides farmers with a reliable secondary source of income without incurring additional costs.
- **Easy financial assistance:** Traditional fish farmers are gaining access to instant loans at very low interest rates through the 'Machhua Kisan Credit Card'.
- **Profits from new industries:** The establishment of hatcheries and pearl farming in every district will provide local youth with advanced technical training and self-employment opportunities.

Promoting modern hatcheries and 'blue tourism'

At least one modern and advanced fish hatchery is being developed in every district of the state. Additionally, activities such as aquaponics, pearl farming and duck rearing, along with 'blue tourism' models around water bodies, are being rapidly expanded. The state also ranks second in the country in the distribution of 'Machhua Kisan Credit Cards'.

Major financial push: ₹48 crore injection for Forest Science Centres

Farmers to get high value training in medicinal & commercial farming

The Madhya Pradesh government has formulated a major policy framework to provide training to farmers in commercial and medicinal farming. Under this initiative, farmers living near forest areas will be introduced to modern agroforestry techniques. The government has granted administrative and financial approval for a substantial sum of ₹48 crore to establish six new, state-of-the-art Forest Science Centres across various regions of the state between the years 2025-26 and 2029-30.

These centres will provide farmers with practical training in scientific methods for cultivating valuable medicinal plants and commercial forest tree species, alongside traditional farming practices. This initiative will not only enhance environmental conservation but also open up new avenues for self-employment at the rural level and ensure a sustainable increase in farmers' income.

Technology proves a boon: 100% protection against pests and bumper yields even in off-season

Protected farming booms via zero-budget polyhouses, shade nets shield crops with minimal water

Costs halved through drip irrigation and mulching techniques

In Madhya Pradesh, alongside natural farming, protected farming is now being rapidly adopted as a new and highly profitable agricultural method. Under the technical guidance of the Department of Horticulture and Food Processing, thousands of farmers across the state are moving away from traditional open-field farming and turning towards modern polyhouses and shade-net houses.

The greatest advantage of this method is that crops can be kept completely safe from scorching sunlight, hailstorms, frost and harmful pest infestations, resulting in a three- to four-fold increase in crop yield. Through the 'Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture' and the 'PM Irrigation Scheme,' the department provides substantial government subsidies ranging from 40% to 50%, significantly reducing costs.

Drip irrigation and plastic mulching techniques are mandatorily used. Drip technology delivers water and essential liquid fertilisers drop-by-drop directly to the plant roots, saving up to 70% of water and ensuring that not a single grain of fertiliser goes to waste. Meanwhile, laying mulching paper completely eliminates weeds in the fields and drastically cuts down on labour costs. In the districts of the Malwa and Nimar regions, this method is yielding record-breaking harvests of high-value crops such as cucumbers, capsicum, watermelons and roses, proving to be an excellent method for farmers to achieve significant financial prosperity in a short span of time.

Horticulture innovation, agriculture policy & infrastructure

1. **₹20 crore** Establishment of a 'radiation technology unit' in Bhopal in collaboration with BARC, Bombay
2. **₹1.25 crore** State-of-the-art 'cold chain plant' project in Indore in collaboration with RRCAT 2.
3. **₹11.34 crore** Hybrid vegetable seed production clusters in Sagar (district) and Dewas (Kannod).
4. **₹2.5 crore** 'Potato contract farming' in 12 major districts of Malwa and Chambal regions .
5. **10 new districts** Successful expansion of Makhana (fox nut) cultivation in 10 new districts, including Jabalpur, Rewa and Katni.
6. **₹505 crore** Budgetary funds from the Cow Conservation Board allocated to gaushalas (cow shelters) for fodder grants.
7. **2,056+ gaushalas** Operated under government patronage in the state, housing 3.98 lakh cattle.
8. **4 'Model' districts** Fully equipped model Gaushalas in Agar Malwa, Indore, Gwalior, and Ujjain.

New era of compassion

Animal husbandry deptt becomes 'cow rearing department', roadmap targets economic self-reliance and upgraded facilities

State doubles daily dietary allowance per head of cattle, financial support aids 3.98 lakh cattle in 2,000 gaushalas

Driven by compassion and sensitivity, the Madhya Pradesh government has taken a historic step towards the conservation of cattle considered the backbone of Indian culture and rural life.

The Animal Husbandry Department has now been officially renamed the 'Cow Rearing Department' To ensure better and nutritious feed for cattle, the government has directly doubled the daily feed allowance from ₹20 to ₹40 per animal. A special budgetary provision of ₹505 crore has been made for the state's Cattle Conservation Board to ensure the seamless operation of this scheme.

Special budgetary fund of ₹505 cr for fodder and straw subsidy

Currently, more than 2,056 gaushalas (cow shelters) are operating successfully in the state with government support. Over 3.98 lakh cattle are being cared for with great sensitivity in these shelters. Meanwhile, 'model gaushalas' equipped with modern facilities have already been established in four districts Agar Malwa, Indore, Gwalior and Ujjain while construction is proceeding rapidly in Bhopal, Jabalpur and Sagar.

Gaushalas to become self-reliant through Panchagavya products

The government has approved the 'Self-Reliant Gaushala Establishment Policy-2025'. Under this initiative, a modern marketing network is being developed to sell gaushala products such as Panchagavya, organic manure, cow urine extract, and natural pesticides.

New lease of life through hydraulic vehicles

A unique system has been put in place for the prompt treatment of helpless cows that meet accidents or fall ill on the roads. State-of-the-art hydraulic cattle-lifting vehicles have been deployed at key urban and rural centres across the state.

pillars of prosperity

- **100% increase in feed allowance:** With the daily allowance per cow rising from ₹20 to ₹40, animals in gaushalas will now receive more nutritious and adequate fodder and straw.
- **Safe transportation:** The deployment of state-of-the-art hydraulic vehicles has made it possible for injured and helpless cows found on the roads to receive immediate treatment without undergoing additional suffering.
- **A new model of self-reliance:** Under the self-reliance policy, the commercial marketing of organic manure and cow urine extract will boost the daily income of gaushalas (cow shelters).

Milk adulteration racket busted, 15 booked

Raina Assainar
NAVI MUMBAI

An FIR has been registered against 15 individuals and dairy establishments in connection with an alleged milk adulteration racket operating in Navi Mumbai's Mahape MIDC area. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) seized 4,710 litres of adulterated and suspected milk, along with skimmed milk powder (SMP), paneer and cream worth several lakhs of rupees.

The FIR was registered at Turbhe police station on August 22, following an FDA raid at PK Dairy in Mahape on August 19. The FDA has also begun the process of cancelling the food licences of the establishments involved.

According to the FDA, Shivendra Shyamlal Jaiswal, 34, was allegedly caught adulterating milk by mixing SMP and chilled water into an Eicher milk tanker, allegedly in connivance with dairy owner Pradeep Kamlesh Yadav. The adulterated milk was reportedly supplied as pure cow and buffalo milk to dairies in Thane, Airoli, Kopri, Digha and Ghansoli.

The FIR was filed at Turbhe police station following an FDA raid at PK Dairy in Mahape on August 19

PK Dairy was operating without a food safety licence and was shut down. The FDA seized and destroyed 4,710 litres of milk worth ₹1.85 lakh. It also seized 473 kg of SMP worth ₹1.60 lakh, 129.5 kg of paneer worth ₹45,280 and 88.4 kg of cream worth ₹30,940.

At Bhaskar Dairy, 548 kg of suspected powder and paneer worth ₹1.83 lakh was seized and its licence suspended. At Narayan Dairy, 3,648 litres of pasteurised skimmed milk worth ₹1.24 lakh was destroyed for lacking laboratory reports. Another 88.4 kg of cream was seized from Fattesingrao Naik Cooperative Milk Union., all on the orders of the FDA commissioner.

12-year-old climbs six-tier Govinda pyramid, 2 in dock

Avadhut Kharade
MUMBAI

The Bhoiwada police have registered an FIR against the president and instructor of SPC Govinda Mandal, Parel, for allegedly allowing a 12-year-old boy to climb onto the sixth tier of a six-level human pyramid during a Ganesh idol procession on August 23.

The accused have been identified as Mahesh Maruti Kalbate, president of SPC Govinda Mandal, and Sachin Dattatray Surve, the mandal's instructor. They have been accused of committing a negligent act despite allegedly knowing that the participant was a minor.

The Ganesh idol procession of Parelcha Samrat, from the Tata Mill Compound on Jagannath Bhatankar Marg, began at 5pm on August 23.

The boy climbed without wearing any protective gear or safety equipment, triggering quick police action

When the procession reached the Lakshmi Cottage building on Dr BA Road between around 6.30pm and 7pm, a Govinda team comprising approximately 50 to 60 people allegedly arrived in front of the procession and began forming a human pyramid.

According to the complaint, the team formed a six-tier pyramid, and a minor boy was seen climbing onto the sixth and highest tier. The boy was allegedly not wearing any protective headgear or safety equipment. Police personnel deployed for bandobast immediately intervened and brought the boy down.

Police subsequently questioned the mandal office-bearers and detained Kalbate and Surve for further inquiry and action. During questioning, they identified the boy who had climbed onto the sixth tier and stated that he was 12 years old.

Police have registered a case against the two accused under relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act and the Maharashtra Police Act.

Ayub's food business licence suspended

Amit Srivastava
MUMBAI

The Maharashtra Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has suspended the food business licence of Ayub's, a food establishment in Fort, after an inspection found serious and widespread violations of food safety and hygiene norms.

An inspection conducted on August 22 under the guidance of Food Safety Commissioner Tukaram Mundhe found several lapses at the establishment, including improper storage of eggs and other high-risk food items at room temperature, lack of adequate temperature-control facilities and improper segregation of raw and cooked food.

FDA officials also found poor hygiene in food-handling areas, open and poorly maintained drains, stagnant water, houseflies and inadequate pest-control measures. The establishment also lacked adequate personal hygiene facilities for food handlers and had deficiencies in food testing and traceability records.

The FSSAI licence of Ayub's was suspended with effect from August 23.

In a separate action, FDA found serious hygiene and food-safety violations at Sankalp Mahila Audyogik Utpadak Sahakari Society Limited's Mid-Day Meal Canteen in Kurla West during an inspection on August 21, 2026. Inspectors found poor housekeeping, dirt and food residue, unhygienic walls and fittings, cracked flooring with stagnant water, inadequate pest-exclusion measures and no records of periodic drinking-water testing as per IS 10500 standards. FDA suspended with immediate effect the food business licence of the canteen.

WR, CR shut down 45 food outlets

Mumbai: Forty-five catering outlets across Western and Central Railway have faced action during a 10-day hygiene and cleanliness drive in Mumbai. Western Railway's Mumbai Central Division shut 39 outlets, while Central Railway's Mumbai Division took action against six of 53 stalls inspected between August 15 and 24. The action includes closures, penalties and mandatory compliance checks before outlets can resume operations.

'Non-veg tea': HC orders reinspection of 5 MCA eateries

Urvi Mahajani
MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court on Tuesday directed the Maharashtra Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to reinspect five eateries at the Mumbai Cricket Association's (MCA) premises in Bandra-Kurla Complex (BKC), after serious hygiene violations were found during an earlier inspection.

The court also directed the MCA to thoroughly clean the premises before the inspection and said the FDA should consider lifting the suspension if the outlets are found to have complied with food safety requirements.

The bench was hearing petitions filed by the MCA challenging the suspension of licences of the five eateries. The FDA had inspected the premises on August 20 and suspended the licences.

According to the FDA, its inspection found cockroaches and flies in the kitchens, besides dirty and slippery floors. It also noted that the eateries were being operated by M/s Shirke Infrastructure, although the food licences were issued in the MCA's name.

Senior counsel Vikram Nankani, appearing for the MCA, argued that the FDA should have first issued an improvement notice. The bench, however, said an improvement notice was not necessary in cases involving "gross violations" of hygiene standards.

When Nankani submitted that the closure of all five eateries meant the MCA could not even provide tea to cricketers using the facility, the bench responded: "There are flies and cockroaches in the restaurants' kitchens. It is non-vegetarian tea. Do they (cricketers) know they are consuming this tea?"

The court, however, permitted the MCA to provide tea and coffee to players through vending machines.

The HC directed the FDA to conduct the fresh inspection between 1pm and 6pm on Thursday, with the deficiencies assessed and scores recorded as per the usual practice.

"Once a restaurant/eatery clears up the deficiencies, then the suspension order needs to be revoked immediately, the bench observed. "It cannot be kept pending as the FDA's objective has been achieved."

The matter has been posted for further hearing on August 29.

Bhuleshwar fall: Sculptor built 22-foot idol for first time

Sapna Dodmani
MUMBAI

Two days after the Bhuleshwar Cha Raja Ganesha idol collapsed during a procession, killing two and injuring five, sculptor Aniket Desai told the police in a statement that he had built a 22-foot-tall idol for the first time.

Desai had previously created a 19-foot Ganesh idol for a mandal in Kamathipura last year. Desai, who has a temporary workshop at Bakri Adda, told LT Marg Police that he had created the idol as per specifications provided by the mandal.

Police sources said that Desai could not be contacted after the incident on Sunday. The LT Marg police subsequently visited his residence and served him a notice. However, he was reportedly not present at home at the time. Through the notice, Desai was asked to appear for questioning on Tuesday. Accordingly, he appeared before the LT Marg police on Tuesday morning and his statement was recorded.

Police have registered two Accidental Death Reports (ADRs) in the case. Police have so far recorded the statements of around 15 to 20 people, including mandal office-bearers, volunteers and eyewitnesses who were present during the arrival ceremony.

Meanwhile, the Lalbaugcha Raja Ganeshotsav Mandal announced financial assistance. The mandal will provide ₹11 lakh to the Bhuleshwar Raja Ganeshotsav Mandal and ₹5 lakh each to the families of deceased office-bearers Sanket Nevshe and Brijesh Joshi.

The deceased have been identified as Sanket Nevshe, president of the Bhuleshwar Raja Sarvajanik Ganeshotsav Mandal, and Brijesh Joshi, an office-bearer of the Mandal. Police suspect a technical failure in the support system, with faulty welding being possible factors.

50% hike in Andheri Sports Complex fee

Devashri Bhujbal
MUMBAI

The BMC, which owns, operates and manages the Andheri Sports Complex, has quoted a massive rent hike of 50% to Mumbai City FC (MCFC) for using the ground for the upcoming Indian Super League (ISL). With the revised ground fees, the MCFC may have to pay ₹15 lakh per match against of ₹110 lakh rent fee charged last year.

The proposed jump in the rent fees by the BMC, has raised questions in the sports fraternity and football enthusiasts if the matches will be shifted out of Andheri Sports Complex this year.

Speaking on the proposed fee hike, an official from BMC's sports department said: "This year the additions are made like inclusion of rooms and other areas of the sports complex during the tournament, following which Rs 15 lakh rent per match is quoted to MCFC."

The Mumbai City FC will now have to pay ₹15 lakh per match instead of ₹10 lakh

Meanwhile, Shiv Sena (UBT) leader and MLA Aaditya Thackeray on Tuesday alleged that the BJP regime is set out on a mission to finish football in Mumbai. "They believe that rather than promoting sports, it's their job to hike the fees and push out football from the city, so that they can start leasing the ground to events and shows and earn money out of it" he said. "As a result, they've quoted an absurdly high rate of fees for Mumbai City FC for ISL."

Human pyramids

Participants form towering human pyramids during the Pro Govinda League 2026, which Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and Mumbai Mayor Ritu Tawade attended, at NSCI Dome – Vijay Gohil

MUMBAI'S FESTIVE WEEK

It will be a festive week in Mumbai as different communities come together to celebrate Onam, Eid-e-Milad, Yajur Upakarma, Raksha Bandhan and Narali Purnima.

WEDNESDAY
Onam
Malayalis celebrate the 10-day festival with the traditional Onam Sadhya.

Eid-e-Milad
Muslims mark the birth anniversary of Prophet Muhammad.

THURSDAY
Yajur Upakarma
South Indian Brahmin communities observe the sacred-thread changing ritual.

FRIDAY
Raksha Bandhan
Sisters tie Rakhis on their brothers' wrists.

Narali Purnima
Mumbai's Koli community celebrates Coconut Day by offering coconuts to the sea.

Anti-conversion law: Churches say no 'consent forms'

Manoj Ramakrishnan
MUMBAI

Mainstream Christian denominations in Mumbai have denied reports that churches in the city and its outskirts are asking worshippers to sign declarations stating that they attend religious services voluntarily and without any inducement.

The reports have surfaced ahead of the anti-conversion law, which is scheduled to come into force on August 28. While church groups have expressed concern that the law's definition of "allurement" could bring charitable, educational and religious activities under police scrutiny, the government has maintained that the legislation is aimed only at forced and fraudulent religious conversions.

In Mumbai, major denominations such as the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of North India (CNI) said they have not asked their members to sign any such undertakings.

Cyril Dara, secretary of the Christian Reform United People Association, said: "Neither the CNI nor the Methodist Church is asking members to sign such documents. Our members are registered and have the freedom to worship where they want. We will oppose the law through legal means and not by signing such papers, which mock our right to worship."

Melwyn Fernandes, secretary of the Association of Concerned Catholics, said Mumbai and Thane have more than 100 Roman Catholic churches, none of which have asked their members to submit such declarations.

Dolphy D'Souza, spokesperson for the Bombay Catholic Sabha, however, said some churches that are not part of mainstream denominations have started using consent letters. He said some churches had been advised to install CCTV cameras so that, in the event of violence or mob attacks, individuals could be identified. "There is nothing like this across all churches," D'Souza said. "It is only where they have faced some problems that they want to protect their interests."

Cops arrest 1 for trying to loot bank

Megha Kuchik
MUMBAI

The Bangur Nagar police arrested a man for allegedly attempting to steal from an international bank branch in Evershine Nagar, Malad. The accused, identified as Pradip Mane, allegedly broke the bank's lock and damaged wires connected to the server and locker room.

The police arrested Mane within 24 hours of the incident. According to the police, a security guard was deployed at the bank during the day, but not at night.

The incident took place between 6.20pm on August 20 and 9am on August 21. When bank staff arrived on Friday morning, they found the lights on, and the door to the cash room apparently tampered with.

The staff discovered that the CCTV cameras had been removed or damaged. They also found that a drawer on the ground floor and another on the first floor had been opened. Suspecting an attempted theft, the staff informed the police.

A police officer said the accused had been living on the footpath and had been booked in theft cases at various police stations in the past.

Egg supplier behind Ganpati incident: Cops

Poonam Apraj
MUMBAI

The Byculla police have arrested a 22-year-old egg supplier for allegedly throwing eggs from a building during the Ganesha arrival procession of the Mazgaoncha Morya Ganpati Mandal on August 23.

Based on technical investigation and other evidence, the police identified the accused as Danish Sher Khan and arrested him within 36 hours of the incident.

According to the police, Khan works as an egg supplier and delivers eggs to customers after receiving online orders. On the day of the incident, he was entering a building on Rambhau Bhogale Marg to make a delivery when he allegedly became irritated by the smoke from firecrackers being burst during the procession. Police said he allegedly threw the eggs in anger over the incident.

No Maha Pookalam at CSMT this year

Manoj Ramakrishnan/ Abhishek Pathak
MUMBAI

The annual Maha Pookalam, a traditional floral carpet created at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT) during Onam, will not be held this year after the Railways denied permission, citing security concerns.

Organised by the All Mumbai Malayalee Association (AMMA) since 2015, the event had become a prominent feature of Mumbai's Onam celebrations. Central Railway said the denial was linked to restrictions imposed in the area following a protest by the Central Railway Mazdoor Sangh a few months ago near the motormen's lobby.

The Pookalam was traditionally prepared overnight on Uthradam by volunteers using hundreds of kilograms of flowers. It attracted visitors from across India and abroad.

Mumbai woman shares top rank in ICSI CS examination

Shreya Jachak
MUMBAI

Mumbai candidate Sania Sameer Khan has jointly secured All India Rank 1 in the Institute of Company Secretaries of India's (ICSI) CS Professional Programme examination held in June 2026. Khan shared the top position with Khushi Agarwal of Jaipur, according to the provisional merit list released by ICSI on Tuesday.

The official result announcement lists Khan, roll number 123102, with an address in Mumbai, Maharashtra. Agarwal, who also secured Rank 1, is from Jaipur. Vidushi Garg of New Delhi secured Rank 2, while Harkiran Kaur of Nashik secured Rank 3.

The results of the June 2026 CS Professional Programme examination were declared on August 25, along with the All India Provisional Merit List and the list of top rank holders. Candidates can access their individual results and marks statements through ICSI's examination-results portal.

Maharashtra recorded a strong performance, with Khan jointly topping the national examination and Kaur securing the third position. The top three ranks were secured by women, with Khan and Agarwal sharing Rank 1, Garg at Rank 2 and Kaur at Rank 3.

The merit list also features Nandini Sanjay Pandey at Rank 4, while Jiya Shashikant Sagar and Vanshika Kamlesh Lulla jointly secured Rank 5.

The June examination was conducted under the 2022 syllabus. ICSI conducts the CS Professional examinations twice a year, with the June 2026 results forming part of the latest examination cycle for candidates pursuing the Company Secretary qualification. Candidates can check their results using their examination credentials and can also apply for verification of marks and other examination-related services through ICSI.

Fire-safety audits of all hospitals

Kalpesh Mhamunkar
MUMBAI

The state government has ordered comprehensive fire, electrical and structural safety audits of all government, private and charitable hospitals across the state, with health minister Prakash Abitkar directing authorities to begin the exercise urgently.

The move places fire safety and emergency preparedness at the centre of patient safety. Abitkar said the safety of every patient is the government's highest responsibility and warned that negligence in implementing fire-safety measures would not be tolerated.

Hospitals will have to inspect fire-fighting equipment, electrical installations, building structures, medical gas pipeline systems and other critical infrastructure. They must document deficiencies and submit detailed reports, while rectifying shortcomings within stipulated timelines.

Particular attention will be given to ICUs, neonatal ICUs, nurseries and operation theatres. Officials will assess evacuation arrangements and the functioning of fire-fighting systems.

Staff preparedness will also be reviewed through employee training and mock fire drills to ensure personnel can respond effectively and evacuate critically ill or immobile patients safely.

The government has directed hospitals to prepare priority-based action plans for deficiencies identified during inspections. Each building and block in a hospital complex will undergo a fire-safety assessment every six months.

Abitkar stressed that the exercise must go beyond obtaining fire-audit certificates or completing paperwork. Authorities have been asked to physically inspect facilities and verify that safety systems are operational.

Every healthcare institution will have to appoint a fire-safety nodal officer to monitor fire-fighting systems, electrical safety, evacuation arrangements, staff training and mock drills. Institutional heads will be held accountable for delays in audits or lapses in implementing safety measures.

Aug 31 deadline set for forest land records

FPJ News Service
PALGHAR

The Palghar district administration has directed the forest department to complete recording forest land details in revenue records by August 31. The exercise, originally due by the end of June, was delayed by the Special Intensive Revision exercise and monsoon. At a review meeting on Tuesday, the resident deputy collector directed officials to finish work and submit a final compliance report.

The exercise aims to address discrepancies between Forest and Revenue department records that can cause disputes and litigation. Under an April 23, 2026 government circular, forest type, statutory status and sub-category must be entered in 7/12 extracts.

Officials said almost all protected and reserved forest records have been updated and await certification by deputy conservators of forests. Work on private and other forest lands continues. Clearer records are expected to protect forest areas, reduce litigation and facilitate development-related permissions.

MEDICAL TUSSLE | IMA questions govt's 'contradictory' orders

Regn of homeopaths for modern medicine resumes

Amit Srivastava
MUMBAI

The Maharashtra Medical Council (MMC) on Monday resumed registration of Bachelor of Homeopathic Medicine and Surgery (BHMS) doctors who completed the Certificate Course in Modern Pharmacology (CCMP) after the state government withdrew its August 18 order temporarily halting the process. By evening, Dr Rajashri Arun Memane and Dr Mayuresh Ramesh Kamble had been registered with the MMC.

The move allows BHMS-CCMP practitioners to practise modern medicine within the scope permitted under the CCMP framework. The government withdrew its August 18 order on August 20, allowing the MMC to restart registrations.

Dr Neha Pawar received the first registration on August 4, becoming the first CCMP-qualified homoeopathy practitioner to secure conditional MMC registration.

The move has drawn opposition from the Indian Medical Association (IMA) and resident doctors, with the matter pending before the Bombay High Court.

After Pawar's registration, the MMC halted the process, citing technical issues. BHMS-CCMP doctors threatened protests, including an agitation at Jantar Mantar, while one practitioner reportedly threatened self-immolation outside the MMC office. The proposed protests have been dropped.

IMA Maharashtra state president Dr Santosh Kulkarni criticised the government's "contradictory orders", saying they created confusion while the matter was before the court and a standard operating procedure committee was working with the IMA, Maharashtra Association of Resident Doctors (MARD) and MMC. He demanded that the Medical Education Minister and Principal Secretary take moral responsibility and resign.

"If registration of BHMS-CCMP doctors with the MMC is not stopped immediately, IMA will approach the Bombay High Court with a contempt petition. If the government fails to act, we will launch a statewide democratic agitation," Kulkarni said.

Central MARD president Atharva Shinde said patient safety remained its priority. "This is not a retreat. Our fight will continue through legal remedies, public awareness and a united nationwide movement. We have respected the Bombay High Court's directions and ensured emergency and life-saving services remain uninterrupted. We will now take the issue from the streets to the courtroom and the national platform," he said.

The dispute has continued through August after a government resolution directed the MMC to begin homoeopath registrations and formed a committee to frame a standard operating procedure for negligence cases involving homoeopaths. The move led to a strike by MARD and the IMA, which was called off on the Bombay High Court's order. The court is also examining whether doctors can strike.

The medical education department froze registrations on August 18 after considering concerns from the medical community. It reversed the decision on August 20, directing the MMC to follow the minutes of a July 28 meeting.

Maswan school death: FDA inspects kitchen

FPJ News Service
PALGHAR

Senior officials from the Palghar district administration and tribal development department on Tuesday inspected Maswan school after a seven-year-old student died and several others fell ill.

Palghar Zilla Parishad CEO Manoj Ranade, the additional commissioner, tribal development, and integrated tribal development project, Dahanu, project officer Vishal Khatri visited the school and reviewed the situation during their visit to the premises Tuesday morning.

Officials said the priority was the children's recovery and preventing a recurrence. Precautionary health check-up camps are being conducted across Palghar district schools, with students showing fever, cold or cough kept under observation.

As of Tuesday noon, 30 students were under observation at Maswan Primary Health Centre. Five students, four girls and one boy, were shifted to the Rural Hospital at Manor on a paediatric specialist's advice. Officials said all students were stable and out of danger.

Food and Drug Administration (FDA) officials inspected the school kitchen and took spices, turmeric, chilli powder, oil containers and other food preparation materials for examination. Officials also reviewed pest control, water purification, food safety and hygiene measures.

Show-cause notices were issued to the president and secretary of Adivasi Seva Mandal, Mumbai, which operates the aided school. The school superintendent was suspended with immediate effect for alleged gross negligence.

A Special Investigation Team (SIT), constituted with the Additional Commissioner's approval, will inquire into the student's death, determine responsibility and recommend preventive measures. The administration said appropriate action would be taken against those found responsible after the SIT submits its report.

Women take charge

Marking Mangala Gaur, women from Nadgaon blocked the pothole-ridden Shahapur-Murbad-Patgaon-Khopoli highway for nearly three hours on Tuesday over construction delays — Danish Azmi

CBI probes ₹15cr Canara Bank fraud

Somendra Sharma
MUMBAI

Firm booked for allegedly routing bank funds to group and sister concerns

The CBI's Mumbai Economic Offences Branch has registered a case against a Navi Mumbai-based firm and its two partners for allegedly defrauding Canara Bank of ₹15 crore. The company had obtained a term loan in August 2017 to establish a cold storage facility and install 40 Bulk Milk Chilling plants.

According to the CBI, the borrowers submitted inflated quotations and allegedly diverted the loan funds instead of using them for the sanctioned purpose. The company reportedly failed to install all the plants with the required capacity and routed funds to group and sister concerns.

The loan repayment default began in May 2019, and the account turned into a non-performing asset in August 2019. Canara Bank reported the account as fraud to the RBI in April 2024. The CBI has alleged criminal conspiracy, cheating and misappropriation of bank funds.

State hikes cash rewards for medal-winning sportspersons

Kalpesh Mhamunkar
MUMBAI

The Maharashtra Cabinet has approved an expansion and revision of the state's cash prize scheme for medal-winning sportspersons and their coaches, bringing the National Games, Khelo India and para-sports competitions under its ambit.

The decision was taken at a cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. The revised scheme seeks to recognise athletes performing at national and international levels and the contribution of their coaches.

National Games gold medallists will now receive ₹7 lakh, up from ₹5 lakh, while silver and bronze winners will get ₹5 lakh and ₹3 lakh, respectively, against ₹3 lakh and ₹1.5 lakh earlier.

World University Games medallists will receive ₹10 lakh for gold, ₹7 lakh for silver and ₹5 lakh for bronze. Khelo India winners will get ₹3 lakh, ₹2 lakh and ₹1 lakh, respectively.

Youth Olympics and Youth Paralympics gold medallists will receive ₹50 lakh, up from ₹22.5 lakh, while silver and bronze winners will get ₹30 lakh and ₹20 lakh.

Grand Slam tennis winners will receive ₹3 crore and runners-up ₹2 crore. Thomas Cup, Uber Cup and Sudirman Cup winners will get ₹40 lakh and runners-up ₹20 lakh. Champions Trophy hockey winners will receive ₹40 lakh and runners-up ₹20 lakh.

Over 1.2L students get BTech, MBA seats

FPJ News Service
MUMBAI

The Maharashtra State Common Entrance Test (CET) Cell on Monday announced the third allotment lists for BE-BTech and MBA/MMS admissions for 2026-27, offering seats to 1,16,690 engineering aspirants and 4,454 management aspirants across the state.

For engineering admissions, 2,04,987 students submitted college preferences for the third Centralised Admission Process (CAP) round. Of them, 1,16,690 were allotted seats according to their preference order.

The round gave 11,505 students an opportunity to secure an engineering seat for the first time, while 1,05,185 students who had secured seats in earlier rounds received betterment.

As many as 9,766 engineering aspirants were allotted colleges among their first six preferences, with their allotments marked 'Auto Freeze'. They must accept the allotted seat to retain it. Those rejecting an Auto Freeze allotment cannot participate in the fourth CAP round and must wait for the institutional round.

Maharashtra has 2,03,270 BE-BTech seats this year. In the first two CAP rounds, 62,609 students secured admission. Third-round allottees must report to their colleges by August 28, submit documents and pay the prescribed fees. Provisional vacancies for round four will be announced on August 29.

For MBA/MMS, 12,817 students submitted preferences for the third round and 4,454 were allotted seats. As many as 4,714 students received one of their first six preferences, marked "Auto Freeze".

Of 58,153 MBA/MMS seats available statewide this year, 31,537 students secured admission in the first two rounds, while 5,747 secured admission through betterment. A total of 20,869 seats were available for the third round.

The CET Cell considered preferences submitted by 12,817 management aspirants within the stipulated deadline while preparing the third-round allotment list for MBA/MMS admissions.

MBA/MMS allottees must report to their institutes by August 27, submit documents and pay the prescribed fees. Provisional vacancies for the fourth round will be announced on August 28.

₹30 chakali complaint revived after 9 yrs

Pranali Lotlikar
MUMBAI

The Maharashtra State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission has come to the rescue of a Dadar resident after nine years, setting aside a district consumer forum order that dismissed his complaint over a ₹30 packet of chakali at the admission stage.

The dispute arose from D'Souza's purchase of the snack from the retailer. Vincent D'Souza had filed the appeal against Shreeji Foods, a shop at CST Subway, alleging that the receipt for the chakali did not mention the product name, manufacturing date, expiry date or weight. He also alleged that excess payment had been taken from him.

The District Consumer Commission, South Mumbai, had dismissed his complaint on November 17, 2017, holding that the matter did not fall under the Consumer Protection Act and that there appeared to be no deficiency in service.

D'Souza then approached the State Commission. During the appeal proceedings, the retailer's representative appeared but made no submission, while D'Souza appeared in person.

Examining the computer-generated receipt, the State Commission found that it merely recorded the sale of one item for ₹30 without describing it. It also noted that no GST had been charged.

The bench said the absence of the product name, manufacturing and expiry dates, and weight deprived the consumer of vital information about the food product.

"It is the duty of the opponent to provide all the details of the article sold to the consumer, including the manufacturing as well as expiry date," the commission observed.

Criticising the dismissal, the commission said, "The order passed by the District Consumer Commission is cryptic. It does not show application of mind."

The bench held that D'Souza had made out a case for admission and that the District Commission ought to have entertained his complaint. It allowed the appeal, set aside the November 17, 2017 order and directed the District Commission to admit the complaint, secure Shreeji Foods' presence and proceed with the matter according to law.

Mth-long sweep cleans up Nandivli Lake

Danish Azmi
KALYAN

Nandivli Lake in Kalyan East has received a cleanliness boost following a month-long deep-cleaning drive to remove waste and restore the waterbody and its surroundings.

The campaign was carried out jointly by Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Kalyan Varkari Samaj, Kalyan-Dombivli Municipal Corporation (KDMC) sanitation workers and Sumit Alcoplast Pvt Ltd, with several social organisations supporting the initiative.

During the drive, substantial quantities of waste were removed from the lake and its banks, including coconuts, religious offerings, nirmalya and garbage dumped by visitors and passers-by. The collected material was removed from the premises to restore cleanliness around the waterbody.

Swachh Bharat Abhiyan Kalyan city chief Mrityunjay Shukla played a key role in the campaign and remained involved throughout the month, helping maintain momentum in the cleaning operation.

Disposal of the collected waste emerged as a major challenge after the cleaning. Sumit Alcoplast employees used the company's vehicles to transport the waste for proper disposal. The company's logistical support throughout the month helped ensure that waste generated during the operation was cleared systematically.

Following weeks of sustained efforts, the Nandivli Lake premises now appear cleaner and more presentable.

Organisers and civic authorities appealed to citizens to help preserve the lake by not dumping nirmalya, coconuts, religious offerings or other waste into the waterbody.

They also urged citizens to respect religious sentiments while adopting environmentally responsible practices, stressing that protecting public water resources is a collective responsibility. Organisers said maintaining cleanliness after the campaign was as important as the exercise itself and sought continued public cooperation to prevent the lake from being polluted again. They said sustained awareness would be essential to protect it.

175 epilepsy surgeries in 3.5 yrs

Amit Srivastava
MUMBAI

For children with drug-resistant epilepsy, surgery can offer more than seizure control, helping them return to school, regain developmental abilities and lead more independent lives. Mumbai-based Narayana Health SRCC Children's Hospital has performed more than 175 paediatric epilepsy surgeries over the past three-and-a-half years and is on track to cross 200.

The hospital said 87% of children who underwent curative epilepsy surgery remained seizure-free at a minimum one-year follow-up. Its complex paediatric epilepsy programme treats children whose seizures persist despite multiple medications and require specialised surgical intervention.

Epilepsy affects an estimated 0.8% of India's paediatric and adolescent population, while around one-third of children with epilepsy are estimated to have drug-resistant epilepsy. India has an estimated 2-3 million people with drug-resistant epilepsy, of whom around one million could potentially benefit from surgery. However, only about two in 1,000 eligible patients undergo it.

Dr Anaita Udwadia Hegde, Head of Neurosciences, said complex paediatric epilepsy requires specialised infrastructure and a multidisciplinary team. Procedures include corpus callosotomy, hemispherectomy and minimally invasive stereotactic radiofrequency ablation.

A six-year-old boy with daily drop attacks became seizure-free after corpus callosotomy when medicines failed. A 10-year-old Ratnagiri girl with extensive pre-birth brain damage and daily seizures underwent hemispherectomy and was seizure-free three months later.

Doctors said successful surgery can also improve neurocognitive and developmental functioning in some children following treatment.

MAHARASHTRA PRIVATE COACHING CENTERS BILL | Students seek mental health support and smaller batches, while teachers flag challenges posed by proposed regulations

Teachers, students split over proposed pvt coaching rules

Alister Augustine
PUNE

Private coaching institutes in Maharashtra could soon face tighter regulation, with the state government proposing mandatory registration, restrictions on teaching hours, fee transparency, safety compliance and student-welfare measures under the draft Maharashtra Private Coaching Centers (Registration and Regulation) Bill, 2026.

The proposed legislation, drafted in the wake of concerns surrounding the NEET-UG paper leak and the growing dependence of students on private coaching, seeks to bring institutes under a formal regulatory framework. The government has invited suggestions and objections from students, parents, teachers and coaching operators before finalising the Bill.

Under the draft, coaching centres with more than 25 students will have to register online, with registration valid for three years. Existing institutes would get six months to complete the process. Centres would also have to comply with fire and building safety norms, while CCTV footage would have to be preserved for at least one month.

One of the most significant provisions is a proposed five-hour daily teaching limit, along with a mandatory weekly holiday for students and teachers. Tests cannot be conducted on the day immediately following the weekly holiday. The draft also seeks to prohibit integration between schools and coaching centres, a move aimed at curbing the "dummy school" system.

The Bill proposes greater transparency in fees and refunds. Coaching centres would not be allowed to increase fees after enrolment and would have to refund the unused portion of course fees, hostel and mess charges to students leaving a course. Institutes would also have to publicly disclose faculty qualifications, course fees and refund policies.

Speaking to The Free Press Journal, Ajay Kumar, professor at Allen Career Institute on FC Road, said, "While we welcome transparency and student safety measures like mandatory fire compliance and CCTV coverage, capping daily teaching hours at five and banning integrated coaching creates a serious operational challenge. NEET and JEE syllabi are massive; if students are forced to attend regular physical college full-time alongside restrictive coaching hours, the burden on them will actually double rather than decrease."

He added that coaching teachers increasingly handle responsibilities beyond academics. "We are constantly caught between severe parental expectations for top ranks and managing student stress; we end up acting as academic mentors, counsellors and pseudo-parents all at once." He also argued that stronger paper-security mechanisms should be addressed at the examination level.

Soham Kulkarni, professor at Lakshya Institute, said provisions regulating fees and refunds could protect students from unfair practices. "Regulating unfair fee hikes and mandatory refund policies for dropouts is a step in the right direction because predatory practices by unorganised operators hurt the reputation of the entire teaching fraternity," he said.

However, Kulkarni said the government should also consider the pressures faced by teachers. He said, "We undergo immense mental fatigue, delivering six to eight hours of high-intensity lectures daily while managing intense anxiety from parents every time a mock test score dips," adding that school curricula often do not match the difficulty of national competitive examinations.

On the other hand, students have called for stronger mental-health support, accountability and transparency. Dhanraj Khatari, 18, a NEET aspirant studying at an FC Road coaching centre, said, "It feels like we are caught in an endless rat race where any paper leak in the system completely destroys months of our hard work and sleepless nights." He wants the government to make psychological counselling mandatory at coaching centres without additional charges and impose strict criminal action against those responsible for examination-paper leaks.

Ankit Gaikwad, a JEE Advanced aspirant from a Tilak Road coaching centre, welcomed the proposed weekly holiday but said the dummy-school provision must be accompanied by changes in the regular education system. "If I am forced to attend 75% school lectures that don't cover JEE-level physics or maths, where do I find the time to solve Advanced-level problem sets?" he said, suggesting a unified hybrid curriculum for students preparing for competitive examinations.

Another student, a repeater at an FC Road coaching centre, said the proposed refund provisions could provide financial protection to families. "What I want added to this Bill is a mandatory limit on batch sizes—restricting them to a maximum of 40 or 50 students per classroom," the student said, pointing out that overcrowded batches can make it difficult for students to ask questions or receive individual attention.

With the draft still open for public consultation, the government has specifically invited citizens and students to submit their suggestions and objections before the legislation is finalised. The School Education and Sports Department has said submissions received by 6pm on September 4 will be considered by the government.

AI-generated image

NEET and JEE syllabi are massive; if students are forced to attend regular physical college full-time alongside restrictive coaching hours, the burden on them will actually double rather than decrease
— Ajay Kumar, professor, Allen Career Institute

Regulating unfair fee hikes and mandatory refund policies for dropouts is a step in the right direction because predatory practices by unorganised operators hurt the reputation of the entire teaching fraternity
— Soham Kulkarni, professor, Lakshya Institute

ABVP, Cong trade blame over COEP Uni hostel clash

Alister Augustine
PUNE

The political blame game over the clash between ABVP and NSUI-Youth Congress workers at the COEP Technological University hostel continued, with both sides accusing each other of pressuring students and triggering the confrontation ahead of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's 'Chhatron Ki Goonj' programme in Pune, which took place last week. Police have registered cases based on complaints from both sides and are investigating the incident.

The dispute began after a video of a female COEP student surfaced in which she apologised for remarks about alleged excess fees at the college. The student later released another video saying she was not associated with politics and should not be dragged into the political dispute. The ABVP, in its press conference, alleged that Congress and NSUI workers were pressuring students to attend Gandhi's programme and had used inducements and threats. It further alleged that three students were pressured after refusing to attend the programme and that the issue eventually led to an altercation at the hostel.

ABVP also alleged that Congress workers entered the campus and attacked students after one of them spoke about the alleged pressure. The organisation demanded strict legal action against those who threatened or assaulted students and said educational institutions should remain free from political pressure. However, Congress has rejected the allegations. Akshay Jain of the Youth Congress told The Free Press Journal that the ABVP had initiated the confrontation.

"Whatever ABVP has said is false. They had started the fight. The girl was under pressure and stress due to ABVP people meeting and putting her under pressure," Jain said. He denied that the confrontation was linked to pressure allegedly exerted by NSUI or Congress leaders and questioned the version being circulated by the ABVP.

"I request the Pune police commissioner to please release the actual CCTV footage of that night and show Punekars who is at fault," Jain said. He added that the Congress would take legal action against the ABVP over what he termed a false narrative. The Congress has also alleged that ABVP members had pressured and threatened the female student after she spoke in support of Gandhi's programme. Meanwhile, an FIR was registered at Shivajinagar police station on a complaint by ABVP office-bearer Malhar Patil against several NSUI and Congress workers. Police invoked provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita relating to causing hurt, rioting and criminal intimidation. Police officials have confirmed that counter-complaints were also submitted by the two sides

100-150 booked

Police have registered an FIR against around 100 to 150 activists allegedly associated with NSUI and Congress over the August 21 clash at the COEP hostel. The case was registered at Shivajinagar police station on August 23 following a complaint by a university administrative official. According to the FIR, the incident occurred between 7.45pm and 9.45pm at the hostel premises. Police invoked provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita relating to unlawful assembly, rioting, criminal intimidation and assault, along with sections of the Maharashtra Police Act. The complaint alleges that NSUI activists recorded a female student without consent, pressured her over fee-related remarks and forcibly entered the hostel. The university also filed a complaint against an ABP Majha reporter for allegedly entering the premises without authorisation.

Ganpati Prep
Ganpati idol stalls have come up across the city, with devotees visiting to book their idols ahead of Ganesh Chaturthi Pic: Anand Chaini

150 CCTV cameras help crack robbery

Ankit Shukla
PUNE

The Bundgarden police have arrested three men from Dombivli for allegedly attacking a senior railway booking clerk with a knife and robbing him at Pune Railway Station in the early hours of August 18. Police tracked the suspects using footage from more than 150 CCTV cameras along their escape route, officials said on Tuesday.

The accused have been identified as Jitendra Motiram Rathod (24), a resident of Chalisgaon and currently staying in Dombivli; Ishwar Gorakh Chavan (23), a resident of Kannad in Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar district; and Ajay Madan Chavan (35), also residing in Dombivli.

According to police, the victim, Calvin Solomon Gayla (29), a Mundhwa resident, was on duty around 1am when two accused allegedly attacked him with a knife, tied him up, and attempted to kill him before fleeing with cash, two mobile phones and a gold chain. Police found that the suspects escaped by train towards Lonavala, later travelled by the Rajkot Express to Kalyan and then took a local train to Dombivli.

After examining over 150 CCTV cameras, police received information that the trio was staying at Mumbra Devi Chawl near Bhopar Gaon Kamani in Dombivli. A joint team of Bundgarden police and RPF intelligence branch detained them around 4am on August 21.

4,317 kg food items seized

Ankit Shukla
PUNE

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Maharashtra, seized 4,317 kg of food products worth approximately ₹7.26 lakh during an inspection of a food establishment in Wadaki, Pune district, as part of the ongoing Safe Food, Safe Maharashtra campaign, officials said on Tuesday.

The inspection was conducted on Monday at M/s Trimurti Enterprises, S. No. 1178, Wadaki, Haveli, under the guidance of Food Safety Commissioner Tukaram Mundhe.

According to the FDA, the establishment was found operating without a valid food licence or registration. Officials also found several food products suspected to be of substandard quality,

Use ₹105 cr for cleaner air

Alister Augustine
PUNE

The Pune Air Action Hub has submitted recommendations to the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) for the effective use of ₹105.25 crore in unspent air-quality funds under the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) and 15th Finance Commission grants.

The recommendations were submitted to PMC Municipal Commissioner Naval Kishor Ram after the Maharashtra Environment and Climate Change Department directed the civic body to speed up the utilisation of the funds. The PMC has already used ₹166.24 crore from the grants received between 2020-21 and 2025-26, while ₹105.25 crore remains unspent.

Women cops' proposed wedding plans cancelled

Varad Bhatkhande
PIMPRI-CHINCHWAD

The proposed marriage between two women police constables from the Pimpri-Chinchwad police department has been called off, days before they were scheduled to marry in Alandi.

The two constables had planned to get married on August 30 in a Vedic ceremony. They had also applied to the police administration for leave for the wedding and attached their invitation card to the application. However, the proposed marriage has now been cancelled. The exact reason has not been officially disclosed.

The two women met during the police recruitment process. Both had come to Pimpri-Chinchwad with the aim of joining the police force. They cleared the recruitment process and were appointed as police constables. After completing their training, they were initially posted at the police headquarters before being transferred to the same central police station in Pimpri-Chinchwad.

AI-generated image

The two reportedly became close during their time in the police force. They later decided to live together and reportedly planned to spend their lives together. Their proposed marriage became known within the police department after they submitted their leave applications, which reportedly included their wedding invitation.

There were reports that the family of one of the constables opposed the relationship and had approached senior police officials over the matter. However, police authorities have not officially confirmed whether family opposition played a role in the cancellation. It is also unclear whether the decision was due to personal reasons or other circumstances.

Earlier reports had said that one of the constables was undergoing medical treatment related to gender reassignment. However, there is no official confirmation that the treatment had any connection with the cancellation of the wedding.

The proposed marriage had also attracted attention because of the legal position on same-sex relationships and marriage in India. Consensual same-sex relationships between adults are not criminalised in India, but same-sex marriage does not currently have legal recognition.

The Pimpri-Chinchwad police administration has not issued an official statement explaining why the wedding was called off. The reason for the cancellation therefore remains unclear, and any conclusion about the cause would be speculative until the constables or police administration provide further information.

Fake cop robs man

Ankit Shukla
PUNE

A man was allegedly robbed of ₹38,900 after an unidentified person posing as a police officer forced him and his friends to transfer money through PhonePe near Mamba Devi Chowk on Solapur Road, officials said on Tuesday.

According to the police, the complainant, Akshaykumar Kashiram Rao (28), a resident of Solapur Road in Wanowrie, was travelling with two friends at around 3:45am on Sunday when the accused approached them on a motorcycle near Nalini Society. The accused allegedly identified himself as a police officer and intimidated Rao. He then made Rao's two friends transfer money from their PhonePe accounts to Rao's PhonePe account. After obtaining the password to Rao's mobile phone and his PhonePe PIN, the accused allegedly transferred ₹38,900 from the account before fleeing the spot. Rao later approached the Wanowrie police.

Zepto delivery man robbed; 6 arrested

Varad Bhatkhande
PIMPRI-CHINCHWAD

The Pimpri-Chinchwad Crime Branch has arrested six habitual offenders for allegedly kidnapping and robbing a Zepto delivery worker in Gahunje, officials said on Tuesday.

According to police, the accused intercepted the delivery worker's two-wheeler near Gahunje Stadium, forced him into an autorickshaw and took him to an open ground near a graveyard in Mamurdi. They allegedly assaulted him and robbed him of ₹90,000 in cash.

The incident occurred after the complainant delivered an order at a housing society in Gahunje. A case was registered against unidentified persons at Talegaon Dabhade police station.

Crime Branch Unit-4 began investigating the case by examining CCTV footage, analysing mobile phone details and gathering information from informants. The six suspects were subsequently identified and taken into custody. Police said they confessed to their involvement during interrogation.

The accused have been identified as Suraj Shankar Chalwadi (24), of Mamurdi; Deepak Dayanand Bhandge (24), of Narhe and originally from Latur; Avinash Arun Wankhede (26), of Narhe and originally from Velhe; Prathamesh alias Pratik Haribhau Kank (27), of Panvel in Raigad; Viraj alias Sunny Yuvraj Hirve (19), of Mamurdi; and Isaak Raju Kajapuram (28), of Mamurdi.

Police said all six are habitual offenders with previous criminal records, including cases of robbery and dacoity.

Property worth 1.80 lakh, including the autorickshaw allegedly used in the crime and mobile phones, was seized. The accused have been handed over to Talegaon Dabhade police for further legal action.

CULTURAL KUMBH | Traditions from across India to converge

'Bhakti Sangam' in Nashik

FPJ News Service
NASHIK

Ahead of the MahaSimhastha, Nashik is set to experience a unique 'Cultural Kumbh' celebrating devotion, music and India's rich saint traditions. The three-day 'Simhastha Mahakumbh Bhakti Sangam' will bring together devotional traditions from different parts of the country, including Maharashtra's Kirtan, Punjab's Gurbani Shabad Kirtan and Manipur's distinctive Nat Sankirtana. The festival will be held at Thakkar Dome from August 28 to 30, bringing diverse regions, traditions and art forms together on a single platform.

Organised by the Nashik-Trimbakeshwar Kumbh Mela Authority, the festival aims to create a cultural confluence of the diverse devotional traditions that lie at the heart of the Kumbh. By bringing different traditions of devotion, bhajans and kirtans onto one platform, the festival will highlight their diversity as well as the common thread of devotion that connects them.

The festival will begin on the first day with a Kirtan performance by PP Amritashram Swami Maharaj, followed by Rahul Deshpande's Abhangwari presentation. On the second day, Dr Charudatta Govindswami Afale will present a Kirtan, followed by a bhajan performance by Maithili Thakur.

The programme will extend beyond Maharashtra's devotional traditions. On the third day, Bhai Maninder Singh Ji Hazuri Ragi of Sri Darbar Sahib, Amritsar, will present traditional Gurbani Shabad Kirtan, followed by a presentation of Nat Sankirtana Mahajagya from Manipur.

Maharashtra's Kirtan and Abhangwari, Punjab's Gurbani Shabad Kirtan and Manipur's Nat Sankirtana may differ in style, language and presentation, but they are united by a common spirit of devotion. Bringing these diverse traditions together on a single stage will be a defining feature of the 'Simhastha Mahakumbh Bhakti Sangam'.

The concept of 'Sangam' in the festival is not limited to the confluence of rivers. It represents an effort to bring together diverse saint traditions, devotional practices, artists, regions and audiences in a cultural confluence.

Against the backdrop of the MahaSimhastha, the initiative aims to give devotees arriving in Nashik from different parts of the country an opportunity to experience the diversity of India's devotional traditions. The festival is therefore expected to offer more than a cultural programme, providing a glimpse into the broader cultural experience of the Simhastha.

The 'Simhastha Mahakumbh Bhakti Sangam' will also feature discussions on India's saint traditions through a 'Bhakti Sammelan' on August 29. The two sessions will focus on the Maha Simhastha Kumbh Mela, Indian saints and social harmony, as well as the participation and coordination of saint traditions from a national perspective.

As part of preparations for MahaSimhastha 2027, attention is being given not only to roads, transportation, water supply, sanitation, security and facilities for devotees, but also to taking Nashik's spiritual and cultural identity to audiences across the country.

Teenager attempts suicide

FPJ News Service
NASHIK

A 17-year-old girl attempted suicide by hanging herself at her home in Pinglenagar, in the Peth Road area. The incident was allegedly triggered by mental harassment by her ex-boyfriend and his new girlfriend. A case has been registered against the duo at Mhasrul police station.

According to police, the victim had befriended the suspect, Dishant Ahire, while she was studying in the 10th grade. Dishant later entered into a relationship with another girl, identified as Khushi. He allegedly began ignoring the victim and subjected her to mental harassment, telling her to "forget about me; I am with Khushi." Khushi also allegedly harassed the victim repeatedly and threatened her to stay away from Dishant.

Following the alleged harassment and mental stress, the girl attempted suicide.

Safety checks ordered at all Nashik hospitals

FPJ News Service
NASHIK

Al-generated image

Following the death of three newborns in a fire at the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) of the District Women's Hospital in Amravati on August 24, the Nashik District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) has ordered fire and electrical safety inspections at all government and private hospitals in the district.

A circular issued on August 24 by Rohitkumar Rajput, Chief Executive Officer of the Nashik District Disaster Management Authority and Resident District Collector, directed hospitals to undertake immediate safety checks and rectify any deficiencies.

The circular identifies intensive care units, including ICUs, NICUs, PICUs and CCUs, as high-risk areas because of high oxygen concentration, extensive electrical equipment and the limited mobility of patients.

Hospitals have been instructed to conduct fire and electrical safety inspections of these critical care units if such checks have not been carried out in the past six months. Comprehensive inspections covering fire safety, electrical systems and elevators have also been ordered for the entire hospital building.

Special attention has been directed towards main distribution panels, wiring, transformers, generators and oxygen plants. Hospitals have been asked to rectify defects identified during inspections within the stipulated timeframe and submit compliance reports.

The authorities have also directed hospitals to ensure that fire extinguishers, smoke detectors and fire alarm systems are functional. Emergency exits must remain unobstructed and clearly marked, while hospitals must possess a valid Fire No-Objection Certificate (NOC).

The circular further calls for regular mock drills and specialised training for hospital staff on safely evacuating newborns and critically ill patients during emergencies.

The directive has been sent to the Divisional Commissioner, Nashik Municipal Corporation, District Collector, Chief Executive Officer of the Zilla Parishad, Registrar of the Maharashtra University of Health Sciences (MUHS) and local fire officials.

Kavad Yatra turns tragic

FPJ News Service
JALGAON

A 10-year-old boy, Prabal Raju Gawli, was killed after being run over by an Eicher vehicle on the Jalgaon-Mamurabad road on Monday evening while returning from a Kavad Yatra.

According to police, over 250 devotees from Gawliwada in Shanipeth had travelled to the Rameshwaram Triveni Sangam to collect holy water for the Vhalsadevi Temple on Mamurabad Road. While returning at around 5.30pm, the speeding Eicher vehicle, travelling from Jalgaon towards Chopda, allegedly hit Prabal and dragged him for around 150 feet. He died on the spot.

Following the incident, an angry mob set the vehicle on fire and blocked the road, demanding immediate action against the driver. A fire tender that reached the spot was allegedly prevented from approaching the burning vehicle.

A large police team, including the Superintendent of Police, was deployed to control the situation. Traffic remained disrupted for nearly two hours.

Police detained the driver, who was allegedly assaulted by the mob and admitted to a hospital. Further investigation is underway.

Delhi to get 840 tonnes of onions

FPJ News Service
NASHIK

As part of efforts to make onions available to urban consumers at affordable prices, 840 tonnes of onions will be dispatched from Lasalgaon to Adarsh Nagar in Delhi through the National Cooperative Consumers' Federation (NCCF). 21 boxes of onions will be loaded onto a BCN rake at Lasalgaon railway station. With such a large quantity being sent to Delhi, consumers in the national capital are expected to get some relief.

The Central Government has been procuring onions through the NCCF and NAFED and supplying them to major cities across the country to keep onion prices under control. Onions are now being dispatched directly from a major onion market such as Lasalgaon to Delhi.

However, onion growers have expressed concern that while the move may provide relief to consumers, it could also affect farmers' market prices. If large quantities of onions are released into the market, supply could increase relative to demand. This could put pressure on market prices and make it difficult for farmers to get the rates they expect.

The concern is particularly significant as farmers are already facing rising production costs. Many growers have planned to bring the onions stored in their storage sheds to the market in phases. Farmers fear that if government agencies simultaneously send large quantities of onions to urban markets, it could affect prevailing market prices.

With 840 tonnes of onions being dispatched from Lasalgaon to Delhi, onion growers are now watching closely to see how much benefit Delhi consumers receive in terms of prices and to what extent the move affects onion prices in the Lasalgaon market.

"Transparency is essential in the purchase and sale of onions by NAFED and NCCF. If the onions purchased are being sold in Azadpur or other markets instead of reaching consumers, neither farmers nor consumers benefit. The Price Stabilisation Fund scheme appears to be benefiting only a handful of stakeholders. However, farmers should not panic. Since NAFED and NCCF do not have a very large stock of onions remaining, farmers should bring their onions to the market in phases," said Jaydatta Holkar, Director, Mumbai APMC.

Sugar price hike triggers protest

FPJ News Service
JALGAON

With sugar prices rising sharply, the Jalgaon City Women's Wing of Shiv Sena (UBT) staged a unique protest outside the Jalgaon Municipal Corporation on Monday, preparing sugar-free tea and serving it to citizens and party workers.

Sugar prices have risen to around 80 per kg in recent days, with indications that they could cross 100 during Diwali. The rising prices have also pushed up the cost of tea at roadside stalls, with several vendors reportedly increasing prices by 5.

Protesters said the price rise was putting additional pressure on household budgets and making everyday essentials increasingly expensive. They claimed that tea lovers were now switching from sugar-based tea to jaggery tea, with roadside stalls displaying boards advertising jaggery tea.

The women's wing criticised the government over the increase in sugar prices and said the burden was becoming difficult for ordinary citizens to bear. As part of the protest, members sat on the road outside the civic headquarters, prepared sugar-free tea and served it to passers-by and party workers to highlight the impact of rising sugar prices. The protest was held under the leadership of the party's Jalgaon City Chief Sharad Tayade.

21 AC E-buses arrive

FPJ News Service
NASHIK

The first batch of 21 air-conditioned electric buses under the Centre's PM E-Bus Sewa scheme has arrived in Nashik, with the buses likely to be inducted into passenger service from September 1.

Seven more buses are expected to arrive next week, taking the first-phase fleet to 28 AC electric buses. Nashik has been allotted a total of 50 electric buses under the scheme, which will be introduced in phases.

The new buses will be operated under the Citilinc public transport system and are expected to provide commuters with quieter, cleaner and more comfortable travel. With zero tailpipe emissions, the buses are also expected to help reduce air pollution and dependence on conventional fuels.

The introduction of the buses was delayed due to contractual and administrative formalities between the Nashik Municipal Corporation (NMC) and the bus operator. With the agreement now in place, the process has gained momentum. The Adgaon electric bus depot has also been readied for charging, maintenance and operations.

The move comes ahead of the 2027 Simhastha Kumbh Mela,

Bank of India
Relationship beyond banking

MIRAJ BRANCH : IMA Building, Shivaji Road, Miraj, Tal. Miraj, Dist. Sangli - 416 410. Phone No.: 0233-2222023 / 24. Miraj.Kolhapur@bankofindia.bank.in

[See Rule - 8(1)]

POSSESSION NOTICE
(for Immovable Property)

Whereas; The undersigned being the **Authorized Officer of BANK OF INDIA**, under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued a demand notice dated **11.06.2026** calling upon the borrower / Guarantor **Mr. Rohit Ravsaheb Kurane (Borrower), R/o. -** Tehsildar Galli, Budhwar Peth, Miraj, Tal. Miraj, Dist. Sangli - 416416; **Mr. Sohan Shekhar Parab (Guarantor-Mortgager), R/o. -** B8, Nandanvan Colony, Wakharbhag, Miraj, Tal. Miraj, Dist. Sangli - 416416, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being **Rs. 35,60,760.27 (In words – Rupees Thirty Five Lakh Sixty Thousands Seven Hundred Sixty and Twenty Seven Paisa) + interest + charges** within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The Borrower / Guarantor having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers, Guarantor and the public in general that the undersigned has **taken symbolic possession** of the Properties described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under sub-section (4) of section 13 of the Act read with rule 8 of the Security Interest Enforcement Rules, 2002 on this the **19th day of August of the year 2026**.

The Borrower / Guarantor in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the Property and any dealings with the Property will be subject to the charge of the **Bank of India, Mijraj Branch** for an amount of being **Rs. 35,60,760.27 (In words – Rupees Thirty Five Lakh Sixty Thousands Seven Hundred Sixty & Twenty Seven Paisa) + interest + charges thereon from the date of NPA**. The Borrower / Guarantor attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Description of the Immovable Property

All the pieces and parcel of land and building / immovable property situated at Plot No. 12, Survey No. 200/1/2/3 (Old Survey No. 248/1/2/3), Kokane Galli, Miraj, Tal. Miraj, Dist. Sangli - 416410 admeasuring 189.00 Sq.Mtrs. in the name of Mr. Sohan Shekhar Parab (Guarantor for Cash Credit Loan. **Property Boundries: East :** Plot Property No. 11; **West :** Plot Property No. 13; **South :** Remaining portion of S. No. 200/1/2/3; **North:** Road.

Date : 19.08.2026 Seal **Sd/-**
Place : MIRAJ. **Authorised Officer**

OFFICE OF THE RECOVERY OFFICER-I/II DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL PUNE
Unit No.307 to 310, 3rd Floor, Kakade Biz Icon Building, Shivaji Nagar, Pune - 411016

NOTICE UNDER SECTIONS 25 TO 28 OF THE RECOVERY OF DEBTS & BANK RUPTCY ACT, 1993 AND RULE 2 OF SECOND SCHEDULE TO THE INCOMETAX ACT, 1961.

RC/458/2025 20/08/2026

PUNJAB NATIONAL BANK
VERSUS
VISHAL SHINDE GANPAT & ORS.

To
(CD1) VISHAL SHINDE GANPAT
162/7, Vidya Vihar Apartment, Railway line, Dahitane, 3, Khandare galli, Taluka Akkalkot, Dist-Solapur-413226,
(CD2) MRS. GETA BALBHIM SHINDE
162/7, Vidya Vihar Apartment, Railway line, Dahitane, 3, Khandare galli, Taluka Akkalkot, Dist-Solapur-413226
(CD3) MR. USHA BHAGWAN SHINDE
162/7, Vidya Vihar Apartment, Railway line, Dahitane, 3, Khandare galli, Taluka Akkalkot, Dist-Solapur-413226
(CD4) KUSUM GANPAT SHINDE
162/7, Vidya Vihar Apartment, Railway line, Dahitane, 3, Khandare galli, Taluka Akkalkot, Dist-Solapur-413226
(CD5) MRS. KALPANA GOKUL SHINDE
162/7, Vidya Vihar Apartment, Railway line, Dahitane, 3, Khandare galli, Taluka Akkalkot, Dist-Solapur-413226
(CD6) MRS. PRITI DATTA SHINDE
162/7, Vidya Vihar Apartment, Railway line, Dahitane, 3, Khandare galli, Taluka Akkalkot, Dist-Solapur-413226
(CD7) MR. PRASAD DNYANDEO JADHAV
162/7, Vidya Vihar Apartment, Railway line, Dahitane, 3, Khandare galli, Taluka Akkalkot, Dist-Solapur-413226
(CD8) MRS. NITA BALBHIM SHINDE
162/7, Vidya Vihar Apartment, Railway line, Dahitane, 3, Khandare galli, Taluka Akkalkot, Dist-Solapur-413226
(CD9) MRS. ANJANABAI DATTATRAY SHINDE
162/7, Vidya Vihar Apartment, Railway line, Dahitane, 3, Khandare galli, Taluka Akkalkot, Dist-Solapur-413226
(CD10) MR. DHIRAJ GOKUL SHINDE
162/7, Vidya Vihar Apartment, Railway line, Dahitane, 3, Khandare galli, Taluka Akkalkot, Dist-Solapur-413226
(CD11) SHOBHA BALBHIM SHINDE
162/7, Vidya Vihar Apartment, Railway line, Dahitane, 3, Khandare galli, Taluka Akkalkot, Dist-Solapur-413226

This is to notify that as per the Recovery Certificate issued in pursuance of orders passed by the Presiding Officer, DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL PUNE in **OA/489/2022** an amount of **Rs.77,11,473.00 (Rupees Seventy Seven Lakhs Eleven Thousands Four Hundred Seventy Three Only)** along with cost, expenses and future interest @9% Simple Interest Yearly w.e.f. **26/02/2021** till realization and costs of **Rs. 1,09,005.00 (Rupees One Lakh Nine Thousand Five Only)** has become due against you (Jointly and severally).

2. You are hereby directed to pay the above sum within 15 days of the receipts of the notice, failing which the recovery shall be made in accordance with the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993and Rules there under.DRT - PUNE

3. You are hereby ordered to declare on an affidavit the particulars of yours assets on or before the next date of hearing.

4. You are hereby ordered to appear before the undersigned on **30.09.2026** at 10:30 a.m. for further proceedings.

5. In addition to the sum afore said, you will also be liable to pay:

(a) Such interests as is payable for the period commencing immediately after this notice of the certificate / execution proceedings.

(b) All costs, charges and expenses incurred in respect of the service of this notice and warrants and other processes and all other proceedings taken for recovering the amount due.

Given under my hand and seal of this Tribunal on this Date : **20.08.2026**

SEAL
VINAY SAXENA
Recovery Officer II,
Debts Recovery Tribunal, Pune

केनरा बैंक Canara Bank
भारत सरकार का उपक्रम
सिंडिकेट Syndicate
A Government of India Undertaking

Regional Office, Kolhapur, Karveer Nivasini Tower, 3 rd Floor, Near Zorba Hotel, Gavat Mandz road, Shahupuri, Kolhapur-416001 Recoveryrosolapur@canarabank.com, Ph.: 02312993544

DEMAND NOTICE

Notice U/s 13(2) of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002

1. Name of the Borrower with Address

Sr. No.	Branch / Name & Address of Borrower / Co-Borrower / Mortgagor / Guarantor	Date of NPA	Account No. Nature of Loan Rate of Interest, Loan Amount	Outstanding Amount	Description of Moveable and Immovable Properties
1.	**Branch Name : KOLHAPUR MAIN BRANCH (15230)** **DHARAMDAS TUKARAM HULASWAR** **2905 C WARD SIDDHARTH NAGARKOLHAPUR MH 416002** **SUBHASH DNYANDEV ALATEKAR** **2905 C WARD SIDDHARTH NAGARKOLHAPUR MH 416002** **NIRMALA TUKARAM HULASWAR** **2905 C WARD SIDDHARTH NAGARKOLHAPUR MH 416002** **SUBHASH TUKARAM HULASWAR** **2905 C WARD SIDDHARTH NAGARKOLHAPUR MH 416002** **URMILA CHANDRAKAT KELUSKAR** **ALIBAG, TAL. ALIBAG, DIST. RAYGAD MH** **SWAPNAGANDHA PRAKASH KAMBLE** **104-7 SHASHTRI NAGAR COLONY SATARA MH**	**14.05.2017**	0304621011687 MSME LOAN (TL) 11.35 % Rs. 3,00,000.00	Rs. 5,71,452.40 (Rupees Five Lakhs Seventy One Thousand Four Hundred Fifty Two and Paise Forty Only)	ALL PART AND PARCEL OF PROPERTY C.T.S. NO. 2905/A AREA 12.5 SQ.MTRS., C.T.S. NO 2905/2 AREA 28.4 SQ.MTRS, C.T.S. NO. 2905/3 AREA 19.2 SQ.MTRS. AND C.T.S. NO 2905/4 AREA 12.50 SQ.MTRS, TOTAL 60.1 SQ.MTRS. THUS ENTIRE AREA ADMEASURING 72.60 SQ.MTRS. SITUATED AT C WARD, SIDHARTHA NAGAR, BUDHAWAR PETH, KOLHAPUR, MH. BOUNDED BY – AS PER AGREEMENT

2. As the principal debtor (borrower) has defaulted in repayment of his / her / theirs / its liabilities, we have classified his / her / theirs / its dues in accordance with the directions or guidelines issued by the Reserve Bank of India. 3. This notice is issued in accordance to the provisions of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 for serving you a notice sent under registered post since returned undelivered, where in you were advised to make following payments with interest. 4. The aforesaid facilities granted by bank are secured by the above Assets / Securities. 5. Now, through this public notice, we advise you to pay the bank. Liability with interest together with further interest and incidental Expenses and costs to pay off your liabilities within 60 days from the date of the notice other wise the bank will proceed under the provisions of SARFAESI Act 2002. The undersigned is empowered to take possession of the properties to sell there after and is an authorised officer of the bank under section 13 of the SARFAESI Act.

Date : 26/08/2026
Place : Kolhapur

Sd/-
AUTHORIZED OFFICER
SANDEEP VILASRAO ATOLE
DIVISIONAL MANAGER

DENGUE-MALARIA CONTROL | **Health Department conducts six-day campaign**

Guppy fish released at 512 sites to control mosquitoes

FPJ News Service
CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR

Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar Municipal Corporation (CSMC) has initiated a 'Guppy Fish' drive to control the mosquito menace and prevent the spread of diseases such as malaria and dengue. The drive is being implemented across 10 zones of the corporation under the guidance of Municipal Commissioner Amol Yedge, Assistant Commissioner Kalpita Pimple and Dr Syed Summaiya Naaz.

The 'Intensive Guppy Fish Campaign' was implemented by the Health and Malaria Department to prevent mosquito-borne diseases. The special campaign was carried out across all zones (Zones 1 to 10) by the Health and Malaria Department from August 19, 2026, to August 24, 2026.

Guppy fish are beneficial biological agents that feed on mosquito larvae, thereby helping to naturally control mosquito breeding

Under the campaign, guppy fish were released at various locations to enhance preventive measures against mosquito-borne diseases such as dengue and malaria and to biologically control mosquito larvae.

During the campaign, guppy fish were released at a total of 512 locations across Zones 1 to 10. Guppy fish are beneficial biological agents that feed on mosquito larvae, thereby helping to naturally control mosquito breeding.

To prevent mosquito breeding, citizens should not allow water to stagnate around their homes or in surrounding areas. Water storage containers should be cleaned regularly, and citizens should cooperate with the preventive measures implemented by the Municipal Corporation's Health Department.

Those wishing to obtain guppy fish should register their name, mobile number and address with the multipurpose health worker at their nearest Municipal Corporation health centre.

Activists seek probe into childbirth deaths

FPJ News Service
BEED

Alleging medical negligence during childbirth at the Mother and Child Hospital attached to Beed District Hospital, social activist Dr Ganesh Dhawale has demanded a fair and independent inquiry, registration of criminal cases against those found responsible, and action against the concerned medical professionals under applicable regulations.

Dr Dhawale and other activists staged a protest outside the district hospital on Monday, demanding an investigation into the deaths of Chhaya Ganesh Panchal and Shaikh Muskan, who allegedly died during childbirth, as well as complications faced by 19-year-old Sandhya Suraj Gaikwad of Wadwani following a caesarean section.

According to Dhawale, Sandhya allegedly developed an infection after medical material was left inside her abdomen during the surgery. She is currently undergoing treatment at Sassoon Hospital in Pune, he claimed.

The activists have demanded that an independent inquiry determine the exact medical responsibility in each case. They also sought criminal proceedings against officials and staff found guilty and called for the competent authority to examine their medical licences in accordance with the law.

Dhawale also raised concerns over patient safety at the Mother and Child Hospital, reportedly constructed at a cost of around 24 crore to provide quality healthcare, particularly to economically weaker sections.

The demand for action comes amid growing concerns over alleged lapses at the hospital. The death of Shaikh Muskan during childbirth last month was followed by the case involving Sandhya Gaikwad, prompting calls for greater accountability.

The protesters demanded that authorities should not merely constitute inquiry committees but should make their findings public and fix responsibility based on the findings.

The activists also demanded an inquiry into previous deaths of women admitted to Beed District Hospital for childbirth. Dhawale alleged that despite demands from relatives and social organisations following the deaths of Chhaya Panchal and Muskan Shaikh, action had been delayed in the name of inquiries.

Dhawale said a memorandum had been submitted to Deputy Chief Minister and Guardian Minister Sunetra Pawar and Public Health Minister Prakash Abitkar, seeking the suspension of District Civil Surgeon Dr Satishkumar Solanke until the inquiries into the alleged negligence cases are completed.

Several activists and citizens participated in the protest, including Shikha Yunus, Shaikh Mubeen, Ramnath Khod, Ashok Yede, Sadeque Syed, Balasaheb More, Kishkindha Panchal, Sunita Panchal, Ramdhan Jamale, Dr Sanjay Tandale, Bajirao Dhakane, Hanuman Ghodke, Abasaheb Jadhav, Bhimrao Kute, Shankar Ghadge, Sarfaraz Khan, Ramchandra Dhumal and Vishwas Bhore.

MP reviews CSN station works

FPJ News Service
CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR

MP Sandipan Bhumre conducted an on-site inspection and a detailed review of the ongoing redevelopment work at Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar Railway Station on Monday. Accompanied by senior railway officials, he assessed the quality and progress of the development work, pending tasks and passenger amenities.

MP Bhumre directed that all works be completed within the stipulated timeframe and to a high standard of quality.

1,833 dog-bite cases in 7 months

FPJ News Service
BEED

The menace of stray dogs has escalated across Beed town, leaving children, women and the elderly vulnerable to frequent attacks in neighbourhood lanes and alleys. While concern among residents continues to grow, the Beed Municipal Council has come under criticism, with both ruling and opposition leaders allegedly maintaining silence over the issue.

Residents allege that despite a budgetary provision of 1,450 per dog, amounting to roughly 5 lakh per month and nearly 60 lakh annually, the situation on the ground remains critical. Citizens have questioned the utilisation of public funds and alleged that the measures have failed to address the problem.

Two days ago, a stray dog attacked three-year-old Shivanshi Rameshwar Gholap in Dhondenagar, leaving her with 12 stitches on her cheek.

On May 26, young Swaraj Ravindra Darphe was attacked by stray dogs while playing outside his house, suffering severe injuries to his legs.

CCTV footage also recently surfaced showing four to five stray dogs surrounding a child in Peth Beed around May 14.

Similar incidents across several neighbourhoods have created widespread fear among residents.

Ravindra Darphe, a parent, said, "Stray dogs attacked my son in May while he was playing outside, causing severe injuries to his legs. Stray packs continue to roam our locality even today, keeping us in constant fear."

Meanwhile, in October 2025, the animal birth control (ABC) contract was awarded to the Parbhani-based agency People for Animals. The agency reportedly claimed to sterilise 350 to 400 dogs every month, with a planned budget of ₹5 lakh per month, or nearly ₹60 lakh annually.

Briefs

Rupee rises 26p to close at 95.44/USD

The rupee pared initial losses and settled for the day higher by 26 paise at 95.44 against the US dollar on Tuesday, driven by positive domestic markets, a weaker greenback, and a fall in crude oil prices. Forex traders said the overall weakness in the US dollar on declining odds of a rate hike may support the rupee at lower levels.

Sebi drops case against Max Financial, Max Life, Axis firms

Sebi has disposed of proceedings against Max Financial Services, Max Life, and Axis Group entities over an alleged Rs 3,911 crore shareholder loss, with the markets regulator finding that disclosure lapses and a fraudulent scheme were not established. Max Life Insurance Company is now known as Axis Max Life Insurance. The Sebi, in a final order passed on Monday, dropped proceedings against seven individuals, including Max Group founder and Chairman Analjit Singh.

C-DOT must take 'Made in India' telecom technologies to world: Scindia

Union Minister for Communications and Development of North Eastern Region Jyotiraditya M Scindia on Tuesday urged the Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT) to take India's indigenous telecom technologies to global markets and accelerate the transition from research and development to commercially viable products. Speaking at C-DOT's 43rd Foundation Day, the minister said the state-run telecom research organisation must develop technologies that are affordable, reliable, scalable and globally competitive as India seeks to strengthen its position in emerging areas such as 6G, artificial intelligence, quantum technology and cybersecurity.

Paluck Technologies IPO to open on August 28

Paluck Technologies Ltd is a diversified engineering-services group serving retail and corporate customers across the telecom and construction sectors. Purposes to open its initial public offering (IPO) on August 28, 2026, aiming to raise ₹ 33 crore with shares to be listed on the BSE SME. The issue size is 68,76,000 equity shares with a face value of ₹10 each with a price band of ₹46 - ₹48 per share.

Applications open for SNAP 2026

Symbiosis International (Deemed University) has officially opened applications for the Symbiosis National Aptitude Test (SNAP) 2026, a national-level entrance examination for M.B.A. aspirants. The registration and payment window for SNAP 2026 will close on November 25, 2026. Interested student can visit www.snaptest.org for more information.

Raksha Bandhan trade expected to cross ₹30K cr

Retail activity across India has picked up sharply ahead of Raksha Bandhan, with the festival expected to generate more than ₹30,000 crore in business this year, according to the Confederation of All India Traders on Tuesday.

Confederation of All India Traders National Secretary General and Chandni Chowk MP Praveen Khandelwal states that the rakhi segment alone is projected to account for around ₹25,000 crore, while Delhi is expected to contribute nearly ₹4,000 crore to the rakhi trade. With just four days left for the festival, markets in Delhi and other parts of the country are witnessing a surge in consumer footfall. Major markets in the national capital, including Chandni Chowk, Sadar Bazaar, Karol Bagh, Lajpat Nagar and Laxmi Nagar, report heavy crowds as shoppers make final purchases. **-IANS**

RESILIENCE HOLDS FIRM | Credit and liquidity reinforce expansion prospects

India's growth engine roars despite gathering global economic storms

FPJ News Service
MUMBAI

India's economy is carrying momentum into the second quarter despite a harsher external environment, with industrial, services and trade indicators signalling expansion. The Reserve Bank of India's August Bulletin said July preserved the pace established in Q1 2026-27, even as West Asian geopolitical tensions and fresh US tariffs darkened the global outlook.

GROWTH ENGINES STRENGTHEN

High-frequency indicators pointed to sustained manufacturing and services activity, while merchandise exports and imports registered double-digit expansion. A revival in the southwest monsoon during July brought kharif sowing closer to normal acreage, partly cushioning agricultural risks.

Inflation, however, rose. Headline consumer price inflation moved above target primarily because of supply-side pressures, while stable core inflation suggested limited transmission of cost pressures into underlying prices.

FINANCIAL BUFFERS IMPROVE

Easier liquidity supported credit growth and investment, while renewed foreign capital inflows reinforced the external account. Financial conditions were characterised by robust lending expansion, comfortable system liquidity and softer government-security yields, materially strengthening the financing backdrop.

The RBI clarified that views in the State of the Economy article belong to its authors and do not represent the central bank's official position.

MSME FUNDING WORRIES INTENSIFY

Against that resilient macroeconomic backdrop, the Federation of Indian Micro and Small and Medium Enterprises warned that proposed restrictions on NBFC revolving credit could squeeze working-capital access. Draft directions would permit NBFCs to offer only term-loan products, eliminating revolving facilities. Stakeholders can submit feedback until 28 August 2026.

FISME Secretary General Anil Bhardwaj acknowledged regulatory concerns around indefinite rollovers, concealed borrower stress and harmful app-based lending, but argued productive working capital differs from consumer revolving credit. The body wants risks addressed through underwriting, monitoring, disclosure and data-governance safeguards rather than an outright prohibition.

PwC India's Ranen Banerjee said revolving facilities restore available limits after repayment, enabling MSMEs to pay interest solely on utilised credit and avoid repeated loan applications. NBFCs represent around 10-11% of total credit outstanding, suggesting only a minor aggregate impact.

Infra projects see ₹3.4L crore cost overrun

Infrastructure projects worth more than ₹150 crore each recorded a cumulative cost overrun of around ₹3,40,504 crore, according to a monthly government report for July 2026.

A total of 1,775 ongoing infrastructure projects across 17 central ministries and departments were monitored, revealing a total revised cost of ₹37,10,642 crore compared to their original cost of ₹33,70,138 crore. The report, however, did not specify the actual number of projects that faced cost overruns. The cumulative expenditure incurred on these projects stands at ₹19.26 lakh crore, accounting for approximately 51.91% of the revised project cost and indicating steady progress in project implementation, a statement by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation states. **-PTI**

Markets bounce back as crude oil drops below $90 per barrel

Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty pared intraday losses to close higher on Tuesday, driven by buying in the final hour amid a sharp drop in crude oil prices.

After moving in a range with a negative bias for most of the day, the 30-share BSE Sensex settled higher by 286.98 points, or 0.37%, at 77,656.09, on monthly expiry day. As many as 24 of its constituents ended in gains, and six in losses. During the day, it hit a high of 77,666.39 and a low of 77,125.91.

The 50-share NSE Nifty also remained volatile before ending higher by 115.50 points, or 0.48%, at 24,334.55 on fag-end buying.

Among the 30 Sensex firms, InterGlobe Aviation, Adani Ports, Infosys, Trent, Titan and State Bank of India were the major winners.

Eternal, HCL Tech, Power Grid and Bajaj Finserv were among the major laggards.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, declined 3% to $89.32 per barrel.

Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, states that the much-anticipated US sanctions against Iran fell short of market expectations, causing crude oil prices and bond yields to moderate from their recent peaks, while relief in energy costs aided a moderately positive close today on the monthly expiry day. **-PTI**

Exports key for mobile brands to maximize MPMS incentives: Kotak

Exports are likely to be the key driver for mobile phone brands seeking to consistently beat the growth benchmark and maximise incentives under the newly notified Mobile Phone Manufacturing Scheme, according to a report by Kotak Institutional Equities.

The report states that this is because India's domestic smartphone market has seen limited volume growth, while the country's mobile phone production has expanded largely on the back of rising exports. The MeitY notified the scheme last week with a budget outlay of ₹62,500 crore. The scheme aims to make India more competitive globally by increasing manufacturing scale, expanding the domestic supply chain through higher Domestic Value Addition, and strengthening local manufacturing capabilities. **-ANI**

Piyush Goyal invites greater Japanese institutional capital

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Tuesday held discussions with representatives of Japan's leading financial and investment institutions on strengthening long-term capital flows, deepening investment partnerships and expanding Japanese participation in India's growth story.

The meeting brought together senior representatives of MUFG, DBJ, Mizuho, Morgan Stanley, Nomura and Nippon Life, providing a platform for an exchange of views on India's economic outlook, emerging investment opportunities and measures to further facilitate Japanese institutional investment.

During the meetings, Goyal highlighted the strength and resilience of the Indian economy, noting that India recorded 7.7% growth last year despite global uncertainties and is working towards becoming a $30 trillion economy by 2047.

He underlined India's strong banking sector, robust capital adequacy and low levels of non-performing assets, along with the country's expanding middle class and rising disposable incomes. He added that significant opportunities exist for Japanese firms in sectors such as semiconductors, artificial intelligence, data centres, renewable energy, green hydrogen, advanced manufacturing and digital infrastructure. **-PTI**

India to ease BIS certification rules for high-tech firms

Piyush Goyal on Tuesday said the government is working on a framework to exempt high-tech sector companies, including from Japan, from Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) certification for equipment and components needed to set up manufacturing facilities in India. Goyal said he had taken note of concerns raised by Japanese companies over BIS certification requirements and that the government had already instructed the BIS and the Commerce and Industry Ministry to work on a framework to address the issue. The minister was addressing representatives of Japanese firms from semiconductors and AI sectors.

Retailers curb price hikes despite rising costs: Nuvama

Indian retailers are keeping price hikes in check amid volatility in fabric, yarn and cotton prices and supply-chain risks linked to geopolitical disruptions, including the West Asia crisis, according to a research report by Nuvama.

Retailers are adjusting sourcing strategies and building safety stocks to manage higher costs and supply risks without hurting consumer demand, the brokerage states in its retail sector outlook.

"Price hikes are being kept highly calibrated," Nuvama states in its outlook for the retail sector, noting that Page Industries implemented a 2.2% weighted average price increase in May, while V-Mart expects to limit average selling price increases to 3-5% and V2 Retail plans a 4-5% increase in the third quarter. **-ANI**

Govt to exercise greenshoe option, sell up to 6% stake in Hindustan Copper OFS

The government will exercise the greenshoe option and sell an additional 3% stake in Hindustan Copper Ltd through an offer for sale, Divestment Secretary Arunish Chawla states on Tuesday. The government offered to sell up to a 6% stake in the company through an offer for sale, including a base issue size of 3% and a greenshoe option of 3%. The issue opened on Tuesday for non-retail investors, while retail investors and employees can bid on Wednesday.

"Hindustan Copper Ltd OFS received an enthusiastic response from institutional investors and was oversubscribed 3.41 times on Day One," Chawla writes in a post on X. "The Government has decided to exercise the entire green shoe option." Chawla stated on Monday that 10% of the offer is reserved for retail investors, with an additional 25,000 shares reserved for eligible employees. The government holds 66.14% in Hindustan Copper. A 6% stake sale will lower its share to 60.14%. At the floor price, the Centre will earn nearly ₹30 billion from the entire 6% stake sale.**-Informist**

NRI deposits rise in June

Outstanding deposits by non-resident Indians rose to $168.51 billion at the end of June from $165.96 billion as on May 31, according to provisional data released by the RBI on Tuesday. FCNR (banks) deposits grew only at a sluggish pace in the first month of the central bank's scheme to attract foreign capital.

India pivots to US for LPG, LNG as W Asia crisis disrupts Gulf supplies

India has sharply increased purchases of liquefied petroleum gas and liquefied natural gas from the US as disruptions linked to the conflict in West Asia constrain supplies from traditional Gulf suppliers, data from maritime intelligence firm Kpler shows.

India imported about 0.62 million tonnes of LPG from the US in August, in addition to 0.89 million tonnes in July, accounting for more than 73% of the country's LPG imports, according to Kpler data.

The July US volume was almost equal to the highest-ever monthly LPG import from the UAE, India's traditional supplier, of 0.891 million tonnes in October 2025. Imports from Gulf suppliers have fallen sharply after the effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz. The waterway is a key shipping route for crude oil and gas exported by Gulf producers to major consumers, including India. UAE LPG imports fell to about 140,000 tonnes in August, while Qatar supplied around 60,000 tonnes, Kpler data shows. Saudi Arabia supplied no LPG to India in either July or August. **-PTI**

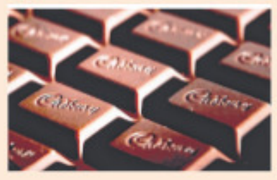
Govt to sell onions in Delhi at ₹35/kg

The government will sell onions at ₹35 per kg in the national capital, a deep discount of around 36% from prevailing average retail prices, as it looks to provide relief to the common man from high rates.

According to Department of Consumer Affairs data, the all-India average retail price of onion has jumped more than 28% in a month to ₹44.72 per kg on Aug 25. Among major cities, retail onion prices on Tuesday stood at ₹60 per kg in Chennai (₹35 per kg a year ago), ₹55 per kg in Delhi (₹33), ₹60 per kg in Kolkata (₹32 per kg) and ₹48 per kg in Mumbai.

FSSAI crackdown: Food firms Mondelez India, Amway withdraw misleading claims on products

PTI
NEW DELHI



Food regulator Food Safety and Standards Authority of India stated on Tuesday that several food companies, including Mondelez India and Amway India, have withdrawn misleading claims on product labels after receiving notices.

In a social media post, the food safety regulator stated that major food business operators have taken prompt corrective action following notices issued by the authority.

The corrective measures include withdrawing misleading label claims and revising product packaging.

In the case of Mondelez India Foods Pvt Ltd, the authority stated that it had found misleading health claims and nutrient comparative claims.

Following the notice, Mondelez has withdrawn the claims and advertisements from e-commerce platforms and ensured compliance. Sapiens Labs has also withdrawn all misleading claims and advertisements. Juza Foods of Kerala has removed misleading claims.

In the case of Vichi Agro Products Pvt Ltd, the regulator had issued a notice for a misleading trade name.

"Response from Flipkart was received, wherein the food business operator mentioned that he has delisted the product from his platform," the regulator stated.

Sebi slaps ₹33 cr fine on Varanium Cloud, 8 others for diversion of IPO proceeds

Market regulator Sebi has slapped fines totalling ₹33.08 crore on Varanium Cloud, its promoter Harshawardhan Hanmant Sabale, and seven others for misrepresenting the company's financials and diversion of IPO proceeds.

Besides, the regulator barred Varanium Cloud Ltd and Sabale from the securities markets for seven years.

Further, Sabale was also restrained from being associated with any listed company or a Sebi-registered intermediary as a director for seven years. The proceedings emanated from Sebi taking cognisance of media reports concerning the company, following which it conducted a preliminary examination into the affairs of VCL, an NSE Emerge listed entity. Thereafter, an interim order was passed by Sebi in May 2024 against VCL and Sabale, followed by a confirmatory order in October. Subsequently, Sebi conducted a detailed probe into the alleged violations, leading to the present final order. In its 155-page final order, Sebi directed VCL to bring back ₹62.51 crore, comprising ₹18.98 crore from IPO proceeds and ₹43.53 crore from rights issue proceeds, along with 12% interest from the respective dates of debit transactions from the company's account. The regulator stated that funds were transferred to related parties and other entities, and found that ₹32.73 crore of the rights issue proceeds was transferred directly into Sabale's account. **-PTI**

Gilts rise on fall in oil price below $90/bbl

Government bond prices ended higher on Tuesday, tracking a fall in Brent crude oil futures prices below the psychologically crucial $90 per barrel level, dealers state. Some traders also covered short bets, supporting bond prices. However, gains were contained as traders awaited clarity on the US-Iran war, dealers state. Some traders also made room in their portfolios ahead of the fresh supply of the 10-year benchmark bond at Friday's auction, which also weighed on bond prices, dealers state.

The 10-year benchmark 6.94%, 2036 bond ended at ₹100.63, against ₹100.47 on Monday. The yield on the bond fell to 6.8488% from 6.8708% at the end of the previous session. Traders expect the yield on the 10-year benchmark bond to remain in the range of 6.80%-6.90%, as Brent crude oil prices continue to hover between $80 and $90 per barrel, dealers state. **-Informist**

SEBI plans pilot project for tokenised bonds

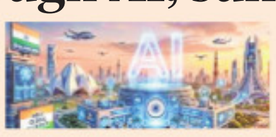
The Sebi, in coordination with the RBI, is planning to launch a pilot project for tokenised bonds, according to people aware of the development. REC Ltd. will be the first tokenised bond issuer, they added. The markets regulator is anchoring the launch of the new instrument, which will likely be done on a pilot basis, an official at REC said.

'India targets $55 trillion economy by 2047 through AI, sunrise sectors'

India can build a $55 trillion economy by 2047 by capitalising on its young demographic in artificial intelligence and dominating key sunrise sectors, according to former CEA Krishnamurthy V Subramanian.

Addressing India 2047 Leaders TALK, Subramanian stated that sustained 8% real GDP growth, coupled with strategic capital deployment, will unlock compounding value across India's core economic pillars.

"Building a $55 trillion



Viksit Bharat by 2047 is an achievable reality driven by the power of compounding growth, ethical wealth creation, and bold structural policy," Subramanian said.

He highlighted the critical interplay of attracting high-quality foreign direct investment, expanding world-class electronics and industrial manufacturing under global value chain integrations, and cultivating a hyper-skilled young talent pool proficient in artificial intelligence.

"By expanding high-value manufacturing, harnessing our vast young demographic in artificial intelligence and emerging capabilities, and establishing global dominance in sunrise sectors like space and defence tech, India is not merely expanding its economic footprint -- it is delivering a resilient economic blueprint for the modern world," he stated.

RBI to reimpose interest rate caps on 3-5 FCNR(B) deposits from Aug 31

The RBI on Tuesday reinstated limits on interest rates offered on 3- to 5-year FCNR(B) deposits from Aug. 31, bringing forward the timeline from the earlier notified Sept. 30. Interest rate caps on non-resident (external) deposits of three years and above will also be reimposed a month earlier. The guidelines state that banks' interest rate on deposits must be limited to the overnight Alternative Reference Rate for the respective currency or swap plus 350 basis points.

Briefs

Augmont Enterprises IPO subscribed 105.78 times

The initial public offering of integrated gold and silver platform Augmont Enterprises Ltd was subscribed 105.78 times on the final day of bidding on Tuesday. The company's Rs 825-crore IPO received bids for 81,61,86,230 shares against 77,15,999 shares on offer, as per data available with the NSE.

Min lays foundation for ₹10,500 cr Suzlon projects

Andhra Pradesh IT Minister Nara Lokesh on Tuesday laid the foundation stone for 1,325 MW Suzlon wind energy projects in Anantapur district, involving an investment of ₹10,500 crore. The initiative is expected to generate 1,600 direct and indirect jobs, said an official press release. The minister also inaugurated Suzlon's expanded smart blade manufacturing facility in Ananthapur, with two additional production lines, strengthening the state's renewable energy manufacturing ecosystem.

Sunshine Pictures shares end 2.5% higher

Sunshine Pictures Ltd, promoted by film and television producer-director Vipul Shah, ended 2.5% higher on Tuesday against the issue price of ₹360. The stock started trading at ₹394, registering a jump of 9.44% on the BSE. During the session, it surged 9.72% to ₹395. Later, the stock trimmed most of the intraday gains and finished at ₹368.90, up 2.47%.

MICE sector to grow by 14% annually: NIMA

India's MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions) sector is expected to grow at 12-14% annually over the next 3-5 years, Network of Indian MICE Association (NIMA) national coordinator Dr Nitin Mittal said recently. "The country's MICE and destination-wedding industry is witnessing strong momentum, with corporate MICE growing by 10-15% year-on-year," Mittal said at the 3-day TTF.

Sigenergy opens experience center in city

Sigenergy, a global energy technology company, has launched its first state-of-the-art Experience Center at TTC MIDC in Navi Mumbai as part of 'Sigenergy Day India 2026'. The company said the centre is aimed at accelerating India's transition towards green and intelligent energy solutions.

Welspun Corp promoter Group, CEO to sell 2.4% stake in ₹1,417 cr block deal

Shares worth as much as ₹1,417 crore in Welspun Corp are set to be offered through a block deal, with a promoter-group entity and the company's managing director and chief executive among the sellers, CNBCTV18 reported.

Welspun Investments and Commercials, part of the promoter group, and Managing Director and CEO Vipul Mathur are looking to sell around 63 lakh shares, equivalent to about 2.4% of Welspun Corp's equity.

The offer price has been set at ₹2,250 per share, representing a discount of up to 4.1% to the stock's last closing price of ₹2,331. The transaction is a secondary share sale, meaning the proceeds will go to the selling shareholders rather than Welspun Corp. The proposed stake sale comes shortly after Welspun Corp secured the largest order in its history — a $1.8 billion contract to supply pipes for a Permian Basin export pipeline in the US.

Avaada Group to set up ₹10,000 cr green industrial campus

PTI
NEW DELHI

Avaada Group stated on Tuesday that it has inked an initial pact with Haryana Enterprises Promotion Centre to facilitate the development of a Zero-CBAM Green Industrial Campus in Hisar entailing an investment of ₹10,000 crore.

The project has the potential to generate over 5,000 employment opportunities, a company statement notes.

The proposed 300-acre campus is envisioned as a next-generation green industrial ecosystem, powered by reliable, traceable and round-the-clock renewable energy, the company states.

It is designed to support industries seeking to decarbonise operations, strengthen energy security and enhance readiness for evolving global carbon and sustainability requirements, including the European Union's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism.

Under the memorandum of understanding, the Haryana government, through Haryana Enterprises Promotion Centre, will facilitate the development of the proposed campus as a state-supported green industrial and zero-CBAM industrial park.

The facilitation will include support towards appropriate industrial-park status, exploration of a customised package of incentives, common infrastructure, connectivity and utilities, and expediting requisite statutory approvals through the state's single-window mechanism.

The partnership will also focus on attracting anchor investors, technology partners and industrial participants to the proposed campus.

Avaada Group and the Haryana government will explore joint international investment roadshows across key markets, including Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, Japan and South Korea, among others, to showcase investment opportunities in the proposed green industrial ecosystem.

The proposed campus seeks to bring together renewable energy, industrial infrastructure and green manufacturing within an integrated ecosystem.

Bombay HC to re-hear Volkswagen's challenge to $1.4 bn tax demand

Carmaker Skoda Auto Volkswagen India will have to re-argue its petition in connection with a tax demand of $1.4 billion after a bench of the Bombay High Court released the matter without pronouncing its verdict.

The bench had reserved the matter for judgment in April 2025, but did not pronounce the verdict till date. On Tuesday, the bench said it was releasing the automobile company's petition from its court as it could not adhere to the timeline set by the Supreme Court to pronounce verdicts once reserved. "Due to the exigency of work we have not been able to pronounce judgment till date. We release the above matter (related to Skoda Auto), and which shall now be placed for hearing before the regular Bench as per the roaster hearing Writ Petitions arising from indirect taxes," the HC said. It ordered for a status quo to be maintained for a period of four weeks. The company has been accused of deliberately misleading customs authorities through its mode of import of parts as individual units rather than as a component of a 'completely knocked down' unit, which attracts higher import duty.**-PTI**

Natco Pharma to invest $14 mn in eGenesis Inc

Natco Pharma stated on Tuesday that it is investing $14 million, which is over ₹130 crore, in eGenesis Inc, a US-based biotechnology firm, through its two subsidiaries.

As part of the transaction, Natco Pharma (Canada) Inc will invest $9.5 million and Natco Pharma South Africa Proprietary Ltd $4.5 million in eGenesis through convertible promissory notes. eGenesis is pioneering a genome engineering-based approach in the development of safe and effective transplantable organs to end the global organ shortage and transform the treatment of organ failure, it added. **-PTI**

WazirX launches AI trading co-pilot

Indian cryptocurrency exchange WazirX on Tuesday launched WazirX AI, an artificial-intelligence trading assistant that combines market research, portfolio analysis and trade preparation in a single conversational interface.

Integrated into WazirX's app and website, the tool allows users to ask questions about live crypto prices, market news and macroeconomic developments, receive analysis with supporting charts, review their portfolios and approve trades without switching between charts, news feeds and trading screens, according to a company statement.

The AI assistant follows an "Ask-Understand-Decide" model, coordinating market-data, technical-analysis, portfolio and order-management functions across multi-step requests. **-PTI**

CNH Industrial to invest ₹2,000 crore in India by 2030, double mfg capacity

The Indian arm of CNH Industrial — the $18 billion global agriculture and construction equipment major — will invest around ₹2,000 crore in India by 2030, including setting up a tractor plant near Greater Noida in Uttar Pradesh, a top company official stated on Tuesday.

CNH Industrial India President and Managing Director Narinder Mittal stated that the country is a focus market for the conglomerate, and it has firmed up spending ₹1,000 crore on the new plant at Yamuna Expressway, close to its existing Greater Noida facility, to double tractor manufacturing capacity from 70,000 units to 1.4 lakh units.

An additional ₹1,000 crore will go towards research and development and product development for both domestic and export markets, he stated.

The company has been allotted 100 acres of land by the Yamuna Expressway Authority for the greenfield project, as its existing Greater Noida plant faces land constraints preventing further expansion, Mittal stated. **-PTI**

Air India seeks $1.5 billion from Tata Sons, Singapore airlines?

FPJ News Service
MUMBAI

Air India is reportedly seeking about $1.5 billion in fresh equity from Tata Sons and Singapore Airlines as mounting losses and a transformation programme intensify its capital requirements. The proposed injection would rank among its largest shareholder funding requests since Tata regained control of the state-owned carrier in 2022.

Air India and budget arm Air India Express recorded combined losses of $2.33 billion in the year ended March, more than double the previous year's deficit, weighing on Singapore Airlines' earnings.

Sources said the carrier wants funds, although any infusion is expected in tranches. Singapore Airlines, which owns around 25% of Air India, would need to contribute its proportional share. Discussions remain under way and no decision has been reached.

Air India and Tata Sons reportedly did not comment. Singapore Airlines said it continues working with Tata Sons to support the carrier's transformation, but declined to discuss finances. Operational headwinds include Pakistan's airspace ban on Indian airlines, international-network disruption from the US-Israeli war with Iran and fallout from last year's crash that killed 260 people.

Tata Sons Chairman N. Chandrasekaran is due to step down in February after disagreements with the group's controlling charitable trust, partly concerning Air India's losses.

L&T bags BESS projects worth up to ₹10,000 crore

Engineering and construction major Larsen & Toubro announced on Tuesday that its renewable energy business has won a mega order to develop three battery energy storage system projects for a notable client in the Middle East. The company states that it classifies mega orders as those valued between ₹5,000 crore and ₹10,000 crore.

The three projects will collectively contribute to 6 gigawatt-hours of storage capacity, marking one of the most impactful advancements in grid modernisation and renewable energy integration across the Middle East region. This positions Larsen & Toubro as a key engineering, procurement and construction player in the fast-growing energy storage sector.

In addition to the storage facilities, the scope of the packages also involves grid interconnections, including pooling substations and underground cables, Larsen & Toubro states in a regulatory filing with the stock exchanges. This enables effective energy shifting, allowing surplus clean energy generated during off-peak periods to be stored and delivered during peak demand hours, the company states. **-PTI**

Sigma Advanced Systems bags addl ₹1,600 crore Rolls-Royce contract

Defence and aerospace firm Sigma Advanced Systems stated on Tuesday that it secured an additional long-term agreement worth nearly £125 million, or about ₹1,600 crore, with Rolls-Royce through its recently acquired UK subsidiary Bromford Precision Solutions.

The latest agreement expands Sigma's partnership with the British aerospace major and takes the combined value of its two long-term agreements with Rolls-Royce to nearly £425 million.

The new contract builds on a previously secured agreement worth around ₹3,800 crore, which covers the manufacture and supply of high-precision aerospace components. Under the latest agreement, Bromford will manufacture aero-engine rings, casings, lock plates and other critical engine structures across Sigma's manufacturing facilities in India and the UK.

The arrangement will create a dual-source manufacturing solution for Rolls-Royce and enable Sigma to supply a broader portfolio of complex engine components, it stated. **-PTI**

Sidbi profit FY26 jumps 14% to ₹5,493 crore

Small Industries Development Bank of India stated on Tuesday that its net profit rose by 14% to hit an all-time high of ₹5,493 crore for the financial year ended March 2026. The financial institution had earned a net profit of ₹4,811 crore in the previous financial year. During the year, the bank's balance sheet crossed ₹6.32 lakh crore, it stated. **-PTI**

Hyundai Motor, Jio-bp in pact to integrate, boost EV charging network

Hyundai Motor India Ltd stated on Tuesday that it has entered into a partnership with Jio-bp to integrate their respective EV charging networks and enhance charging accessibility for EV users across India.

Jio-bp is the operating brand of Reliance BP Mobility Ltd, a joint venture between Reliance Industries and bp, and is a leading provider of EV charging services and solutions.

Through this collaboration, EV customers will be able to discover, access and use Jio-bp pulse charging stations using the myHyundai app, Hyundai Motor India Ltd's integrated EV charging platform, further enhancing charging convenience and accessibility, the company stated.

With the integration of the Jio-bp pulse network, HMIL's EV charging ecosystem now provides access to over 37,000 charging points across India, while HMIL's high-capacity chargers will also be gradually integrated into the Jio-bp pulse charge pro app, it added. **-PTI**

Tata Steel gets interim relief in ₹1,755 cr demand notice

Tata Steel has received interim relief in a ₹1,755 crore demand notice issued by the Jharkhand government, according to a regulatory filing.

The company has challenged a ₹1,755 crore mining demand notice issued by the District Mining Office in Ramgarh, Jharkhand, over alleged excess coal extraction of 16.24 million tonnes at the West Bokaro Colliery beyond permissible limits during 2000-01 to 2006-07.

The company concluded that the demand lacked justification and substantive basis and held merit to challenge it. Accordingly, in April, Tata Steel filed a Revision Application before the revisional authority of the coal ministry, challenging the demand notice.

The revisional authority heard the revision application.

The company states that the revisional authority has, inter alia, passed directions admitting the Revision Application filed by Tata Steel Ltd for consideration, and directed respondents not to take coercive steps against the applicant pursuant to the impugned demand notices or letters during the pendency of the present Revision Application. **-PTI**

AMI orders 9,000 NVIDIA Rubin GPUs for H'bad facility

AM Intelligence, an infrastructure platform set up by Greenko promoters, on Tuesday placed a binding order for 9,000 NVIDIA Rubin GPUs for what it described as its first AI factory. The order covers 9,000 NVIDIA Rubin GPUs to be deployed as Vera Rubin NVL72 systems at AMI's 30 MW facility in Hyderabad in the first quarter of 2027. The facility is expected to be among Asia's first frontier AI computing clusters using the Vera Rubin platform. **-PTI**

FedEx to invest $150 million for air cargo hub at Delhi airport

PTI
NEW DELHI

Federal Express Corporation plans to invest $150 million, or around ₹1,430 crore, to develop an air cargo hub spread across 230,000 square feet at the Delhi airport.

The groundbreaking ceremony for the facility was held in the national capital on Tuesday in the presence of Civil Aviation Minister K Rammohan Naidu, who states that India should be the backbone for air cargo movements.

The integrated air cargo hub will be set up at GMR Cargo City at the Indira Gandhi International Airport and will help strengthen connectivity across North and East India, linking businesses with global markets, FedEx states in a release.

The hub, once operational, is designed to increase processing capacity from 600 to 5,000 packages per hour, and can be scaled up further.

"The proposed facility represents a long-term investment of approximately USD 150 million by FedEx," the release states.

At the current exchange rate, $150 million is worth over ₹1,400 crore.

The facility is expected to be completed in 12 to 18 months.

FedEx Middle East, Indian Subcontinent and Africa President Kami Viswanathan states that India is a critical market in its global network and that the air cargo hub in the national capital will enable the company to serve northern and eastern markets in India.

Inorbit Malls completes acquisition of two malls for ₹1242 cr

Inorbit Malls has completed the acquisition of two shopping malls from Prozone Realty Ltd for ₹1,242.5 crore as part of its expansion plan.

In a statement on Tuesday, the company states that it has completed the acquisition of two mall assets at Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar, formerly Aurangabad, and Coimbatore.

The transaction doubles Inorbit Malls' asset base from four to eight within a year and takes its total gross leasing area to over 5 million square feet. **-PTI**

Varun Beverages incorporates co for alcoholic, ready-to-drink ops in India

Varun Beverages Ltd stated on Tuesday that its board has approved the incorporation of a wholly owned subsidiary in India to, among other things, carry on the business of ready-to-drink alcoholic beverages and allied products. This subsidiary will be christened KIVA Spirits and Co Ltd. Prathmesh Mishra has been appointed Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director of the subsidiary.

In a filing with the bourses, Varun Beverages stated that it will also incorporate a joint venture company in Tunisia to, among other things, carry on the business of production

and distribution of beverages, including carbonated soft drinks, juices, water and dairy, subject to the receipt of requisite approvals. Varun Beverages will hold a 75% stake in this joint venture company, which is expected to be named Varun Beverages Tunisia SA.

Mishra, who will head KIVA Spirits, is a seasoned business leader with over 30 years of experience across consumer businesses. He most recently served as Managing Director for Korea and Japan at Diageo, where he was responsible for driving business growth and strategic leadership across two premium, complex markets in Asia. Before this international assignment, Mishra held several senior leadership positions at Diageo India.

Before joining Diageo, Mishra spent 14 years with Pernod Ricard India, where he held a range of leadership roles. Mishra also served as chairman of the Indian Premier League franchise Royal Challengers Bangalore. **-Informist**

Tata Communications, Tata Motors partner to launch 5G-powered Sierra.ev

PTI
NEW DELHI

Tata Communications and Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles on Tuesday announced a collaboration to equip the Sierra.ev with in-built 5G cellular connectivity, a move aimed at accelerating the deployment of Software-Defined Vehicles in India.

Under the partnership, the Tata Communications MOVE Connected Vehicle Platform will be integrated with the car's SDV platform N.IO, with a joint statement noting that the integration will provide seamless connectivity and digital-first in-vehicle experiences.

"As vehicles evolve into intelligent ecosystems that enable a growing range of services and applications, the underlying digital fabric will be central to fostering innovation and scaling new capabilities. This collaboration reflects a shared commitment to shaping a smarter mobility experience that will securely enhance convenience and personalisation," Vivek Manglik, Executive Vice President – Interaction Fabric, Tata Communications, states.

Netweb Technologies raises ₹1,200 cr through QIP

Netweb Technologies India has raised ₹1,200 crore through the qualified institutional placement route, the company states on Tuesday.

Pursuant to the qualified institutional placement, the company allotted 2,505,219 shares with a face value of ₹2 each at an issue price of ₹4,790 per equity share, including a premium of ₹4,788 per equity share. Netweb Technologies India Limited announced the successful completion of its qualified institutions placement, raising an aggregate of approximately ₹1,200 crore.

INDIAN BANK OFFERS 51 PROPERTIES THROUGH ASSET FAIR HELD IN VIRAR

Indian Bank's Mumbai West Zone organised a two-day Asset Fair in Virar West on August 24 and 25, showcasing 51 properties across Maharashtra to prospective buyers and investors. The fair was organised under the leadership and guidance of Rajesh Mundra, Zonal Manager/Deputy General Manager, and inaugurated by Deputy Zonal Manager Praveen Kumar Gurawalia, Assistant General Manager. Of the 51 properties showcased, 38 were under physical possession and 13 under symbolic possession. The properties were primarily located in Virar, Palghar, Boisar and Umrauli, while assets in Pune, Panvel, Badlapur and Wada were also featured.

Sugar prices retreat after govt intervention?

FPJ News Service
MUMBAI

Sugar ex-mill rates retreat 18% as raw sugar imports, stockholding restrictions and anti-hoarding action puncture last week's speculative price surge

Sugar ex-mill values have retreated sharply after government intervention punctured last week's speculative spike, easing immediate pressure across India's physical sweetener market.

Food Secretary Sanjeev Chopra said mill-gate quotations have fallen 18% to ₹55 per kg from a record ₹67, with further correction expected as imports, inventory controls and anti-hoarding enforcement improve near-term supply visibility.

Mill prices retreat

Chopra said the surge was not supported by underlying fundamentals, arguing mills had pushed quotations higher despite adequate domestic availability. Sugar output for the 2025-26 marketing year, running October-September, is now pegged at 306 lakh tonnes, below an earlier estimate of 343 lakh tonnes. Even so, annual consumption is placed at roughly 280-285 lakh tonnes, leaving the balance sheet comparatively comfortable.

National Federation of Cooperative Sugar (Factories) MD Prakash Naiknavare said no state currently has ex-mill quotations above ₹55 per kg. He expects mill-gate rates to soften further as enforcement checks speculative inventory accumulation.

Supply curbs bite

Last week, the Centre authorised imports of 1 million tonnes of raw sugar, imposed stock limits on bulk consumers and instructed states to intensify inspections against hoarding and speculative stocking. Flying squads have subsequently been deployed nationwide, tightening scrutiny across the distribution chain.

The intervention marks a significant shift in trade management. Government policy has historically regulated sugar production, sale, movement and international trade under statutory controls. The Centre had raised customs duty on sugar imports from 50% to 100% from 6 February 2018, underscoring the significance of the latest import opening.

Official records also show sugar remains subject to mill-wise stockholding controls, designed to manage releases and domestic availability.

Retail relief still elusive

Despite the sharp correction in ex-mill quotations, relief has yet to reach consumers. Sugar's all-India average retail price climbed nearly ₹1 to ₹63.97 per kg on Tuesday from ₹63.05 a day earlier, according to the Department of Consumer Affairs' Price Monitoring Division. The latest quotation is 31% above ₹48.81 per kg a month earlier and 38% higher than ₹46.31 a year ago. The maximum retail price stood at ₹76 per kg on Monday, while the modal rate was ₹65.

Wholesale sugar was quoted at ₹59.23 per kg, compared with ₹45.35 a month earlier and ₹43.01 a year ago. The divergence indicates that the 18% retreat in ex-mill prices to ₹55 per kg from last week's record ₹67 has yet to transmit through wholesale and retail distribution channels.

The Centre has allowed imports of 10 lakh tonnes of raw sugar by 31 October, imposed stockholding limits on dealers and bulk consumers, including beverage manufacturers, and had already prohibited exports. .The crucial test now is whether cheaper mill-gate sugar, raw-sugar imports and tighter inventory discipline translate into lower shelf prices. ***(With inputs from official sources and traders)***

India's AI revolution transforms farms, healthcare frontiers

Commodity Desk
MUMBAI

Emerging technologies are strengthening diagnostics, agriculture intelligence and decision-making, while creating affordable, scalable solutions with significant potential across developing economies

India is rapidly emerging as a global artificial-intelligence innovation hub, with scalable AI applications transforming healthcare delivery and agricultural productivity, Gates Foundation chief executive Mark Suzman said on Tuesday.

Speaking to ANI on the sidelines of AVPN Conference 2026 in New Delhi, Suzman said India offers substantial potential to develop, deploy and export technology-led solutions across emerging economies.

AI sharpens healthcare delivery: The foundation is exploring low-cost sensors for monitoring pregnant women and diagnosing tuberculosis, alongside AI-driven clinical decision-support systems capable of delivering diagnostic accuracy comparable with expensive US hospitals.

Machine-learning treatment algorithms are also being developed to equip community health workers with stronger decision-making capabilities when assessing children presenting with fever, potentially improving frontline healthcare outcomes.

Affordability remains crucial for mass deployment. Suzman said the foundation recently worked with an Indian partner to reduce the cost of a tuberculosis diagnostic test to below $2 from around $20 historically.

Agri-tech targets smallholders: Agriculture represents another high-impact AI frontier. Following state-level initiatives, including in Maharashtra, the foundation is working with the Department of Agriculture to scale an interactive platform for smallholder farmers.

The multilingual application integrates advanced weather forecasting, soil-health intelligence and recommendations covering fertilisers and seeds, while connecting cultivators with government assistance, extension services and subsidies.

These data-led capabilities could strengthen input optimisation, farm economics and climate resilience. Suzman said India was leading globally in these applications, creating scalable models that could be replicated across developing markets, particularly African economies.

Founded in 2000 by Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates, the Gates Foundation is among the world's largest private philanthropic organisations.

(With inputs from ANI)

COMMODITY FUTURES

Commodity futures saw selective price action on Tuesday as physical demand supported crude oil and zinc, while bullion, base metals and agricultural contracts lost ground. On the MCX, gold, silver, copper and aluminium weakened as softer offtake prompted exposure cuts, although crude held firm. On the NCDEX, cottonseed oil cake, guar seed, guar gum and coriander declined as comfortable supplies and sluggish procurement weighed. Overseas, weaker New York energy and precious metal benchmarks added further pressure to domestic contracts overall.

Copper eased 30 paise, or 0.02%, to ₹1,392.50 per kilogram for September delivery, with 1,443 lots changing hands as muted domestic consumption restrained pricing. Subdued procurement by consuming industries limited support for the red metal and encouraged exposure cuts. The decline reflected softer downstream requirements, leaving copper dependent on stronger industrial offtake for renewed price traction in subsequent domestic trading sessions ahead as trading progressed.

Aluminium slipped 15 paise, or 0.04%, to ₹344.80 per kilogram for September delivery, with 124 lots changing hands as weaker physical demand prompted position reductions. Softer procurement from consuming industries restricted support for the lightweight metal. Limited downstream offtake kept pricing under pressure, with buyers reluctant to build exposure while demand from industrial users remained subdued across the domestic market during trade as trading progressed.

Zinc advanced ₹1.40, or 0.35%, to ₹404.60 per kilogram for September delivery, with turnover of 247 lots as stronger physical demand encouraged additional exposure. Improved spot offtake provided support for the galvanising metal, helping it outperform other industrial contracts. Firmer procurement from consuming industries strengthened pricing, with domestic demand proving sufficient to absorb available material and underpin zinc through the trading session amid metals activity.

Cottonseed oil cake dropped ₹40, or 1.22%, to ₹3,230 per quintal for September delivery, while open interest stood at 44,790 lots as holders reduced exposure following weakness in the physical market. Subdued demand at prevailing levels accelerated liquidation in the livestock feed ingredient. Softer spot conditions remained the principal drag, with available supplies meeting insufficient buying interest.

Guar seed declined ₹11, or 0.17%, to ₹6,281 per quintal for September delivery, with open interest at 41,210 lots as increasing supplies from producing regions weighed on pricing. Higher arrivals improved availability and reduced procurement urgency in the physical market. Supply growth outweighed immediate demand, keeping the agricultural commodity under pressure as buyers remained adequately covered at prevailing levels during the trading session amid trade.

Guar gum fell ₹20, or 0.16%, to ₹12,150 per quintal for September delivery, with turnover at 58,665 lots as holders offloaded positions alongside weakness in the physical market. Slack spot demand and ample supplies from producing regions pressured the processed guar derivative.

OILSEEDS, OILS & OILMEALS PRICES

OIL SEEDS (₹ per 100 kg)	PRICE (₹)
Groundnut Kernel	₹8,800
Sunflower Seed	₹5,600
Nigerseed	₹12,500
Castorseed Bombay	₹7,155
OILS (₹ per 10 kg)	**PRICE (₹)**
Groundnut Raw	₹1,760
Sunflower Expeller	₹1,690
Sunflower Refined	₹1,760
Cottonseed Refined	₹1,710
Refined Palm Oil	₹1,500
Soyabean Refined	₹1,485
Rapeseed Refined	₹1,780
Rapeseed Expeller	₹1,750
Copra White	₹2,760
Rice Bran	₹1,450
Linseed	₹1,610
Castor Commercial	₹1,461
FSG	₹1,471
FSG Kandla	₹1,451
DEOILED CAKES (OILMEALS) (₹ per metric tonne)	**PRICE (₹)**
Groundnut Extraction 45%	₹33,000
Sunflower Extraction	₹30,000
Soyameal 48%	₹48,522
Castor Extraction	₹10,100

Prices are indicative and subject to change based on market conditions.

India's steel output rises 4% as finished product exports surge

India's steel production complex expanded further in July, with finished steel volumes rising 3.9% year-on-year to 14 million tonnes as upstream output strengthened. Ministry of Steel data showed crude steel production increased nearly 2% to 14.4 million tonnes, while hot metal output climbed 6.3% to 8.4 million tonnes.

Steelmaking volumes expand: During April-July, finished steel production advanced 4.7% to 54.7 million tonnes, crude steel increased 2.4% to 56.2 million tonnes and hot metal rose 2.7% to 31.9 million tonnes. Seven leading steelmakers, operating combined annual crude steel capacity of 117.4 million tonnes, produced 31.3 million tonnes of crude steel, 29.7 million tonnes of hot metal and 29.3 million tonnes of finished products during the period.

Eastern belt dominates: Odisha led crude steelmaking with 11.04 million tonnes, accounting for 19.6% of output. Chhattisgarh followed with 8.23 million tonnes, Jharkhand 6.67 million tonnes, Karnataka 5.82 million tonnes and West Bengal 5.39 million tonnes. Other states contributed 19.04 million tonnes, or 33.9%.

Trade flows accelerate: Alloy steel production surged 22.7% to 982,600 tonnes in July, while imports fell 17.8% and exports increased more than fourfold. Stainless steel presented a contrasting picture: output declined over 9% to 352,600 tonnes, imports soared more than 171% and exports dropped above 7%. Finished steel exports jumped 44% to 699,300 tonnes, while imports increased 9.5% to 702,300 tonnes. China supplied 855,800 tonnes to India, while Vietnam absorbed 354,000 tonnes of Indian finished steel.

Industry outlook: The steel sector's near-term trajectory will hinge on infrastructure spending, construction demand, automotive consumption and movements in raw-material costs.

Competitive pressure from overseas shipments remains another critical variable for domestic realisations and margins. Producers will therefore be watching global steel pricing, trade-policy measures and downstream order books closely as capacity additions reshape the industry's operating environment and profitability outlook ahead.

—Commodity Desk

Fertiliser shares jump on Russian supply assurance

Indian fertiliser shares rallied sharply after Russia assured India of uninterrupted supplies and expressed readiness to increase shipments, strengthening import visibility as geopolitical disruption and elevated global prices threaten procurement security ahead of key agricultural seasons.

At 1246 IST, Fertilizers and Chemicals Travancore soared more than 16%, becoming the Nifty 500's biggest gainer. Paradeep Phosphates, Rashtriya Chemicals and Fertilizers and National Fertilizers advanced 3.9-6.0%.

Russian President Putin said Moscow was prioritising fertilisers alongside energy, nuclear power and high technology in bilateral cooperation with India, while remaining prepared to raise shipments further.

Systematix Shares and Stocks said the assurance could ease availability concerns, particularly for urea, while reducing supply-chain disruption risks for domestic producers.

—Commodity Desk

Marathwada sowing shrinks as rainfall falters

Marathwada's cultivated area has contracted sharply this season as deficient rainfall curbs planting across Maharashtra's key agricultural belt. Sowing stands at 46.19 lakh hectares, 7% below the five-year average of 49.72 lakh hectares and 2 lakh hectares lower than last year.

The eight-district region has received 479.1 mm rainfall against the expected 586.1 mm, leaving a 20.3% deficit. Parbhani faces a 34.7% shortfall, while Latur is 40.6% below normal.

Cash crops have taken the biggest hit. Cotton acreage has fallen by 2.65 lakh hectares to 12.14 lakh hectares, while sugarcane planting has slumped from the 3.24 lakh-hectare average to 43,821 hectares. Farmers are shifting acreage towards alternative crops. Soybean planting has increased 12% to 25.74 lakh hectares, maize has expanded 5% to 2.68 lakh hectares, while sunflower acreage has surged 39% to 2,289 hectares, govt data showed.

—Commodity Desk

Gold extends four-day rally as silver succumbs to profit-taking pressure

Gold extended its domestic advance for a fourth consecutive session on Tuesday, with Delhi bullion rates climbing ₹2,700 to ₹1,67,100 per 10 grams for 99.9% purity, against ₹1,64,400 previously, even as overseas markets softened and derivatives encountered selling pressure.

Silver snapped a three-session rally as profit-taking pulled prices ₹3,500 lower to ₹2,50,000 per kg, inclusive of taxes, from ₹2,53,500, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

Mumbai's closing bullion board showed silver spot at ₹2,41,848 per kg. Standard gold of 99.5% purity settled at ₹1,61,392 per 10 grams, while 99.9% pure gold closed at ₹1,62,041. International bullion surrendered part of its recent advance.

Spot gold, after two sessions of gains, declined $11.87, or 0.26%, to $4,639.51 an ounce. Silver extended losses for a second session, dropping 1.04% to $67.88.Domestic derivatives mirrored the softer global undertone.

MCX October gold slipped ₹120, or 0.07%, to ₹1,63,109 per 10 grams across 1,595 lots as physical demand weakened. New York gold futures eased 0.23% to $4,641.42 an ounce.

MCX September silver fell ₹903, or 0.37%, to ₹2,43,317 per kg, with turnover at 1,702 lots, as positions were unwound. New York silver traded 1.04% lower at $68.22 an ounce. The contrasting moves underline a widening split between India's physical gold market and paper bullion trade, with domestic cash quotations retaining upward momentum while global prices and exchange-traded contracts undergo consolidation.

Silver's reversal further signals profit-taking after its recent run, leaving near-term direction sensitive to international cues, physical offtake and broader speculative positioning trends ahead.

Bullion's medium-term backdrop remains constructive, although volatility should stay elevated.

Gold retains support from investment flows, geopolitical hedging and sustained central-bank accumulation, while high prices may restrain jewellery consumption.

Silver faces sharper swings, but investment demand and a sixth consecutive structural market deficit provide underlying support. Oil, currencies, interest-rate expectations and geopolitical shocks will remain decisive price catalysts globally.

—Commodity Desk

Maharashtra sugar prices slide as bulk demand fades

Ex-mill sugar prices weakened further across key Maharashtra centres as impending inventory restrictions curbed institutional buying, while duty-free raw sugar imports reduced concerns over near-term availability. Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu quotations, however, remained steady.

Maharashtra values dropped ₹200 per 100 kg as bulk purchasers withdrew from aggressive stocking. The government has permitted zero-duty raw sugar imports until end-October and tightened enforcement against hoarding and speculative accumulation.

From 1 September, confectioners, beverage manufacturers, food processors and other institutional users consuming at least 10 tonnes monthly can hold only 15 days of inventory for three months. Authorities will scrutinise mill sales made directly or through dealers.

ISMA has sought a reduction in traders' stockholding ceiling to 200 tonnes from 400 tonnes. Mills have additionally been asked to begin 2026-27 crushing by 15 October, potentially lifting October production to around 1 million tonnes from the usual 400,000 tonnes ahead of November's Diwali demand.

Prices had rallied since July as tightening-stock fears triggered festival-season buying. Deficient rainfall and forecasts of strengthening El Niño conditions during August-September added a weather premium.

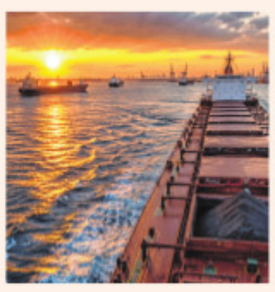
Ex-mill quotations consequently surged to ₹6,000-₹6,400 per 100 kg last week from ₹4,600-₹4,800 in July.Government intervention has since punctured speculative appetite, with traders expecting quotations to stabilise as supply visibility improves.

—Informist

Dry bulk freight rates soar to 3-yr high amid global shipping turmoil

Dry bulk shipping costs climbed about 36% between February and July 2026, reaching their highest level in three years as elevated oil prices, geopolitical disruption and robust commodity demand tightened freight economics, Bank of Baroda Research said.

The Baltic Dry Index advanced roughly 36% during the period encompassing the US-Iran war. Supramax rates recorded the steepest increase, surging around 44%, while Capesize and Panamax indices rose approximately 38% and 22%, respectively. Supramax vessels typically carry grains, coal, fertilisers, cement, clinker, steel products and alumina. Capesize ships principally transport coal and iron ore, while Panamax carriers handle coal and grains. Higher bunker costs and geopolitical tensions lifted operating expenses, while demand for agricultural products, infrastructure materials and electricity-related commodities strengthened cargo flows. Rising freight and input costs have consequently begun feeding into global commodity prices.



Disruption around the Strait of Hormuz and Bab-al-Mandeb forced some vessels towards longer Cape of Good Hope routes. Domestic truck freight also increased, with Delhi-Chennai rates gaining 5.3% and Delhi-Dehradun 15%. International air cargo volumes fell 53% between February and June.

—ANI

Maize prices diverge across key mandis as wheat, rice hold firm

India's grain markets displayed contrasting price action, with maize responding to regional supply conditions while wheat and rice remained steady as participants awaited policy and harvest cues.

Maize in Indore fell ₹25 to ₹2,475 per 100 kg as rising arrivals and elevated moisture levels pressured realisations. Fresh deliveries have started reaching Madhya Pradesh mandis, with volumes expected to increase.

Higher moisture raises storage costs and mould risk, prompting discounts against dry-weight valuations.

Davanagere maize gained ₹50 to ₹2,650 per 100 kg as fresh arrivals remained absent and farmers' inventories tightened. New-crop supplies are expected after two months. Indore wheat held at ₹2,850 per 100 kg, while Kota remained ₹2,520-₹2,540, with arrivals steady at 5,000 bags of 50 kg each.

Vashi wheat stayed at ₹2,900 as the trade awaited government open-market sale dates, potentially around Diwali. Vashi basmati quotations were unchanged.

The 1509 variety stood at ₹8,400-₹8,500 per 100 kg, 1120 at ₹10,000-₹10,200 and 1401 at ₹9,700-₹9,900. The 1401 grade had risen sharply last week amid scarce arrivals. Kharif supplies are expected from mid-September, with sowing trends remaining a key price signal.

—Informist

DII / FPI trading activity

	BUY VALUE	SELL VALUE	NET VALUE
DII	14,280.18	14,049.92	230.26
FII / FPI	13,259.03	11,665.50	1,593.53

All figures in ₹ crores

Surround yourself with capable and trustworthy people.
Warren Buffett

Strong recovery lifts mkts off lows

Motilal Oswal Wealth Management
MUMBAI

Indian equities staged a forceful late-session recovery on Tuesday, reversing early weakness as buying accelerated into the close. The Nifty reclaimed 24,250 and finished near the session's upper band, while the Sensex recovered from around 77,100 to above 77,500. Bank Nifty remained choppy, reflecting persistent resistance at higher levels despite demand emerging on declines.

Nifty reclaims momentum: The Nifty formed a bullish daily candle after absorbing first-hour selling, consolidating around midday and attracting strong final-hour demand. The index must sustain above 24,300 to extend the advance towards 24,450 and 24,550, while support lies at 24,200 and 24,100.

Derivatives positioning shows maximum Call open interest at 24,500 followed by 24,300, while maximum Put open interest sits at 24,200 then 24,000. Call writing emerged at 24,500 and 24,800, with Put writing at 24,200 and 24,100. Options data indicates a broader 23,900-24,700 trading corridor and an immediate 24,100-24,500 band.

The Sensex opened marginally lower and slipped towards 77,100 before staging a V-shaped rebound beyond 77,500 as buyers defended lower levels. Its bullish candle carried a long lower shadow, signalling accumulation on declines. The benchmark also reclaimed its 50-day exponential moving average. Sustaining above 77,600 could open 78,000 and 78,200, whereas supports are placed at 77,400 and 77,200.

Bank Nifty choppy: Bank Nifty opened slightly lower, recovered quickly towards 57,650, then surrendered ground towards 57,250. A small bullish candle with extended upper and lower shadows highlighted demand at lower levels but weak follow-through overhead. Holding above 57,500 is required for 57,750 and 58,000; failure could expose 57,250 and 57,000.

Nifty futures settled 0.51% higher at 24,333. Positive setups were visible in Paytm, Idea, Laurus Labs, HDFC AMC, Mazdock, AU Bank, Divis Labs, Apollo Hospitals, TVS Motors and Lodha. Federal Bank, Motherson, Hind Zinc, RVNL, Coal India, Dabur, Crompton, Force Motors, ONGC and Wipro showed weakness.

The closing recovery strengthens near-term market structure, but confirmation depends on follow-through above immediate resistance. Derivatives concentration around 24,500 could cap upside unless fresh buying absorbs Call supply. Conversely, sustained defence of 24,200 would preserve the recovery framework and keep higher targets active. Bank Nifty's inability to retain intraday gains remains a key constraint, making 57,500 the pivotal trigger for broader financial-sector participation.

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Wall Street rebounds as tech reclaims leadership

Wall Street pushed higher on Tuesday as technology shares recovered from their recent sell-off, putting the Nasdaq Composite at the forefront of the advance.

Softer oil and Treasury yields improved risk appetite after the bond-market rout had tightened financial conditions and pressured equity valuations. The rebound offered some relief before September, historically a weaker month for US stocks.

Rates risks recede: The macro backdrop became less hostile as borrowing costs retreated and Washington's Iran measures proved less severe than investors feared. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent's promised "economic D-Day" stopped short of directly penalising China, Iran's biggest oil buyer, reducing immediate escalation risk between the world's two largest economies.

Stanley Druckenmiller criticised Bessent's intervention aimed at lowering borrowing costs. Trade friction nevertheless intensified after Ottawa announced 15%-50% tariffs on roughly $20 billion of American steel, dairy, appliances and farm equipment. Investors are additionally assessing which global bank could face new US sanctions. Bitcoin briefly breached $80,000 for the first time since May as efforts to suppress longer-dated yields revived the "dollar debasement trade".

Nvidia faces reckoning: Attention now pivots decisively towards Nvidia's Wednesday results, which represent the next valuation test for the AI-driven rally. With expectations elevated, merely delivering another powerful quarter may prove insufficient. Investors are seeking fresh evidence that growth can justify stretched semiconductor multiples.

Signs that Rubin chips are ramping ahead of schedule or that Chinese demand is returning could refresh the investment narrative. Conversely, slowing growth or cautious guidance risks reigniting concerns over AI spending durability and triggering renewed pressure across richly valued technology shares.

—**Business Desk**

Stock Ideas

DIVIS LAB

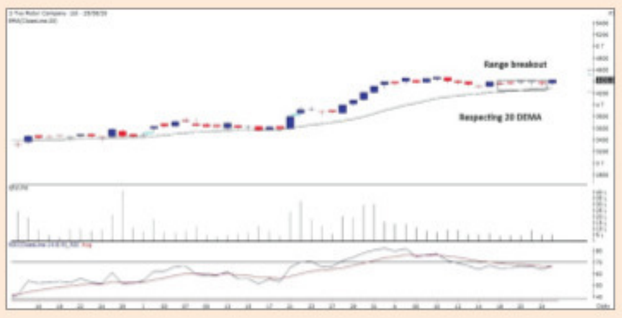
Divis Labs remains firmly entrenched in an established uptrend, decisively outperforming the broader market after breaking into fresh all-time-high territory above the 8,600 zone. The move also clears an eight-to-ten-session consolidation range on noticeable volumes, signalling robust participation. A bullish Marubozu reinforces buying conviction, while sustained strength across the pharmaceutical pack provides an additional sector tailwind for further upside.

Buy	
CMP	8,744
SL	8,480
TRGT	9,250

TVS MOTORS

TVS Motors has delivered a decisive breakout from its tight seven-to-eight-session consolidation following the preceding sharp advance. The strong bullish candle signals renewed buying conviction, while the counter continues to respect its 20-day exponential moving average as the price base shifts progressively higher. RSI is approaching a bullish crossover, while sustained trade above 4,480 could accelerate the next leg of the advance.

Buy	
CMP	4,420
SL	4,320
TRGT	4,600



52-week high

Company Name	25/8/2026	52-week High	52-week Low	Change Rs	Chg (%)
Keltech Energies	14740.00	14800.00	2900.00	11900.00	410.34
Bajaj Auto	11924.00	11924.00	8490.10	3433.90	40.45
Divi's Lab.	8680.00	8680.00	5637.50	3042.50	53.97
SPR Auto Technologies	4638.85	4808.85	2452.05	2356.80	96.12
Welspun Corp	2347.80	2430.45	709.75	1720.70	242.44
Technocraf.Inds.	3421.35	3567.05	1870.00	1697.05	90.75
Siemens	4090.00	4149.40	2827.00	1322.40	46.78
Danlaw Tech.	1610.75	1610.75	428.00	1182.75	276.34
Afcom Holdings	1609.00	1637.00	637.85	999.15	156.64
P. H. Capital	1090.00	1103.00	165.05	937.95	568.28
Mahamaya Steel	1215.00	1220.10	331.20	888.90	268.39
Super Sales Ind.	1229.50	1298.50	530.00	768.50	145.00
One 97	1710.00	1713.90	947.10	766.80	80.96
Zelio E-Mobility	900.60	900.60	154.90	745.70	481.41
Entero Healthcar	1631.75	1666.40	944.00	722.40	76.53
Ipca Labs.	1940.30	1958.00	1252.95	705.05	56.27
CFF Fluid	1040.00	1073.00	445.00	628.00	141.12
Shilpa Medicare	864.00	868.10	260.00	608.10	233.88
SG Mart	835.00	846.45	313.30	533.15	170.17
Cyient DLM	771.00	777.40	264.95	512.45	193.41
Pitti Engg.	1122.30	1149.85	677.20	472.65	69.79
Sancode Tech.	556.05	556.05	89.35	466.70	522.33
AU Small Finance	1125.35	1143.90	682.50	461.40	67.60
Uniparts India	828.00	844.10	391.20	452.90	115.77
Apollo Pipes	663.75	670.10	252.80	417.30	165.07
Dhoot Transmission	1521.40	1541.00	1130.50	410.50	36.31
Yatharth Hospit.	924.70	938.00	538.15	399.85	74.30
Timex Group	616.85	624.15	237.20	386.95	163.13
PVR Inox	1230.90	1283.00	900.05	382.95	42.55
Akums Drugs	745.20	783.80	410.10	373.70	91.12
Beezaasan Exp.	540.85	540.85	177.05	363.80	205.48
GSP Crop Science	623.65	666.00	327.35	338.65	103.45
Nitin Spinners	622.55	626.85	300.00	326.85	108.95
Molbio Diagnosti	1229.40	1250.00	925.80	324.20	35.02
Rapicut Carbides	369.45	369.45	66.66	302.79	454.23
Modison	412.00	416.90	114.45	302.45	264.26
Millworks Technologies	886.00	919.95	628.90	291.05	46.28
Welspun Enterp	656.75	670.00	391.20	278.80	71.27
Shree Refrigerat	421.00	423.95	161.00	262.95	163.32
Max Estates	555.85	561.55	305.55	256.00	83.78
Purple Wave Info	343.95	343.95	95.10	248.85	261.67
Keto Motors	333.70	333.70	104.99	228.71	217.84
L. T. Elevator	353.85	353.85	125.33	228.52	182.33
Somany Ceramics	541.45	559.20	332.00	227.20	68.43

Top gainers (value)

Company Name	24/8/2026	25/8/2026	Chg in ₹	% Chg
Dixon Technolog.	14540.05	14990.00	449.95	3.09
Shree Cement	24085.00	24480.00	395.00	1.64
Bosch	47986.40	48317.55	331.15	0.69
Solar Industries	19621.45	19930.00	308.55	1.57
Apar Inds.	16704.85	17002.40	297.55	1.78
JSW Holdings	11179.10	11426.00	246.90	2.21
Bajaj Holdings	11082.05	11290.00	207.95	1.88
Divi's Lab.	8500.00	8680.00	180.00	2.12
Apollo Hospitals	8700.00	8878.00	178.00	2.05
Oracle Fin.Serv.	11521.00	11690.00	169.00	1.47
Bajaj Auto	11772.20	11924.00	151.80	1.29
A B B	7502.00	7650.00	148.00	1.97
Acutaas Chemical	3174.55	3302.00	127.45	4.01
Adani Enterp.	2980.00	3106.50	126.50	4.24
Interglobe Aviat	5115.00	5220.00	105.00	2.05
Abbott India	26415.85	26515.00	99.15	0.38
Kaynes Tech	3842.00	3934.00	92.00	2.39
One 97	1619.15	1710.00	90.85	5.61
Atul	6427.10	6502.00	74.90	1.17
HDFC AMC	2615.00	2687.00	72.00	2.75
Cyient	908.60	979.60	71.00	7.81
Laurus Labs	1796.25	1865.00	68.75	3.83
KEI Industries	5482.00	5550.10	68.10	1.24
Page Industries	35475.15	35540.00	64.85	0.18
Mazagon Dock	2538.00	2602.00	64.00	2.52
eClerx Services	1823.55	1886.00	62.45	3.42
ICICI AMC	3229.35	3290.10	60.75	1.88
Torrent Pharma.	4860.85	4920.00	59.15	1.22
Maruti Suzuki	13594.00	13650.00	56.00	0.41
Britannia Inds.	5306.00	5361.40	55.40	1.04
Cummins India	5175.00	5230.00	55.00	1.06
Gillette India	7409.00	7460.00	51.00	0.69
Timken India	3080.80	3130.55	49.75	1.61
Glaxosmi. Pharma	2930.50	2980.05	49.55	1.69
Titan Company	5065.55	5115.00	49.45	0.98
Adani Energy Sol	1543.85	1590.00	46.15	2.99
Bayer Crop Sci.	4046.95	4091.00	44.05	1.09
TVS Motor Co.	4365.95	4401.25	35.30	0.81
Radico Khaitan	4605.50	4640.15	34.65	0.75
Godrej Agrovet	574.85	609.10	34.25	5.96
CRISIL	4471.00	4503.05	32.05	0.72
Trent	2897.00	2929.00	32.00	1.10
Narayana Hru-	1860.95	1892.75	31.80	1.71
Gland Pharma	2801.75	2833.25	31.50	1.12
Larsen & Toubro	4085.30	4116.40	31.10	0.76

Top losers (value)

Company Name	24/8/2026	25/8/2026	Chg in ₹	% Chg
MRF	134277.30	132440.00	-1837.30	-1.37
Hitachi Energy	33867.50	33390.00	-477.50	-1.41
PTC Industries	21654.75	21197.95	-456.80	-2.11
3M India	33862.25	33635.00	-227.25	-0.67
Craftsman Auto	10596.30	10372.05	-224.25	-2.12
Data Pattern	4737.70	4540.15	-197.55	-4.17
Netweb Technol.	5457.60	5275.40	-182.20	-3.34
Force Motors	17613.00	17431.00	-182.00	-1.03
TVS Holdings	13698.80	13605.55	-93.25	-0.68
Siemens Ener.Ind	3485.60	3393.10	-92.50	-2.65
Hero Motocorp	5680.00	5595.35	-84.65	-1.49
Persistent Systems	5700.00	5629.95	-70.05	-1.23
Welspun Corp	2409.00	2347.80	-61.20	-2.54
Honeywell Auto	36653.30	36600.00	-53.30	-0.15
Linde India	6536.20	6484.70	-51.50	-0.79
Grindwell Norton	2055.45	2006.50	-48.95	-2.38
ZF Commercial	2649.90	2601.90	-48.00	-1.81
Blue Dart Expres	5047.80	5005.00	-42.80	-0.85
Dalmia BharatLtd	1851.60	1810.00	-41.60	-2.25
Hindustan Copper	573.55	533.20	-40.35	-7.04
Kirloskar Oil	2067.25	2030.00	-37.25	-1.80
Aether Industri.	1667.50	1631.10	-36.40	-2.18
Affle 3i	1745.10	1708.70	-36.40	-2.09
P & G Hygiene	8125.25	8089.00	-36.25	-0.45
IIFL Finance	696.55	665.50	-31.05	-4.46
Tata Elxsi	3679.95	3649.00	-30.95	-0.84
CEAT	3564.90	3534.00	-30.90	-0.87
Gujarat Fluoroch	4620.30	4591.10	-29.20	-0.63
Finolex Cables	1289.30	1260.30	-29.00	-2.25
Avenue Super.	3938.00	3911.05	-26.95	-0.68
Balrampur Chini	693.50	667.85	-25.65	-3.70
AAVAS Financiers	1337.20	1312.00	-25.20	-1.88
CreditAcc. Gram.	1440.80	1415.80	-25.00	-1.74
Zen Technologies	1903.00	1878.05	-24.95	-1.31
Mahanagar Gas	1126.25	1101.75	-24.50	-2.18
Caplin Point Lab	2496.45	2474.00	-22.45	-0.90
L&T Technology	3584.60	3564.15	-20.45	-0.57
Aegis Logistics	1342.20	1322.05	-20.15	-1.50
Action Const.Eq.	1166.20	1146.65	-19.55	-1.68
Godrej Industrie	1182.95	1164.00	-18.95	-1.60
Schaeffler India	4018.70	4000.00	-18.70	-0.47
J K Cements	5218.55	5199.90	-18.65	-0.36
Supreme Inds.	3618.00	3600.00	-18.00	-0.50
Nippon Life Ind.	1247.40	1229.40	-18.00	-1.44
Kirl. Brothers	1921.80	1904.80	-17.00	-0.88

52-week low

Company Name	25/8/2026	52-week High	52-week Low	Change Rs	Chg (%)
P & G Hygiene	8089.00	14493.15	8087.00	-6406.15	-44.20
City Pulse Multi	181.10	3289.95	181.10	-3108.85	-94.50
Astrazeneca Phar	7146.00	9850.00	7120.00	-2730.00	-27.72
Indian Link Ch.	442.10	2640.75	400.00	-2240.75	-84.85
National Standar	115.75	2338.00	115.75	-2222.25	-95.05
Bayer Crop Sci.	4091.00	5576.45	4028.90	-1547.55	-27.75
P I Industries	2480.00	3916.00	2455.00	-1461.00	-37.31
Waterways Leisur	104.30	1053.00	101.30	-951.70	-90.38
Indosolar	275.10	725.00	273.85	-451.15	-62.23
JK Lakshmi Cem.	542.30	990.85	540.45	-450.40	-45.46
Indo Thai Sec.	53.90	470.00	53.90	-416.10	-88.53
Elitecon Inter.	13.76	422.65	13.73	-408.92	-96.75
Nitin Castings	270.75	659.00	260.00	-399.00	-60.55
Symphony	596.05	972.20	593.00	-379.20	-39.00
Repro India	311.75	596.00	307.35	-288.65	-48.43
Brainbees Solut.	192.05	438.70	191.90	-246.80	-56.26
Innovision	257.60	468.60	257.00	-211.60	-45.16
Gujarat Energy	257.00	451.55	255.00	-196.55	-43.53
Sun TV Network	468.90	660.00	465.85	-194.15	-29.42
Dabur India	394.90	576.80	392.25	-184.55	-32.00
Rail Vikas	218.40	400.90	217.10	-183.80	-45.85
Vesuvius India	429.10	608.45	426.65	-181.80	-29.88
Greenpanel Inds.	156.85	333.35	155.70	-177.65	-53.29
Yajur Fibres	34.45	139.20	32.01	-107.19	-77.00
Behari Lal Engg.	451.45	547.90	441.65	-106.25	-19.39
SBI Funds Mgt.	548.70	625.00	536.50	-88.50	-14.16
West Leisure	68.88	156.70	68.88	-87.82	-56.04
Misquita Engg.	55.84	142.00	55.84	-86.16	-60.68
A B Lifestyle	85.39	151.20	84.96	-66.24	-43.81
Sofcom Systems	16.98	82.45	16.47	-65.98	-80.02
NMS Global	40.50	103.94	37.98	-65.96	-63.46
N G Industries	115.00	162.00	110.20	-51.80	-31.98
Shri Gang Indus	60.19	109.00	59.80	-49.20	-45.14
Aditya Bir. Fas.	54.50	94.95	53.57	-41.38	-43.58

Top gainers (%)

Company Name	24/8/2026	25/8/2026	% Chg
Vodafone Idea	14.06	15.18	7.97
Cyient	908.60	979.60	7.81
Paradeep Phosph.	149.45	159.60	6.79
Godrej Agrovet	574.85	609.10	5.96
One 97	1619.15	1710.00	5.61
Angel One	286.05	300.30	4.98
R C F	119.05	124.40	4.49
City Union Bank	212.30	221.40	4.29
Adani Enterp.	2980.00	3106.50	4.24
Indian Renewable	115.25	120.00	4.12
Acutaas Chemical	3174.55	3302.00	4.01
Pine Labs	157.45	163.75	4.00
Allied Blenders	610.00	633.90	3.92
Laurus Labs	1796.25	1865.00	3.83
Billionbrains	196.30	203.05	3.44
eClerx Services	1823.55	1886.00	3.42
AWL Agri Busine.	193.95	200.55	3.40
LIC Housing Fin.	490.00	506.00	3.27
Dixon Technolog.	14540.05	14990.00	3.09
Adani Energy Sol	1543.85	1590.00	2.99
Chalet Hotels	870.05	895.00	2.87
Authum Invest	554.40	570.00	2.81
HDFC AMC	2615.00	2687.00	2.75
Capri Global	233.45	239.85	2.74
Max Healthcare	988.10	1015.00	2.72
S A I L	179.35	184.20	2.70
Zydus Wellness	510.85	524.65	2.70
Afcons Infrastr.	278.50	285.95	2.68
Zydus Lifesci.	1101.00	1130.00	2.63
Indus Towers	376.20	386.00	2.60
Varun Beverages	427.00	438.00	2.58
Mazagon Dock	2538.00	2602.00	2.52
Kaynes Tech	3842.00	3934.00	2.39
Emmvee Photovol.	325.15	332.85	2.37
UPL	571.00	584.00	2.28
J & K Bank	146.25	149.55	2.26
JSW Holdings	11179.10	11426.00	2.21
Divi's Lab.	8500.00	8680.00	2.12
T R I L	302.20	308.50	2.08
Lodha Developers	1255.00	1281.00	2.07
Interglobe Aviat	5115.00	5220.00	2.05
Apollo Hospitals	8700.00	8878.00	2.05
Union Bank (I)	182.85	186.50	2.00
A B B	7502.00	7650.00	1.97
B P C L	311.85	318.00	1.97

Top losers (%)

Company Name	24/8/2026	25/8/2026	% Chg
Hindustan Copper	573.55	533.20	-7.04
IIFL Finance	696.55	665.50	-4.46
Data Pattern	4737.70	4540.15	-4.17
Balrampur Chini	693.50	667.85	-3.70
Redington	365.05	352.30	-3.49
Netweb Technol.	5457.60	5275.40	-3.34
ACME Solar Hold.	409.25	397.00	-2.99
Federal Bank	357.90	347.30	-2.96
Ola Electric	37.35	36.27	-2.89
Sonata Software	307.35	298.60	-2.85
Birlasoft Ltd	299.20	291.25	-2.66
Siemens Ener.Ind	3485.60	3393.10	-2.65
Welspun Corp	2409.00	2347.80	-2.54
Elecon Engg.Co	438.55	427.50	-2.52
Prime Focus	307.65	300.00	-2.49
Motherson Wiring	37.75	36.82	-2.46
Grindwell Norton	2055.45	2006.50	-2.38
Graphite India	718.55	702.20	-2.28
Elgi Equipments	622.20	608.20	-2.25
Finolex Cables	1289.30	1260.30	-2.25
Dalmia BharatLtd	1851.60	1810.00	-2.25
Aether Industri.	1667.50	1631.10	-2.18
Mahanagar Gas	1126.25	1101.75	-2.18
JK Lakshmi Cem.	554.30	542.30	-2.16
Hindustan Zinc	604.80	591.80	-2.15
Craftsman Auto	10596.30	10372.05	-2.12
PTC Industries	21654.75	21197.95	-2.11
Affle 3i	1745.10	1708.70	-2.09
JBM Auto	660.55	647.00	-2.05
Tenneco Clean	555.70	544.50	-2.02
Finolex Inds.	165.50	162.20	-1.99
Natco Pharma	883.45	866.45	-1.92
AAVAS Financiers	1337.20	1312.00	-1.88
Minda Corp	719.90	706.85	-1.81
ZF Commercial	2649.90	2601.90	-1.81
Kirloskar Oil	2067.25	2030.00	-1.80
Engineers India	254.85	250.35	-1.77
EID Parry	824.30	809.85	-1.75
CreditAcc. Gram.	1440.80	1415.80	-1.74
L T Foods	458.80	451.00	-1.70
Natl. Aluminium	402.75	395.95	-1.69
Action Const.Eq.	1166.20	1146.65	-1.68
Reliance Power	23.10	22.72	-1.65
Swan Corp	303.45	298.50	-1.63

Upwardly & Downwardly Cos

Company Name	18/8/2026	25/8/2026	Days	Gain/ Loss %	Per Day Averge
Sapphire Foods	232.70	249.90	5	7.39	3.44
Chalet Hotels	836.05	895.00	5	7.05	11.79
Jindal Steel	1102.00	1153.00	5	4.63	10.20
IRB Infra.Devl.	19.03	18.81	5	-1.16	-0.04
Chambal Fert.	434.45	426.85	5	-1.75	-1.52
Waaree Energies	2708.75	2659.90	5	-1.80	-9.77

Note: 52-week high–low data apply to all BSE-listed firms; other tables cover the BSE 500. Source: Capital Market

Sugar prices hit highs as ethanol diversion deepens supply squeeze

India's sugar market is entering a pronounced supply squeeze, with retail prices at record levels before festive consumption reaches its seasonal peak. Thinner carryover inventories, weather-related cane concerns and rising feedstock diversion towards ethanol have tightened availability, raising the prospect of duty-free imports and sharpening the food-versus-fuel debate surrounding E20.

Consumer prices accelerate

Consumer Affairs Department data showed the all-India average retail sugar price at ₹52.3 /kg on Aug 18. Punjab touched ₹65, while Mumbai and Bhopal recorded ₹58-63. Kolhapur's wholesale market climbed about 20% from early August to a record ₹5,350/100 kg. Authorities are considering removing the 100% import duty and permitting limited duty-free purchases, potentially India's first such intervention in nearly a decade.Festive demand between August and November typically strengthens as households, biscuit manufacturers and confectionery companies increase procurement around Ganesh Chaturthi, Dussehra and Diwali.

Ethanol diversion intensifies

The tightening sugar balance coincides with greater cane allocation towards ethanol under India's E20 blending programme. All India Distillers Association data showed annual ethanol production capacity across 499 sites had reached about 18.22 billion litres by mid-2025. Sugarcane accounts for 30-35% of ethanol feedstock, with corn and rice supplying the remainder.

Chief Economic Adviser V Anantha Nageswaran wrote on August 17 that India should pause at E20 before proceeding further, pending an assessment of the food-versus-fuel trade-off.

Inventories remain vulnerable

Industry estimates place 2026-27 opening stocks at 4.0-4.2 mn tonnes, while researchers project 3.2-3.5 mn tonnes, both below domestic requirements of roughly 5 mn tonnes. For 2025-26, total availability is around 32.0 mn tonnes against consumption of 28.5 mn tonnes. After exports of approximately 0.7 mn tonnes, closing inventory could shrink to about 3.5 mn tonnes. The government has consequently halved dealers' stockholding limit from 30 days to 15 days between September 1 and November 30 for those handling more than 10 metric tonnes monthly. A decision on reducing ethanol diversion for the October season could emerge by end-September. Patchy rainfall and dry weather affecting the 2026-27 cane crop compound supply risks. For investors, import policy, ethanol allocation and sugar realisations remain crucial earnings and valuation triggers for mills and distilleries.

The above report is for educational and informational purposes only and does not constitute investment advice or a recommendation to buy or sell any securities. Investments in the securities market are subject to market risks. Read all related documents carefully before investing.

corporate gallery

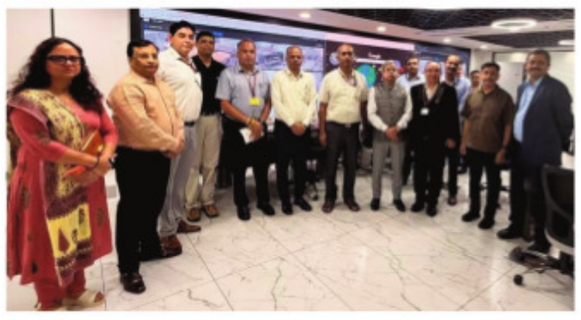
Sleeply Enters Mattress Industry backed by 36 years of expertise by Aadi Foam

Aadi Foam has announced the launch of Sleeply, its new mattress brand, marking the company's entry into India's evolving sleep and mattress market. Backed by over 36 years of experience in foam industry. Sleeply brings together Aadi Group's legacy of quality and consistency with a new-generation approach to comfort, innovation and the evolving needs of Indian consumers.
Sleeply has been created with a clear vision: To make better sleep a more accessible and meaningful part of everyday life. The brand aims to go beyond the conventional mattress proposition by focusing on comfort, support, thoughtful design and sleep innovation. One of the key innovations associated with Sleeply is S5 Adaptive Zones™, a proprietary five-zone sleep support system developed to provide differentiated support across key areas of the body. The technology reflects. Sleeply's focus on developing solutions that respond more thoughtfully to individual sleep and comfort needs. S5 Adaptive Zones™ is featured in selected mattresses within the Sleeply portfolio.

SAMIL Freedom Auction 2026 Facilitates ₹130 Crore+ in Transactions

Shriram Automall India Limited (SAMIL) brought its nationwide auction network together for the SAMIL Freedom Auction 2026, conducting 135+ simultaneous auctions across the country in a single day.
The nationwide event saw 13,300+ assets listed and attracted 20,000+ customer footfall. By the time the auctions concluded, 3,400+ assets had been sold, facilitating transactions worth ₹130 crore+. The event connected institutional sellers with buyers across 500+ cities, showcasing the scale and reach of SAMIL's integrated physical, phygital and digital auction ecosystem.
Themed "Freedom Finds Its Next Owner" in a nod to Independence Day, the event was built around a simple idea: every pre-owned vehicle, piece of equipment or asset carries the potential for a second life, and someone, somewhere, is looking for exactly that. This idea underpins SAMIL's role in vehicle remarketing, asset resale and enabling circular-economy outcomes across India's organised used-vehicle and used-equipment marketplace.
The auction featured a diverse range of assets, including pre-owned cars, commercial vehicles, two-wheelers, construction equipment, farm equipment, industrial equipment and luxury vehicles.

Chairman of the Rly Board Reviews IRCTC War Room



Chairman and Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Railway Board (Ministry of Railways), Satish Kumar reviewed the functioning of the IRCTC War Room at the IRCTC office yesterday, with a focus on strengthening the systems for passenger feedback, kitchen monitoring and quality assurance in catering services. During the review, the Chairman of the Railway Board (CRB) interacted with the dedicated team for monitoring and feedback-related activities. He emphasized on strengthening the existing systems to make monitoring more responsive, technology-driven and outcome-oriented. Satish Kumar directed that the Rail Madad interface should be further automated to enable passengers to communicate with the concerned system in a simple and convenient manner through a single click. Closer monitoring of Rail Madad complaints was also emphasized, including direct interaction with passengers wherever required, so that passenger concerns can be understood and resolved more effectively.

Healthcare and MedTech emerge as high-potential thrust Areas for India–Russia Trade

"Healthcare and medical technology offer significant opportunities to expand trade and business collaboration between India and Russia. After establishing its global leadership in IT, India has also emerged as the 'Pharmacy of the World' and is today the world's 3rd largest producer of pharmaceuticals by volume. With pharmaceutical exports exceeding USD 30 billion annually and the medical devices sector expanding rapidly, there is considerable scope for Indian MSMEs and Russian enterprises to collaborate in pharmaceuticals, medical devices, healthcare technologies, joint manufacturing, technology transfer, exports and re-exports to third-country markets," said Dr. Vijay Kalantri, President, All India Association of Industries and Chairman, MVIRDC World Trade Center Mumbai at an interactive business meeting with a delegation from St. Petersburg, Russia, hosted by All India Association of Industries (AIAI) in association with MVIRDC World Trade Center Mumbai. The visiting delegation represented companies from the healthcare, medical devices and MedTech sectors.

whispersinthecorridors

Dr Suresh Mehrotra

Another Secretary-level reshuffle likely

Following Prime Minister Narendra Modi's deliberations with Secretaries, another Secretary-level reshuffle in the Government of India is believed to be on the cards.

Why are IFS officers getting SIR notices?

Ramesh Chander, a 75-year-old retired Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer and former ambassador, has been served a notice by the Jalandhar Special Summary Revision (SIR) authorities in Punjab, asking him to furnish documents proving his Indian citizenship. Chander represented India in diplomatic missions across Asia, Africa and Europe, including key postings in Belarus, Japan, Prague and Edinburgh, and has been a registered voter in Jalandhar for many years. He is the second former diplomat to receive such a notice. The issuance of such notices highlights administrative challenges during large-scale voter-list verification exercises. Extended overseas postings of diplomats can lead to gaps in local residency records, municipal registries or electoral rolls.

UP, Punjab representation may rise in Cabinet reshuffle

Insiders say the number of ministers from Uttar Pradesh and Punjab in the Union Council of Ministers could increase in the expected Modi Cabinet reshuffle, keeping in view the upcoming Vidhan Sabha elections.

West Bengal Chief Secretary to get another extension?

The second extension granted to Assam Chief Secretary Ravi Kota has fuelled speculation about a second six-month extension for West Bengal Chief Secretary Manoj Agrawal in January next year. He is a 1990-batch IAS officer of the West Bengal cadre.

Who will be the next DG of RPF?

RPF leadership remains a watch point as Sonali Mishra, IPS, is the incumbent DG, RPF. Appointed in 2025, her tenure is scheduled to continue until her superannuation on October 31, 2026. Who will be the next DG, RPF?

Adviser of an Authority asked to exit?

A former Member (Operations), currently serving as Chief Adviser of an Authority, is believed to have been asked to resign two months before his scheduled one-year term ends. His resignation is expected to take effect on August 31, 2026. Who is the official?

Extension likely for Ravi Arora

Joint Secretary Housing Ravi Arora is likely to get a six-month extension in his central deputation tenure.

Did Nitin Gadkari write to PM Modi over BJP IT cell attacks on E20?

Political reports suggest Union Minister Nitin Gadkari wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, raising concerns over coordinated online attacks related to the E20 fuel transition. Speculative reports claim Gadkari alleged that party-affiliated IT cell handles were amplifying public discontent and running campaigns against the nationwide rollout of 20% ethanol-blended petrol. The minister reportedly expressed frustration over being individually targeted for a collective Cabinet decision, emphasising that ethanol blending falls under the Petroleum Ministry's purview rather than his transport portfolio. If true, the reported correspondence points to differences within the ruling party over the ambitious green energy initiative.

Pre-BRICS Summit push: Doval, Jaishankar take lead with Beijing, Moscow visits

India is stepping up its diplomatic engagement ahead of the BRICS Summit in New Delhi. National Security Advisor Ajit Doval's visit to Beijing for boundary talks with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi is aimed at stabilising relations along the Line of Actual Control and preparing the ground for President Xi Jinping's participation. Meanwhile, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar's visit to Moscow is focused on strengthening energy, trade and strategic ties with Russia and securing President Vladimir Putin's participation. The two visits underline New Delhi's pragmatic foreign policy approach. By sending its key foreign policy officials to Beijing and Moscow, India is seeking to address sensitive border issues while maintaining crucial strategic partnerships. The outcome of Doval and Jaishankar's visits could influence the momentum of the summit. The presence of both Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin in New Delhi would be a significant diplomatic achievement for India.

Govt promotes nine IRS officers as Chief Commissioner/DG of Customs and Indirect Taxes

The government on Monday promoted nine IRS officers of Customs and Indirect Taxes to the rank of Chief Commissioner/Director General of Customs and Indirect Taxes, with effect from the date they assume charge. The officers promoted are Satyajit Singh (C & IT, 1993 Batch), Ved Prakash Shukla (IRS-C & IT, 1993), N. Sridhar (IRS-C & IT, 1993), Jaideep P. (IRS C & IT, 1993), Gurusharan Singh (IRS-C & IT, 1993), Vidhyadhar Namdeorao Thete (IRS-C & IT, 1993), Kiran Verma (IRS C & IT, 1993), Arvinder Singh Ranga (IRS C & IT, 1993) and K. S. Ravichandran (IRS C & IT, 1992).

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7th High-Level Meeting Between Indian Coast Guard And Vietnam Coast Guard

The 7th High-Level Meeting (HLM) between the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) and Vietnam Coast Guard (VCG) was held at Chennai under the framework of the 2015 Memorandum of Understanding on Coast Guard Cooperation.
The meeting was co-chaired by Director General Paramesh Sivamani, AVSM, PTM, TM, Director General, ICG, and Major General Luong Dinh Hung, Vice Commandant, VCG. The discussions focused on strengthening bilateral cooperation in key areas including Maritime Search and Rescue (SAR), Maritime Law Enforcement, Marine Pollution Response and capacity building. Both sides reviewed ongoing bilateral engagements, including professional exchanges, ship visits, and reaffirmed their commitment to enhancing cooperation and interoperability. The two Coast Guards emphasised the importance of regular institutional interactions, training programmes, professional exchanges, sharing of best practices and ship visits in further strengthening mutual trust, coordination and operational cooperation.
The HLM reaffirmed the shared commitment of India and Vietnam to work together in the spirit of friendship and cooperation towards promoting maritime safety, security and environmental sustainability in the region.
The India–Vietnam Coast Guard Joint Exercise, SAHYOG–HOPTAC, as part of the ongoing bilateral engagement, is scheduled to be conducted at sea on 27 August 2026. The exercise will provide an opportunity for both Coast Guards to enhance operational coordination and exchange best practices.

Adani Foundation Contributes ₹15 Crore to Strengthen Mumbai Police Fleet

(LtoR) Pranav Adani , Director, Adani Enterprises Ltd; Deven Bharti (IPS), Commissioner of Police, Greater Mumbai; Mr Mohd Suvez Haque, IPS, Jt CP Admin Mumbai Police

Demonstrating its commitment to public safety and community welfare, the Adani Foundation has contributed ₹15 crore towards the induction of 100 new vehicles into the Mumbai Police fleet, enhancing the force's mobility and operational capabilities across the city. The Mumbai Police Foundation expressed its gratitude to the Adani Foundation for its support towards the welfare of Mumbai Police personnel and for strengthening infrastructure essential for the safety and security of Mumbai and its citizens. As part of the initiative, Pranav Adani, Director, Adani Enterprises, visited the Mumbai Police Headquarters. In a message shared on social media, Adani paid tribute to the dedication of Mumbai
Police personnel who work tirelessly round the clock to keep the city safe.
"A heartfelt salute to the brave women and men in khaki who work tirelessly, round the clock, to keep Mumbai safe for everyone. We are proud to contribute towards strengthening the Mumbai Police fleet and supporting the heroes who protect this city that never sleeps," said Pranav Adani.
The contribution reflects Adani Foundation's continued commitment to supporting initiatives that strengthen communities and contribute to the well-being and safety of citizens.

NBCC organises 20th edition of SAMVAAD

NBCC (India) Limited successfully organised the 20th edition of SAMVAAD at the Convention Centre, East Kidwai Nagar, New Delhi. The two-day programme included discussions on project execution, business development, financial performance, technology adoption, human resources management and organisational growth. The programme was attended by Dr. K. P. Mahadevaswamy, Chairman & Managing Director, NBCC, Dr. Suman Kumar, Director (Commercial), Anjeev Kumar Jain, Director (Finance), Smt. Ritu Pande, Chief Vigilance Officer (CVO), senior management, RBG/SBG Heads, project heads, and employees. The first day featured a presentation on "Cyber Hygiene" by Anish Prashad, IPS officer of the 2003 batch from the Tripura cadre, focusing on cyber security awareness, responsible digital practices and, digital fraud prevention. This was followed by a presentation by Kapil Deo Narayan, Chief Technical Examiner (CTE), Central Vigilance Commission (CVC), providing insights into technical examination, vigilance, quality-related aspects of major government construction projects, and various aspects of efficient contract management. The sessions were a part of 3 month campaign as a prelude to the Vigilance Awareness Week, with the theme "सत्यनिष्ठा से समृद्धि" – "Probity for Prosperity". The campaign focuses on disposal of pending complaints, disposal of pending cases, capacity building programmes, digital initiatives and contract management. The programme further featured two sessions by the Building Materials and Technology Promotion Council (BMTPC) on New Construction Technology, covering modern construction techniques, building materials and emerging solutions for the construction sector.

CORPORATE CORNER

Azim Premji Foundation to support up to 20,000 girls in Delhi (NCT) with scholarships

Azim Premji Foundation today announced the launch of the Azim Premji Scholarship for Delhi (NCT). The scholarship will support up to 20,000 girls in Delhi this year to continue their higher education.
Each selected student will receive ₹30,000 a year, from the first year of college until she completes her undergraduate degree or diploma. Depending on the duration of the course, which can range from two to five years, a student can receive up to ₹1.5 lakh. The scholarship can be used to pay college fees and meet other education-related expenses.
Launched in 2024, the scholarship is now open to girls who have completed their schooling in any of 21 States and Union Territories: Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Delhi (NCT), Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Odisha, Puducherry, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Telangana, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. To be eligible, a student must have completed Classes 10 and 12 in a government school in one of these States/UTs and secured admission to the first year of an undergraduate degree or diploma course at a recognised institution anywhere in India.
The Foundation aims to support up to 5 lakh girls across India every year. Since most undergraduate programmes last around three years, and students continue to receive the scholarship throughout their course, nearly 15 lakh girls could have an active Azim Premji Scholarship at any given time. Since the scholarship was launched in 2024, more than 1.9 lakh girls have received support. The Azim Premji Scholarship application process is completely online and free. Applications can be submitted only through the official Azim Premji Foundation website.

Punjab National Bank signs MoU with Oriental Insurance Company Limited for Providing Salary Package Benefits to Oriental Insurance Employees

Punjab National Bank(PNB), one of nation's leading Public Sector Banks, has entered into Memorandum of Understanding(MoU) for Salary Package Benefits with Oriental Insurance Company Limited(OICL). PNB is offering bouquet of services with enhanced Insurance Coverage, Banking Benefits, Concessional offers in Retail Loans and Other Benefits to all the serving employees of OICL.
The MoU was exchanged in presence of Sanjay Joshi(CMD), Ms. K Savithri (General Manager), Ms. Aruna Anand (General Manager), Jasvinder Singh (General Manager), Rajeev Kr. Agarwal (General Manager), Rohit Singhal(Actuary) from OICL & Ashok Chandra (MD&CEO), Rajesh Bhowmick (CGM, Zonal Head, Delhi), Shri. Sanjeev Bhardwaj, General Manager(BA&RM), Deepak Kumar (General Manager (PR & Credit Card), Alok Jain (Circle Head, South Delhi) from PNB.
The MoU was signed by Chhotu Ram, General Manager (HR & Estate) on behalf of OICL and Sudhir Dalal, Chief General Manager(BA&RM) on behalf of PNB.
The offering provides OICL employees and their families with comprehensive insurance protection and a host of enhanced banking privileges, including dedicated education and marriage-related covers for children. Key benefits include preferential locker rent, salary-linked overdraft facilities, zero-balance family accounts, complimentary essential banking services, and concessions on processing and documentation charges for home, education and vehicle loans. In addition, employees can avail themselves of several value-added benefits, including Hospicash benefits, family banking privileges and complimentary credit cards.
Speaking on the occasion, Ashok Chandra, MD&CEO, PNB said "The signing of this MoU marks an important milestone in strengthening the relationship between two leading Public Sector organizations in the financial sector. This partnership reflects our shared commitment towards providing enhanced value and a comprehensive bouquet of banking services to the employees of OICL. The MoU will pave the way for a broader banking association that goes beyond conventional salary account relationships and will facilitate access to a range of customized financial solutions and value-added services for employees and their families."

NFR 98th ZRUCC Meeting Highlights Transformative Growth across the Northeast

The 98th meeting of the N.F. Railway Zonal Railway Users' Consultative Committee (ZRUCC) was held successfully at Maligaon on 25th August, 2026. Chetan Kumar Shrivastava, General Manager, N.F. Railway, presided over the meeting, while the proceedings were smoothly conducted by Anurag Agarwal, DGM and Secretary, ZRUCC. The meeting witnessed the participation of Hon'ble Members of Parliament Dr. Jayanta Kumar Roy (Jalpaiguri), Khagen Murmu (Maldah Uttar), Tapir Gao (Arunachal East), Dr. Indra Hang Subba (Sikkim), Kripanath Mallah from Karimganj (Assam) and Smt. S. Phangnon Konyak (Nagaland). Hon'ble Members of Legislative Assemblies A. Pongshi Phom (Nagaland) and Lt. Col. Clement Lalhmingthanga (Mizoram) also attended the meeting. Senior officers from the State Governments, representatives of Hon'ble MPs, various railway users' associations and organisations and other members from the North-Eastern States, West Bengal and Bihar also attended the meeting, making it a vibrant platform for constructive dialogue and meaningful engagement on the future development of railway services and infrastructure in the region.

Western Railway's Bardoli Goods Shed Achieves Milestone With First-Ever Outward Piecemeal Loading

Western Railway's Bardoli Goods Shed in Mumbai Division commenced its first-ever outward goods loading under the Piecemeal Demand category, marking an important milestone in freight operations and opening a new avenue for outward goods traffic from Bardoli. According to a press release issued by Chief Public Relations Officer, Western Railway, Vineet Abhishek, an indent was placed by M/s Humcha Padmavati Logistics on 22nd August, 2026 for transportation of paper from Bardoli to Azara, Assam. Accordingly, one BCN (covered freight) wagon containing paper bundles of M/s JK Paper Mills Ltd. was placed for loading on 24th August, 2026. Weighing 56.73 tonnes and covering a distance of 2,450 km, the consignment generated freight revenue of more than Rs. 1.30 lakh.
The commencement of this service marks the initiation of new outward goods traffic from Bardoli.

Bite

Sugar prices have gone up, people are troubled due to spurious fuel, and there is no saving of foreign exchange.
– **Arvind Kejriwal**, AAP Convenor

Briefs

BAREILLY

Loud DJ 'kills' 60-year-old woman

A 60-year-old woman died after suffering chest pain allegedly caused by a loud DJ system mounted on a tractor-trolley in Aliganj, police said on Tuesday.

Kamla Devi was heading to Gauri Shankar temple for jalabhishek on Monday when the tractor passed her. She clutched her chest and collapsed, a relative said.

Police said the family refused a post-mortem examination, and added that the woman had high blood pressure and was sensitive to loud sounds.

NEW DELHI

CBI arrests two in bank frauds

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has arrested two proclaimed offenders in separate bank fraud cases, officials said on Tuesday.

Jitendra Kumar and Pooja Pahwa had allegedly evaded trial proceedings for 17 years and four years, respectively, the agency said.

Kumar was allegedly involved in a 2002-03 home loan default. The loan was obtained using fake and forged salary certificates, causing a loss of ₹65.90 lakh to GIC Housing Finance Limited.

A chargesheet was filed against Kumar and 18 others in 2006.

NEW DELHI

UPI a major turning point, says PM

On completion of a decade of the Unified Payments Interface, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday hailed it as a major turning point in India's digital payment journey and said its sheer scale is something every Indian must be proud of.

The UPI was launched on August 25, 2016 by the National Payments Corporation of India under the regulatory oversight of the Reserve Bank of India, and has emerged as a critical driver of financial inclusion.

BENGALURU

K'taka Guv suspends KPSC chief

Karnataka Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot on Tuesday suspended Karnataka Public Service Commission (KPSC) Chairman Shivashankarappa S Sahukar for the second time over charges of corruption and large-scale irregularities.

The Governor had suspended Sahukar on July 13, but the Karnataka High Court set aside the order on the ground that the action lacked the "aid and advice of the State Cabinet". On Aug 21, the State Cabinet decided to recommend to the Governor that Sahukar be suspended.

NEW DELHI

H1N1 is not a new strain: ICMR director

The current surge in H1N1 infections in India is part of the seasonal influenza pattern and no new strain has been identified, ICMR Director General Dr Rajiv Bahl said, urging people not to panic as most cases are mild and self-limiting.

Addressing the media, Dr Bahl said the current influenza situation is being continuously monitored, and the present observations do not indicate the emergence of a new threat and are consistent with the expected behaviour of seasonal influenza viruses.

CENSUS OBJECTIONS | Rahul, Kharge moot drop-down lists as in SC/ST enumeration

Cong: Caste data not properly recorded

Gaurav Vivek Bhatnagar
NEW DELHI

FILE PHOTO

Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha **Rahul Gandhi** and Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha and Congress President **Mallikarjun Kharge** have written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, protesting against the manner in which the Caste Census is being conducted and terming the recording of data "misleading".

The Congress leaders demanded that the existing questionnaire be withdrawn and a new one prepared after consultation with political parties, experts and the public to ensure every caste and community is recorded accurately.

They said the Centre had chosen an "open-ended questionnaire to record caste information in the Census, which is misleading", as per which whatever caste name a person states will be recorded.

Gandhi and Kharge said accurate data was essential to implement social justice policies and assess the number and socio-economic status of different castes. They noted that the same caste is known by different names, sub-castes and variations across regions.

They warned that recording members of the same caste under different names would divide a single caste into thousands of entries, making the data almost entirely useless.

The leaders said improper data collection would affect deprived communities and decisions on education, employment, welfare schemes and social justice.

They suggested preparing a drop-down list of castes based on existing government lists, similar to the enumeration of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

'Robot army' warning shows a Chinese mindset: BJP

Gaurav Vivek Bhatnagar
NEW DELHI

The Bharatiya Janata Party on Tuesday accused the Congress of harbouring a "Chinese mindset" after its MP Manish Tewari warned that India could soon face a "robot People's Liberation Army (PLA)" along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

Tagging an image of a Chinese robot reportedly completing a 100-metre sprint in 9.39 seconds, Tewari said on X that India could soon be "fighting a robot PLA on the LAC" if it was not careful.

Tewari, a former Union minister, said China was ahead of the US in 67 of 75 critical technologies.

BJP spokesperson and MP Sambit Patra accused the Congress of demoralising the Indian armed forces. Targeting Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi over his past remarks during border tensions, Patra also called him a "Robot of China".

SIA reopens probe into Wandhama massacre of 23 Kashmiri Pandits

M Saleem Pandit
SRINAGAR

Nearly 3 decades on, investigation follows June filing of chargesheet in Sarla Bhat murder

The Jammu and Kashmir Police's State Investigation Agency (SIA) has been directed to reopen the investigation into the 1998 Wandhama massacre, in which 23 Kashmiri Pandits were killed by terrorists in central Kashmir's Ganderbal district on the intervening night of Jan 25-26.

According to sources, the SIA has reopened the case to gather fresh evidence about the killings and identify and prosecute those responsible for the massacre.

Twenty-three Kashmiri Pandits, including nine women and four children, were killed by gunmen wearing Army uniforms during the intervening night of Jan 25-26, 1998. The terrorists, carrying automatic weapons, entered Wandhama village in Ganderbal district and directed Kashmiri Pandit families to come out of their houses in the dead of night before opening fire on the residents, killing 23 people.

Ganderbal Police Station had registered an FIR in connection with the massacre, but the case remained unresolved.

"Now the SIA has reopened the investigation into the case. All efforts will be made by the agency to uncover the conspiracy behind the massacre. The agency will gather credible evidence to identify those responsible for the massacre on the basis of evidence and statements from witnesses," police sources said.

The agency was prompted to reinvestigate the massacre after it made significant progress in other old Kashmiri Pandit murder cases. In June, the agency filed a 737-page chargesheet in the 1990 murder of Sarla Bhat, naming jailed Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) chief Yasin Malik as the mastermind.

Survivor's story

According to a 12-year-old boy, the lone survivor, the terrorists dressed in Indian Army uniforms entered the homes under the pretext of asking for tea before opening fire and burning down houses.

The massacre was carried out on the holy night of Shab-e-Qadr, one night before Republic Day. The lone survivor of the massacre, Vinod Kumar Bhat, then 12, was taken into the custody and care of Shiban Lal Bhat, then Kashmir Divisional Commissioner.

The boy, son of Badri Nath Bhat, managed to survive by hiding under a bundle of rice sheaves during the attack.

According to sources, the SIA is ready to reinvestigate several terror cases that were closed as "not found" during 30 years of militancy in Kashmir.

Board upholds order for K'taka to give Tamil Nadu Cauvery water

PTI
NEW DELHI

The Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) on Tuesday upheld the Cauvery Water Regulation Committee's (CWRC) recommendation directing Karnataka to ensure a flow of 9,000 cusecs of water to Tamil Nadu for 15 days.

The decision was taken at the 56th meeting of the CWMA held in Delhi under the chairmanship of S K Haldar. Officials from Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Puducherry, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala participated in the meeting.

The meeting was held following the Supreme Court's direction to the Tamil Nadu government on Monday to raise before the CWMA its grievance over the release of its proportionate share of Cauvery water by Karnataka.

Karnataka Water Resources Minister N Cheluvarayaswamy said the government would take a decision in the interest of the state and farmers after the CWMA order.

"The matter is scheduled to come up before the Supreme Court next week. In a federal system, committee orders and local situation should be considered. But our government and the department will take the responsibility of ensuring that no trouble is caused to our farmers and people."

Protesting against the order, activists from pro-Kannada organisations, led by Vatal Nagaraj, attempted to lay siege to the KRS Dam in Mandya. They were detained and later released. Vatal Nagaraj warned that they would block the Tamil Nadu-bound route near Attibele on September 1.

Ram Rahim's parole draws Akal Takht ire

PTI
CHANDIGARH

Granting another furlough to rape convict Dera Sacha Sauda chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh on Tuesday drew sharp reaction from the Akal Takht Jathedar who said those jailed for heinous crimes like rape were released "frequently" as if they were on a "picnic".

Jathedar Giani Kuldip Singh Gargajj said on the other hand, 'Bandi Singhs' (Sikh prisoners), who have completed their sentences, are not being released from jails.

Footpath dweller meets Suvendu

Aritra Singha
KOLKATA

The Park Street footpath resident who hit the headlines when she was seen boiling milk for her child, met West Bengal Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari on Tuesday at the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) office in Salt Lake.

Adhikari told the media that though the woman didn't submit any specific complaint against anyone, the state government would explore arrangements for shelter for the family.

"I will ask municipal commissioner Smita Pandey to look into accommodation for them. This is a government for everyone and it will work for everyone. The woman said that she has faith in the chief minister. Pavements are meant for pedestrians, not for living," said Adhikari.

A political controversy started after the woman was filmed on Saturday heating milk for her child on the Park Street pavement. A video, showing her being questioned by municipal and urban development minister Agnimitra Paul for boiling milk on the pavement, had gone viral.

On Monday, former chief minister Mamata Banerjee offered to take responsibility for the family's accommodation and the children's education. Without naming Paul, Mamata also criticised the BJP government over the incident.

The chief minister also slammed the previous Trinamool Congress and Left Front governments for not addressing the problems of street dwellers.

"What did Mamata do during the last 15 years? The CPI (M) government before that also failed to address the problem," he added.

No link between sugar price rise, ethanol: UP producers

Biswajeet Banerjee
LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh has 121 sugar mills, of which 95 are in the private sector

The Uttar Pradesh Sugar Mills Association (UPSMA) has rejected claims that diversion of sugar for the Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) programme is responsible for the recent rise in sugar prices, saying the allegations are not supported by facts.

In a statement issued on Tuesday, the association said the quantity of sugar being used for ethanol production has actually declined over the past few years. It also pointed out that Uttar Pradesh remains the country's largest supplier of ethanol.

UPSMA said it was concerned about reports and public apprehensions over sugar availability and domestic supplies amid rising prices. The association said all its member mills have adequate stocks of sugar and there is no shortage at the mill level.

The association also rejected reports of artificial scarcity and said it considers hoarding or unnecessary accumulation of stocks responsible for price fluctuations to be a matter of concern.

It said sugar stocks available with mills in the state are sufficient to meet household consumption requirements during the festival season and there is no shortage of sugar at the mill level.

Uttar Pradesh has 121 sugar mills, of which 95 are in the private sector, making the state the country's largest sugar producer.

UPSMA said these mills form the backbone of domestic sugar supplies and reiterated that its members maintain adequate stocks.

Parl panel meet hots up over use of force at stir

PTI
NEW DELHI

A meeting of a Parliament committee on Tuesday witnessed heated exchanges over the use of force against protesting students on July 20 as opposition members demanded a discussion on the issue, sources said.

The matter was raised by Congress member Ajay Maken during the meeting of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs, where views of officials of various ministries were to be presented on the subject of "crimes against children".

Maken said the issue of use of force against protesters should be taken up for discussion but committee chairman Radha Mohan Das Agarwal did not allow it, noting that the matter is sub judice, the sources said.

The verbal sparring continued for about an hour as several opposition members, too demanded that the matter be discussed.

The Chairman, in his ruling, said that the committee would take up a discussion at a later date on Standard Operating Procedures on use of force on protesters. After the ruling, the opposition members relented and tempers cooled down.

IAS officer escaped grilling: ED

Vinay Madhava Gowda
BENGALURU

The Directorate of Enforcement (ED) raid on IAS officer Gyanendra Kumar Gangwar's residence has revealed that he applied for emergency leave on Friday and left for Delhi before ED officials could question him.

The ED is probing the alleged cash-for-posting scam in the Karnataka Public Service Commission (KPSC) recruitment of veterinary doctors. It had searched premises linked to former KPSC Chairman Shivashankarappa Sahukar, Secretary Shantha Kumari, successful candidates and others allegedly involved.

Gangwar, presently Managing Director of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME), was Comptroller of Examinations during the recruitment. He applied for emergency leave, citing his father's ill health, and booked an IndiGo flight to Delhi 90 minutes before departure.

Home Minister Priyank Kharge said he had spoken to Gangwar, who had gone to attend to his father, and that the officer would return in a day or two.

On Sunday and Monday, ED officials visited Gangwar's residence. Security initially denied them entry, but police intervention allowed access. With the house keys missing, officials called a locksmith. The ED found only a printer.

The ED also searched Gangwar's ancestral residence in Uttar Pradesh and issued him a notice to appear on Aug 25 with KPSC veterinary recruitment documents. The officer remains untraced.

'No junk food around schools'

RAJASTHAN HC BAN

Manish Godha
JAIPUR

The Rajasthan High Court, expressing concern for the future and health of the country's future generation, has ordered a complete ban on junk food — including carbonated drinks, chips and bakery products containing trans fat — within a 50-metre radius of Rajasthan's schools.

Taking suo moto cognisance and issuing notices to central and state government departments, the court has directed strict monitoring of mid-day meals and adequate nutrition as per World Health Organization standards.

The single bench of Justice Anoop Kumar Dhand, while issuing a series of directions, stated in his order that the Gen-Z and Gen-Alpha students currently studying in schools and colleges and the Gen-Beta students of the future will lead the nation.

Considering their health, the court ordered a strict ban on the sale of foods high in fat, sugar, and salt in schools.

The court directed that mid-day meals and other nutrition schemes conform to FSSAI's balanced-diet guidelines.

38 booked over molestation allegation at Jharkhand protest

PTI
RANCHI

Police have booked 38 people for allegedly molesting a member of the JPSC-JSSC Reforms Manch during a protest over recruitment examination irregularities in Ranchi on Aug 21.

The case was registered on Monday after the woman, accompanied by Leader of Opposition Babulal Marandi, lodged a complaint at Kotwali police station.

Police said eight people were named in the FIR and 30 others remained unidentified.

The complainant alleged that she was assaulted and molested while protesters attempted to burn effigies of Chief Minister Hemant Soren and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi near Albert Ekka Chowk.

Marandi alleged that JMM workers attacked protesting students and demanded action against them.

Ranchi Sadar Circle Officer Shiv Shankar Pandey maintained that his complaint over the Aug 21 protest was based on what he witnessed and was not linked to any political party.

Mandya beggar dies, leaves ₹8.7 lakh cash stash

Vinay Madhava Gowda
BENGALURU

An elderly woman with speech and hearing impairments, who lived by begging, has died — leaving behind wads of currency notes and piles of coins stored in bags at her house in Mandya, about 80 km from Bengaluru.

Relatives of the deceased handed over the cash to the local mosque authorities, who refused to treat it as mosque property but took up the task of counting the money left behind by Noor Unnisa, a resident of Gutthalu Layout in Mandya city.

So far, the mosque authorities, along with members of the public, have counted 10 bags of currency notes amounting to more than ₹8.7 lakh. The counting of coins stored in another 20 bags is underway.

The mosque authorities have decided to hand over the money to Unnisa's relatives after the counting is completed and let them decide how to use it.

According to one of Unnisa's nephews, although she had three brothers and three sisters, she preferred to live alone in her house. She was also said to have had some mental health issues.

Although her family members offered to look after her and asked her not to beg, she did not listen to them. Whenever family members went to her house to give her food or speak to her, she did not allow anyone inside. She would come out, lock the house from outside and speak to them, opening it only after they had left.

The family did not become concerned until last Sunday, when they realised they had not seen Unnisa for three days. They broke open the house and found her dead. The family believed she had died of age-related causes.

They then discovered the cash and coins stored in 30 bags inside the house. They informed the nearby mosque authorities and shifted the money to the mosque.

However, the maulvi said the mosque could not accept the money as Unnisa had not donated it to them.

The mosque committee agreed to count the money and hand it over to the family members, who could decide how to use it.

So far, 10 bags of currency notes have been counted, while the counting of coins in the remaining 20 bags is pending.

MIKA'S MATRIX

Briefs

NEW DELHI

SC flays MCD, ASI over Delhi monuments

Taking serious note of the condition of heritage monuments in the capital, the Supreme Court has pulled up the Municipal Corproration of Delhi and the Archaeological Survey of India for "total callousness" and suppressing facts on the matter. A bench of Justices Ahsanuddin Amanullah and N Kotiswar Singh on Monday also directed top officials of both agencies to appear before it and listed the matter for further hearing on October 7. The strong observations came after the bench was apprised of reports highlighting the poor condition and extensive encroachment at Lodhi-era tombs in south Delhi's Zamrudpur area.

LUCKNOW/PRAYAGRAJ

AIMPLB to challenge hijab case

The All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) is likely to challenge the Allahabad High Court's dismissal of a petition seeking permission for a student to wear a hijab or headscarf with the school uniform. The petitioner is a student of the private Tagore Public School, Attarsuiya, Prayagraj. She is seeking admission to class 11 at the same school. A two-judge bench of Justice J J Munir and Justice Indrajit Shukla dismissed the petition, holding that the petitioner did not establish that wearing a headscarf was an essential religious practice without which her faith would be jeopardised.

SPOUSE TROUBLE | High Court acquits man in wife poisoning case, cites lack of evidence

'Better half turns bitter half if issues not resolved'

PTI
NEW DELHI

The institution of marriage is quite paradoxical and if the issues between spouses are not resolved quickly, the better half becomes a bitter half, the Delhi High Court has observed.

The high court said one of the most beautiful relationships of humans, that of a husband and wife, becomes one of the most terrible when things go wrong in a matrimonial alliance.

Justice Vimal Kumar Yadav made the observations while allowing a man's appeal against a trial court's judgment sentencing him to three years of imprisonment for trying to kill his wife by pouring Baygon spray in her mouth.

The high court acquitted Nafe Singh in the case, saying the prosecution's case lacked cogent evidence about the intention and knowledge as contemplated in Section 307 of the IPC.

It is highly unsafe to act upon the kind of shaky evidence brought on record, the court said while granting the benefit of doubt to the man.

The high court, in its August 24 verdict, said, "The institution of marriage is quite paradoxical and a world of extremities. The best, in no time, becomes worst if not handled carefully. The better-half becomes the bitter-half if issues are not taken care of and resolved as soon as possible."

It further said, "One of the most beautiful relationships of humans, that is of a husband and wife, becomes one of the most terrible when things go wrong in a matrimonial alliance. Time, albeit, is a big healer and tones down a lot of pains in life; however, in relationships, time taken can also be counterproductive."

Wife demanding husband sever ties with mother amounts to cruelty: HC

KOLKATA: The Calcutta High Court has held that a wife's insistence that her husband sever ties with his dependent widowed mother and live separately amounted to mental cruelty in the facts of the case, particularly as the wife's justification for seeking separate residence was based on an allegation of molestation of the parties' minor son which remained wholly unsubstantiated. A Division Bench of Justice Sabyasachi Bhattacharyya and Justice Supratim Bhattacharya observed that while a demand for separate residence cannot, by itself, be treated as cruelty, the wife's conduct has to be assessed in the context of the circumstances of the particular marriage.

SC issues notice to 20 rebel Trinamool MPs

IANS
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday issued notice to 20 rebel Trinamool Congress MPs on a plea filed by party National General Secretary, Abhishek Banerjee, challenging the delay in deciding the disqualification petitions against them.

A Bench headed by Chief Justice of India (CJI), Surya Kant, and comprising Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana issued notice to the rebel MPs, but refrained from issuing notice to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla.

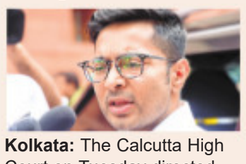
Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, the Centre's second-highest law officer, urged the CJI Kant-led Bench not to issue notice to the Speaker.

"I have some reservations about issuing notice to the Speaker," he said. The Solicitor General informed the apex court that the Speaker has already issued notices to the 20 rebel MPs on the disqualification petitions filed by the Trinamool.

He submitted that he would appear on behalf of the Speaker and said that he had instructions to inform the top court that notices had been issued to the MPs in the disqualification proceedings.

Advocate Kalyan Banerjee appeared for Abhishek, who has filed the plea challenging the alleged delay by Lok Sabha Speaker in deciding the disqualification petitions filed against the 20 rebel MPs under the anti-defection law.

Abhishek gets HC protection



Kolkata: The Calcutta High Court on Tuesday directed the police not to take any coercive steps against TMC MP Abhishek Banerjee in 3 criminal cases against him till November 30, holding that custodial interrogation is not necessary. Justice Saugata Bhattacharyya directed the Diamond Harbour MP not to travel abroad without the high court's permission. He clarified that the permission granted to Banerjee by the Supreme Court for going abroad for three weeks for medical reasons would not be curtailed by this order.

In the Courtyard

Plea seeks revamp of students stir probe panel

New Delhi: A plea was mentioned in Supreme Court on Tuesday seeking reconstitution of the five-member committee headed by former top court judge Justice R Subhash Reddy to examine allegations of police excesses against student protesters in Delhi recently and violence against police personnel. Expressing reservation over the composition, senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan, appearing for some of the petitioners, mentioned the matter before a bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta vehemently opposed the plea.

45-year-old double murder case is failure of system: SC

New Delhi: The Supreme Court has directed the release of a 70-year-old man by suspending his sentence as it termed the nearly half century long litigation in a double-murder case from Jharkhand a "failure of judicial system." A bench of Justices JB Pardiwala and K Vinod Chandran also questioned the period of over two decades taken by the Jharkhand High Court for deciding the appeal filed by accused Simon Soren, who is undergoing treatment at hospital while in custody. "The above case projects the failure of the judicial system, when a crime went unpunished and the accused were put to the torture of a prolonged trial of 22 years and then after conviction, the appeal filed having been dismissed after yet another two decades and two years," the bench said in its August 19 order. There was a double murder incident in Dumka in 1981.

Grievance redressal

East Central Railway General Manager Chhatrasal Singh interacted with seven railway employees and their dependents at the ECR Headquarters in Hajipur on Tuesday, as part of an employee grievance redressal initiative. The employees and their family members apprised the General Manager of various issues and grievances concerning them.

Spl SC bench to hear govt plea on OBC creamy-layer criteria

PTI
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday agreed to consider setting up a special bench to hear Centre's plea seeking clarification on the applicability of its March 11 judgment on OBC creamy-layer criteria to candidates of the Civil Services Exam (CSE) 2025.

The Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) seeks directions allowing the government to proceed with service allocation of the 958 candidates recommended by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) for CSE-2025 on the basis of the OBC creamy-layer determination applied before the March 11 verdict.

At the outset of day's proceedings, a bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana was told by Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, that the DoPT has filed a miscellaneous application in a disposed of matter seeking some urgent directions and it has to be listed before a bench headed by Justice P S Narasimha.

Advocate Sanjay Hegde, appearing for a litigant, said that a bench comprising justices Narasimha and R Mahadevan had passed the order on March 11 and the instant miscellaneous application has to be heard by the same bench as the judges sit in different combinations now.

Chess tournament

Representatives of the Saraikela-Kharsawan District Chess Association met Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren at Jharkhand Secretariat on Tuesday and briefed him about the Chief Minister's Trophy – International Grandmaster Chess Championship 2026. The delegation included SKDCA President Manoj Kumar, Vice President Laxman Tudu, Shailendra Kumar, and Abhishek Das.

From front page

Students, job seekers...

The protesters, who have been holding a sit-in at Gardanibagh since August 18, also demanded cancellation of the 70th Bihar Public Service Commission (BPSC) preliminary examination, alleging irregularities and a paper leak.

The BPSC has rejected the allegations and maintained that its examination process is sound

The march began at Gandhi Maidan and gathered momentum as students moved towards JP Golambar. Despite heavy security and barricades, protesters pushed through police lines and reached Dak Bungalow crossing, one of Patna's busiest intersections.

Police deployed water cannons to disperse the crowd. Instead of immediately retreating, some protesters turned the water jets into an impromptu "rain dance", an unusual scene that quickly circulated on social media. Tensions later escalated into physical clashes, with protesters allegedly throwing stones at police personnel and police using batons to clear the intersection.

Patna Senior Superintendent of Police Kartikeya Sharma said police had repeatedly appealed to protesters to maintain peace and offered to facilitate a delegation to meet the authorities.

"The situation is now under control. Traffic movement is also being restored," Sharma said. He said some people had been injured and that determining the number of detainees would follow once the area was cleared.

The confrontation came a day after controversy erupted over remarks by BPSC examination controller Rajesh Kumar Singh. Addressing questions about the protests, Singh quoted the Hindi proverb, "Hathi chale bazaar, kutta bhunke hazaar", which critics interpreted as a disparaging reference to the protesting students.

Singh subsequently expressed regret, saying he had used a proverb and had not intended to offend anyone. The Bihar government, however, ordered his suspension on Monday. The controversy further fuelled anger among the protesters, who demanded not only changes in the examination system but also action against the official.

The agitation has brought together several student and youth organisations, including groups affiliated with the Left as well as NSUI. CPI(M) state secretary Manoj Chandravanshi said students from different organisations had joined the march, while CPI state secretary Ram Naresh Pandey demanded the immediate release of those detained.

The CPI(ML) Liberation condemned the police action and called for talks with the protesters,.

The BPSC, meanwhile, has said TRE-4 will be conducted in two stages and that negative marking will remain in objective examinations. The Commission has also said applications for the recruitment examination will be accepted from September 1 to September 30, with the examination likely to be held in December or January

Year-round drug...

On Tuesday, Kinjarapu confirmed that the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) is currently engaging with key stakeholders to revamp the existing rules. "One of the opinions from our side is that everyone has to go through it the whole year at a random time," Kinjarapu said, acknowledging that the aviation ecosystem must adapt to stricter enforcement across its roster of over 12,000 active commercial pilots.

According to the existing norms under the current civil aviation requirements, each airline has to screen a minimum of 10% of pilots through periodic random sampling. The Ministry is now considering a framework for randomly testing 100% of commercial pilots throughout the year through unscheduled sampling.

The Free Press Journal also reported on August 18 that the Federation of Indian Pilots (FIP) had urged the DGCA to comprehensively overhaul the country's psychoactive-substance testing regulations by increasing random sampling from 10% to at least 25%. It had also suggested the introduction of oral-fluid screening alongside existing urine tests and strict procedural safeguards to protect crew members.

The Airline Pilots' Association of India (ALPA India) had appealed to the DGCA to strictly preserve confidentiality and procedural integrity during random psychoactive substance testing. It cautioned that initial "non-negative" screening results can frequently be triggered by routine over-the-counter self-medication, prescription drugs or dietary habits rather than illicit drug abuse.

Pvt sector set to make...

It is understood that the private sector may be allowed to produce conventional weapons such as Akash air defence missiles, Astra air-to-air missiles and the Nag anti-tank guided missile.

Conventional missiles are those that rely on explosives or kinetic impact to destroy targets. Non-conventional missiles are armed with nuclear, biological or chemical warheads.

The Defence Ministry said the "provision will enable successful transition of missile system development to industrial production".

"The objective is to enhance domestic manufacturing capabilities, strengthen the defence industrial base and create opportunities for the participation of Indian MSMEs and other technology partners in the supply chain," the ministry said.

It added that the initiative aims to enhance operational capability, reduce import dependence and increase domestic value addition, while supporting the growth of India's defence manufacturing sector.

Protest in IIT Delhi

The objections were raised at a meeting at the Lecture Hall Complex on August 24, according to minutes of the meeting. Students said the administration's account of Kumar's case placed disproportionate emphasis on his medical history and failed to adequately reflect accounts provided by his mother, friends, students in the Physics Department and others about how his concerns were handled.

The protests have brought renewed focus on student welfare, institutional accountability and mechanisms for supporting students in distress.

Among their demands is the resignation of senior officials, including the Dean of Student Affairs, Associate Dean (Student Welfare), Associate Dean (Hostel Management) and the Head of the Physics Department.

Students said the agitation would continue until their demands for an independent examination of the circumstances surrounding Kumar's death and greater accountability were addressed.

'All donations must go...

The Court said it was not disputing the sewayats' right to receive their share but made it clear that donations must first go to the deity.

"First, the donation must be into the dedication, that is, to the deity. And from that you will get your share as part of the bhandari duties. You cannot appropriate [the money] before the devotee goes to the temple and gives the money into the deity's funds," the Court said. Justice Bagchi added, "A priest cannot have a garnishee right on the deity." The case concerns the management and administration of the temple, including its finances.

During Tuesday's hearing, Senior Advocate Shyam Divan, appearing for the petitioners, raised concerns over the alleged use of temple funds by the managing committee to purchase properties. "The major concern which we have... is that funds are being expended by this committee in a manner which is completely unjustified," Divan submitted.

He also raised concerns over regulating darshan and referred to a previous stampede, saying the petitioners had suggested regulating the flow of devotees through tickets or an online system.

The Court directed that these submissions be dealt with in the reply. It granted the contesting parties one week to file their responses and objections to the status report.

3,400 kisses, 5.5 mn...

After all, when entrusted with a job involving 3,400 kisses, apparently one simply gets on with it. That it went viral was not something that the traffic police were impressed by.

After spotting the car speeding in the viral video, Gwalior traffic police began tracing it. The vehicle, bearing registration number MP07 CC 9452, was eventually located in the Thatipur area and brought to the traffic police station.

Sikarwar was summoned for questioning and admitted his mistake. He then cleaned the lipstick marks from the car himself with water. Police imposed a ₹5,500 fine and warned motorists against violating traffic rules merely to manufacture social-media content.

But the viral success came with an unexpected cleanup operation. After police action, Sikarwar blocked his Instagram account, which had 2,952 followers and 64 posts.

The Gwalior "kissing car" episode has highlighted a lesser-known rule for motorists: vehicle owners cannot freely alter a vehicle after purchase, even if the modification does not affect its mechanical functioning.

Under Section 52 of the Motor Vehicles Act, alterations that change particulars from those specified by the manufacturer are regulated and may require approval from the registering authority. A Delhi Traffic Police officer said motorists should check whether permission is required before making any alteration.

Black films and extra tinting are prohibited, with factory-fitted glass required to allow at least 70 per cent visible light transmission through the windscreen and rear window and 50 per cent through side windows.

Other modifications that can invite action include loud aftermarket silencers, unauthorised additional lights, excessively powerful headlights and pressure or multi-toned horns. Unauthorised colour changes and substantial structural modifications can also attract enforcement.

Xi likely to visit India...

The two sides are expected to use the summit to explore ways to expand engagement while managing longstanding differences over the disputed Himalayan border and regional security, the sources said. Xi's final travel plans and the agenda for any bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi have not yet been finalised. China's Foreign Ministry said Beijing attaches "great importance" to BRICS cooperation and supports India, the current chair, in successfully hosting the summit, but added that it had no information to provide on Xi's visit. India's Foreign Ministry did not comment.

India-China relations deteriorated sharply after clashes along their disputed border in 2020 killed 20 Indian and four Chinese soldiers. A four-year military standoff ended with a disengagement agreement in October 2024, although tensions have continued.

US sanctions on 4...

Among the four India-based companies facing action is a customs broker identified as Portease Partners LLP and its partners Indrismiya Ashrafmiya Sheikh and Harish Ramachandra Rangi. They facilitated the import of multiple shipments of Iranian petrochemical products, the State Department said in the release on Monday.

Other Indian companies facing action are Sadashiva Overseas Limited; PP Softtech Private Limited, along with its director Prashant Garg; and Prakrutees Infra Impex Private Limited.

Sheikh, Rangi and Garg are Indian nationals, according to the release.

Sadashiva Overseas imported Iranian-origin petroleum products worth around $69 million from multiple companies, while PP Softtech and Prakrutees Infra imported petroleum products worth $25 million each, the press release said.

These companies were put on a list for "knowingly engaging in a significant transaction for the purchase, acquisition, sale, transport, or marketing of petroleum or petroleum products from Iran", it said.

State Department spokesperson Tommy Pigott on Monday said in a statement: "Today, the United States took sweeping action against multiple entities, individuals, and vessels enabling the Iranian regime's destabilising activities."

"Such activities include attacks against US forces and allies in the region, illicit weapons procurement, cyber intrusions into American infrastructure, and the movement of energy products whose sale funds terrorism globally," he added.

Tackle hate crimes...

Police stops and identity checks involving racial profiling had reportedly resulted in arbitrary arrest and detention without due process, as well as torture and mistreatment, it said.

The committee expressed concern about deportations and forced returns of individuals requiring international protection. It urged India to "urgently address discrimination, hate speech and hate crimes" against these groups, protect their rights and refrain from collective expulsions. India appeared for review before CERD earlier this month for the first time since 2007, with Solicitor General Tushar Mehta leading its delegation.

CERD is a panel of 18 independent rights experts that monitors compliance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination by the 182 countries that are party to it.

In a statement, India's mission said that during the review, its delegation "highlighted our pluralism; diversity; scale and complexity; constitutional and legal framework and safeguards ... as we continue our journey towards ensuring equality, dignity and opportunity for all Indians".

Courts must record...

"Any order devoid of such reasons would suffer from nonapplication of mind," the SC said.

Referring to various precedents, the court said, "In serious offences like murder, the order granting bail must reflect proper application of mind to the facts of the case and justifiable reasons have to be recorded before bail is granted to such an accused." The case concerns the killing of a man who was allegedly set on fire after petrol was poured on him. According to the allegations, his wife called him around 10.22 pm and said four people, including accused No. 1 and three unidentified accomplices, had arrived at their home demanding that their son Prajwal apologise for a dispute during his wedding. They allegedly kicked the door and threatened the family.

When the man reached home, the assailants allegedly kicked and punched him and threatened to kill him. Accused No. 1 allegedly took a petrol can from the vehicle and poured petrol over him while three accomplices held him down before he was set on fire with a matchstick. He was taken to hospital but succumbed to his injuries.

The case reached the Supreme Court after Jyotiraditya, accused No. 4, was granted bail. Pruthviraj, accused No. 3, subsequently secured bail on the ground of parity. The High Court upheld the bail, prompting the state to approach the Supreme Court.

In the judgment authored by Justice Mehta, the court held that the High Court and trial court had ignored grave circumstances, including the alleged prior preparation, repeated threats and gravity of the offence.

"The fact that the accused persons were prepared well in advance to commit some grave offence is prima facie borne out from the fact that the can containing petrol was carried in the vehicle in which all four accused persons had arrived at the crime scene," the court observed.

It said the circumstances, considered cumulatively, indicated the "premeditated nature of the ghastly attack".

Cancelling the bail, the Supreme Court directed both accused to surrender within three weeks, failing which the trial court would take appropriate steps to arrest them and bring them to trial.

Briefs

JAMMU

2 killed in separate accidents

Two labourers were killed in separate accidents in Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday, officials said. Gotam Sahu, 25, from Bihar, died after a bridge pier under construction collapsed at Jakh Morh in Samba district. Another labourer suffered head injuries. In Jammu, Budhi Singh, 45, from Ramban, was critically injured after falling from the Tawi bridge under construction in Sidhra. He was taken to Government Medical College hospital, where doctors declared him brought dead.

PRAYAGRAJ

Trial against Pappu on Parl skit starts

Trial proceedings against independent MP Pappu Yadav began in a Prayagraj court on Tuesday with statements of two witnesses recorded in the case related to his symbolic skit in the Parliament premises, allegedly portraying the theft of Ram temple donations. Advocate Sushil Kumar Mishra, who is also the state co-convener of the BJP's legal department, had filed the criminal complaint against Yadav, MP from Purnia (Bihar).

NEW DELHI

Govt notifies 'Keralam' as new name

The Union Home Ministry has notified 'Keralam' as the new name for the southern state effective Tuesday. In a gazette notification issued on Tuesday, the home ministry said, "In exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (2) of Section 1 of the Kerala (Alteration of Name) Act, 2026, the Central government hereby appoints the 25th day of August, 2026, as the date on which the provisions of the said Act shall come into force." Earlier this month, President Droupadi Murmu gave assent to a Bill to rename Kerala as Keralam, turning the legislation into a law.

RANCHI

J'khand nod for 100 schools of excellence

The Jharkhand cabinet on Tuesday approved proposals of establishing 100 new CM Schools of Excellence and distributing free sanitary napkins among girl students of Classes 6-12 in government schools, an official said. At present, 80 CM Schools of Excellence are functioning in the state. "The cabinet has approved Rs 721.43 crore for the development of 100 new CM School of Excellence," Additional Chief Secretary (Cabinet Secretariat) Vandana Dadel said. It has also approved an amount of Rs 124.37 crore for the free biodegradable sanitary napkins distribution programme.

ZERO TOLERANCE | Even MLAs won't be spared if charges proved, party workers cautioned

No cut money, extortion, warns BJP Bengal chief

Aritra Singha
KOLKATA

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) state president Samik Bhattacharya on Tuesday issued a stern warning to party leaders and workers against corruption, extortion, and 'cut money', making it clear in an open letter that even MLAs will not be spared if allegations are proved.

Bhattacharya highlighted growing concerns over indiscipline within the ranks, emphasising that strict action will follow for any violation of the party's core values.

"BJP is an ideological party and serving the nation is its foundation. Recently, I have received letters and complaints regarding irregularities and undesirable activities by some workers. If any leader or worker acts outside the party's principles or gets involved in corruption, the party will not take responsibility for their actions. This applies from the booth level to the state level," Bhattacharya stated.

Bengal BJP leaders, including state chief Samik Bhattacharya (left), have warned against party workers engaging in extortion and other crimes.

The disciplinary push comes amid heightened scrutiny within the organisation. The state BJP has already issued more than 200 show-cause notices and suspended over 100 individuals over allegations of financial irregularities and anti-party activities.

Reinforcing the message, West Bengal observer and central BJP leader Sunil Bansal held meetings with party workers and senior leaders at the state headquarters. Bansal made it clear that the saffron camp will not hesitate to get a party leader arrested if allegations of corruption or misconduct are proved. Bansal noted that the Bengal unit is adopting an organisational approach similar to the Uttar Pradesh model, which successfully curtailed corrupt practices and restored cadre discipline across all levels.

SC bins plea on reopening CBSE portal for re-evaluation

PTI
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday declined to direct the reopening of CBSE's portal for the re-evaluation of class 12 answer sheets for students with complaints with the On-Screen Marking (OSM) system. A bench comprising CJI Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana said the portal was opened for all candidates for a specified period and reopening could trigger fresh claims.

"Why should we direct them to open this window again for you? If you don't use the bus, you miss the bus," the CJI said. The counsel appearing for the petitioner submitted he was seeking only one week's time. "The website crashed and many students could not apply for on-screen verification," he said.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for CBSE, told the apex court that 1.68 lakh students successfully applied during the notified window.

Ayodhya seers demand CBI probe into donation theft

Biswajeet Banerjee
AYODHYA

Tension flared during a meeting of the saint community in Ayodhya on Tuesday after police and Local Intelligence Unit personnel arrived at the venue. The gathering was called to discuss alleged financial irregularities in the offerings received at the Ram temple.

The situation turned contentious when media personnel were instructed to leave the premises. The assembled religious leaders strongly protested the decision, questioning why security and intelligence officials were deployed at a peaceful gathering of saints.

Chaired by Computer Baba, the meeting concluded with demands for a Central Bureau of Investigation probe into the management of temple offerings. The saints also demanded strict action against Champat Rai, Dr Anil Mishra and Gopal Rao. They claimed that the ongoing Special Investigation Team probe had acted only against lower-level workers while sparing influential figures involved in the matter. These allegations could not be independently verified.

Seers demand CBI investigation into the donation theft case, threaten foot march from Chitrakoot to Ayodhya

Speaking to media personnel after the meeting, Computer Baba warned that the saint community would launch a massive protest if the authorities failed to initiate an impartial inquiry. He indicated that religious leaders from across the region were prepared to converge on the holy city to press their demands.

"If required, we will come to Ayodhya with one lakh saints and launch an agitation," Computer Baba told reporters.

The saints are also preparing to submit a detailed memorandum outlining their grievances to the Chief Minister. Additionally, they announced plans to visit the temple for Ram Lalla's darshan and seek forgiveness from Lord Ram over the controversy surrounding the temple's offerings. The meeting ended with the religious leaders reiterating their call for an independent, high-level investigation to ensure complete transparency in the handling of devotee donations.

Centre okays ₹5k cr housing package for flood-hit Assam

Digjyot Lahkar
GUWAHATI

The Centre has approved housing assistance worth Rs 5,000 crore under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G) for flood-affected families in Assam. Union Minister for Agriculture Shivraj Singh Chouhan handed over the approval for 3.8 lakh new houses to Assam CM Himanta Sarma on Tuesday.

The Centre also extended the PMAY-G survey period by 15 days. Furthermore, action plans worth over Rs 960 crore were sanctioned under various agricultural schemes to support flood-hit farmers and promote sustainable farming in the state.

BSP to go alone in Punjab polls, Maya rules out tie-ups

Biswajeet Banerjee
LUCKNOW

Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati has ruled out entering into any electoral alliance in Punjab, confirming that the party will contest the upcoming Assembly elections independently. The party aims to expand its support base by reaching out to voters disillusioned with the ruling Aam Aadmi Party, Congress and BJP.

Addressing party workers and office-bearers at the BSP office in Lucknow, Mayawati reviewed organisational activities in Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. She pointed out that previous seat-sharing arrangements and alliances had adversely affected the party's vote share and overall

seat tally. Consequently, she asked workers to prepare for a solo fight and remain vigilant against tactical maneuvers by political rivals.

Mayawati instructed leaders to select honest, committed candidates for the polls scheduled early next year. She reiterated the party's commitment to providing dignified living conditions for poor, unemployed and marginalised sections through its Ambedkarite framework of "Sarvajan Hitay, Sarvajan Sukhay".

To ensure effective execution, she directed the state unit to strengthen organisational structures down to the polling booth level and address internal shortcomings within a strict timeframe. She also reviewed implementation metrics from last year's national meeting.

Looking ahead, Mayawati instructed the Punjab unit to organize comprehensive preparations for the death anniversary of BSP founder Kanshi Ram on October 9, in line with established guidelines. Furthermore, she called for enhanced financial mobilization for the party's "Jankalyankari Diwas" event on January 15, 2027, noting that the funds collected would help bolster the broader Ambedkarite movement and support party activities.

Meghalaya govt invites KSU for high-level talks

Digjyot Lahkar
GUWAHATI

The Meghalaya Government has invited the Central Executive Council (CEC) of the Khasi Students' Union (KSU) for a high-level meeting on Aug 26, with Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma scheduled to lead the discussions.

The meeting will take place at 6 pm at the Meghalaya Secretariat in Shillong to address a five-point charter of demands.

The invitation was sent via a letter from Joint Secretary DD Syngai to KSU Assistant General Secretary Pynshaiborlang Rani.

This government outreach comes amid the detention of four KSU executives following violence during a 'Black Flag Bike Rally' on Aug 19.

Three union officials—President Raymond Kharjana, Vice President Pynkmen Sanmiet and General Secretary Rueben A Najiar — were moved to Garo Hills facilities on August 20 before being brought back to Shillong District Jail on August 25 for investigation.

A fourth leader, Jerimaiah Pohthmi, arrested on Aug 24, also remains in Shillong.

Former union leaders visited the suspects and confirmed they are in good health and receiving medical care.

The KSU CEC confirmed during its Aug 25 session that it will attend the Secretariat meeting to present its core demands directly to the Chief Minister.

IRCTC sues influencer over bromate claims in Rail Neer

FPJ News Service
MUMBAI

The Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) has initiated legal action against an influencer following social media claims that a sample of its packaged drinking water brand Rail Neer contained bromate at 8.4 times the prescribed limit.

The claim was made by the Trustified YouTube channel, which reported finding 0.084 mg per litre of bromate against the permitted 0.01 mg per litre.

Defending its quality-control measures, IRCTC stated that Rail Neer is manufactured in strict compliance with BIS and FSSAI regulations.

Disclose data on Bengal SIR, top court tells ECI

ANI
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday said persons excluded from the electoral rolls during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) in West Bengal exercise have a right to have their appeals decided within a reasonable time, and asked the Election Commission of India (ECI) to submit details on the pendency and disposal of appeals before SIR tribunals in West Bengal.

A bench headed by CJI Surya Kant and comprising Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana was informed during the hearing that the SIR tribunals have so far disposed of around 85,000 appeals.

The Court pointed out that persons excluded from the voter list and who have contested their exclusion have a right to have their appeals decided within a reasonable time.

"We are on disenfranchised persons having a right of appeal and that right has to be realised in a reasonable time," Justice Bagchi said.

The Court has also directed the ECI to provide a break-up of the pending appeals based on whether they concern exclusion of voters or requests for inclusion.

"A very large chunk does appeal for exclusion. Then give you a date, give us the break-up of the nature of appeal, whether inclusion or exclusion. Then we will take a call whether to prioritise the inclusion or exclusion," the Court said.

The court also sought details of the number of appeals filed so far and the number still pending before the tribunals.

During the hearing, the ECI informed the court that it had already met the tribunal judges twice and was scheduled to meet them again, as the tribunals had made suggestions for expediting the disposal of appeals.

Rescue operations

A view of the recovered lifeboat during the search-and-rescue operation by Indian Coast Guard (ICG) and Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC) Beijing for the missing seafarers after the China-bound Panama-flagged cargo ship, MV Ocean Winner, sank (Aug 22) in the Bay of Bengal, on Tuesday. – ICG/ ANI

Rijiju, Khera spar over swimming

New Delhi: What began with Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju posting a video of himself swimming in an Arunachal river and defending his technique after comparisons with Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has now run into political cross-currents. Congress MP Pawan Khera on Tuesday took a swipe at Rijiju for bringing Gandhi into his posts while responding to those questioning his swimming technique, saying the Union minister could not even go for a "half-naked swim" without invoking the LoP. Rijiju responded, seemingly half in jest, that he would report Khera's conduct to Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma. "Dear Pawan Khera, I'll report to CM Himanta Biswa Sarma ji about your indisciplined conduct if you talk about half-naked swimming. Do you swim with a full suit & coat?" Rijiju wrote on X.

Indian airlines' int'l mkt share drops to 37.3%

Dhairya Gajara
MUMBAI

The market share of Indian airlines in international air traffic dropped sharply to 37.3% in the second quarter of 2026 as total passenger volume fell 8.99% year-on-year, according to Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) data.

Total international passenger traffic flying in and out of India contracted to 1.72 crore between April and June 2026, down from 1.89 crore in the same period in 2025 and 1.91 crore in Q1 2026. While foreign carriers increased their volume by nearly 6% to 1.07 crore passengers, Indian airlines experienced a 26% decline, carrying just 64.14 lakh passengers compared to 87.34 lakh in Q2 2025.

This shifted market share heavily toward international airlines. The steepest loss occurred in April, when Indian airlines recorded an almost 40% drop, carrying 18.24 lakh passengers against 30.07 lakh in April 2025.

Numbers subsequently improved to 22.58 lakh in May and 23.31 lakh in June. Industry analysts attribute the disproportionate impact on Indian carriers to severe operational constraints and airspace restrictions. Aside from geopolitical tensions in West Asia, the ongoing closure of Pakistani airspace to Indian aircraft has severely affected operations. Flights connecting North Indian cities to Western destinations are forced to take extended detours, resulting in longer flight times, increased fuel burn, and higher airfares that lower profitability.

Despite the overall contraction, routes between India and the UAE remained the most active segment. Between April and June, 22.99 lakh passengers arrived from the UAE, while 22.61 lakh departed for the country. The Mumbai-Dubai corridor maintained its position as the busiest single city pair, accounting for more than 4.89 lakh passengers during the three-month period.

Woman in viral video is not me, says TN minister

PTI
CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Industries Minister S Keerthana has slammed social media posts targeting a woman over her clothes in a misidentified viral video and clarified that she was not the person featured in the video.

The fact that a video of a woman simply going about her day could spark political hysteria tells everything about the fragile, regressive mindset behind it, she said referring to the viral video in which a woman could be seen getting out of a car.

Several people on social media drew a comparison with Keerthana, as the woman in the video clip resembled the first time TVK minister.

Keerthana, the TVK legislator from Sivakasi, said on "X" recently "but I'm not surprised. What else can you expect from followers of a leader with a track record of deeply derogatory remarks against women?"

offgrid

At Keralam temple, monkeys get own Onam feast

PTI
KOLLAM (KERALAM)

At a temple in Keralam, Onam is not only a celebration for people. The monkeys that live around the premises have a place at the feast too.

At the Sree Dharma Sastha Temple in Sasthamcotta in this south Keralam district, an Onam feast is prepared specially for the temple monkeys every year.

Rice, dal, pappad, pachadi, avial, pickle and other dishes that form part of a traditional Onam feast are served to them. The scene is unusual and, for many devotees, deeply familiar.

"The special Onam feast is served to the monkeys on Uthradam and Thiruvonam, the two main days of the festival," Abhijith N, who is associated with the temple, told PTI.

He said the monkeys had been part of the temple's surroundings for several centuries, adding to the unique tradition associated with the shrine.

The Sasthamcotta Sree Dharma Sastha Temple is among the five ancient Sastha temples in Kerala.

At a feast organised on Tuesday, the Uthradam day and eve of Thiruvonam, the monkeys arrived at the hall to partake in the feast called 'vanara sadya', which was served on plantain leaves.

Initially, a group of monkeys arrived, ate their share and left. Soon, another group appeared. As one group moved away, another came in, turning the temple premises into an informal dining space for the animals.

Some of the monkeys were hesitant when the feast began. But gradually, they came forward and started eating. The visits continued one group after another.

The tradition is believed to have continued at the temple for many decades.

Temple authorities and those associated with the shrine say the feast is part of a long-standing practice linked to faith, tradition and offerings made by devotees.

IN SHORT ››

HC disposes of Arpora hill-cutting case

PANAJI: The High Court of Bombay at Goa has disposed of a four-year-old PIL over illegal hill-cutting at Arpora after recording that the damaged slope had been restored to a stable condition in accordance with technical recommendations. The Court pronounced the order, after considering a June 29, 2026 report of the Goa Engineering College, which found that the restoration works had complied with its recommendations.

SPs summoned by court on FIR

PANAJI: The Judicial Magistrate First Class, Merces, has directed Superintendent of Police (Crime Branch) Rahul Gupta and Superintendent of Police (North Goa) Harishchandra Madkaikar to remain present before the court on September 29 in connection with a criminal complaint filed by electricity officer Kashinath Shetye.

FDA seizes 225 kg unlabelled jamun

MAPUSA: The Food and Drugs Administration has seized 225 kg of unlabeled frozen jamun, valued at around Rs 50,000, during an early-morning surveillance drive at the interstate Mapusa bus stand. The FDA team checked around 30 buses as part of the drive to monitor food articles being transported into Goa.

Complete civic poll process by January 4, HC tells SEC

UPHOLDS VALIDITY OF ORDINANCE, SAYS IT SHOULD GOVERN THE ELECTORAL PROCESS FOR ALL 11 MUNICIPAL COUNCILS

THE GOAN I NETWORK

PANAJI

The High Court of Bombay at Goa has upheld the validity of the Goa Municipalities (Amendment) Ordinance, 2026, directing the State Election Commission to complete the poll process including declaration of results for 11 municipalities by January 4, 2027.

In its order on Tuesday, the Division Bench of Justice Valmiki Menezes and Justice Hiten Venegavkar rejected the challenge seeking invalidation of the ordinance, the alternative plea that it should not apply to the current electoral cycle and that the elections be conducted under the pre-amendment statutory framework.

"The challenge seeking invalidation of the Goa Municipalities (Amendment) Ordinance, 2026 is rejected," the court said, holding that the ordinance would remain operative and govern the present general elections to the 11 municipal councils.

The Bench's 232-page order also rejected the challenge to the SEC's May 21 decision discontinuing the earlier delimitation exercise.

However, it clarified that factual and administrative material generated during the earlier process that can lawfully be utilised under the amended regime "may and shall, wherever practicable, be utilised".

The court has prescribed a series of deadlines for completing the delimitation and reservation process before the elections are held. The SEC has been directed to complete consideration of objections to the draft delimitation, government consultation and publication of the final delimitation by September 9.

The Goa State Commission for Backward Classes has been directed to continue its municipality-wise empirical inquiry and, after final delimitation, complete the residual ward-specific exercise and furnish the required report and data to the SEC by September 16.

The SEC is further asked to publish the draft reservation notification by September 20 and provide the full statutory 30-day period for objections and suggestions. After the objections close on October 20, the SEC must complete their consideration, government consultation and publish the final reservation by November 9.

"The 30-day statutory period under Section 10(7) would remain untouched. On the outer schedule, the SEC will declare the municipal elections on December 10," it said.

The results of elections to all 11 municipal councils must consequently be declared not later than January 4, 2027, the court directed and made it clear that all dates prescribed in the judgment are outer limits and that if any stage is completed earlier, subsequent stages must be advanced to the extent legally permissible.

The State government is asked to provide the SEC with all personnel, infrastructure, security, funds, transport and other assistance necessary to adhere to the timetable. It made clear that proximity of the Legislative Assembly elections, ordinary administrative inconvenience or shortage of government machinery cannot be cited as grounds to postpone the municipal elections beyond the schedule fixed by the court.

MAJOR DIRECTIONS OF THE HIGH COURT

- SEC must use factual, administrative material from earlier process
- Final delimitation shall be notified by September 9
- Residual OBC empirical exercise shall be completed by September 16
- Draft reservation shall be published by September 20
- Objections shall close by October 20
- Final reservation shall be published by November 9
- Statutory waiting period shall expire on December 9
- Election notification shall be issued on December 10
- Electoral process shall stand completed by January 4, 2027
- Assembly poll proximity, administrative inconvenience or shortage of govt machinery cannot delay municipal elections beyond the court's schedule
- Govt to provide SEC with all personnel, infrastructure, security, funds, transport and other assistance necessary to adhere to the timetable

Sawant cracks whip over irregularities inside Colvale jail

Orders DGP to investigate

THE GOAN I NETWORK

PANAJI

Chief Minister Pramod Sawant said he has directed the Director General of Police to conduct a detailed inquiry into irregularities at Colvale Central Jail and submit a report.

He said the government has tightened supervision after the prison was placed under the Police Department, with SP-level officers now directly overseeing operations.

The directive comes amid mounting pressure following reports in The Goan of contraband and illicit trade inside the jail. The allegations include smuggling of drugs, alcohol, food and mobile phones, raising questions about security and accountability. Exposés by The Goan had revealed a thriving underground economy within the prison where inmates allegedly paid thousands of rupees for unauthorised meals -- Rs 7,000 for tandoori, Rs 1,000 for fried rice, Rs 500 for fish.

Fruits supplied for prisoners were reportedly diverted to brew wine, which was then distributed among select inmates. Digital payment platforms such as GPay and other UPI apps were allegedly used to settle transactions, pointing to organised networks operating inside.

Repeated seizures of narcotics and mobile phones were also reported, and in one case, a constable was arrested for attempting to smuggle 1.65 kg of ganja into the facility.

Defeat BJP to scrap E20 petrol rollout: Kejriwal

THE GOAN I NETWORK

PANAJI

At a townhall in Panjim against the compulsory rollout of E20 petrol, AAP national convenor Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday declared that the only way to get it cancelled is to defeat the BJP in the upcoming Goa and Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections.

"If BJP loses on March 10, then by March 15 the E20 fuel policy will be withdrawn," Kejriwal said, adding that he would quit politics if what he predicted does not happen.

He warned that 87 per cent of Goans are already affected.

The event at a hotel in Miramar saw participation from AAP's two MLAs -- Venzy Viegas and Cruz Silva -- State president Valmiki Naik and other party leaders.

At the townhall, several citizens from across Goa narrated their experiences with E20 fuel including a motorcycle pilot who said his bike stalls frequently and delivers poor mileage. A Swiggy delivery partner also reported working 15-18 hours daily but fuel costs eat into his earnings.

A mechanical engineer from Benaulim described throttle body damage and white powder deposits in superbikes. Another vehicle owner reported a 30 per cent mileage drop, rubber parts damage and fuel leakage.

Kejriwal said Goa is disproportionately hit because 87 per cent of families here own two-wheelers and 47 per cent own cars which is far above the national average.

He accused the BJP government of misleading Goans into believing E20 has not yet been introduced.

He also alleged that automobile manufacturers had privately admitted E20 is unsafe for vehicles made before 2023, but were silenced through threats and cited a withdrawn SIAM study that flagged risks, claiming the Centre pressured the industry body to retract.

Setback for Tejpal, SC orders surrender within 3 weeks

TO HEAR APPEAL AGAINST CONVICTION ONLY AFTER GETTING HIS SURRENDER CERTIFICATE

THE GOAN I NETWORK

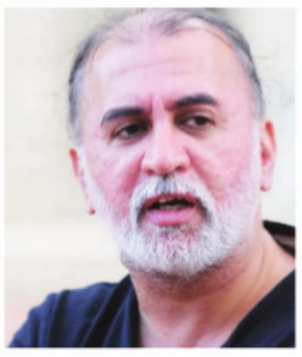
PANAJI

The legal road has narrowed further for former Tehelka Editor-in-Chief Tarun Tejpal. In another setback following his conviction in the 2013 sexual assault case, the Supreme Court on Tuesday turned down his plea to defer surrender and directed him to surrender within three weeks to begin serving his sentence.

A single-judge bench of Justice Alok Aradhe has made it clear that Tejpal's appeal against his conviction and 10-year rigorous imprisonment sentence would be taken up on merits only after he surrenders.

The order followed arguments by senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Tejpal, and Solicitor General Tushar Mehta for the Goa government.

Sibal, during the hearing on Monday, submitted to the court that the High Court of Bombay at Goa had, on August 6, granted Tejpal four weeks to surrender. He submitted that Tejpal had remained on bail throughout the proceedings, barring the first six months, and was now a senior citizen.



After hearing both sides, Justice Aradhe rejected the plea and asked Sibal how much time Tejpal would need to surrender. Sibal sought three weeks, following which the court directed Tejpal to surrender within that period

He also relied on the Supreme Court (Enlargement of Criminal Appellate Jurisdiction) Act, 1970, arguing that the apex court could consider the plea for exemption from surrender along with the appeal on merits.

Mehta opposed the plea, submitting that Tejpal's appeal could not be heard unless he surrendered and produced a surrender certificate or secured an exemption from surrender. He also contended that the 1970 Act could not be relied upon, as it was temporary legislation and appellate jurisdiction was now governed by the applicable statutory provisions.

After hearing both sides, Justice Aradhe rejected the plea and asked Sibal how much time Tejpal would need to surrender. Sibal sought three weeks, following which the court directed Tejpal to surrender within that period.

The Supreme Court ordered that if the surrender certificate is filed, the appeal would be listed on September 22 for hearing.

In addition to the appeal, the Goa government has also already filed a Special Leave Application seeking enhancement of the sentence to life imprisonment.

FESTIVE RHYTHM: A vendor displays traditional ghumots by the roadside in Tivrem on Tuesday. With Chaturthi around the corner, demand for these traditional instruments is on the rise. Narayan Pissurlenkar

Power billing will be streamlined by October, assures Dhavalikar

THE GOAN I NETWORK

PANAJI

Power Minister Ramkrishna (Sudin) Dhavalikar has assured consumers that the Electricity Department will streamline its billing system within three months, promising resolution of inflated bill complaints by October.

Speaking to journalists after Tuesday's cabinet meeting, Dhavalikar noted that there were complaints over continued high electricity bills and the Electricity Department had sought three months to streamline the system.

He said, he expects the issues to be resolved by October even as he stressed that discrepancies linked to fines for sanctioned load breaches have been addressed and adjustments will reflect in the billing of upcoming cycles.

Refunds due will be credited against bills, he reiterated.

The assurance comes amid persistent public anger over steep charges. Households across Goa continue to report inflated bills despite earlier government promises of relief.

The controversy had begun earlier this summer when households received unusually high bills and officials had attributed the surge to usage beyond sanctioned load.

More ore blocks in pipeline for auction before elections

TENDER NOTICES LIKELY AHEAD OF POLL CODE

THE GOAN I NETWORK

PANAJI

The Directorate of Mines and Geology (DMG) has initiated the process of identifying additional iron ore mineral blocks for auction, with the fifth phase of auctions tentatively planned before the Model Code of Conduct comes into force for the 2027 Goa Assembly elections, which are due in February.

Sources said the department is currently undertaking mineral resource estimation for mining leases where geological surveys have already been completed. Once the estimation is finalised, the DMG will identify the mineral blocks that can be offered in the fifth phase of auctions.

"Once the resources estimation process is complete, we will be able to zero in on the mineral blocks that will go for auction in the fifth phase," sources said, adding that Notices Inviting Tenders are likely to be issued before the election code comes into force.

The exercise, however, will have to remain within the annual 20 million tonne production ceiling imposed by the Supreme Court. The total environmental clearance capacity of the mineral blocks auctioned through the four NITs conducted so far is around 18.5 million tonnes.

The Geological Survey of India has been roped in to prepare detailed geological reports for the blocks. "We have a 20 million tonne production ceiling annually. We have to restrict within that," sources said.

The Sun is not shining on Goa's solar dream

THE GOAN I NETWORK

PANAJI

The State is lagging behind its target for rooftop solar installations and considering its current move, it will have to increase the pace of installations nearly seven-fold to achieve its 21, 200 installation target for the current financial year, according to data available with the Goa Energy Development Agency (GEDA).

GEDA officials said the State is currently installing an average of around 10 rooftop solar panels a day, whereas the pace needs to increase to nearly 70 panels a day to meet the annual target of 21,200 installations.

Till July, 3,369 rooftop solar panels had been installed in Goa, accounting for only 16 per cent of the FY 2026-27 target.

Of the 4,556 applications received, 3,369 systems have been installed. Officials said monsoon conditions, including difficulties in site visits, rooftop inspections and installation work, have slowed implementation.

The government now plans greater awareness campaigns, targeting cooperative housing societies, improving access to loans, introducing a utility-led aggregation model for 1-3 kW consumers and setting strict monthly installation milestones.

However, in terms of electricity generation capacity, the state has achieved 27.74 MW out of the targeted 65 MW, or around 43 per cent of the capacity target.

Officials said the difference between the number of installations and capacity achieved is because vendors are installing larger-capacity systems. As a result, fewer individual installations can still contribute significantly to the overall megawatt capacity. "Focus is also on to promote large-scale rooftop solar installations in both new and existing buildings, including hotels, government offices, and housing complexes," official said.

WHAT GEDA DATA REVEALS

- Currently around 10 rooftop solar systems per day being installed
- Installation pace needs to rise to nearly 70 systems per day to meet annual target of 21,200 installations
- Till July, 3,369 rooftop solar systems installed, achieving only 16% of the FY 2026-27 target
- Of 4,556 applications received, 3,369 systems have been installed
- Around 1,187 applications still pending
- Monsoon conditions slows work due to difficulties in site visits, rooftop inspections & installations

WHAT GOVT PLANS TO DO...

- **Awareness campaigns to promote rooftop solar**
- Target cooperative housing societies for wider adoption
- **Improve access to loans for solar installations**
- Set strict monthly installation targets

Briefs

GANDHINAGAR

NHRC issue notices to Gujarat chief secretary, DGP in Bhavnagar spurious liquor tragedy

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India, has taken suo motu cognizance of media reports that at least nine people died and 39 others were hospitalised in critical condition after consuming spurious Indian--Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL) in Bhavnagar district, Gujarat, a press release said. Notably, the death toll has risen to 13 as of today.As per the NHRC, the illicit liquor was spiked with a high concentration of methanol and was being sold in counterfeit bottles bearing the label of a popular brand. The illicit liquor racket came to light during an investigation into an accidental death case registered following the death of a police recruit.The Commission has observed that the contents of the news reports, if true, raise serious issues of human rights violations.

BHUJ

Illegal Army uniform trade busted in Kutch

Military Intelligence and Bhuj Police have launched a joint operation against the alleged illegal sale and storage of Army uniforms in Kutch, raiding two army and sports stores in Bhuj and Madhapar and seizing a large quantity of combat uniform material.The raids were conducted at Dhaka Army General Store near Bhuj RTO Circle and Raghav Army and Sports Store in Madhapar, following inputs received by the police and Military Intelligence.During the searches, officials seized 128 metres of combat uniform fabric, 50 pairs of combat dresses, 280 Army-style caps, and 36 coats and jackets.The seizure of a substantial quantity of combat uniform fabric and ready-made garments has raised concerns over the alleged unauthorised storage and sale of Army-pattern uniforms in the open market.

DAMAN

Direct flights connecting Daman with Ahmedabad

The Union Territory of Daman has received a major boost to its tourism and transport connectivity with the launch of direct air services to Ahmedabad and Mumbai. The services, operated by Alliance Air from Tuesday, will allow tourists and local residents to travel between Daman and the two major cities by air at relatively affordable fares.The new services are part of the Centre's efforts under the UDAN (Ude Desh Ka Aam Naagrik) scheme, which aims to make air travel more accessible to the common citizen by improving connectivity to regional destinations.As per the schedule issued by Alliance Air, the flight will take off from Mumbai at 7:05 am and land in Daman at 7:45 am. It will then depart from Daman at 8:10 am and arrive in Ahmedabad at 9:20 am.

SURAT

Govt schools to remain open on four Sundays

Students of government schools in Surat will have to attend classes on four Sundays in September and October, as the City Primary Education Committee (Nagar Prathmik Shikshan Samiti) has decided to keep schools open to compensate for academic days lost due to holidays declared during heavy rains.The decision comes after schools were given four additional holidays in July and August due to heavy rainfall. Holidays were declared on July 24 and 25, and July 31 and August 1.As per the decision of the Primary Education Committee, government schools will conduct academic activities on September 6, September 13, September 27 and October 4, despite these dates falling on Sundays.

SURGE | Onion prices in Gujarat have surged to Rs 60-70 per kg as rain-hit supplies from Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh trigger shortages and higher wholesale rates

Onion prices surge to Rs 70/kg across Gujarat

FPJ News Service
AHMEDABAD

The humble onion is becoming an expensive kitchen staple in Gujarat, with retail prices rising from Rs 35-40 to Rs 60-70 per kg in just 15 days. Traders warn that prices could climb another Rs 15-20 as rain-hit supplies from major producing states remain disrupted.

Onions arriving from Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh have declined sharply after rains affected stocks and quality. Ahmedabad traders said wholesale prices have increased by Rs 10-15 in a week, forcing retailers to sell onions at around Rs 40-50 per kg before other costs.

"Farmers lost around 25 per cent of their stock in the fields due to quality issues, while another 25 per cent had to be removed immediately. Only the remaining stock is reaching markets," said Amarjeet, an Ahmedabad APMC trader.

Another trader, Anvarbhai, said supply shortages were becoming severe. "If a trader orders two 12-tonne vehicles, only one may arrive. Those ordering four vehicles are receiving supplies equivalent to just two," he said.

The impact is also visible in Rajkot and Surat. In Rajkot, the price of an onion maund has reportedly doubled from around Rs 500 to Rs 1,000. In Surat, wholesale prices of good-quality onions have risen to Rs 800-1,000 per 20 kg.

Babu Sheikh, a Surat APMC wholesaler, said prices would remain elevated until fresh arrivals begin. "Only the arrival of the new crop can bring prices under control," he said.

Traders expect the shortage to persist for another one to three months. Consumers, meanwhile, are cutting purchases as household budgets come under pressure.

"Onions and potatoes are daily necessities. At Rs 60-65 a kg, the increase has badly affected the household budget," said Vadodara consumer Kishan Singh.

Shraddha Kapoor's Palmonas jewellery showroom robbed

FPJ News Service
SURAT

A high-profile jewellery showroom linked to Bollywood actor Shraddha Kapoor became the target of a pre--dawn theft in Surat's Adajan area on Tuesday, triggering a major police investigation and concern among local traders.

The showroom of Palmonas, a jewellery brand co-founded by Shraddha Kapoor, was allegedly targeted in the early hours when an unidentified man broke the lock of the main shutter and entered the premises.

According to police, the accused then smashed glass display cases and escaped with jewellery. The entire incident was captured on the showroom's CCTV cameras, with footage showing one person entering the premises and carrying out the theft.

The incident caused a stir in the locality, with senior police officials and teams from Adajan Police Station reaching the showroom soon after the theft was reported.

Adajan Police Inspector N.A. Chavda said the exact value of the stolen jewellery was yet to be determined.

An unidentified man broke the lock of the main shutter and entered the premises

"QR codes and barcodes are linked to the products in the showroom. We are matching the physical stock with the company's software and inventory records. The exact quantity and value of the stolen jewellery will be known after the stock audit," Chavda said.

Police and Crime Branch teams have secured CCTV footage from the showroom as well as cameras installed along major roads in the surrounding area. Investigators are examining the footage to establish the accused's route before and after the theft.

More than three police teams have been formed to trace the suspect and determine whether he had accomplices waiting outside.

Investigators are also examining how the accused managed to open the shutter lock and whether the theft was planned in advance.

The police have launched a search operation to identify and apprehend the accused. Further details about the stolen jewellery are expected after the completion of the inventory verification.

Gujarat Anganwadi workers send 4.5 lakh rakhis to soldiers

FPJ News Service
GANDHINAGAR

More than 4.50 lakh Rakhis prepared by Gujarat's Anganwadi workers will reach soldiers guarding the nation's borders this Raksha Bandhan, turning a traditional festival into a heartfelt expression of gratitude for the armed forces.

The Rakhis were sent under the state's "Ek Rakhi Desh Ke Jawano Ke Naam" initiative, which has been observed for the past three years to honour soldiers who celebrate festivals away from their families.

Deputy Chief Minister Harsh Sanghavi and Women and Child Welfare Minister Dr Manisha Vakil were present when the Raksha Sutra Kalash was symbolically handed over to senior personnel representing the Army, Air Force, Navy, BSF and CRPF.

"Soldiers remain away from their families while dedicating themselves to protecting the country. These Rakhis carry the prayers, affection and gratitude of Gujarat's women for their safety and service," officials said.

The initiative aims to create an emotional connection between soldiers at the borders and families back home. The Rakhis were collected from Anganwadi workers across Gujarat and sent as a gesture of solidarity and respect.

MANTRA, Dawoodi Bohras explore textile opportunities for entrepreneurs

Melvyn Thomas
SURAT

A new pathway into textiles and modern manufacturing is being explored for Dawoodi Bohra entrepreneurs, with Surat-based Man-Made Textile Research Association (MANTRA) holding talks with the Dawoodi Bohra Department of Economic Affairs (DBDEA) in Mumbai to provide technical and business support across the textile value chain.

A MANTRA delegation led by Director Dr Pankaj Gandhi, Deputy Director Dr Hitesh Jariwala and engineer Himanshu Desai met the DBDEA Economic Advisory Board at Wallace Street, Fort, Mumbai, on August 24. Discussions focused on creating new business opportunities and helping entrepreneurs establish sustainable textile ventures.

The proposed support would cover pre-feasibility and technical feasibility studies, preparation of detailed project reports, factory design and planning, machinery selection, product development, sample production, quality testing and commissioning of manufacturing units.

The initiative would also extend beyond setting up a business, with entrepreneurs receiving continuing technical guidance after production begins.

"Technical support should not end when a manufacturing unit starts production. Entrepreneurs need guidance on quality, product modification, testing and technical challenges as their businesses grow," officials said during the discussions.

The proposed model follows a seven-stage approach — "Learn, Train, Start Business, Invest, Grow, Diversify and Solve Problems" — designed to help entrepreneurs make informed decisions at every stage.

Participants also discussed launching the initiative from Surat as a pilot. With Surat being one of India's major textile production, processing and trading hubs, officials believe its industrial ecosystem could provide a practical model that can later be replicated across other textile centres.

Banswara Garments in Daman fined Rs.1.47 crore for air pollution

FPJ News Service
DAMAN

A garment manufacturing unit in Daman has been slapped with an environmental compensation of Rs 1.47 crore for alleged violations of air and water pollution control norms, exposing continued concerns over industrial emissions in the Union Territory.

The Pollution Control Committee (PCC), Daman, issued a closure order against Banswara Garments, a unit of Banswara Syntex Limited located in Kadaiya, on August 18. The action followed alleged non-compliance with provisions of the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974, and the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981.

According to the order, the company has been directed to deposit the environmental compensation through a demand draft. Its power connection will be restored only after payment of the imposed amount and compliance with the committee's directions.

Officials said the unit had already been issued a notice around two months before the closure action but allegedly failed to undertake the required corrective measures.

The company has also been directed to install an adequately sized Air Pollution Control Device (APCD) and keep it operational throughout the production process. It must conduct regular emission monitoring, maintain records and ensure compliance with prescribed stack-emission standards.

"The unit has to ensure that the required pollution--control equipment remains operational throughout production and that emission standards are strictly followed," officials said.

The action has also raised questions over why corrective measures were not taken earlier. According to the information provided, installation of an APCD costing around Rs 15 lakh could potentially have helped prevent continued pollution--related violations and the subsequent financial penalty.

NSUI protests alleged Gujarat University grant scam in A'bad

FPJ News Service
AHMEDABAD

A protest over alleged financial irregularities at Gujarat University turned dramatic as around 200 NSUI workers entered the Vice Chancellor's office, raised slogans against former Vice Chancellor Neerja Gupta and showered fake currency notes on the in-charge Vice Chancellor.

The protesters demanded that a police complaint be registered against Gupta within 72 hours over allegations linked to the use of a grant of around Rs 40 crore received under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram (PMJVK).

NSUI warned that failure to file the complaint within the deadline would trigger a shutdown of colleges affiliated with Gujarat University. Protesters also threatened to blacken the face of the Chancellor as part of their agitation.

The student organisation alleged that Gupta had appointed herself as the Principal Investigator of the PMJVK project while serving as Vice Chancellor and received additional remuneration of around Rs 4.20 lakh apart from her salary.

Another serious allegation concerns a transfer of Rs 9.84 lakh from the grant-linked account to the bank account of Gupta's son, who is based in Germany. NSUI also questioned the absence of utilisation details for more than half of the Rs 40-crore grant.

The protesters further alleged that Gupta had appointed 10 assistants to key posts, including director-level positions, allegedly in violation of UGC norms. Controversy also erupted after some employees were reportedly paid salaries higher than that of the Vice Chancellor.

Gujarat flags off 500 new Janrakshak vehicles

FPJ News Service
GANDHINAGAR

Gujarat has strengthened its emergency response network with the addition of 500 new state-of-the-art '112-Janrakshak' vehicles, taking the total fleet deployed across the state to 1,000.

Deputy Chief Minister Harsh Sanghavi flagged off the vehicles from Nava Sachivalay in Gandhinagar on Tuesday, describing the initiative as a major step towards faster assistance to citizens in distress.

"Public safety remains our priority. The 112 emergency service is being strengthened so that police assistance reaches citizens faster and more effectively," Minister of State for Home Kamlesh Patel said.

The Janrakshak system uses a 150-seat call centre, Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) technology and caller-location systems. These measures have helped bring Gujarat's average police response time down to 10 minutes and 49 seconds.

With the deployment of the additional vehicles and upgraded technology, the state aims to reduce the response time to below eight minutes.

The 112 panic-button facility has also been integrated with Ola, Uber, Rapido and Bharat Taxi, expanding access to emergency assistance.

In just 11 months of the Janrakshak Project, integrated services were provided in more than 11.04 lakh emergency calls, while immediate assistance was delivered in over 6.74 lakh police emergency incidents.

Jivraj9 Tea Group donates ₹12 lakh ventilator to hospital

FPJ News Service
SURAT

A ₹12 lakh contribution by Jivraj9 Tea Group is set to strengthen critical-care infrastructure at New Sheth P. T. Multispeciality Hospital in Surat, with the company donating a ventilator to support patients requiring advanced respiratory assistance.

The contribution is aimed at creating long-term healthcare capacity rather than providing a one-time intervention. The ventilator will become part of the hospital's critical-care infrastructure and can be used whenever patients require intensive respiratory support.

Rushabh Shah, Executive Director, Jivraj9 Tea Group, said the company wanted its contribution to create lasting value for the community.

"We wanted our contribution to create capability. A ventilator becomes part of a hospital's infrastructure and can be called upon whenever a patient needs critical respiratory support. For us, that makes this ₹12 lakh contribution meaningful—not because of the equipment itself, but because of the lives it can potentially support over its useful life," Shah said.

Sunil K. Modi, President, New Sheth P. T. Multispeciality Hospital, welcomed the contribution, saying stronger infrastructure is essential to improving a hospital's ability to respond to critical cases.

offgrid

Khijadiya becomes Gujarat's black-necked stork breeding stronghold

FPJ News Service
GANDHINAGAR

Four nests, eight fledglings and a 100% fledging success rate have placed Gujarat's Khijadiya Bird Sanctuary firmly on the map as a key breeding habitat for the Black-necked Stork, one of India's most striking wetland birds.

A new study by scientists of the Gujarat Ecological Education and Research (GEER) Foundation has confirmed the sanctuary's importance for the species. The research, published in the peer-reviewed Journal of Threatened Taxa, examined the population, breeding ecology, nesting behaviour and habitat conditions between July 2024 and March 2025.

"One of the most significant findings was the confirmation of four active Black-necked Stork nests. Each breeding pair successfully produced two fledglings, resulting in a total of eight juveniles," said B.P. Pati, Director, GEER Foundation.

The researchers conducted surveys across 48 georeferenced sampling points covering eight management zones, generating more than 320 hours of field observations.

The study found that all four nests were built on Neltuma juliflora trees, commonly known as gando baval, at heights of three to 4.5 metres. The findings indicate the storks can adapt to suitable invasive trees when traditional native nesting trees are limited.

Forest and Environment Minister Arjun Modhwadia congratulated the research team, saying the findings would help develop "more focused and effective conservation measures".

Minister of State for Forests and Environment Pravin Mali said the findings highlighted Gujarat's efforts to protect its natural heritage, particularly the Ramsar-designated sanctuary.

Researchers found that successful nesting was closely linked to shallow wetlands, emergent vegetation, elevated nesting sites, abundant aquatic prey and low human disturbance. Water depths around nesting sites ranged between 0.3 and 0.7 metres.

The birds also displayed remarkable parental cooperation. During 89 monitoring visits, adults attended nests for an average of 62 minutes per visit. In 94% of observed foraging departures, one parent returned to replace the other.

"The coordinated biparental care ensures continuous protection and care of eggs and chicks," said Dr Sandeep Munjpara, Scientist, GEER Foundation.

No nest abandonment, predation or chick mortality was recorded during the study. Juveniles also continued receiving food from parents after fledging, indicating prolonged parental care.

Located along the Central Asian Flyway, Khijadiya combines freshwater and saline habitats that support resident and migratory birds. The latest findings strengthen its status as a critical breeding landscape for Black-necked Storks in western India.

Surat pushes for Gujarat High Court Circuit Bench

FPJ News Service
GANDHINAGAR

The long-standing demand for a Gujarat High Court Circuit Bench in Surat has gained fresh momentum, with six Bar Council of Gujarat members elected from Surat submitting a representation to Governor Acharya Devvrat.

The campaign seeks to address the difficulties faced by citizens and lawyers from South Gujarat, who currently have to travel to Ahmedabad for High Court proceedings. The proposed circuit bench would serve people from Surat, Bharuch, Navsari, Valsad, Tapi and Dang.

The representation was submitted by Zaki Sheikh, Preeti Joshi, Hitesh Patel, Hiral Panwala, Bhavesh Rabari and Haresh Nakrani.

The members said the growing population, increasing litigation and pending cases made a stronger case for bringing High Court services closer to South Gujarat.

"The demand for a circuit bench at Surat is not only a demand of lawyers, but a demand related to the right to justice and easy access to justice of lakhs of citizens of South Gujarat," the six members said.

According to the representatives, establishing a circuit bench could significantly reduce the time and expenses incurred by litigants and lawyers travelling to Ahmedabad.

SC to HC: Hear all med matters of gas victims

Seeks time-bound compliance with its August 2012 judgment

Our Staff Reporter
BHOPAL

The Supreme Court (SC) has directed the MP High Court to consider the medical matter concerning Bhopal gas victims urgently and ensure that compliance with the SC judgement of August 2012 be carried out in a time-bound manner.

The Bhopal medical contempt matter was taken up by the SC division bench of Justice Narasimaha and Justice Alok Aradhe. The Monitoring Committee will play a crucial role in ensuring compliance with the judgement. A dedicated bench of MP HC will hear this matter on a monthly basis.

This Public Interest Litigation (PIL) shall stand transferred to the jurisdictional bench of the HC for better and effective control in this case. All applications filed hence-forth shall be dealt with and disposed of by the concerned bench of the HC, in line with the various orders passed by this court, so as to ensure proper functioning of the 'Relief and Rehabilitation Programme', working of the expert bodies and utmost medical care and treatment to the gas victims. The SC said that Chief Justice of the MP HC ensures that the case is dealt with by a bench presided over by the Chief Justice himself or a bench presided over by the senior-most judge or any other appropriate bench in accordance with the HC rules or any special legislation governing the subject in that behalf. SC Monitoring Committee member Purnendu Shukla said, The SC has instructed for dedicated bench of HC to hear all medical matter.

REMARKS ON COLONEL SOFIYA | As decision was taken secretly, other than officials concerned, rest were told to keep out of the meeting. Now, the file will be sent to the governor

SIT finds Shah guilty but Cabinet refuses trial nod

Our Staff Reporter
BHOPAL

The cabinet on Tuesday turned down the SIT's demand for prosecution of Tribal Welfare Minister Vijay Shah for making comments on Colonel Sofiya Qureshi.

An inquiry panel formed by the Supreme Court probed the case. On the basis of evidence and statements of various people, the SIT considered that Shah had commented against Qureshi. The cabinet on Tuesday turned down the SIT's demand for prosecution of Tribal Welfare Minister Vijay Shah for making comments on Colonel Sofiya Qureshi.

The SIT sought the state government's approval to prosecute Shah according to the provisions of section 196(1)(a) of the Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita (BNS). The cabinet secretly took the decision on the issue. After the completion of the regular agenda of the cabinet, other than the officers concerned, the rest of them had to leave the cabinet hall.

Besides the ministers, chief secretary Ashok Barnwal, additional chief secretary Neeraj Mandloi, ACS (Home) Sanjay Shukla, ACS (General Administration Department) Sheo Shekhar Shukla, and secretary (law) stayed in the hall.

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav said Shah had already tendered apologies thrice for the remark. When Yadav said the cabinet decided not to give permission for his prosecution, all cabinet members supported him.

Those who participated in the meeting were advised to keep the decision secret.

Now, the government will send the file to the governor. Once the governor gives his nod, the state will submit an affidavit in the apex court, informing it about the decision over not giving permission to prosecute Shah.

SHAH PRESENT DURING MEET
When the cabinet held the discussion, Vijay Shah remained there. The government put up the proposal in Shah's presence, but the persons on whom the government or any other organisation takes a decision stay away from the meeting, but it did not happen in the case of Shah.

Shah faced criticism for calling Col Sofiya terrorists' sister
During Operation Sindoor, Vijay Shah made a community-based remark against Colonel Sofiya Qureshi, calling her the sister of terrorists. Shah said, "Those killed the husbands of Indian women and sent their sisters to teach India a lesson." Shah's remark sparked criticism across the country. The high court took an exception to the remark and ordered registering an FIR against him. Shah filed a petition in the Supreme Court which set up an SIT.

352 of MP's 413 ULBs lack sewage treatment facilities

Our Staff Reporter
BHOPAL

As many as 352 of Madhya Pradesh's 413 urban local bodies currently lack sewage treatment facilities, with untreated sewage and sludge flowing into rivers and other water bodies, including the Narmada, Shipra and Chambal. The National Green Tribunal (NGT) on Tuesday expressed serious concern over the situation and directed the state government to take time-bound corrective measures.

According to the state government's report examined by the NGT, 1,315 drains in these 352 urban bodies are carrying around 637 MLD of sewage and sludge into water sources. Sewage treatment plants with a combined capacity of 736 MLD have been proposed for these areas but the report does not clearly specify their completion timelines.

932.944 MLD sewage discharged through 311 drains

12.67 lakh homes outside sewer network

The situation remains a concern even in 61 urban bodies where sewage treatment infrastructure is available. These bodies generate around 2,075.86 MLD of sewage, while only 1,117.49 MLD is reportedly being treated. The NGT has assessed the overall sewage treatment gap in the state at 1,542.18 MLD. The tribunal noted that 311 drains in these 61 bodies are discharging 932.944 MLD of sewage and sludge. As many as 12,67,626 households remain unconnected to existing sewer networks, allowing black and grey water to enter drains and eventually reach rivers and other water bodies.

Major cities face sewage problem

The NGT specifically highlighted sewage discharge through drains in Bhopal, Indore, Ujjain, Jabalpur, Gwalior, Sagar and Dewas. It directed the 61 urban bodies to ensure 100% sewer connectivity and operate STPs at their prescribed capacity. The remaining 352 bodies have been asked to prepare time-bound sewage management plans.

12.86 lakh tonnes of legacy waste remains

Solid waste management has also come under scrutiny. About 12.86 lakh metric tonnes of legacy waste remains in 110 urban bodies and has been ordered to be cleared by December 2026. The NGT also questioned the reliability of the state's data, noting that it was based on information from all 413 urban bodies without adequate ground verification. District collectors will now verify waste collection, segregation, transportation, processing and legacy waste management and submit reports to the chief secretary.

No stitched uniforms, govt to transfer money directly to students

DBT-BASED SYSTEM: To replace distribution of stitched uniforms to government school students

Rishita Tomar
BHOPAL

The school education department has decided to return to the system of transferring uniform assistance directly into students' bank accounts through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT), moving away from the distribution of stitched uniforms.

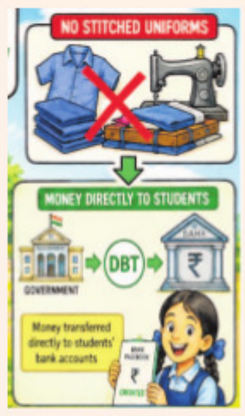
The decision was taken during department's review meeting held on Tuesday. School education minister Uday Pratap Singh has directed officials to begin preparations for implementing the DBT-based system, following the directions of chief minister Mohan Yadav.

Government school dress. File photo

According to UDISE+ 2025-26 data, Madhya Pradesh has 56,62,228 students enrolled in Class 1 to 8 in government schools. Of them, 34,36,341 students are in Class 1 to 5 and 22,25,887 are in Class 6 to 8.

HC stay on uniform tender

The decision comes amid the uncertainty surrounding the state's latest uniform procurement process. In June, the Cabinet had approved the distribution of stitched uniforms to government school students from Class 1 to 8, replacing the earlier Rs 600 clothing allowance. Following the decision, Madhya Pradesh Textbook Corporation floated an open tender worth around Rs 350 crore on June 3 for supplying uniforms. However, Madhya Pradesh High Court imposed an interim stay on the tender. The department had planned to award the contract to a single company but the tender was subsequently cancelled following court's intervention.



Uniform scheme changed several times

The uniform assistance scheme has undergone repeated changes. Till 2018, students received cash assistance to purchase uniforms. The government then shifted to direct distribution of uniforms. However, complaints about incorrect sizes and irregularities prompted a return to cash transfers in 2019. In 2023-24, the government again adopted the uniform distribution model, this time through Self-Help Groups (SHGs). Complaints of poor fabric quality and delayed delivery, however, continued. In several districts, distribution had not even started by February 2024. The department subsequently decided to transfer uniform assistance directly into students' bank accounts through DBT. In 2024-25, about 54 lakh students received uniform assistance through the DBT system.

Teachers' tyre tube ride to school to mark e-attendance on time

FP News Service
BHIND

The disconnect between digital governance and ground reality is stark: teachers in a remote village risk their lives on inner tubes to cross a rain-swollen stream to reach school on time, and mark their mandatory e-attendance in Bhind.

The incident took place in Gram Panchayat Babedi, Bhind - the access route connecting Nadrauli and Sumer Singh Ka Pura gets completely cut off when monsoon rains fill the seasonal Khar.

With no culvert or safe passage available, teachers, students and villagers are left with the dangerous option of crossing the strong current on inner tubes. In the video, a teacher at Nadrauli Primary School balancing himself on an inner tube while crossing the flooded stream has brought the issue into focus.

The waterlogged route reportedly remains disrupted for nearly four months every monsoon, making commuting on foot or by bike virtually impossible.

The e-attendance system has added another layer to the hardship. Government school teachers are required to reach their institutions within a specified time and register attendance online.

In a recent case from Chhatarpur, teachers were reportedly forced to climb school rooftops to catch mobile network signals and mark their attendance through the 'Humare Shikshak' mobile application.

Despite the absence of a safe route and a lack of network in rural areas, teachers are making life risky to avoid being marked absent.

Villagers said the problem is repeated every year, yet their demand for a permanent culvert or safe access road has remained unanswered. Residents questioned whether the realities of remote rural areas were considered before strict online attendance requirements were enforced.

Ask colleges to face CBI probe: SC tells nursing students

Says students can take exams at CBI-cleared colleges; others may be shifted

Our Staff Reporter
BHOPAL

The Supreme Court (SC) on Tuesday told Madhya Pradesh nursing students to approach the managements to whom they had paid fees or donations and insist that the colleges face a CBI probe.

Students' counsel argued that the colleges were inspected following the court's directions and students took admission after those inspections, so they should be allowed to appear for examinations.

The Chief Justice of India said the SC was not concerned with that. The SC said once the CBI gives a college a "green check", students can take the examination there. If a college is not cleared, students can be shifted to another institution for the examination. The SC was hearing pleas by MP nursing students seeking permission to appear for examinations despite their colleges being under scrutiny.

The students had challenged the Aug 13 High Court order refusing to permit students from colleges in the Gwalior-Chambal region to appear for examinations. The HC observed that faculty duplication had not been examined during the earlier probe conducted by a 10-member committee constituted by the Gwalior Bench in 2021. It declined relief in the absence of a CBI inquiry. Students' counsel said the affected students were admitted during the 2020-21 and 2021-22 academic sessions. Their colleges were found to comply with prescribed rules and criteria by a committee constituted following the Supreme Court's directions.

The High Court on Tuesday said that if the colleges submit an undertaking to face a CBI investigation and obtain a clarification to this effect from the Supreme Court, examinations of their students can be conducted according to their category after the CBI investigation

4 arrested, minor detained, in schoolgirl gang-rape case

Jabalpur: A 14-year-old schoolgirl was allegedly kidnapped and gang-raped by a group of youths in Jabalpur. Police have arrested four suspects and detained another minor in connection with the case.

According to police, the prime suspect, identified as Nikhil Singh Rajput, had befriended the girl and allegedly sexually assaulted her. He is also suspected of recording a video of the incident.

Police said the suspects allegedly used the video to threaten and blackmail the girl. After learning about the video, his associates allegedly joined him in sexually assaulting the minor. According to the complaint, the girl was allegedly taken to different locations on two occasions. In one incident, four suspects allegedly took turns assaulting her inside a car on Dec 2, 2025. On another occasion, they allegedly took her to a dilapidated building on Aug 20, 2026 and sexually assaulted her.

Govt to guarantee Rs 4,600 cr MPRDC loan from Nabard

Our Staff Reporter
BHOPAL

The State Cabinet on Tuesday approved the proposal to provide government guarantee to loan of Rs 4,600 crore to be taken by Madhya Pradesh Road Development Corporation (MPRDC) from NABARD Infrastructure Development Assistance. Overall, proposals worth Rs 10,630 crore for infrastructure, health, cyber security and social welfare works were cleared during the Cabinet meeting.

The MPRDC will take loan to develop 12 routes to improve the road connectivity. They include Bhopal-Vidisha, Khalghat-Manawar-Mangod, Mandsaur-Sitamau, Sitamau-Basai-Suwasara, eastern Bhopal bypass 4 lane to 6 lane with paved shoulder, Neemuch-Manasa-Rampura-Jhalawad route SS 7, Indore-Depalpur route four-lane with paved shoulder, 2 lanes of State Highway 7 from Neemuch-Manasa-Rampura-Jhalawad route, Dinara-Datia-Sewda route, Agar-Sarangpur route, Soyat-Machalpur-Jeerapur route, Rahatgarh, Khurai to Khimlasa route, Singhpur-Koti-Birsinghpur Semaria Gohad-Sirmore route.

Corporation to borrow from NIDA for 12 routes to improve road connectivity

244 posts for Dhanvantari medical univ

About 244 posts were sanctioned for Ujjain-based Dhanvantari Medical University and Rs 80 crore were approved under MPCERT Scheme for cyber security management. The proposal authorising EOW under BNS 2023 was also approved.

22 roads to be transferred to MPRDC

The ownership of 22 main roads will be transferred on token price to MPRDC.

In lieu of this, Board of Directors, MPRDC, will issue share in favour of state government. The loan interest and loan repayment will be made through the toll collection and other resources of transferred roads.

Rs 3,960 cr for 91.64 km Seoni-Balaghat road

A sum of Rs 3,960.9 crore was approved for construction and other works of 91.64-km long Seoni Balaghat road. It will be 4-lane along with paved shoulder.

For land acquisition and other works needed before construction along with supervision charges, sum of Rs 501.16 crore was also sanctioned. This route will benefit about eight lakh people.

offgrid

HC settles 72-yr-old dispute over Ram Mandir

First appeal registered in 1968 in a case arisen from a civil suit filed in 1954

Atul Gautam
INDORE

The Indore Bench of the Madhya Pradesh High Court has settled a 72-year-old dispute over the management of Shree Ram Mandir in Khachrod, Ujjain district, holding that deity Shree Ram is the absolute owner of the temple and its movable and immovable properties. The shrine will remain under State management through the Revenue Department.

Justice Vinay Saraf pronounced the judgment on Tuesday in a first appeal filed in 1968, arising from a civil suit filed in 1954 by Ratandas, son of Murlidas Bairagi. The dispute concerned the temple's management, status of its priest, control over its properties and the role of the Maheshwari community.

Ratandas claimed the temple was established by Baba Mayaramdas and that, under Ramanand sect customs, its Mahant and priest were selected according to traditional practices. He

sought the right to manage the temple and its properties and an injunction against alleged interference by the Maheshwari community.

The State and Maheshwari community disputed his claims, maintaining that the temple belonged to the community and Ratandas was only a priest appointed under the Auqaf administration.

The High Court found that Mahant Murlidas had approached Auqaf authorities to bring the temple under State supervision. On Oct 15, 1930, the Auqaf Department took the temple and its properties under State control. The court held that the arrangement had attained finality and the State, through the Auqaf Department now merged with the Revenue Department was the temple's manager.

The court found that Ramanand sect ascetics performed the Bhekh ceremony and nominated Ratandas as Mahant. The Auqaf Committee later appointed him priest and handed him charge of the temple in 1948. The charge was later withdrawn following objections from Maheshwari community members.

The High Court set aside the trial court's 1968 judgment dismissing Ratandas' suit. It declared Shree Ram the absolute owner of the temple at Ramolla, Khachrod, and all its movable and immovable properties. It also held that the Auqaf Department had the authority to appoint the priest and recognised Ratandas as the duly appointed Pujari, entitled to perform priestly duties.

However, the court declined Ratandas' plea for a perpetual injunction against the Maheshwari community, noting that its members are devotees of the temple.

The dispute had earlier reached the Supreme Court. A 1993 High Court judgment allowing the appeal was set aside by the Supreme Court in 2020, which remanded the matter for fresh consideration on merits.

The judgment thus recognises the deity's ownership, continued State management and Ratandas' status as Pujari, while allowing Maheshwari community members to continue as devotees.

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Briefs

GORAKHPUR

800 Buses for Raksha Bandhan

Around 800 buses were put into operation in Gorakhpur to manage the rush of passengers during Raksha Bandhan. The special arrangements aimed to help sisters travelling to meet their brothers and ensure smoother connectivity across the region. Additional services were deployed on busy routes to reduce waiting time and ease crowding. The Uttar Pradesh government has also announced special bus arrangements during the festival period, including free travel for women on state-run buses.

LUCKNOW

UP Transport Crackdown Intensifies

The Uttar Pradesh Transport Department has intensified its crackdown on irregularities, taking action against 10 passenger-tax officers following inspections at 13 Regional Transport Offices (RTOs). The swift action was initiated under the direction of the Transport Commissioner, who has emphasized stricter monitoring and accountability within the department. The move is aimed at improving enforcement, curbing negligence and ensuring greater transparency in transport-related operations across the state.

VARANASI

Rain Turns Deadly

Heavy rain in Varanasi turned fatal as four people lost their lives in separate incidents. A father and his son reportedly died after coming into contact with an electric current amid waterlogging and rain-related hazards. In another incident, a husband and wife were killed when a wall collapsed during the downpour. The deaths have highlighted the dangers posed by intense rainfall, exposed electrical wiring and weakened structures.

LUCKNOW

24x7 Grocery and Cafe Opens

A new 24x7 grocery and cafe outlet, 'Anything Anytime Anywhere', opened at Husadiya Chauraha in Gomti Nagar, Lucknow, on Tuesday. Former Uttar Pradesh DGP Dr. Suryakumar Shukla inaugurated the outlet. Owner Nikita Tawar said the store aims to meet customers' everyday needs round the clock. It offers groceries, pizza, coffee, cold drinks, dairy products, sweets and ice cream. Nikita also highlighted women's growing role in entrepreneurship and said she aims to build her career independently.

AGRA

Dog Attack Injures Elderly Woman

An elderly woman was seriously injured after being attacked by a stray dog in Agra, Uttar Pradesh. The dog reportedly bit her on the forehead and below the eye, leaving deep wounds on her face. She was rushed for medical treatment following the incident. The attack has raised concerns among local residents over the growing stray dog menace and the need for effective measures to prevent such incidents, particularly involving elderly people and children.

DECISION | Free Bus Travel for Elderly Women

UP Govt Tightens Property Rules for Negligent Children

UP State Bureau
LUCKNOW

60+ women to get lifelong free UPSRTC travel

The Uttar Pradesh Cabinet, chaired by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, approved a series of important proposals on Tuesday, with measures aimed at senior citizens, women, transport and youth welfare. Among the key decisions, women aged 60 years and above will get free lifelong travel on Uttar Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (UPSRTC) buses under the Lokmata Ahilyabai Matrushakti Yojana.

The move is expected to provide significant financial relief to elderly women travelling for healthcare, religious, family and social purposes. The government had already made a provision of 100 crore in the 2026-27 supplementary budget to reimburse UPSRTC for the initiative.

Another major decision concerns the protection of elderly parents. The Cabinet approved changes to the Uttar Pradesh Parents and Senior Citizens Maintenance and Welfare Rules, 2014. Under the revised framework, elderly parents facing neglect or lack of care from their children or relatives will have a stronger mechanism to seek relief. In eligible cases, action can extend to removing negligent children from property or residential premises, strengthening the legal protection available to senior citizens. A dedicated helpline has also been announced for elderly people seeking assistance. The Cabinet decisions come at a time when the state government is focusing on social security and welfare measures alongside infrastructure and economic development. The senior-citizen measures are particularly significant as they seek to address both mobility and dignity—providing elderly women greater freedom to travel while strengthening safeguards against neglect.

The Cabinet also cleared several other proposals, including the purchase of 25 lakh tablets for eligible youth under the Swami Vivekanand Yuva Sashaktikaran Yojana. The monthly stipend for MBBS interns was increased from ₹12,000 to ₹25,000.

Together, the decisions underline the government's focus on welfare, digital empowerment and stronger support systems for vulnerable sections of society.

Father-Son Attack Power Vigilance Team

UP State Bureau
HARDOI

A father-son duo in Hardoi allegedly attacked a vigilance team during an electricity theft inspection, triggering concern among officials. The team had reportedly reached the area to check suspected power theft when the two men became angry after the irregularity was detected. They allegedly confronted and assaulted members of the inspection team, disrupting the official operation. The incident was reported to the police, and action is being initiated against the accused. Officials said such attacks would not be tolerated and warned that teams conducting electricity checks must be allowed to perform their duties. The case has also highlighted continuing challenges faced by enforcement teams while cracking down on power theft.

UPI Boosted Digital Payments & Inclusion: Maurya

UP State Bureau
LUCKNOW

UPI Turns 10: India's Digital Revolution Goes Global

Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya congratulated the nation on the completion of 10 years of the Unified Payments Interface (UPI), calling it a powerful symbol of India's digital strength and technological capabilities.

Maurya said that under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, UPI has made digital payments simpler, faster, safer and more transparent while giving a major boost to financial inclusion and good governance.

He said the digital payment system has brought banking and financial services closer to ordinary citizens. Street vendors, small shopkeepers, farmers and workers, along with traders and entrepreneurs, now benefit from quick and convenient transactions through UPI.

According to Maurya, UPI has evolved from an innovative initiative into a key pillar of Digital India and Aatmanirbhar Bharat. Its success, he said, demonstrates India's growing leadership in technology and innovation and reflects the country's expanding digital capabilities on the global stage.

Ram Mandir Trust Under Spotlight Over Key Decisions

UP State Bureau
AYODHYA

Champat Rai Return Talk Amid Locker Probe

The Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust is in focus over two significant developments linked to its administration and financial records. Discussions are reportedly underway over the possible reappointment of Champat Rai as the Trust's general secretary, while forensic verification of around 30 bank lockers associated with the Ram Mandir Trust has been intensified.

According to reports, the issue of Rai's reappointment is being discussed ahead of an important meeting of the Trust. Rai has played a prominent role in the Ram temple movement and has been closely associated with the construction and administrative affairs of the temple. Any decision on his possible return to the post is expected to attract considerable attention.

At the same time, the forensic examination of nearly 30 bank lockers has emerged as another major development. Investigators are examining the lockers and related records as part of efforts to verify documents, transactions and other material associated with the Trust. The verification is expected to help establish the authenticity of records and provide clarity on financial and administrative matters.

The developments come amid increased attention on the management of temple donations, records and assets. The Trust has been facing questions over transparency and internal administrative arrangements, making the verification process particularly significant.

The upcoming Trust meeting is therefore expected to be important, with discussions likely to cover organisational appointments as well as issues related to financial records and documentation.

Meerut Beat Kanpur by 19 Runs

UP State Bureau
LUCKNOW

Meerut Mavericks defeated Kanpur Superstars by 19 runs in a rain-hit UP T20 League Season 4 match at Ekana Cricket Stadium, Lucknow. Reduced to five overs per side, Meerut posted 96/3, powered by captain Rinku Singh's 30 off 10 balls, including four sixes. Divyansh Joshi added an unbeaten 22.

Chasing 97, Kanpur made a strong start through Adarsh Singh (28) and Sameer Rizvi (22) but finished at 77/3. Legspinner Zeeshan Ansari turned the game around, taking 3/12 in two overs and dismissing Rizvi, Adarsh and Satyam Sangu. Zeeshan was named Player of the Match. Meerut also secured its seventh consecutive victory.

Flood Fury Grips Uttar Pradesh

UP State Bureau
LUCKNOW

Heavy rain and waterlogging disrupt normal life

Heavy monsoon rains continued to wreak havoc across Uttar Pradesh on Tuesday, with rivers in spate, roads waterlogged and several low-lying areas facing flood-like conditions. At least seven people were reported dead in rain- and flood-related incidents across the state during the past 24 hours. The situation remained particularly concerning in eastern and central Uttar Pradesh. In Mirzapur, heavy rainfall and rising water levels affected normal life, while a school classroom roof reportedly collapsed. The district had already witnessed disruptions linked to overflowing water bodies and heavy rain.

Varanasi was among the worst-affected urban areas, where continuous showers turned several major roads into waterlogged stretches. Residential colonies and public places also faced flooding, forcing commuters and visitors to move through knee-deep water in several locations. Schools were closed in the district amid the adverse weather.

Flood conditions were also reported in multiple districts as the Ganga, Ramganga and other rivers continued to rise. In Lakhimpur, a portion of the Tamolinpurwa Dam on the Sharda River was breached, putting nearby villages at risk. In Badaun, rising Ganga and Ramganga levels intensified concerns among residents living close to the riverbanks.

The India Meteorological Department forecast very heavy rainfall in several districts, including Prayagraj, Mirzapur, Varanasi, Kaushambi, Chitrakoot, Banda, Lalitpur and Sonbhadra. Weather officials said intensified monsoon activity was linked to a cyclonic circulation over eastern Uttar Pradesh and a low-pressure area over the Bay of Bengal.

Congress Leaders Protest in Rainwater

UP State Bureau
VARANASI

Congress leaders staged an unusual protest near the BHU Gate in Varanasi, sitting in rainwater to highlight waterlogging and civic problems. The protesters alleged that heavy rainfall had exposed inadequate drainage arrangements and caused severe inconvenience to residents and commuters. They demanded immediate action from the administration to improve drainage and prevent recurring waterlogging during the monsoon.

Akhilesh Projects SP-BJP 2027 Face-Off

UP State Bureau
LUCKNOW

Akhilesh Signals Direct SP-BJP Battle in UP Polls

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav has signalled that the 2027 Uttar Pradesh Assembly election will primarily be a contest between the SP and BJP, setting the stage for an increasingly direct political battle in the state. Yadav said that although several parties are preparing for the polls, the main fight would be between the two major contenders.

His remarks are being viewed as an attempt to project the Samajwadi Party as the principal opposition force against the ruling BJP. The strategy could also influence the prospects of other opposition parties, including the Congress, BSP and smaller regional outfits, which are preparing their own electoral plans.

The political significance of Yadav's statement lies in his effort to push the election narrative towards a two-polar contest. The SP had benefited from a consolidated opposition vote in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, while the BJP is now working on its own strategy to counter the SP's PDA outreach.

Four of Family Killed in Road Crash

UP State Bureau
BARABANKI

Four members of the same family were killed in a tragic road accident in Barabanki, Uttar Pradesh, while three others sustained serious injuries. The accident occurred in the Ramnagar police station area, where the vehicle carrying the family was involved in a collision.

According to reports, four people died at the spot following the impact, while the injured were rushed to a nearby hospital for treatment. The incident triggered panic in the area, with locals gathering at the accident site and assisting in rescue efforts.

Police reached the spot soon after receiving information and began an investigation into the circumstances surrounding the crash.

Godrej Group Plans ₹20,000 Crore Haryana Investment

UP State Bureau
NOIDA

Investment push expected to create nearly 40,000 jobs

Godrej Industries Group has signed an MoU with the Haryana government for a proposed investment of around ₹20,000 crore, with the potential to create nearly 40,000 jobs in the state. The agreement was signed in the presence of Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini.

The Group has already invested around ₹12,000 crore in Haryana and employs nearly 9,000 people. Godrej Properties will lead the investment, planning an additional ₹16,000 crore by FY28 across residential projects.

Godrej Ventures also plans to invest ₹3,500 crore in Grade A+ office infrastructure in Gurugram, potentially generating more than 30,000 direct and indirect jobs. The Group currently operates across real estate, finance and consumer products in Haryana.

DNA Search Fails in Saharanpur

UP State Bureau
SAHARANPUR

A team from Uttarakhand Police reached Saharanpur to collect a DNA sample from the grave of a six-month-old baby girl in connection with a POCSO case. The child was reportedly born to a teenage girl who had allegedly been sexually assaulted and later married the accused before their divorce.

The baby died days after birth. Police dug up multiple graves in a Saharanpur cemetery but could not locate the child's body, even after a six-hour search.

The team returned without collecting the DNA sample. Officials said the DNA test was intended to establish whether the child belonged to the accused and the teenager

protest

Veiled Women 'Wake Up' UP Administration

UP State Bureau
MATHURA

Women Protest Delays, Allege Corruption

In an unusual protest against the alleged functioning of the tehsil administration, a group of women reached the Govardhan tehsil premises beating steel plates and raising their concerns. The women said the symbolic protest was aimed at "waking up" officials and drawing attention to complaints that, according to them, have not been addressed in a timely manner.

The women alleged that they had repeatedly approached officials with various problems but had not received satisfactory action. They also levelled allegations of corruption and demanded an impartial inquiry into the issues raised by them. The protesters said ordinary people were being forced to make repeated trips to government offices to seek solutions to their grievances.

The unusual demonstration also invoked a familiar image from the Covid-19 lockdown period. The women referred to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call during the pandemic to beat plates as a symbolic gesture of unity. They said they were now using the same method to send a message to the local administration and make officials pay attention to their problems.

Woman protester Vinodi Chaudhary said women were having to repeatedly visit the tehsil to get their complaints addressed. She questioned why people should continue making rounds of government offices when their grievances could be resolved through timely administrative action.

The protesters demanded that their complaints be investigated fairly and that action be taken against anyone found responsible for wrongdoing. They also called for a time-bound system for disposing of public grievances so that people do not have to repeatedly approach officials.

The protest drew attention because of its distinctive style, with women appearing with veils over their faces and plates in their hands. A video of the demonstration also circulated on social media. The incident has highlighted the protesters' demand for greater accountability, transparency and prompt grievance redressal at the local administrative level

SC Tightens Banke Bihari Donation Rules

UP State Bureau
MATHURA

"Every Temple Donation Must Reach Treasury"

The Supreme Court has issued strict directions on the management of donations at Vrindavan's Banke Bihari Temple, stressing that every rupee offered by devotees must be deposited in the temple treasury. The court directed that donations be routed through official donation boxes or the temple's authorised online accounts.

A bench headed by Chief Justice Surya Kant said no individual associated with the temple could claim rights over offerings before they are deposited in the temple's funds. The court also directed the management committee to establish a transparent system for handling donations.

The directions followed concerns raised through photographs and videos presented before the court. The material allegedly showed devotees being encouraged to place offerings in plastic bags instead of donation boxes.

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Quick Trail

SHIVAMOGGA

Woman jumps into Tunga river with kids

A woman allegedly jumped into the Tunga river along with her three children from a railway bridge here following a family dispute, prompting a search operation for her two daughters who remain missing, police said on Tuesday.

The incident occurred at around 7.30 pm on Monday, they said.

Police said the woman and her 11-month-old son were rescued by local youths, while her two daughters are still missing.

The missing children are aged 6 and 4 years, they added. According to police, Bhavani, a resident of Hosur village in Chitradurga district, first allegedly pushed her two daughters into the river before jumping in with her infant son.

Both the woman and her infant son were immediately admitted to a hospital and are said to be stable, a senior police officer said.

The search operation in the Tunga river continued on Tuesday, with personnel from the Fire and Emergency Services department searching for the two girls. Further investigation is underway.

KALABURAGI

Warrant issued against MLA

In connection with a case involving allegedly derogatory remarks against Kalaburagi Deputy Commissioner Fauzia Taranum, the 42nd Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (ACMM) Court in Bengaluru has issued a non-bailable warrant (NBW) against BJP Legislative Council member N. Ravikumar.

The court had previously issued summons directing him to appear for the hearing.

However, as he failed to respond to the summons and remained absent from the proceedings, Judge Sandeep Patil ordered the issuance of a non-bailable warrant against him. An FIR had been registered at Kalaburagi's Station Bazaar Police Station based on allegations that N. Ravikumar made derogatory remarks against Deputy Commissioner Fauzia Taranum during a protest held in Kalaburagi last year.

BENGALURU

Biker killed after car rams into bike

A 33-year-old biker was killed after a speeding car rammed into his motorcycle at a traffic signal here, police said.

The incident occurred on Monday morning on Kaggadasapura Main Road in Vignana Nagar, they said. The deceased was identified as Naveen, a hair stylist at a barber shop, who was on his way to work when the accident occurred.

"Naveen was waiting at the Vignana Nagar signal when a car came from behind at high speed and rammed into his bike.

Due to the impact, he was thrown nearly 50 feet away and sustained severe injuries. He died on the spot," police sources said.

BENGALURU

Experience centre inaugurated

Construction firm TrustNest Homes and Nirmaan Interiors inaugurated their new Experience Center at Uttarahalli in city.

The inauguration was attended by Paramapujya Jagadguru Nischalanandanaatha Swamiji as chief guest.

Founder Santosh and his team felicitated the seer and sought his blessings on the occasion. Sandalwood actors Sharan, Srinagar Kitty and Shivaraj K.R. Pete, along with MLA M. Krishnappa, were among the dignitaries present.

VOTER ROLL REVISION | ALLEGATIONS OF DISCREPANCIES

K'taka civil society groups announce plan for 'Election Commission Chalo'

NT Correspondent
BENGALURU

Civil society organisations in Karnataka on Tuesday announced an "Election Commission Chalo" campaign on September 1 here, protesting the SIR of electoral rolls and alleging that the exercise was "flawed" and "unscientific".

They claimed that lakhs of eligible voters had been excluded from the draft electoral rolls and demanded that the exercise be halted.

Addressing a press conference here, actor Prakash Raj, representing the civil society groups, said they had decided to launch the campaign against the Special Intensive Revision process, alleging discrepancies in the exercise. The organisations would approach the courts seeking a halt to the entire process.

"So this is a very big battle...," he said.

The organisations and civil society platforms include Eddelu Karnataka, Muslim Muthahade Mahaz, Namma Mata Namma Hakku Vedike, Active Bangalore and Nagarika Mata Kavalu Samithi.

"On the first of the month (September), we will start an Election Commission Chalo protest with the people of Karnataka who have been affected-the distressed voters-from tomorrow itself; there will be press conferences in every district," Raj said.

He said the civil society groups would engage with the Karnataka government and represent the concerns of affected voters before the Election Commission.

Raj alleged that the SIR process had been carried out without adequate preparation, trained election officials or proper communication with voters.

He questioned the deletion of voters categorised as absent or permanently shifted, saying such voters should be given an adequate opportunity to establish their continued eligibility instead of being required to re-enroll through Form 6.

The national award winning actor also criticised the scale and timeline of the exercise in Karnataka.

"We have two years before the next (Assembly) election. You cannot complete this exercise involving more than five crore voters in one month. You should have announced it six months in advance," he said.

The move comes a day after Chief Electoral Officer V Anbukkumar said Karnataka had more than 4.46 crore electors in the draft electoral rolls published on Monday following the SIR process.

According to data shared by the CEO's office, a total of 1,07,96,339 electors, or 19.48 per cent, have been marked as ASDDO.

The ASDDO categories comprise Absent, Shifted, Dead, Duplicate and Others.

Bengaluru Urban district, including the BBMP limits, has 1,03,88,363 electors, of whom 46,82,703 are in the ASDDO list, according to the data.

> Prakash Raj said civil society groups will engage with govt and represent the concerns of the affected.

In a statement shared with the media, the organisations clarified that their allegations were not directed against Anbukkumar, who was tasked with implementing the SIR process, or the Booth Level Officers who worked during the exercise.

"It is directed at the Election Commission of India, which designed this unscientific, unconstitutional and ill-intentioned process and imposed it on the people of the country," it said.

The organisations alleged that the entire process had been conducted in an "unscientific" and "undemocratic" manner.

They said that of the 5.54 crore electors on Karnataka's 2025 electoral roll, 1.08 crore electors had been placed in the ASDDO categories, while 43.8 lakh electors among those remaining on the draft roll had, according to the organisations, been treated as "suspicious voters" and would be issued notices seeking proof of citizenship.

The organisations said they had no fundamental objection to deletions under the 'dead' and 'duplicate' categories, though some errors existed there as well, but raised serious objections to deletions under the 'absent', 'shifted' and 'others' categories.

According to them, 'absent' refers to eligible voters who were away from home for work or other reasons and could not be met by BLOs. 'Others' includes people who received the enumeration form but did not submit it, with the organisations alleging that responsibility for such non-submission had been placed on the voters.

Withhold assent to Park Bill, Governor urged

NT Correspondent
BENGALURU

Union Minister Shobha Karandlaje on Tuesday submitted a petition to Karnataka Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot, requesting him to withhold assent to the Bill allowing portions of park and garden land to be used for public infrastructure and utility projects in the state, calling it a "regressive and draconian" legislation.

The MP from Bengaluru North said the Karnataka Government Parks (Preservation) (Amendment) Bill, 2026, passed by the legislature on Monday without any discussion, arbitrarily dilutes the statutory protection afforded to public parks and gardens across the state.

The Karnataka Government Parks (Preservation) (Amendment) Bill, 2026, amends the 1975 Act. The Bill was passed in both houses of the state legislature without discussion, amid the opposition's protest demanding the resignation of Minister B Nagendra.

"I write to Your Excellency to register my strongest objection to the Karnataka Government Parks (Preservation) (Amendment) Bill, 2026 and to respectfully request Your Excellency not to accord assent to this regressive and draconian legislation, which fundamentally alters the protective character of the Karnataka Government Parks (Preservation) Act, 1975," Karandlaje said in a letter to the Governor.

The parent enactment was conceived to preserve government parks and gardens, while the present amendment, on the contrary, creates a sweeping statutory mechanism for their alienation and utilisation for purposes other than their preservation, she said.

According to the BJP leader, the most alarming feature of the Bill is the proposed insertion of sub-section (2) to Section 5, which empowers the state government to alienate land or buildings situated within a park or garden by way of sale, lease, gift, exchange, mortgage or otherwise.

JD(S) steps up NICE battle, demands toll cancellation

NT Correspondent
BENGALURU

The Janata Dal (Secular) has intensified its campaign against the NICE project, demanding that the state government immediately stop toll collection on the NICE Road and take over the Bangalore-Mysore Infrastructure Corridor Project (BMICP).

A delegation led by JD(S) Legislature Party Leader Suresh Babu met Chief Secretary officials and submitted a memorandum seeking immediate action on the alleged violations in the implementation of the project. JDS legislators and Legislative Council members were part of the delegation.

The party maintained that the NICE company had violated several provisions of the Framework Agreement and Project Technical Agreement governing the BMICP project. It said the government should act in accordance with directions issued by the Karnataka High Court and Supreme Court, besides implementing recommendations made by the Assembly committee and cabinet subcommittees.

The immediate demand of the JD(S) is to stop what it termed unauthorised toll collection on the NICE Road. The party argued that the government should take a clear decision on the legality of toll collection and ensure that motorists are not subjected to what it described as an unjustified financial burden.

The JD(S) has also demanded that 554 acres of additional land allegedly allotted to the NICE company be taken back by the government. It further sought the recovery of lakes, tanks, parks and other public properties allegedly handed over to the company in violation of rules. The party has called for a special expert investigation team to examine the alleged irregularities in the execution of the BMICP project. The demand comes in the wake of directions issued by the High Court, according to the JDS.

The delegation also sought a forensic audit of NICE's financial affairs to determine whether there were any instances of financial irregularities, misuse of funds or economic offences in connection with the project.

Another major demand is for the government to enact legislation to take over the BMICP project. The JDS alleged that NICE had violated various terms and conditions contained in the agreements signed for implementing the project and said the government should initiate steps to bring the project under its control.

Karnataka to begin cloud seeding

NT Correspondent
BENGALURU

The Karnataka government has stepped up preparations for cloud seeding to address the rainfall deficit in the state, with plans to constitute three committees for the project, Minister N Chaluvarayaswamy said on Tuesday.

Indicating that the government plans to commence cloud-seeding operations within the next two days, he said two meetings had already been held in this regard and necessary instructions issued to department secretaries.

An estimated Rs 27 crore has been allocated for the project. "Three committees-a monitoring committee, a technical committee, and a field operations and evaluation committee-will be constituted.

The department's additional chief secretary will oversee the monitoring committee, while experts from IIT, IISc and the meteorological department will serve on the technical committee," the state water resources minister said.

Speaking to reporters here, he said the committees were expected to be constituted by Tuesday evening and that the government would try to commence cloud-seeding operations within the next two days.

"Cloud seeding has been undertaken three times in the state so far, with a success rate of 18 to 20 per cent. If we achieve a success rate of 30 per cent, the entire project will be worthwhile," he added.

Noting that the rainfall deficit could lead to water shortages in the coming months, the minister said reports indicated that even if rain occurs, it may not be continuous.

"Hence, we are trying to address the situation through cloud seeding.

It is the government's responsibility to meet people's expectations of rainfall, and preparations are being made to effectively face the coming summer," he said.

Cloud-seeding operations will be undertaken by the Water Resources Department across the state's four revenue divisions.

Rainfall is expected within a 15-km radius of the areas where cloud seeding is carried out, he said.

"Seeding is possible only when suitable clouds are available.

Therefore, the operation will be undertaken across the state depending on cloud availability," he said.

The project is estimated to cost around Rs 27 crore and will be carried out for 60 days, involving approximately 200 hours of operations.

KPSC 'scam': ABVP protests near CM's house, Freedom Park

NT Correspondent
BENGALURU

ABVP cadres staged protests near the chief minister's residence and Freedom Park here on Tuesday, demanding action against those allegedly involved in KPSC irregularities and seeking a CBI probe into the alleged scam.

The protesters also gathered near Mourya Circle, where they reportedly sat on the road, disrupting traffic.

Police deployed a large force and detained several ABVP activists, with visuals showing protesters being picked up and taken away in buses.

The protesters alleged irregularities in Karnataka Public Service Commission (KPSC) recruitment exams and recruitment of veterinary officers.

"This is so unfair. If there is corruption like this, how will we get jobs through fair means? People who study hard are not getting government jobs, while those who pay money are getting places," a protestor said. "The system has to change. KPSC must be saved. This is the future of our state and the future of our country," the student said, demanding justice for aspirants.

The Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) activists also protested near the CM's Home Office, Krishna, raising slogans against the government and accusing it of being "anti-student".

They also gathered near the spot where Chief Minister D K Shivakumar was present and blocked the road. Police attempted to disperse them and detained several protesters.

SCAM ALLEGATION

BJP to hold 10-day 'Ballari Chalo' seeking minister's removal

NT Correspondent
BENGALURU

The Karnataka BJP has decided to launch a 10-day padayatra from Raichur to Ballari from September 1 to 10, demanding the removal of Minister B Nagendra over the alleged Valmiki Corporation scam.

BJP state president B Y Vijayendra announced the agitation at a press conference held at the party's Malleshwaram office on Tuesday. Leader of Opposition R Ashoka, BJP MLC Chalavadi Narayanaswamy, former minister G Janardhana Reddy, former minister B Sriramulu and senior leader C T Ravi were present.

Vijayendra said the padayatra would commence from Gurgunta in Raichur district on September 1 and culminate in Ballari after covering nearly 190 to 200 km. Union Minister Pralhad Joshi would attend the inaugural programme, while Union ministers, including H D Kumaraswamy, would participate in the concluding event.

He clarified that the programme would be organised under the BJP's leadership, while the JD(S) had extended its support to the agitation.

"The JD(S) has assured us of its support. We have discussed the programme with H D Kumaraswamy and he will cooperate with the agitation," Vijayendra said.

The BJP state president accused the Congress government of protecting Nagendra despite allegations linked to the Valmiki Corporation scam. He recalled that the BJP had demanded Nagendra's removal before the recent Assembly session and warned that the party would intensify its agitation if the government failed to act.

Vijayendra alleged that the government had failed to address several major issues during the Assembly session. He claimed the opposition had demanded that the session be extended by another week to discuss matters concerning the state, but the government instead curtailed the session.

"Instead of facing the truth, the government ran away from the issues raised by the opposition," he alleged.

He also criticised Chief Minister D K Shivakumar's administration, claiming that the government had not yet settled into effective governance. He cited delays in Cabinet expansion and portfolio allocation, along with reported differences within the ruling Congress, as evidence of instability.

Vijayendra also alleged that the government was mishandling the issue of Scheduled Tribe reservation. He claimed the BJP government had increased ST reservation to 7%, but the Congress government had subsequently reduced it to 3%.

He further accused the government of prioritising real estate and infrastructure projects, including the Bidadi township, Kanakapura airport and NICE takeover, over welfare programmes for the poor and employment opportunities for young people.

Vijayendra said the BJP would use the padayatra to reach out to people across the region.

Plea to reconsider parking fee proposal

NT Correspondent
BENGALURU

Karnataka Minister Ramalinga Reddy has urged Chief Minister D K Shivakumar to reconsider the proposed annual fee of Rs 15,000 to Rs 25,000 for roadside vehicle parking in Bengaluru, saying it could impose an additional financial burden on middle-class and ordinary families.

In a letter dated August 24, Reddy, who is an MLA from Bengaluru, acknowledged the need to regulate roadside parking amid the growing number of vehicles and traffic problems in Bengaluru.

However, he said the economic condition of ordinary citizens must also be taken into consideration before introducing the proposed charges.

Reddy said middle-class and ordinary families were already facing financial pressure due to rising prices of essential commodities and increased expenses on cooking gas, petrol, diesel, GST and tolls.

"Imposing an additional annual parking fee of Rs 15,000 to Rs 25,000 merely for owning a vehicle could become another financial burden on such families," he said.

Bengaluru residents seeking to park vehicles on public roads outside their homes may have to pay an annual residential parking fee of up to Rs 25,000, depending on the vehicle type, under the draft GBA (Parking) Rules, 2026.

The draft rules propose an annual residential parking permit fee of Rs 15,000 for hatchbacks, Rs 20,000 for sedans and Rs 25,000 for sports utility vehicles.

Noting that the state government had implemented various welfare guarantee schemes to improve people's living standards and provide economic support, the minister said that, therefore, care should be taken to ensure that families living in urban areas were not subjected to another unavoidable financial burden.

In association with FPJ
METRO INDIA
Hyderabad, Wednesday, August 26, 2026

NEWS in SHORT

MULUGU

Collector calls for planting trees

District Collector Borkhade Hemanth Sahadeva Rao has called upon everyone to plant trees to protect the environment. The Collector, along with SP Sudhir Ramnath Kekan, ITDA Project Officer Lenin Vatsal Toppo and District Forest Officer Vikas Meena planted saplings at the Panchayat Raj Pylon premises near Gattamma on Tuesday. The Collector said that trees and forests play a very important role in protecting the environment. He said that there is a need to expand greenery to control the growing pollution and maintain the atmospheric balance. The Collector suggested that the Van Mahotsav should not be merely a tree plantation drive but a social responsibility to protect nature. He called for planting saplings and preserving them till they grow into trees to provide clean air and healthy environment to future generations.

WARANGAL

Inter-state smuggler arrested

The Damera police have arrested a smuggler of inter-state ganja and seized 251 kg of ganja, a two-wheeler, Rs 9,000 in cash and a cell phone from his possession. The police said that special measures are being taken to curb the sale of ganja and other intoxicating substances in the Warangal police commissionerate and to protect the youth from getting addicted. A team led by DCP (East Zone) Ankit Kumar arrested Nageshwar Rao (55) of Mudigonda and a resident of Pulukurthi village in Damera mandal. Preliminary investigations revealed that he had purchased ganja at a low price from some people in Odisha and sold it through his network to several people in Telangana, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, police said. Based on the information given by the accused, a huge amount of cannabis was recovered from his house, police said.

UTKOOR

Surprise inspection conducted at govt hospital

Narayanpet District Housing Department PD and Mandal Special Officer Shankar Nayak has instructed the medical staff to provide quality medical services to the poor people who come to government hospitals and give more confidence to the people in the government medical system. He made a surprise inspection of the Utkoor government hospital on Tuesday and checked various records of the hospital. He also advised them to make available relevant medicines and emergency medical supplies as incidents of snake bites and dog bites are likely to increase during the rainy season. When the government medical officer inquired about the details with Dr Santoshini, she said that the necessary medicines were available in the hospital. Shankar Naik said that government hospitals are the main medical support for the poor people in rural areas and patients who come in emergency should be treated without delay.

DEVADULA PROJECT WITHIN A YEAR: UTTAM

METRO INDIA NEWS | HYDERABAD

Irrigation and Civil Supplies Minister N. Uttam Kumar Reddy on Tuesday said the Telangana government had decided to fast-track the long-pending Devadula Lift Irrigation Scheme and complete it within the next year.

Addressing the media after reviewing the project, Uttam said the meeting was held on Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy's directions to give Devadula special attention and remove all impediments to its completion.

Describing Devadula as a historic project, Uttam said it was designed to lift about 38 TMC of Godavari water and provide irrigation to nearly six lakh acres across districts including Hanumakonda, Warangal, Karimnagar, Jangaon, Yadadri-Bhuvanagiri, Suryapet, Siddipet, Medchal-Malkajgiri, Mulugu and Jayashankar Bhupalpally.

The review examined the project component-wise and identified bottlenecks, particularly those related to land acquisition, rehabilitation and resettlement (R&R) and forest clearances. Uttam said funds would be released immediately wherever land acquisition and award procedures had been completed.

He said the Chief Minister had assured a special package of Rs 6,000 crore for ongoing irrigation projects across Telangana, of which about Rs 2,500 crore had already been released. Devadula had also recently received funds for land acquisition, with the remaining requirements to be met as procedures were completed.

Uttam stressed that compensation for acquired land must reach affected farmers and beneficiaries without delay. Following a video conference with District Collectors and Chief Engineers, the Irrigation and Revenue Departments, Collectors and engineers were directed to coordinate closely to prevent delays.

Another key decision was to maximise pumping from the Godavari through the Devadula system. All available pumping facilities will be operated optimally to convey maximum water to the project's command areas and reservoirs.

The review also discussed practical solutions to clear the remaining obstacles and accelerate construction.

Revenue, Housing and Information & Public Relations Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy, Panchayat Raj Minister Danasari Anasuya 'Seethakka', Chief Minister's Adviser Vem Narender Reddy, MPs Porika Balram Naik and other public representatives from the project region, along with senior irrigation officials and engineers, attended the meeting.

- CM Revanth Reddy has directed focused action to remove bottlenecks and complete the long-pending project
- Minister assures immediate funds for land acquisition, R&R and forest-related issues once procedures are completed
- Maximum pumping of Godavari water planned to serve nearly six lakh acres across several districts

Civil Supplies dept draws up Kharif paddy procurement plan

METRO INDIA NEWS | HYDERABAD

Preparing for the Kharif 2026-27 paddy procurement season, the Telangana Civil Supplies department convened a high-level strategic review meeting at the Civil Supplies Bhavan, Hyderabad on Tuesday.

Senior officials have formulated a comprehensive logistics and infrastructure roadmap. To ensure sufficient holding capacity ahead of arrivals, the Civil Supplies department is finalising plans to request district collectors across the state to actively identify and secure all viable storage infrastructure.

The department is exploring options of diverse spaces where available, including godowns, market yards, vacant industrial sheds, function halls, open spaces, and Cover and Plinth (CAP) storage. Concurrently, rapid stock evacuation drives are being planned to clear existing godowns and make maximum space ready for incoming paddy.

Additionally, the Agriculture MARKFED department are actively clearing their respective storage spaces and godowns, assuring that space will be made available by the time procurement begins.

In expanding storage space, the department is accelerating the modernisation and mechanisation of PPCs. The review assessed the progress on procuring automatic paddy cleaners and modern mechanical stackers, which are aimed at speeding up grain handling at the grassroots level, minimising turnaround time for farmers, and eliminating logistical bottlenecks during peak procurement.

Looking toward long-term systemic upgrades, officials also conducted an review of an automated "Farm to Silo" operational framework. The phased transition was evaluated across every operational node, including digital weighbridges, scientific sampling of paddy, pre-cleaning systems, grain dryers, automated bulk silos, and integrated milling linkages.

The high-level coordination meeting was chaired by M. Stephen Raveendra, Ex-Officio Principal Secretary and Commissioner of Civil Supplies department.

Telangana reaches out to Japan for investments

METRO INDIA NEWS | HYDERABAD

Minister for SHAKTI and Mines Dr G. Vivek Venkataswamy has invited Japanese companies to invest in Telangana, assuring them of all necessary support and guidance from the State government.

He said the government would extend all possible cooperation to ensure that investments by Japanese companies in Telangana were safe and profitable. Telangana was rapidly emerging as an investment-friendly State under the leadership of Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, he said.

Vivek Venkataswamy was the chief guest at the 'Leveraging Indian Talent' India-Japan Workforce Roundtable organised in Osaka by Rohit Rao, Founder and CEO of Career Consultz.

The roundtable brought together Japanese business leaders, industry representatives, and officials from government and educational institutions to discuss investment opportunities in Telangana, skilled manpower, employment generation and talent mobility.

The Minister said Telangana offered extensive investment opportunities backed by a strong pool of skilled human resources. The State had a large talent base in sectors including information technology, engineering, pharmaceuticals and biotechnology, he said.

The Minister urged Japanese companies to expand their operations in Telangana and establish new industries and projects. The State government was creating a business-friendly ecosystem by providing necessary approvals, infrastructure and other support to investors, he said.

Vivek Venkataswamy also said Japanese companies had evinced interest in establishing a new industrial park spread over around 600 acres in Telangana. He described the interest as a reflection of the confidence Japanese investors had in the State and urged more Japanese companies to explore investment opportunities and set up industries in Telangana.

Principal Secretary (Finance) Sandeep Kumar Sultania and Secretary, Labour, Employment, Training and Factories, Dasari Harichandana, were among those present.

Kavitha forms panel on polytechnic education

METRO INDIA NEWS | HYDERABAD

Telangana Rakshana Sena (TRS) party Chief Kalvakuntla Kavitha has constituted a committee comprising educationists and the party leaders to study the necessity and continuation of polytechnic education in Telangana. Anxiety has arisen among the polytechnic students following the Congress government's issuance of GO 97, which brings the polytechnic education under the purview of the Skill University. The Students have taken to the streets staging protests in various forms. They are demanding the revocation of the GO 97 and opposing the move to place the polytechnic education under the 'Shakti' (Labour Department) umbrella.

In light of these student concerns, Kavitha announced the formation of a committee to examine issues such as continuing the polytechnic education under the existing system, the adverse effects of GO 97 and the potential consequences of bringing the polytechnic education under the 'Shakti' (Labour Department) framework.

She stated that the educationists and Telangana Rakshana Sena party leaders active in the education sector had been appointed as the committee members. She directed the committee to conduct a comprehensive study on the polytechnic education and submit a report within one week. The names of the Committee Member are Dooguntla Naresh Prajapati, Moram Veerabhadra Rao, Surabhi, Kongara Dharani Rani, Kotla Mahender Reddy (Kanishka), Udari Chandramohan Goud and Nadipalli Venkateswar Rao.

Adopt modern technology for farming: Telangana Governor

Launches 'Sunhari Mitti Abhiyan' and a market linkage programme

METRO INDIA NEWS | NIZAMABAD

Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla on Tuesday called for greater adoption of modern technology, natural farming practices, processing, value addition and stronger market linkages to enhance the incomes of turmeric farmers.

Addressing a farmer interaction programme organised at the National Turmeric Board (NTB) headquarters in Nizamabad, the Governor said the welfare of farmers was fundamental to the prosperity of both the State and the nation.

He also launched the in the presence of turmeric farmers and felicitated outstanding farmer organisations with mementos.

Shukla said Nizamabad had earned a special place in the country's turmeric sector owing to its fertile soil and the hard work of its farmers. The establishment of the National Turmeric Board headquarters in Nizamabad marked a significant milestone and fulfilled a long-standing aspiration of turmeric farmers in the region, he said.

The Governor said the establishment of the Board had been made possible through the special initiative of MP Dharmapuri Arvind and the support and blessings of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The Prime Minister had undertaken several initiatives to make agriculture more remunerative and improve the livelihoods of farmers, he said.

He said the objective of the National Turmeric Board was not merely to retain India's position as the world's largest turmeric producer, but also to develop the country into a global hub for turmeric processing and value-added products.

The Governor appreciated the initiatives of the National Turmeric Board in providing farmers with training in quality improvement, modern agricultural practices and post-harvest management.

Governor Urges Youth to Fight Drug Abuse

Telangana Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla on Tuesday urged youth to stay away from drugs and channel their energy towards education, sports, skills, innovation and nation-building.

Addressing a Nasha Mukt Bharat Abhiyaan programme in Nizamabad, he said tackling drug abuse required strict enforcement along with awareness, counselling and rehabilitation.

Shukla appreciated the Telangana government's EAGLE initiative and police efforts, and welcomed anti-drug committees and Prahari Clubs in educational institutions.

He urged authorities to prevent the availability of narcotics near educational institutions and empower young people to make informed choices.

Recalling Swami Vivekananda's message, he called upon youth to develop determination and self-discipline.

CMC demolishes 17 unauthorised constructions

METRO INDIA NEWS | HYDERABAD

The Cyberabad Municipal Corporation (CMC) has intensified enforcement against unauthorised under-construction buildings across the Corporation limits.

As part of the enforcement drive conducted today, 17 unauthorised constructions were demolished across all three zones. The demolitions included 7 buildings in Serilingampally Zone, 2 buildings in Kukatpally Zone and 8 buildings in Quthbullapur Zone.

In addition to the demolitions, 11 UC notices were served to unauthorised constructions identified during the enforcement process. Further, 54 unauthorised constructions were identified through multiple sources, including MyCURE, Prajavani petitions and field-level identification by officers.

The identification and enforcement process is being carried out on a continuous basis to ensure that unauthorised constructions are detected at the earliest stage and necessary action is taken promptly.

The Commissioner has directed the concerned Town Planning and enforcement teams to maintain daily field-level monitoring, strengthen identification of unauthorised constructions and ensure timely enforcement action in accordance with the applicable rules.

CMC will continue to closely monitor enforcement activities across all three zones to strengthen compliance with building regulations and safeguard public safety.

Revanth didn't provide proper tour plan: Ramchander Rao

METRO INDIA NEWS | HYDERABAD

BJP Telangana State President N Ramchander Rao on Tuesday strongly rejected the CM Revanth Reddy's allegation that the central government has discriminated against Telangana by denying him political clearance to visit US.

Rao ,who is on hunger strike on second day in support of students cause, clarified in a statement that the decision of the central government was based on information that he was going to meet certain individuals and organizations in US who caused trouble to India and its people. He said CM Revanth Reddy failed to submit proper information of his foreign trip.

BJP state chief questioned the CM are you travelling just to meet anti-national forces in foreign countries and said in the past UPA regime also had a history of halting foreign visits of several CMs.

Rao pointed out that when Revanth Reddy previously traveled twice to the USA, as well as to London and Singapore, no one stopped him, asking why those who didn't stop him then would stop him this time.

He recalled that between 2010 and 2024, during the previous UPA government's tenure as well, foreign trip proposals of leaders like Chandrababu Naidu, K Chandrasekhar Rao, Mayawati, Tarun Gogoi, and Arjun Munda were halted when paperwork was incomplete, proper reasons were not filled out, or when there was no clarity on whom they were meeting. He stated that this happens strictly according to Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) rules, and the government acts as per regulations whenever there is a suspicion that someone is meeting anti-national elements.

Condemning the allegations leveled by CM Revanth Reddy, he said it is a serious mistake and uncalled for him to blame the Central Government.

Responding to comparisons made with Gujarat, Rao said that for Prime Minister Narendra Modi, every state in the country whether Gujarat or Telangana is equal, and the Centre moves forward with the principle of "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas." He noted that petrol prices in Gujarat are lower by about Rs.15 compared to Telangana.

He clarified that if Telangana has developed today, it is solely because of Narendra Modi's Central Government. He stated that national highways, the Warangal Airport, the Warangal Railway Coach Factory, AIIMS Bibinagar, modernization of railway stations, and Vande Bharat Express trains were all provided by the Central Government. He further stated that the development of industries like space technology and aerospace in the state happened due to the Central Government. He criticised the state Congress government for doing nothing other than developing real estate business.

BJP state chief lashed out saying Revanth Reddy disrespects the people of Telangana by travelling without providing a proper tour plan and then spreading lies about the Centre. He demanded that Revanth Reddy answer the citizens of this country regarding who those individuals were whom he was going to meet and why he was meeting them.

Rao also demanded that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy immediately apologize to the people of Telangana and the nation for misleading the public and defaming the state by spreading false allegations against the Central Government.

BJP's 48-hours hunger strike concludes

METRO INDIA NEWS | HYDERABAD

The 48-hours Hunger strike initiated by BJP State President N Ramchander Rao demanding state Congress government for early release of Rs 15000 crore fee reimbursement and scholarship dues, ended today successfully with immense public support in spite of police rejection and denying of permission.

BJP state chief has launched 48-hours hunger strike yesterday at 10 an inside BJP state office after police denied permission to organize it at Dharna chowk. A massive crowd gathered at the Nampally and all walks of people visited the venue and expressed their solidarity. The event christened as " FEES BAKAYI—BJP LADAYI" (BJP struggle for fee dues) was organized by BJYM.

The Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM) submitted documents containing 5 lakh student signatures collected at the field level, issuing a firm warning to the Congress government

Thousands of students from Osmania, Kakatiya, Palamuru, Telangana, and Satavahana Universities, along with prominent engineering, medical, polytechnic, ayurvedic, unani, and homeopathy colleges, came in person to share their distress with BJP chief Ramchander Rao and expressed complete solidarity.

Satheesan defends 100-day progress

HD Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Government pairs welfare commitments with investment-led plans spanning artificial intelligence, semiconductors, maritime development and administrative reform

Chief Minister V. D. Satheesan has defended his government's first 100 days in office, saying vested interests seeking to discredit the administration would be firmly resisted while legitimate criticism would be addressed constructively.

The UDF government completed 100 days on Tuesday, August 25, after taking office on May 18 following an election victory that gave the coalition 102 of the 140 Assembly seats. Satheesan said the administration had concentrated on fulfilling campaign pledges, strengthening welfare measures and creating an economic framework capable of drawing investment into emerging industries.

Central to the government's economic strategy is an attempt to position Keralam as a hub for artificial intelligence, semiconductor development and other advanced technologies. The administration plans an Invest Kerala Cell to pursue overseas investment, policies supporting AI data centres and the SEMICON Kerala programme aimed at building a semiconductor ecosystem. Projects identified in the first phase envisage investment of about ₹2,145 crore and more than 31,000 jobs.

Satheesan has said Keralam should emerge as a national centre for AI and emerging technologies. His office has already begun using an AI-powered dashboard to monitor investment projects, while the government has established a Global Job Watch Tower to track shifts in employment demand and identify skills required by industries. Its findings are intended to inform changes to educational curricula and strengthen links between universities and employers.

The technology programme also includes restructuring institutions responsible for digital policy. The State IT Mission is being reshaped to give greater emphasis to future technologies, while the electronics incubation ecosystem is being expanded through SEMICON Kerala.

CPI rejects 'master-servant' attitude by Vijayan

HD Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Communist Party of India escalated its confrontation with CPM leader Pinarayi Vijayan on Tuesday, accusing the Opposition Leader of violating coalition norms as a bitter dispute over the Deputy Leader of Opposition post widened within the Left Democratic Front.

CPI state assistant secretary Sathyan Mokeri used an article in the party mouthpiece Janayugam to challenge Vijayan's handling of the issue, saying alliance politics could not operate on a "master-servant" relationship and required equality, consultation and mutual respect among constituent parties.

Mokeri said Vijayan's public assertion that he would recommend a CPM legislator for the deputy leader's position amounted to a unilateral intervention while discussions between the two parties were still under way. He argued that such decisions should emerge through consultation rather than being imposed by the largest constituent of the LDF.

The intervention marked a significant sharpening of the dispute, which has moved beyond competing claims to an Assembly position and developed into an argument about authority within the Opposition alliance.

Mokeri invoked communist leader Georgi Dimitrov's approach to united-front politics, stressing that coalition

CPI criticism of Pinarayi Vijayan turns a dispute over an Assembly post into a wider test of LDF cohesion

partners should retain their independence and be treated as equal participants. He said an attitude suggesting that one individual could decide everything would not strengthen collective functioning.

The CPI's criticism drew an immediate response from senior CPM leader and former minister V Sivankutty, who accused Mokeri of insulting Vijayan and argued that internal coalition questions should not be fought through the media. Sivankutty defended Vijayan's stand as democratic and consistent with political realities.

Sivankutty also argued that the Deputy Leader of Opposition position had traditionally been held by the CPM and questioned whether posts allocated to constituent parties could simply be transferred to another partner. He asked the CPI leadership to clarify whether Mokeri's article represented an authorised party position.

The exchanges intensified pressure on both organisations to prevent the disagreement from becoming a prolonged confrontation. CPI leaders have maintained that the deputy leader's position should be allocated to them as part of a broader effort to improve collective functioning after the LDF's heavy electoral defeat.

CPI state secretary Binoy Viswam has repeatedly defended the demand and criticised Vijayan's public dismissal of it. After Vijayan said at a press conference that there was no doubt the position would go to a CPM member, Viswam described the remark as inappropriate for the office and political stature of the Opposition Leader.

The issue has now reached the national leaderships of both communist parties. Viswam has conveyed the Kerala unit's concerns to CPM general secretary M A Baby, while CPI general secretary D Raja has publicly urged Vijayan to be more accommodating towards alliance partners.

HIGH-END USERS TARGETTED | Bid to alter consumption pattern to day-time

KSEB moots time-based billing

HD Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Draft rules could expand cheaper daytime power while shifting more costs towards peak-hour consumption from 2027

Kerala's electricity pricing system is set for a significant overhaul from April 2027, with draft regulations proposing wider time-based tariffs, new fixed-charge calculations and tighter recovery of power costs.

The Kerala State Electricity Regulatory Commission has published draft Multi-Year Tariff Regulations for the five-year control period from April 1, 2027, to March 31, 2032. The framework will govern how Kerala State Electricity Board Ltd and other licensees calculate revenue requirements and seek approval for electricity tariffs during the period.

The existing tariff regulations, introduced in 2021, expire at the end of March 2027. The Commission will consider public comments before notifying the final regulations, after which KSEB can submit its tariff proposals for the new control period.

One of the most consequential proposals is an expansion of Time-of-Day tariffs, under which electricity prices vary depending on when power is consumed. The mechanism is intended to encourage greater use during daytime hours, when Kerala increasingly has access to lower-cost solar electricity, while discouraging heavy consumption during evening peak hours.

Time-of-Day pricing currently applies to domestic consumers whose monthly consumption exceeds 250 units. The draft opens the way for the system to cover a wider section of consumers. This could make the timing of household electricity use increasingly important in determining monthly bills.

Consumers able to shift activities such as water heating, electric-vehicle charging and other flexible loads to daytime hours could benefit from lower rates. Consumption during peak evening periods, when demand rises and cheaper solar generation falls sharply, could attract higher charges.

The draft also proposes changes to the calculation of fixed charges for domestic consumers, with connected load expected to play a greater role. The move could alter the present relationship between energy consumption and the fixed component of household bills, particularly for premises with higher sanctioned or connected loads.

Another major issue is the recovery of KSEB's accumulated regulatory assets. These represent legitimate costs that were not immediately recovered through earlier tariffs, partly to prevent abrupt increases in consumer bills.

Kerala's regulatory assets were estimated at ₹7,123 crore for the period up to 2022-23 before adjustments and planned amortisation. A Supreme Court direction, subsequently modified, requires existing regulatory assets outstanding as of April 2024 to be liquidated within the timeframe prescribed under the Electricity Rules, with the process to be completed by March 31, 2031.

The requirement means tariff determinations during the 2027-32 control period will have to address any remaining unrecovered revenue gap. Depending on the amount ultimately allowed and the manner in which it is spread across consumers and years, regulatory-asset recovery could place upward pressure on electricity charges.

Cops transferred over Onam reels

HD Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Seven police officers attached to Thiruvananthapuram's Museum police station have been transferred to the Armed Reserve camp after an Onam celebration involving accused in an Enforcement Directorate assault case triggered scrutiny of police conduct.

The disciplinary action followed a preliminary Special Branch inquiry into how I P Binu and other accused were allowed to participate in festivities outside the station and record social media reels. Binu, a former corporation councillor and CPM Palayam local secretary, is an accused in the May attack on Enforcement Directorate officials and their vehicles.

Deputy Commissioner of Police Shahansha K S will conduct a detailed inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the celebrations.

T P case counsel being shown the door

HD Bureau
NEW DELHI

Government weighs two senior lawyers as seven convicts press the Supreme Court for bail after more than 13 years

The state government has decided to replace senior advocate P V Dinesh as its counsel in the T P Chandrasekharan murder case before the Supreme Court, with former Solicitor General Ranjit Kumar and senior criminal lawyer Sidharth Luthra being considered for the assignment.

The proposed change comes as the legal battle over one of Kerala's most politically sensitive murder cases has entered another important phase, with convicted persons challenging their continued imprisonment and seeking relief from the Supreme Court. The government is expected to choose one of the two senior lawyers to lead its arguments as the appeals and bail applications progress.

Dinesh had been engaged to represent the state before the Supreme Court during the Pinarayi Vijayan government's tenure. A government order issued in September 2025 had accorded ex-post facto sanction for his engagement as senior advocate in proceedings arising from the case. He is known to have been associated with Left causes, a factor that has periodically drawn political attention because of the background of the Chandrasekharan murder.

Ranjit Kumar served as Solicitor General from 2014 to 2017 and has extensive experience before the Supreme Court. Luthra, a former Additional Solicitor General, is among the country's prominent criminal-law practitioners and has appeared in several high-profile criminal and constitutional cases. The government has yet to publicly announce which of the two will ultimately be briefed.

The development coincided with the Supreme Court deferring consideration of bail applications filed by seven convicts, including N K Sunil Kumar, better known as Kodi Suni, for three weeks. The matter was before a bench headed by Justice Satish Chandra Sharma.

The convicts sought an early hearing of their applications, arguing that they had been in prison for more than 13 years. They are seeking bail while their challenges to the Kerala High Court judgment remain pending before the apex court.

MVD probes ambulance at Onam event

HD Bureau
KOCHI

The Motor Vehicle Department has opened an inquiry into the alleged use of an ambulance during Onam celebrations organised by Atoms College of Media and Technology in Palakkad, after videos of the vehicle being driven amid dancing and coloured smoke circulated on social media.

The celebrations were held on the grounds of Government Moyans LP School. Visuals shared online showed students travelling in and around the ambulance while colours were dispersed as others danced to music. The footage triggered criticism over the use of a life-saving vehicle as part of a festive event.

Ambulance drivers subsequently complained to the Motor Vehicle Department, alleging misuse of an emergency vehicle. Enforcement officials began examining the circumstances in which the ambulance was brought to the venue, who authorised its use and who was responsible for the vehicle at the time.

Jaleel revives warning as Anvar alleges UDF betrayal

HD Bureau
KOCHI

Jaleel says Anvar's charge of electoral sabotage vindicates his earlier warning against trusting the UDF

Left-backed former minister K. T. Jaleel has reminded P. V. Anvar that he had warned him against joining hands with the United Democratic Front, after the former Nilambur MLA accused allies of sabotaging his campaign in the Beypore Assembly constituency.

Jaleel's intervention has added another layer to a dispute that has exposed tensions within the UDF over its candidate selection and campaign management in Beypore. Anvar contested the April 9 Assembly election as a UDF-backed Independent but lost to Communist Party of India candidate P. A. Mohamed Riyas by 7,487 votes.

Responding to Anvar's allegation that he had been "backstabbed" by people who were expected to support him, Jaleel said the outcome was what he had cautioned Anvar about when the latter moved closer to the opposition alliance. The two leaders had once been prominent Left-backed Independents from Malappuram district before Anvar broke with the ruling camp.

Transgender challenges Sabarimala entry denial

HD Bureau
KOCHI

A transgender devotee has approached the Kerala High Court alleging that police prevented her from proceeding to the Sabarimala Ayyappa Temple solely because of her gender identity, prompting the court to seek responses from the State and temple authorities.

A Division Bench comprising Justice P. Gopinath and Justice S. Manu issued notice on the petition filed by Sathyashri Sharmila Rehemathali. The State, Pathanamthitta District Collector, Travancore Devaswom Board and the Sabarimala thantri have been asked to respond. The case has been posted for further consideration on September 3.

Rehemathali told the court that she reached Pamba on August 20 intending to undertake the pilgrimage after observing the 41-day Mandala Vratham and carrying the irumudi, the sacred bundle traditionally taken by devotees to the hill shrine.

She alleged that police stopped her at about 3.30 pm near the Pamba Ganapathi Temple during an inspection and told her she could not proceed towards Sabarimala because she was transgender. She said she produced identity documents confirming her gender identity but was still prevented from continuing the pilgrimage.

The petition states that officers at Pamba police station attributed the restriction to instructions from the Travancore Devaswom Board.

offgrid

Temple worker suspended over inter-caste marriage

HD Bureau
KOCHI

A temple ritual assistant in Kannur has challenged his suspension, alleging that he was removed from duty because his daughter married a man from another caste.

C V Rajan, 58, has approached the Deputy Commissioner of the Malabar Devaswom Board against the disciplinary action taken by the authorities of Karivelloor Muchilott Bhagavathy Temple. The dispute is scheduled for a hearing on September 10 at the board's Deputy Commissioner's office at the Civil Station in Kozhikode.

Rajan, who has served as an Upakarmi, or ritual assistant, for about 30 years, has also filed a complaint with the Kerala State Human Rights Commission. He maintains that allegations of misconduct and violations of temple customs were raised only as a justification for keeping him away from his duties after his daughter decided to marry outside his community.

Three-decade ritual assistant says disciplinary charges mask discrimination over his daughter's choice of spouse

His daughter married a man belonging to the Pothuval community on March 15. Rajan belongs to the Vaniya community, whose members have a longstanding association with Muchilott Bhagavathy temples in northern Kerala and traditionally perform rituals connected with the deity.

The temple authorities have rejected Rajan's allegation that caste was the basis for the disciplinary action. The suspension order cites failure to follow established customs, lack of punctuality, disciplinary lapses and complaints about his conduct towards ritual authorities and temple traditions.

Rajan disputes those charges and says he has not been shown evidence of complaints from devotees or of any specific violation that would warrant suspension. He has said he is prepared to step down if the temple authorities establish misconduct against him with evidence.

The dispute began to gather momentum around the time of his daughter's engagement in August 2025. Rajan says the proposed marriage was discussed within the temple's general body and that he was initially allowed to continue performing his duties.

He alleges that an attempt was later made to keep him away from work following the engagement.

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The Free Press Journal

Founder Editor: S Sadanand

Back again: For better or verse?

It is a curious thing how masonry learns to heal faster than memory. If you were to take a stroll through the freshly whitewashed corridors of Bahawalpur or cast a glance toward Muridke, you would hardly suspect that a little over a year ago, during the fiery brief theatre of Operation Sindoor, these very coordinates were subjected to a sudden, violent architectural critique by the Indian Air Force. Let us jog the collective memory back to those nine select targets—four deep in mainland Pakistan and five scattered across Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir—chosen not at random but with the precision of a surgeon about to evict a chronic tumour. There was Sawai Nala and Syedna Bilal in Muzaffarabad, Gulpur and Abbas in Kotli, Barnala in Bhimber, Sarjal and Mehmoona Joya slicing through Sialkot, and the crown jewels of the terror enterprise: Markaz Taiba in Muridke and Markaz Subhan Allah in Bahawalpur. They were selected because they were the academic institutions of the macabre: colleges where young men were imparted the fine arts of infiltration, improvised explosives, and fidayeen geometry, courtesy of the Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Mohammed, and Hizbul Mujahideen. When the smoke cleared from those 25 minutes of supersonic persuasion, the tally sheet registered over a hundred permanent vacancies, including high-ranking connoisseurs of chaos like Mohammad Yusuf Azhar and sundry relatives of the JeM franchise who discovered that divine protection does not include air defence against incoming missiles. Thank goodness dead terrorists and their relatives cannot be rebuilt.

So, what grand, epoch-making lessons do you think has Pakistan learnt? Precisely none.

Yet, time is a brisk redecorator. In the months that have elapsed, both the Bahawalpur complex and its sister enterprise in Muridke have not merely been patched up, given the generous infusions of institutional fondness they enjoy, they have likely emerged even better than before. With modern amenities, perhaps central air-conditioning for the curriculum of discontent, upgraded fibre optics for overseas correspondence, and reinforced ceilings designed to withstand everything short of geopolitical disillusionment? So, what grand, epoch-making lessons do you think has Pakistan learnt? Precisely none. Alas, the more things change, the more they stay stubbornly the same. Which brings us, naturally, to our own parlour games. We are quite fond, from time to time, of issuing grand, pious pledges about reclaiming territories in Pakistan and China that legitimately belong to India. We wonder: what has been the measurable progress on that front aside from mildly diverting television debates? Is there an unspoken merit in singing full-length patriotic anthems at peak volume while entirely lacking the fervour to follow through with promises that alters anything on the ground? Or do we simply remain admirers of our own rhetorical echo, forever marvelling at how neatly the other side rebuilds its ruins while we sing yet another verse?

For the love of Marathi

Honouring, safeguarding, and nurturing a native language in an international, multi-lingual city is always a challenge. The continuing fracas over making Marathi compulsory for autorickshaw and taxi drivers in Mumbai reflects this. The Maharashtra government's gazette of June 12, 2026, which made the practical working knowledge of Marathi necessary for drivers of autorickshaws, taxis, and app-based cabs, was brought into effect earlier this month. Most of them see this as an imposition. To protest the move, drivers have resorted to a strike at sporadic points across Mumbai, causing major disruptions to the regular rhythm of the city's transport network and inconveniences to lakhs of people, including children who depend on them for school runs.

The government's intent, in itself, is not misplaced, given the anxiety over the sustenance of Marathi in Mumbai, but there is cause for much grievance over the ham-handedness, short-sightedness, and selectivity with which it has gone about the task. Its platforms to enable drivers to learn spoken or colloquial Marathi are few and far between; the accessible ones take the more formal literary approach, and the time is too short to enforce the decision. Simply put, the government apparatus to implement its decision is found wanting. Then why insist on the short timeframe of a few months, putting stress on drivers, irrespective of the length of their stay in the city? They are, but naturally, agitated.

Caught between the government and drivers are lakhs of Mumbaikars who have been stranded, forced to pay more, or suffer inordinate delays in their daily commutes. Commuters are being held to ransom by both the parties involved; this is unpardonable. Here, the issue of selectivity becomes relevant. If semi-public transport drivers must learn Marathi because of their daily interface with people, then the rule should extend to other service providers, such as streetside vendors, shop owners and staff, delivery executives, and so on. Singling out drivers makes little sense. In a city made of and by migrants, only the exclusive or exceptionally wealthy, such as actors Amitabh Bachchan and Shah Rukh Khan or the Ambanis, can get away without speaking a word of Marathi.

The anxiety over Marathi being erased from Mumbai is real given the gradual erosion of the language and culture from the city's geography—Dadar, Parel, and Girgaon are less Maharashtrian than a decade ago—and is rooted in the historical agitation to ensure that the city remained the capital of Maharashtra during the state's reorganisation after Independence. Marathi must be widely spoken and nurtured in Mumbai, but the burden of that must not fall on a selective set of the more vulnerable Mumbaikars, such as auto and taxi drivers—and certainly not at the cost of the inconvenience of the majority of Mumbaikars. This is not the 'idea of Mumbai'.

Spectrum

MADAN SABNAVIS

Three action points for the govt for micro-level reforms

The approach so far has been more top-down at the macro level, which has been largely achieved where only incremental tweaks are required

The Independence Day celebration marked our 80th anniversary, which gives us time to look at what needs to be done in the coming 5 years or so. Starting virtually from scratch in 1947, the economy moved along with different kinds of ideology-driven policies. It was in 1991-92 that there was a push which made us go for economic reforms. This was both easy and difficult. Easy, because there was nothing to come in the way, as it was virtually starting from the beginning when it came to following liberalisation. It was tough because mindsets had to change, which is always a challenge. But we, as a nation, have done well.

Going forward, all reforms will have to be calibrated and will be incremental as the basic edifice has been set in place.

There is some tweaking required in areas where we have seen big reforms in the last three decades or so. But there could be scope for some big-bang reforms too, which have to be taken on to bring about acceleration in growth.

Agriculture is one area that needs major reforms. The challenge is that it is a state subject, and, hence, this means that there must be a strong partnership between the centre and states to make this happen. This will also showcase federalism and its strengths if done. One may remember the farm laws that have been held back. These were progressive, as they sought to revolutionise the sector and make it more commercially orientated. India has the strength of being one of the largest or the top 5 producers of almost all agricultural crops. This needs to be leveraged by addressing the issues of productivity and marketing. This will mean bringing back the Green Revolution across all crops so that there is an increase in production.

The farm laws spoke about allowing farmers to sell in any marketplace, which should be explored and debated so that they get higher prices and can move up the value chain. They need to be incentivised to produce enhanced-quality crops, which is needed if agriculture is to be a major export category. Next is contract farming. It is necessary to save on time to ensure that agriculture becomes more commercial. Experience with contract farming has been good, especially where retail chains have created strong backend facilities. With the necessary safeguards, buy-in from states would be required on both these counts. The nation cannot always be dependent on the monsoon for the kharif crop.

Related to this objective, the governments need to work towards improving irrigation across the country. The linking of rivers has been on the agenda for long and then forgotten. It is time to bring this idea back on the table and work towards channelling the water of perennial rivers like the Ganga towards the south so that a corridor is created for providing water to other states. Investments can be made jointly by all states concerned with the centre.

The second area which needs serious reforms is in the education sector, as this is a major lacuna today when linking the youth with jobs. A positive outcome with the spread of e-commerce and construction activity is that several jobs have been created. However, this is in rather low-paying jobs which require neither education nor skill. While e-commerce as an industry is to thrive and grow, more jobs will surely be created. But this does not provide an income which is needed to drive consumption in future. This is why we need to get back to the basics and focus on skill development. Students need to be segregated based on their academic performance, as all cannot go ahead with higher studies.

Focus on job-creating skills becomes essential, which can range from AI-related to the more modest—carpenter or tailor. Once students are put through these skills, they can be linked with the apprenticeship scheme of the government so that they are more industry-ready. In this context, it may be worthwhile to create such courses in universities, and, just like there are BA and BSc degrees, among others, there can be one for special skills called BSS.

The courses can be designed to cover practical skills, with students taking on specialisation in their third year. This way there will be a perfect supply of skilled personnel for industry.

The third area, which is probably more challenging, is to make the MSMEs more independent and in a position to stand on their own. MSMEs have played an important role in terms of contribution to industrial growth and exports and, hence, to the GDP. Their numbers are staggeringly high, but they have had several challenges which, though being addressed, continue to remain. This is why all crises in the country, which can be a war of tariffs, affect them first, and the response is to provide relief normally through the credit channels. This kind of subsidisation is good but has come in the way of making these units work towards becoming more professional. This mindset has to change, and the subsidy should now be towards having these units become bigger so that they are able to compete globally. For this to happen, they need to become more professional and get away from the family or proprietorship approach, the form of structure they have followed so far.

These three areas should, hence, be the focal points for the government in terms of reforms because these will all be at the micro-level where they are required. The approach so far has been more top-down at the macro level, which has been largely achieved where only incremental tweaks are required. Micro-level reforms would cover a larger canvas and bring about development in areas which really matter.

The author is Chief Economist, Bank of Baroda and author of 'Corporate Quirks: The Darker Side of the Sun'. Views are personal.

The Road Ahead

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

India's very own 'Tale of Two Cities' of the modern era

It is the failure of inclusive growth and governance reforms that causes disquiet, even despair, while macroeconomic fundamentals give us hope

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times,.... it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair..."

These immortal opening lines of the novel 'A Tale of Two Cities' by Charles Dickens seem to be relevant in contemporary India.

Over the past decade, the Union government has done some creditable things to give us hope. Among large economies, India is almost alone in managing the Covid pandemic and the turbulence of the Ukraine and Iran wars reasonably efficiently while at the same time exhibiting unusual fiscal responsibility.

There has been an impressive balance of short-term individual welfare to address the immediate needs in a largely poor society and the long-term requirement of economic growth in the form of a massive infrastructure push and promotion of investment and trade. The Union's fiscal deficit, which had stood at a record high of 9.2% in 2020-21, was brought down to 4.8% in 2025-26 and is targeted at 4.4% in FY 2027. Despite the enormous strain on the public finances on account of the Hormuz Strait closure, the fiscal deficit in FY 2027 will be manageable.

The financial sector, which was perilous a decade ago because of indiscriminate lending practices and a high ratio of non-performing assets, has been stabilised with a significant infusion of capital and impressive improvement in recoveries. As a result, public sector banks, which registered an aggregate loss of over ₹85,000 crore in 2017-18, have now recorded an aggregate net profit of ₹1,98,000 crore in 2025-26. The gross non-performing assets ratio of public sector banks, which stood at a staggering 14.6% in 2018, has now declined to a historic low level of 1.93%, and the net NPA ratio stands at a healthy 0.39%.

Perhaps the most impressive accomplishment of the past twelve years is in the infrastructure. The road network has recorded impressive growth. The highway and road network grew from about 91,000 km in 2014 to over 146,000 km in 2026. National highways' length grew from about 18,000 km to 48,000 km, and high-speed corridors increased from a paltry 93 km to 2138 km. Average construction per day increased from 11.6 km to 34 km. In shipping, cargo handling capacity has increased from 800 million tonnes per annum (MPTA) to 2760 MPTA. The turnaround time of major ports has reduced from 94 hours to 48 hours. Electrification of rail tracks increased from 21,800 route km to 46,900 route km. All this has been accomplished by record investments in infrastructure as well as an increase in speed of execution.

As a net result of all these initiatives and policies, the annual economic growth rate is around 6.5-7%, even while facing headwinds like global trade barriers and disruption of energy supplies. There is significant improvement of welfare delivery through digital technology. The unified payment interface (UPI) has been a spectacular success, recording over 240 billion transactions, transferring digitally over ₹314 trillion. Some of the industrial policy initiatives, notably mobile phone manufacturing and exports, yielded excellent results, though other sectors have yet to witness a boom in manufacturing and exports. All these and other news on the economic front are causes of celebration and hope.

And yet we face daunting challenges in the country. I have argued in these columns earlier that we need to focus on three critical numbers unique to India: 1) 85% of the workforce in the unorganised sector without a secure job and monthly wage; 2) over 60% still living in small villages with very few opportunities for upward mobility; 3) up to 46% of workers still engaged in agriculture as the primary occupation even as its share of the GDP is declining and stands at 16-18%. India's growth is real and impressive, though it is still well below our true potential. And yet this growth is not sufficiently impacting the lives of people on a large enough scale. As a result, the formal sector is not able to absorb the 12 million workers who are entering the job market every year; urbanisation is still very slow in comparison to G20 countries or other significant economies; and far too many people are engaged in agriculture with low productivity and wages for want of better opportunities.

There are no easy answers to these great challenges of inclusive growth. They require broad national consensus, determination, innovative policies, competent execution, and, above all, patience and perseverance. Growth is necessary, but not sufficient; we need a massive national effort for about two decades to generate inclusive, sustained high growth to address these challenges. We need to dramatically improve educational outcomes and skill levels to enhance the productivity of our young population. But we also need to improve the growth model to make it more inclusive and employment-generating.

All this must be done on a war footing to be able to fulfil the aspirations of our youth without undermining political stability or social harmony.

We cannot afford stagnation, exhaustion, and ennui. India missed many opportunities in the past 80 years. We should not miss the current opportunity to improve the quality of life and incomes of all Indians. And we cannot forever postpone the critical governance reforms to make our democracy work better for our people—genuine empowerment of local governments; democratisation of political parties; electoral system reform to make competent, public-spirited citizens electable through ethical and rational means; and a system of rule of law that actually delivers justice, protects the innocent, and incentivises socially productive behaviours.

It is the failure of inclusive growth and governance reforms that causes disquiet and even despair, while macroeconomic fundamentals give us hope. Can our parties, media, and public intellectuals come together and help us face the challenges of unfinished tasks?

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear reader, We are eager to know your opinions, comments and suggestions. Write to letters@fpj.co.in with the title of the letter in the subject line. Using snail mail? Send your letters to The Free Press Journal, Free Press House, 215 Free Press Marg, Nariman Point, Mumbai 400021.

Educational reforms

Increasing the number of government colleges, along with creating more job opportunities in both the government and private sectors, can help discourage the coaching culture prevailing in the country. The union and state governments must establish more govt colleges and improve educational standards, with emphasis on quality teaching by well-qualified and trained teachers selected through a transparent, tough, and corruption-free recruitment process. Colleges should focus on qualitative teaching and self-learning so that students become capable of cracking competitive examinations without depending excessively on costly coaching.

Vandana, Chandigarh

Jadavpur violence

The incident at Jadavpur University, as reported in the media, appears to be a well-planned attack by students of an organisation backed by the ruling party. The CM, after two days, showed no strength in condemning the offenders and, instead, chose to blame a Left-leaning students' organisation. Such a massive attack could not have been carried out without the blessings of the ruling party. The fact that policemen stood as mute spectators further confirms this. What is needed is to repose confidence in the minds of students by making education meaningful, purposeful, and employment-orientated.

A.G. Rajmohan, Anantapur

Job before marriage

Apropos of "Chettah, let's get married" (Aug 25). The report on 416 marriages at Guruvayoor Temple is heartening, but the reference to 29.9 per cent unemployment among Kerala's marriageable-age youth deserves greater attention. Marriage may bring companionship and hope, but it cannot compensate for the uncertainty caused by lack of stable employment. Kerala has a well-educated young population, yet many are compelled to seek opportunities outside the state or abroad. The government should, therefore, give greater priority to job creation, especially in sectors suited to educated youth.

A. Myilsami, Coimbatore

Demolish illegal structures

A comprehensive survey on existing illegal and under-construction structures in and around the city should be done, and such structures should be demolished. One fails to understand why the civic authorities don't take preventive actions and address the issue only when mishaps occur, such as the one at Madhapur yesterday. It is sad and heart-rending that many lives are lost time and again due to various unnatural reasons, building collapses being one of them. Merely punishing the guilty to close the issue is only a knee-jerk reaction and not a permanent solution.

N.R. Raghuram, Hyderabad

Our rights

It is amusing that only a catastrophe can accord the citizen the specific right. In the case of a parent who lost his five-year-old child while walking him to school, the Supreme Court declared the right to walk on a demarcated footpath a fundamental right. Yet, even as many casualties of the stray dog menace are reported, the right to freedom from stray dogs/canines is not recognised by law.

P.R. Ravinder, Hyderabad

Where's the justice?

On the one hand, the current government emphasises the Beti Bachao campaign, while on the another hand, Gurmeet Ram Raheem Singh gets the 17th parole since his conviction in a rape and murder case. The timing is intriguing, as he gets parole before elections, religious gatherings, or whenever a political need arises. This isn't a coincidence; it's a pattern. He is not in jail for a petty crime but a serious and heinous crime like rape and murder. The frequency of his parole does not look like humanitarian relief but an institutional mockery. The central and the state governments must hang their heads in shame.

Bal Govind, Noida

Rising sugar prices

The sharp increase in the price of sugar, which has reportedly reached around Rs 80 per kg in many parts of India, has placed an additional burden on ordinary people, especially poor and middle-class families who are already struggling with the increasing cost of food and other daily necessities. Sugar is an essential commodity. The government should take immediate steps to investigate the reasons behind this price rise and prevent hoarding and black marketing. Proper monitoring of the supply chain and effective action against unscrupulous traders are necessary to ensure that sugar remains affordable.

Jubel D'Cruz, Mumbai

CIA Director Ratcliffe makes unannounced visit to Moscow

Moscow: Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Director John Ratcliffe has made an unannounced visit to Moscow, US media reported, after flight data showed an American military aircraft flew to the Russian capital, where a US diplomatic motorcade was later spotted.

CBS News and Axios confirmed the trip, marking Ratcliffe's first known visit to Russia as CIA chief. The Financial Times reported that the Trump administration asked Kyiv to pause long-range strikes on major Russian cities for the duration of the visit. Neither the CIA nor the White House offered immediate comment.

Flight tracking data showed a US military C-17 Globemaster III aircraft travelling from Joint Base Andrews in Maryland via Latvia before landing in Moscow on Tuesday.

The trip occurs as US-brokered negotiations to end Russia's invasion of Ukraine remain stalled, although Moscow recently released a former US marine held since 2022. While the exact purpose of the mission remains undisclosed, the CIA has regularly mediated sensitive US-Russia prisoner exchanges, including the 2024 release of Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich.

DIPLOMATIC PUSH | A Pakistani official noted that US offered to reverse curbs prior to or during a new round of negotiations

Iran vows resistance to expanded US sanctions

Agencies
CAIRO/WASHINGTON

Iran vowed to resist expanded US sanctions designed to cripple its economy, expressing confidence that key trading partners would reject Washington's pressure campaign while claiming the US is eager to resume negotiations.

US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent announced measures targeting 60 individuals, entities and vessels, alongside restrictions on digital assets, gold, technology and shipping. However, the penalties avoided Chinese financial institutions facilitating Iranian oil sales. China reiterated that its economic cooperation with Tehran is lawful and should not be disrupted.

Diplomatic efforts appear to be accelerating. Abbas Golroo, head of the foreign relations committee in Iran's parliament, revealed that Pakistan army chief Asim Munir delivered a US message to Tehran on Monday aimed at restarting political talks. A Pakistani official noted the US offered to reverse sanctions prior to or during a new round of negotiations. Pakistani Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi reported "significant progress" following high-level exchanges in Tehran.

Despite diplomatic engagement, Iranian Economy Minister Ali Madanizadeh warned that Iran was fully prepared to respond, telling state television that "enemies should wait for an attack". Revolutionary Guards spokesperson Brigadier General Hossein Mohebbi also threatened heavy blows against US interests if Iranian infrastructure comes under threat.

US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent speaks during a press conference to outline further sanctions against Iran, at the Treasury Department in Washington

Munir holds talks with officials in Iran on ways to reopen Hormuz

Islamabad: Pakistan Army Chief Field Marshal Asim Munir has held "comprehensive discussions" with the Iranian leadership in Tehran, focusing on measures to prevent further escalation of the West Asia conflict and the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, the army's media wing said on Tuesday.

Tehran puts out unseen Mojtaba video

Tehran: Iran has released a rare, undated video of Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei, marking the first time his voice has been heard publicly since he assumed office. The footage, published by Iran's Fars news agency, depicts the 56-year-old leader listening to a student's thesis assessment and outlining the regime's "Islamic Security Model". Khamenei succeeded his father, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who was killed in joint US-Israeli strikes on Feb 28. He has not made any public appearances since taking power—missing even his father's funeral—fueling speculation that he suffered severe injuries during the attack. Reports suggest he communicates with senior officials through intermediaries to avoid targeting.

-Agencies

Canada strikes back at US with tit-for-tat tariffs

AP
TORONTO

Canada struck back at the United States on Tuesday with retaliatory tariffs on about USD 20 billion worth of American goods, including steel, dairy products, appliances and farm equipment, as the trade war between the once-friendly neighbours escalated sharply.

The tension threatened one of the world's largest trading relationships. The new tariffs extended well beyond industrial goods, hitting everyday purchases such as seafood, cheese, clothing, cosmetics and toilet paper, with some facing duties as high as 50 per cent.

Canada's retaliation came after the Trump administration imposed 50 per cent tariffs over the weekend on Canadian goods following the collapse of trade negotiations.

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney accused Washington of trying to subordinate Canada and said US demands during the failed talks showed that Americans wanted to "destroy our major industries".

President Donald Trump intensified the confrontation Monday, telling Canadian leaders to "fall in line" or face consequences "far WORSE" than existing tariffs and threatening new 50 per cent tariffs on Canadian vehicles, auto parts and steel.

Trump added another provocation Tuesday, saying the United States was giving "serious consideration" to renaming Lake Ontario "Lake America" in a feud with Ontario Premier Doug Ford. Such a change would be reminiscent of the Republican president's unilateral action last year by executive order to rename the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of America.

The tariffs will take effect Sept 8 at rates of 15 per cent, 25 per cent and 50 per cent, with Canada matching the corresponding US tariff rate on more than 700 products such as pulp and paper and electronics.

The tariffs on many American products would double from 25 per cent to 50 per cent, with the largest share of the new measures affecting steel and aluminum.

Briefs

ISLAMABAD

Imran's party files revised contempt plea

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) resubmitted a contempt petition in the Supreme Court after resolving technical objections raised by the registrar's office. Filed by former Prime Minister Imran Khan's sister, Uzma Khan, the plea accuses top officials, including Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, of violating the court's August 18 directive to transfer the 73-year-old leader to Shifa International Hospital.

PORT-AU-PRINCE (HAITI)

Haiti gang attack kills 47, 50 abducted

A violent gang raid on Sunday in Kenscoff left at least 47 people dead, including five children, and resulted in more than 50 kidnappings. The United Nations described the assault as one of Haiti's largest mass kidnappings in recent years. A gang leader threatens to execute hostages if security forces attempt a rescue, presenting a major security test for authorities ahead of scheduled December elections. Attackers also burned 25 homes.

BEIJING

Dissident Chinese artist gets 3-yr term

A Chinese court sentenced dissident artist Gao Zhen to three years in prison for "defaming national heroes and martyrs," his family and a rights group confirmed Tuesday. The 70-year-old US-based sculptor, known for satirical artworks depicting former leader Mao Zedong, was detained in 2024 during a visit to China. Sanhe City People's Court retroactively applied a 2018 law to penalise sculptures Gao created between 2005 and 2009. Rights group Chinese Human Rights Defenders condemned the closed-door trial and retroactive charges. Gao's wife, Zhao Yaliang, announced plans to appeal, noting she and her son remain subject to exit bans.

US prepares to revoke tourist, business visas of 2L foreigners

Washington: The Trump administration is preparing to execute the largest mass visa revocation in US history, targeting up to 2 lakh foreign nationals who hold tourist or business visas and have applied for asylum.

Internal State Department documents reveal plans to revoke B1 and B2 visas issued between 2016 and 2026 to individuals who subsequently sought asylum.

State Department spokesman Tommy Pigott stated that officials are working alongside the Department of Homeland Security to address foreign visitors who enter on short-term visas but apply for permanent residency. Officials clarified that the revocations would not lead to immediate deportation; instead, pending asylum applicants will lose their official status as business or tourism travellers.

The move follows a series of tighter immigration measures introduced during President Donald Trump's second term, including increased social media scrutiny, expensive processing bonds, and targeted entry bans.

15% dip in Indians seeking to join UG courses in US: Report

PTI
WASHINGTON

Amid the tightening of immigration policies, the number of Indian students seeking admission to US colleges declined by 15 per cent in 2025-26 over the previous year, according to a report.

A report, representing over 1,100 institutions, released by the Common App, shows that although application volume for undergraduate admission in the upcoming 2026-27 academic year rose overall, the number of international applicants through March 1 fell 10 per cent, the steepest decline on record.

The report by a non-profit organisation recorded a 15 per cent decrease in applicants from India -- the top source for international students in the US.

India is the largest source of international students in the US, with over 3.63 lakh enrolling for different courses in the 2024-25 academic year.

According to the report, international students contributed USD 41.77 billion to the local economy in the Fall 2025-26. The same number is projected to be 38.37 billion in 2026-27.

Earlier, a report by an organisation of educators said that stricter visa rules and uncertain policy are expected to lead to up to 1.1 lakh fewer international student registrations at US colleges and universities in Fall 2026.

Doval, Wang discuss peace along border

PTI
BEIJING

India and China on Tuesday discussed ways to maintain peace and stability along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and to move toward progress on delimitation of the frontier, while sustaining ongoing work on trans-boundary cooperation, as National Security Advisor Ajit Doval held extensive talks with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi.

Held under the framework of the Special Representatives dialogue, the Doval-Wang talks came weeks before Chinese President Xi Jinping's anticipated visit to India for the upcoming BRICS summit.

In his opening remarks at the meeting, Doval said that normalcy in the ties between India and China has been a direct result of both sides maintaining peace and tranquillity in the border areas.

"The two sides positively reviewed the ongoing momentum in bilateral relations which is in line with the directions and vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Xi Jinping," the Indian embassy in Beijing said.

"They discussed ways to further expand bilateral cooperation, maintain stability and ensure peace and tranquillity in the border areas, and make progress on boundary delimitation, while sustaining the ongoing work on transboundary cooperation," it said.

EAM holds talks with Lavrov to boost relations with Russia

Moscow: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar held a wide-ranging conversation with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, with the two leaders discussing bilateral cooperation, regional hotspots, global challenges and multilateral issues.

EAM Jaishankar shared details of his conversation with Lavrov in a post on X, highlighting the broad range of issues discussed during the engagement. "A wide-ranging conversation this evening with FM Sergey Lavrov of Russia. Discussed our bilateral cooperation, regional hotspots, global challenges and multilateral issues."

The talks between the two foreign ministers come amid continued high-level engagement between India and Russia on a range of bilateral, regional and international matters. Earlier in the day, EAM Jaishankar called on Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow and handed over a "personal message" from Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

SCOTUS allows selective mail voting

Agencies
WASHINGTON

The US Supreme Court on Monday allowed President Donald Trump to begin carrying out portions of an executive order designed to impose restrictions on mail voting, while ongoing lower-court litigation continues to stall key elements of the policy.

The high court's unsigned decision permits the Department of Homeland Security to assemble lists of eligible voters in Democratic-led states that brought legal action against the administration.

However, directives aimed at the US Postal Service—which mandate tracking barcodes on ballot envelopes and state voter submission portals—remain temporarily enjoined nationwide by a separate lower-court ruling.

The Supreme Court explicitly clarified that its decision addressed only the timing of the legal challenge rather than the ultimate constitutionality of the executive order. While the White House declared the outcome a major victory for election security, opposing state officials warned that the policy diverts critical administrative resources away from midterm election preparations.

The ruling prompted strong dissents from the court's three liberal justices. Justice Sonia Sotomayor, joined by Justice Elena Kagan, emphasized that the decision does not affirm executive branch authority to regulate state-run elections.

Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson authored a separate dissent arguing that the ruling creates unnecessary uncertainty for election administrators.

Russian state control for pvt facilities facing risk of Ukraine attack

Agencies
MOSCOW

Russian President Vladimir Putin has issued a decree enabling the state to temporarily take control of critical infrastructure if private owners fail to safeguard facilities against Ukrainian drone strikes or rebuild damaged sites.

The mandate covers essential economic sectors, including energy, communications, transport, and logistics. The move follows persistent Ukrainian strikes targeting oil refineries and major commercial operations. In the latest incident on Tuesday, Ukrainian forces targeted the Afipsky oil refinery in Krasnodar, sparking a fire.

Deputy Prime Minister Denis Manturov stated on Monday evening that the mechanism does not signal widespread nationalisation or ownership changes, but allows targeted state involvement to resolve security issues. However, political analysts suggest the decree provides an ultimatum to private owners who are hesitant to reinvest in facilities vulnerable to repeated attacks.

Russian factory fire claims one

Moscow: A fire broke out on Tuesday at a gas chemical complex under construction in Russia's Far East, killing a Chinese worker and injuring over 100 people. At least 19 workers remain hospitalised. The Amur region facility, a joint project of Russian firm Sibur and China's Sinopec, announced financial support for the victim's family. The sitehas not yet begun production.

-Agencies

PIO former CEO to pay $1.8 mn to settle US SEC fraud case

Washington: Deepak Jain, the former Indian-origin CEO of AiNET Corp, has agreed to pay $1.8 million to resolve allegations of submitting false certifications under a US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) contract.

The Justice Department stated that Jain fraudulently certified that his Maryland data centre met Tier IV uptime and resilience standards. The US government alleged the facility failed to meet even Tier III standards and falsely claimed an entity named UpTime Council had inspected the site. Assistant Attorney General Brett A Shumate stated federal authorities will continue pursuing contractors who fail to deliver required services. **-PTI**

Australia's music industry bans AI-generated tracks from charts

AP
MELBOURNE

Australia's recorded music industry will bar tracks wholly generated by artificial intelligence from official charts as burgeoning generative technologies threaten artists' livelihoods, a representative said on Tuesday.

The crackdown comes as a variation of Madonna's pop hit "Like a Prayer" created by an Australian producer using AI-generated vocals and drums has spent 16 weeks in the Australian top 20, stoking debate about generative AI's place in music. It peaked at number two on the Australian Record Industry Association's top 20 Australian singles chart in May and remained in fourth place on Tuesday. Wholly AI-generated tracks will be banned from the ARIA charts from Monday next week, but some AI-assisted music will remain eligible, ARIA said.

offgrid

Sarees enjoy six yards of glory at Times Square

PTI
NEW YORK

Diverse hues and varieties of India's sarees inundated the iconic Times Square here as women from the diaspora community proudly showcased the timeless elegance, heritage and cultural diversity of the garment at a special event.

The third edition of the 'Saree Goes Global' event was organised by New York-based philanthropic organisation Uma Global at Times Square on Sunday.

Women and girls flaunted their exquisitely embroidered, painted and embellished sarees -- from traditional Assamese weaves, Lucknow's Chikankari to Banarasi Silk and splendid Kanjeevarams -- reflecting the diversity of the nine-yard garment from across the length and breadth of India.

Adorning the vibrant sarees with exquisite embellishments, styles and fabrics, the women proudly showcased their collection as they waved the national flags, danced together, took pictures and shared stories about their sarees, culture and heritage.

In her message that was read out at the event, New York State Governor Kathy Hochul said the event was a celebration of the women who "positively transform our communities, while wearing sarees in proud celebration of your heritage in Times Square." Hochul commended Uma Global for being an "invaluable resource" for women, minorities, and business professionals.

"When we empower professionals of all genders and backgrounds to succeed, we help build a future that works for all of us," Hochul's message said.

In her message on the occasion, Rajlakshmi Appasaheb Kadam (Consul Trade) at the Consulate General of India in New York said the saree is a living legacy of Indian art, traditions, culture and hard-working weavers.

Cloud over Kanye West's Russian gigs

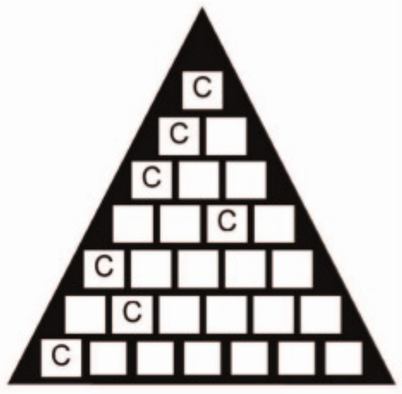
St Petersburg: The Russian stadium, St Petersburg's Gazprom Arena, that was scheduled to host two shows by Ye, the rapper also known as Kanye West, has said the events will no longer take place. West would have been the first major Western performer to play Russia since it invaded Ukraine in 2022. The rapper is trying to rehabilitate his image after years of antisemitic remarks, for which he recently apologised.

-Agencies

ALPHA TRIANGLE

Beginning at the top move towards the bottom seven letter word by adding a letter at each step and rearranging.A correct and different word must be made at each step answering to the clue given.

1 Vitamin type
2 Calcium symbol
3 Abyssinian, for one
4 Mexican entree
5 Dantean division
6 Director's word
7 Surface layer



Solution to Alpha Triangle

C, Ca, Cat, Taco, Canto, Action, Coating.

Go Figure

Place the four numbers in the first, third, fifth, and seventh boxes and whatever operators you care to use in the second, fourth, and sixth boxes in the correct order to get the answer. Use the numbers only once. Operations should be carried out sequentially. BODMAS rule does not apply.

The operators:

÷ × + −

Easy

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐ = 4

3 5 6 8

Medium

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐ = 55

6 6 7 9

Hard

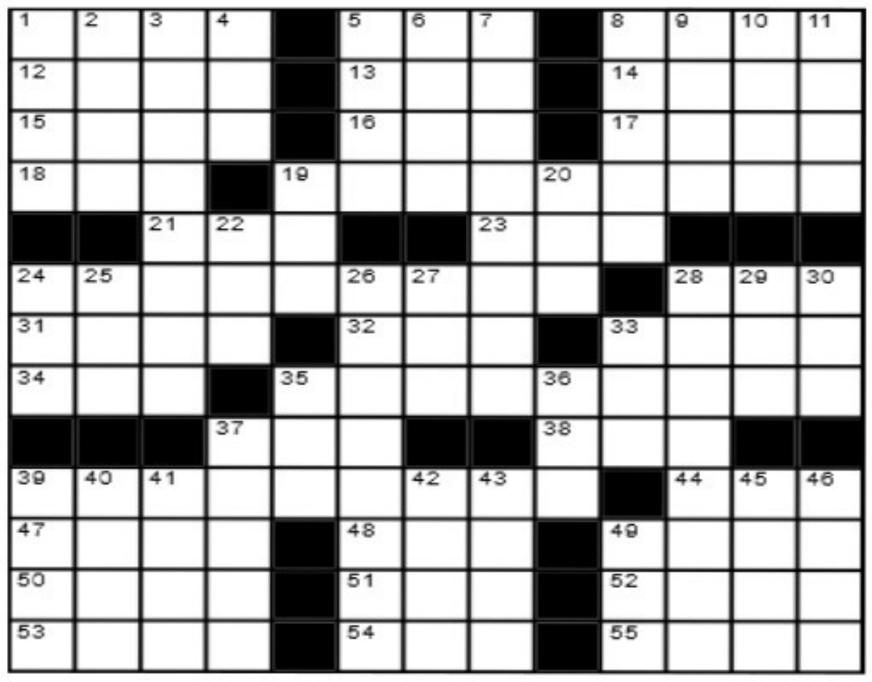
☐☐☐☐☐☐☐ = 25

1 2 2 6

Our Solutions:

Easy - 8 + 5 - 6 - 3 = 4
Medium - 9 x 6 - 6 + 7 = 55
Hard - 6 x 2 x 2 + 1 = 25

Crossword #1967



Across

1 Extent of a surface
5 Primary Flight Display
8 Cube inventor Rubik
12 Tears off
13 Part of verb to be
14 One pound sterling
15 Shear or cut
16 Steal from
17 Congo river
18 ___ up : excited or overwrought?
19 Coordinator
21 Kept out of sight
23 Agent
24 US waterside worker
28 Simile centre (2,1)
31 Showily or pretentiously artistic
32 Anger
33 Terrible Russian
34 US soldiers
35 Annoying, driving to distraction
37 Label
38 Also know as, in short?
39 Unpunctual sort
44 Not yet decided on a sched.
47 Distinctive air
48 Gambler's haven ___ Vegas
49 The city of Jerusalem
50 Separate article
51 Suffix with social or tour
52 Tie securely
53 "Sore" anagram for a lot of eggs?
54 The rebel Guevara's Christian name
55 Indian city

Down

1 Curve or arc; vault
2 Annoy or irk
3 Descriptive phrases
4 A venomous serpent
5 A young salmon
6 Developed tadpole
7 Excluded or prohibited the entry
8 Fit out
9 Regrets, is contrite about
10 Longest river in the world
11 European river - "redo" anagram?
19 Piece of poetry
20 Maiden-name
22 Climbing vine
24 Hang loosely
25 Numerical prefix
26 Fiendish; devilish
27 Fort near Monterey
28 Flying a plane or an aircraft
29 "S" in SF the city
30 Director ___ Lee
33 Writing fluid
35 PC alternative
36 Organ of hearing
37 Sporting sides
39 Den
40 Colloquial term for a car?
41 Growth with branches
42 Squash or pulverize
43 Italian noble family
45 Rude person
46 Pilaster - "at an" anagram?
49 Jamaican dance music

Across: 1 Area, 5 PFD, 8 Erno, 12 Rips, 13 Are, 14 Quid, 15 Clip, 16 Rob, 17 Ule, 18 Het, 19 Organiser, 21 Hid, 23 Rep, 24 Stevedore, 28 As a, 31 Arty, 32 Ire, 33 Ivan, 34 Gis, 35 Maddening, 37 Tab, 38 AKA, 39 Latecomer, 44 TBA, 47 Aura, 48 Las, 49 Sion, 50 Item, 51 Ist, 52 Knot, 53 Roes, 54 Che, 55 Agra.

Down: 1 Arch, 2 Rile, 3 Epithets, 4 Asp, 5 Parr, 6 Frog, 7 Debarred, 8 Equip, 9 Rues, 10 Nile, 11 Oder, 19 Ode, 20 Nee, 22 Ivy, 24 Sag, 25 Tri, 26 Diabolic, 27 Ord, 28 Aviating, 29 San, 30 Ang, 33 Ink, 35 MAC, 36 Ear, 37 Teams, 39 Lair, 40 Auto, 41 Tree, 42 Mash, 43 Este, 45 Boor, 46 Anta, 49 Ska.

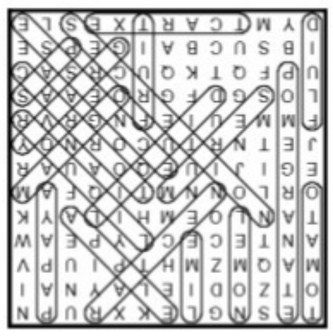
Juice

Can you find the words connected in one way or the other with the theme indicated by the title in today's Word Search?

The words may be read horizontally, vertically or diagonally either forwards or backwards, but always in straight lines. Use a ruler to cross them through as you find them.

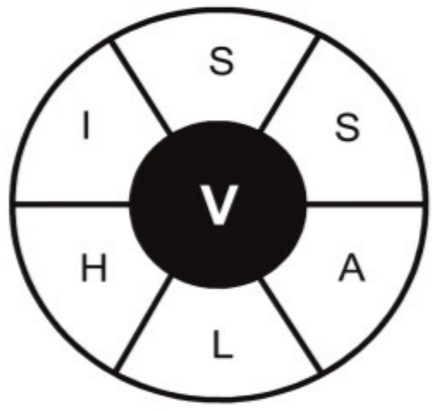
T	E	S	N	G	L	E	K	X	R	U	P	N
O	T	Z	O	D	I	E	L	A	Y	N	A	I
M	A	Q	M	Z	M	H	T	P	I	U	P	V
A	N	T	E	C	E	C	L	Y	P	E	A	W
T	A	N	L	O	E	M	H	I	L	A	Y	K
O	R	L	O	N	N	M	T	I	Q	F	A	M
E	G	I	J	I	U	E	Q	O	A	U	A	R
J	E	T	N	R	T	U	C	O	R	N	O	Y
F	M	M	E	U	I	E	F	N	G	R	V	R
L	O	S	G	D	F	G	R	O	E	A	A	S
U	P	F	Q	T	K	Q	U	C	R	S	A	C
I	B	S	U	C	B	A	I	G	E	P	S	E
D	Y	M	T	C	A	R	T	X	E	S	L	E

Apple
Carrot
Essence
Extract
Fluid
Fruit
Gravy
Lemon
Lime
Liquid
Liquor
Mango
Nectar
Papaya
Pomegranate
Sap
Secretion
Serum
Tomato



BULL'S EYE

How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown? Each word can use a letter only once and must contain the central letter. There should be at least one 7-letter word. British English Dictionary is used as reference.



Ratings:

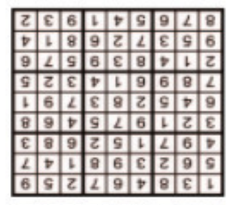
02 average; 03 good; 04 outstanding.

SOLUTION :

lavish, SLAVISH, vial, visa

SUDOKU

1	3	8				2		
5		2					4	7
						6		
3								8
6	4							
		9			4	3	2	
				3	9			
				2		8	1	
8			5	4				



WHAT TO DO: Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Every puzzle has only one correct solution.

RIDDLER

A 30 year old man married a 25 year old woman. She died at age 50 and her husband was so devastated that he cried for years. Ten years after he stopped crying, he died. If he had lived to be 80, how many years was he a widower?

ANSWER: He was a widower for 25 years.

YOUR DAY

By Vinayak Vishwas Karandikar

ARIES: Today is the day to enjoy, entertain, and travel. Expenditure on entertainment, children, education, or travel will bring joy and growth. People in education, the art field, the entertainment sector, sports, politics, and government jobs will achieve success. Spend quality time with family and loved ones; family gatherings will bring happiness. Focusing on back care and eye health will help you stay energetic. Lucky Number: 6; Lucky Colour: Pink

TAURUS: Today is the day to travel and study. Spending on properties, vehicles, or travel will support future stability. People working in the tourism sector, hotels, hospitals, politics, and journalism will see positive results. Household work, WFH, and family interactions will bring satisfaction and bonding. Attending to your ears and digestion will enhance wellness. Lucky Number: 8; Lucky Colour: Blue

GEMINI: Today is the day to travel and communicate effectively. Expenditure on essentials, travel, or businesses will be productive. People working in the tourism sector, politics, and journalism will benefit. Travel or communication with your father or siblings will strengthen family ties. Taking care of your eyes, energy levels, and heart health will keep you strong. Lucky Number: 5; Lucky Colour: Green

CANCER: Today is the day to see your wishes get fulfilled. Spending on medical care or family needs will bring stability. People in the medical field, politics, consulting, banking, and government jobs will achieve success. Focusing on family responsibilities will strengthen bonds. Take care of your teeth and eyes to maintain overall wellness. Lucky Number: 6; Lucky Colour: Pink

LEO: Today is the day to take initiatives, travel, and manage expenses. Spending on travel or health will be beneficial. People in tourism, the medical field, government jobs, and politics will see positive results. You will enjoy a long drive with family and lead with confidence in family decisions. Managing your blood pressure, back, and eye care will support your energy. Lucky Number: 1; Lucky Colour: Orange

VIRGO: Today is the day to travel and manage expenses wisely. Expenditure on travel, medical bills, or family support will bring stability. People in tourism, the medical field, banking, government jobs, and politics will benefit. Family journeys and bonding will bring joy. Maintaining your blood pressure, back, and eye health will enhance vitality. Lucky Number: 5; Lucky Colour: Green

LIBRA: Today is the day to accomplish your tasks and progress. Expenditure on businesses or travel will yield good returns. People in banking, the hotel industry, the medical field, government jobs, and politics will benefit. Efforts to balance family and work will be rewarding. Focusing on eye and knee care will keep you active. Lucky Number: 5; Lucky Colour: Green

SCORPIO: Today, you will see success in your commercial and professional lives. Spending on studies, travel, or business growth will bring good results. People in communications, journalism, education, banking, and government jobs will benefit. Balancing family and work will create harmony. Take care of your knees, heart, and overall wellness to enhance energy. Lucky Number: 2; Lucky Colour: Silver

SAGITTARIUS: Today is the day to face challenges with confidence and find solutions to problems. Spending on businesses, health, or education will be productive. People in the occult, the maintenance sector, the travel industry, education, and religious work will see benefits. Resolving family matters will strengthen relationships. Taking care of your digestion, back, and general wellness will keep you energetic. Lucky Number: 1; Lucky Colour: Orange

CAPRICORN: Today is the day to turn your career and family challenges into opportunities. Spending on spouses, medical care, premium services, or businesses will bring long-term stability. People working in the insurance sector, banks, hospitals, and the occult field will benefit. Focusing on family care will strengthen bonds. Take care of your back, heart, and eyes. Lucky Number: 6; Lucky Colour: Pink

AQUARIUS: Today, you will be able to balance your job and family matters. Expenditure on children, businesses, spouses, or health will be productive. People in banking, government jobs, the hotel industry, the medical field, politics, and the art field will benefit. Family gatherings and fun with loved ones are highlighted. Take care of your stomach, back, and lumbar spine. Lucky Number: 6; Lucky Colour: Pink

PISCES: Today, you will achieve financial stability and progress. Spending on health, careers, houses, vehicles, or education will bring positive results. People in the medical field, the entertainment sector, politics, the automobile sector, education, and the property business will benefit. Harmonious communication with family members will strengthen relationships. Attending to the back, eyes, and heart will maintain energy. Lucky Number: 9; Lucky Colour: Red

Bite When I was in SRH, I benefited a lot from Muttiah Muralitharan and Daniel Vettori. They told me a lot of things about bowling that I did not know. Whatever I learnt from them has helped me a lot. If I keep doing the same things, my graph will improve **- Zeeshan Ansari,** UP leg-spinner

games
Mumbai, Wednesday, August 26, 2026

Briefs

LONDON

Tottenham signs Savinho from City

Tottenham took its summer spending to more than $400 million by signing Brazil winger **Savinho** from Manchester City on Tuesday in a deal worth 85 million pounds ($115 million). During this transfer window, Spurs have already brought in Italy midfielder Sandro Tonali from Newcastle for a reported club-record fee of 100 million pounds ($133 million), days after purchasing another midfielder in Mateus Fernandes from West Ham for 85 million pounds (then $113 million).

KOLKATA

Emami Group exits as EB investor

Emami Group on Tuesday officially ended its role as an investor in East Bengal Football Club, transferring all its shares and associated voting rights back to the club, while continuing its association with the red-and-gold outfit as a sponsor. The development marks the conclusion of Emami's investment and management role at the club, with the group saying it will remain committed to the growth and development of Indian football.

BAGHDAD

Arnold extends Iraq coaching deal

Graham Arnold has extended his contract as Iraq head coach through the 2027 Asian Cup, months after guiding the national team at its first World Cup in 40 years. The 63-year-old former Australia coach said he renewed for six months despite being offered a four-year deal by the Iraq Football Association. "I have renewed my contract for six months and this decision is in my best interest and in the best interest of the Iraq national team," Arnold told a news conference in Baghdad on Monday. Arnold was appointed in May 2025 and guided Iraq to the World Cup.

CRICKET
Second Test: Day 4: Sri Lanka vs India, Live on Sony Sports Network from 10 am onwards

TENNIS
US Open: Live on Star Sports from 8.30 pm onwards

2ND TEST| Once the hosts resumed from the tea score of 216 for seven, they were staring at an earlier end to the innings

Dinusha, Pasindu lead Sri Lankan resistance

PTI
COLOMBO

Indian bowlers failed to break through the Sri Lankan resistance spearheaded by Sonal Dinusha and Pasindu Sooriyabandara in the company of late order batters as the home side finished day three of the second Test on 265 for eight here on Tuesday.

Dinusha (85 batting) and Lahiru Kumara (8 batting) were at the crease when stumps were drawn early because of rain and bad light. Sri Lanka still need 38 runs to avoid the follow-on after India amassed 503 for nine in their first innings.

Once the hosts resumed from the tea score of 216 for seven, they were staring at an earlier end to the innings.

But Dinusha notched up his third 50-plus score in as many innings in this series to keep the Indians at bay across two sessions.

A diminutive left-hander, Dinusha displayed towering spirit and technical nous to counter the Indians.

Prasidh tested him with lifters and toe-crushers while spinners — Manav Suthar, Ravindra Jadeja and Saransh Jain — teased his awareness of lines.

The 25-year-old, however, came out of those tough interrogation spaces with flying colours, leaving the Indians a frustrated lot for 201 minutes.

However, Dinusha, who fetched his fifty in 84 balls, had two equally stone-minded companions — Keshara Nuwantha and Lahiru Kumara.

With Nuwantha, he added 57 runs for the eighth wicket and the former played out 74 balls, and then added 35 runs for the ongoing ninth wicket with Kumara, who consumed 50 balls in 65 minutes.

The Indians will be a massively disappointed lot to see an old failing against tail-end batters resurfacing at a very inopportune moment at the SSC ground.

But before they hit the roadblock, the Indians appeared to have primed to put an early end to Sri Lankan innings, reducing them to 216 for seven at tea.

In the pre-lunch session, Sri Lanka were competitive despite losing two wickets as they had added 122 runs.

But in the middle passage, the visiting bowlers took command of the proceedings, scalping four wickets and conceded just 86 runs.

India inflicted an early jolt on Sri Lanka as left-arm spinner Suthar found his correct length. Suthar forced Dhananjaya de Silva to edge one to KL Rahul, who held onto the catch in the second attempt at first slip.

From that point, there was no respite for the Lankan batters.

India's Prasidh Krishna and teammates celebrate the wicket of Sri Lanka's Kamil Mishara. ANI

Prasidh Krishna

14	Overs
1	Maidens
47	Runs
3	Wickets

Scoreboard

India first innings: 503/9 decl
Sri Lanka first innings (O/n: 8/2): L Udara c Jaiswal b P Krishna 1, K Mishara c Jurel b P Krishna 19, P Jayasuriya lbw Suthar 2, P Sooriyabandara b Jadeja 80, K Mendis c Jadeja b P Krishna 32, D de Silva c Rahul b Suthar 8, S Dinusha (not out) 85, N Dickwella c Jurel b M Siraj 0, K Nuwantha c Jain b Suthar 18, L Kumara (not out) 8. **Extras** (LB-6, NB-5, W-1) 12. **Total** (For 8 wkts, 83.4 overs) 265. **Fall of wickets:** 1-1, 2-8, 3-35, 4-122, 5-137, 6-171, 7-173, 8-230. **Bowling:** M Siraj 11-0-33-1, P Krishna 14-1-47-3, M Suthar 21-0-83-3, S Jain 18-5-51-0, R Jadeja 19.4-4-45-1.

India have fallen behind in WTC final race, says Dravid

Former head coach feels New Zealand tour will test young players with stalwarts Kohli, Rohit missing

PTI
MUMBAI

Former head coach Rahul Dravid says India have slightly "fallen behind" in the race to qualify for the World Test Championship (WTC) final and, even though their performance in Sri Lanka is encouraging, it will not be easy for the team to get past New Zealand in the upcoming series.

Currently fifth in the points table, two-time finalists India face an uphill battle to win the majority of their remaining matches in the 2025-27 World Test Championship and move up the standings.

With the top two teams slated to play in the final next year, India, who are behind fourth-placed Bangladesh, will play two away Tests in New Zealand before taking on Australia in a five-Test series at home from January 2027. India will also play five ODIs and as many T20Is against New Zealand.

"I'm hoping they do. It'll be a great run if India can qualify for the WTC final from here," Dravid, a team owner in the European T20 Premier League (ETPL), told JioStar when asked if India could make the summit clash.

"They've fallen behind a little bit, but the kind of quality that the Indian team has, you're not going to write them off at any stage. They started off well against Sri Lanka, so that's a good first step," he said.

India lead the two-match series against Sri Lanka 1-0 and have the upper hand in the second Test following a solid batting performance.

> I'm hoping they do. It'll be a great run if India can qualify for the WTC final from here
>
> **Rahul Dravid** former India coach

5 India's position in WTC points table

2 Number of Tests India will play in NZ

Talking about the New Zealand tour in October, Dravid said the experience of senior players such as Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma, Ajinkya Rahane and Cheteshwar Pujara would be missed in the two Tests. "Playing against New Zealand away is always a challenge. They are a tough team to play away from home. A lot of the young Indian boys have not played in those conditions, so that's going to be a big challenge," he said.

"Hopefully, they can keep the guys fit and not have a lot of injuries over the next few months. We're missing the experience of Virat, Rohit, Ajinkya Rahane and Pujara, these kinds of guys," he added.

Be patient with Sooryavanshi

Dravid also called for patience with 15-year-old batting talent Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, saying he would need a "couple of seasons of red-ball cricket" to find his feet in the longest format. "With Vaibhav, you've got to be patient. He's only 15 years old, and from what I've seen of the kid, I have no doubt that given the opportunity to practise and play domestic cricket and a couple of seasons of red-ball cricket, he will be able to hold his own in a Test match team," he said.

Prasidh has developed into a world-class bowler: Morne

Morkel was delighted to see Krishna operating calmly through a zillion distracting voices during the Test

PTI
COLOMBO

India bowling coach Morne Morkel showered encomium on pacer Prasidh Krishna for ignoring "outside voices" to work hard on his game, developing into a "world class bowler."

Prasidh took three wickets (3/47) in an intense 14-over spell across the day to lead India's bowling unit against Sri Lanka on the third day of the second Test here on Tuesday.

"It (the spell) showed the character of Prasidh. He has the media on his back, the commentators on his back, to fight through that...and his bowling at the moment is very impressive," Morkel began the post-day press meet.

Morkel was delighted to see Prasidh operating calmly through a zillion distracting voices.

"It' is about quieting those voices and just playing cricket. As a team, we always knew about his potential. As soon as you get into this environment, you want to impress a billion cricket fans, you are under the microscope, every movement gets analysed, and sometimes you try and fight against those elements, "But Prasidh, for me, the biggest change is just to let go of all those thoughts, all those comments that are made on him...he is just enjoying his cricket." The South African was delighted to see the single minded efforts of the Karnataka pacer yielding some wonderful results.

"He is an extremely hard worker, he is a guy that will do a lot of homework, going into games, doing a lot of research about opposition."

> It (the spell) showed the character of Prasidh. He has the media on his back, the commentators on his back, to fight through that...and his bowling at the moment is impressive
>
> **Morne Morkel** India bowling coach

Duleep Trophy: Anukul picks five as East Zone decimate North East Zone

Match finished inside two and half days as NE were bowled out for 146

PTI
BENGALURU

Left-arm spinner **Anukul Roy** grabbed five wickets while Vaibhav Sooryavanshi also helped himself to a couple of scalps as East Zone demolished North East Zone by an innings and 210 runs to enter the Duleep Trophy semi-finals, here on Tuesday.

The match finished inside two and half days as North East were bowled out for 146 in their second innings after being asked to follow-on post a meagre 111-run total in the first essay. East Zone had posted a mammoth 467 runs in their first innings.

On the third day, all it took was 50 overs in the second innings to wrap up the proceedings.

Starting the day at 7 for no loss, North East lost wickets at regular intervals before Pheiroijam Jotin Singh (39) and Akash Choudhary (27) added 39 for the ninth wicket to ensure that the minnows weren't skittled out for less than 100.

One of the highlights on the third day was skipper Ishan Kishan's glovework as he effected five dismissals -- two stumpings and three catches.

India A player Anukul bowled in the right areas and North East batters didn't have any clue about which of his deliveries would turn away or remain on stumps.

His final figures read 15-4-37-5. It was his seventh five-wicket haul in first-class cricket. Since the game was under control, Kishan even gave Sooryavanshi a chance to roll his arms and the 15-year-old didn't disappoint his skipper picking up a couple of wickets.

The match ended when Jotin tried to attack Anukul only for Kishan to execute an easy stumping.

BRIEF SCORES: East Zone 467.
North East Zone 111 and 146 in 50 overs (P Jotin Singh 39, Anukul Roy 5/37).
North Zone 251 & 222 (Ayush Badoni 50, Nishant Sindhu 44; Shams Mulani 4/78, Tanush Kotian 4/46) vs West Zone 187 & 220/7 in 51 overs (Musheer Khan 96, Ruturaj Gaikwad 66).

North rally after Musheer, Gaikwad power West Zone

Bengaluru: A flurry of wickets brought North Zone back into the contest after Musheer Khan and Ruturaj Gaikwad struck fine half-centuries to put West Zone in control of their Duleep Trophy quarterfinal on the third day here on Tuesday. Chasing 287 for victory, West Zone were cruising at 195 for three in their second innings when skipper Ruturaj (66 off 70 balls) was run out. That was the breakthrough North needed after a big partnership, and soon they got the wicket of a well-settled Musheer, who stroked his way to 96 off 126 balls.

At stumps, West Zone were 220 for seven with Urvil Patel batting on 17 and needing another 67 runs for victory. Musheer was dismissed four short of what would have been a well-deserved century, having hit eight fours and two sixes, while skipper Gaikwad struck seven boundaries.

tips

Murali, Vettori helped improve my bowling: Zeeshan

PTI
NEW DELHI

His long wait for a comeback in red-ball cricket was fuelled by lessons picked up from legendary spinners Muttiah Muralitharan and Daniel Vettori during a stint with Sunrisers Hyderabad in the IPL, says legspinner **Zeeshan Ansari.**

The Uttar Pradesh player, who was a member of India's U-19 World Cup 2016 side alongside the likes of Ishan Kishan, Rishabh Pant, and Washington Sundar, saw his career getting a boost when SRH roped him in their squad during IPL 2025.

Ansari followed it up with a strong comeback for Uttar Pradesh in the Vijay Hazare Trophy, nearly five years after his last Ranji Trophy appearance for the state in 2020. He was also picked in the India 'A' side for their two unofficial Tests in Sri Lanka.

"When I was in SRH, I benefited a lot from Muttiah Muralitharan and Daniel Vettori. They told me a lot of things about bowling that I did not know. Whatever I learnt from them has helped me a lot. If I keep doing the same things, my graph will improve," Ansari told PTI Videos.

The 26-year-old has also been benefiting from the guidance of former India spinner Piyush Chawla during the UP T20 League.

"I have spoken to Piyush Chawla twice in the UP T20. He told me that I am bowling really well and gave me some advice. I am learning as much as I can from them. They are helping me a lot," Ansari said.

Ansari has carried his form into the UP T20 League, where he is the leading wicket-taker with 14 wickets from six matches. His team Meerut Mavericks have also been unbeaten, winning all six games so far.

"The team is in good mood right now. We have won six out of six matches, so everyone is happy. I want to go and play the Duleep Trophy after this match. So, this will be my last match here. I want to do well in Duleep Trophy," he said.

He also praised captain Rinku Singh for his communication skills and ability to connect with the players.

"The best thing about him is that he talks to all the players. Even when you are on the ground, he is able to connect with you and understand you.

He asks you whether you should bowl or not. That makes him really special," Ansari said.

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Briefs

MUMBAI

Pratitee, Mayank inch closer to title

Top seeds WFM Pratitee Bordoloi and GM-elect Mayank Chakraborty moved a step closer to the Asian Junior Classical Chess Championship crowns with wins in the eighth and penultimate round at the ITC Maratha Sheraton, Mumbai.
In the Open Championship, Chakraborty strengthened his grip on the title by defeating Daksh Goyal to move to 7/8. **Artem Pingin** of Russia beat IM Vignesh Vemula to reach 6.5 points.

MUMBAI

Bhyander score easy victory

ND Bhyander combined well to easily defeat Navi Mumbai Sports Riders 44-27 in a Girls' U-13 match of the Olympia Sports & Events organised 1st Basketball Development League (BDL), Mumbai edition at the VIBGYOR High School, Goregaon, West on Tuesday. Saisha Choudhary topscored with 16 points, while Eva More contributed 11 points to take the team home.

EUROPEAN FOOTBALL | Blues beat Fulham to give Morgan and coach Alonso perfect EPL start; Roma hammers Fiorentina

Rogers scores for Chelsea

AP
LONDON

Donyell Malen's hat trick got Roma off to a blistering Serie A start in a 4-0 win over Fiorentina and Chelsea delivered a perfect Premier League opening for new coach Xabi Alonso on Monday.

Chelsea beat Fulham 3-2 with the aid of a strike from club record signing Morgan Rogers.

Both La Liga games were tied; Malaga and Deportivo A Coruna drew 1-1 and Levante and Osasuna ended goalless.

Chelsea's Cole Palmer (left) and Fulham's Josh King fight for the ball. AP

SCORELINES
Chelsea-Fulham 3-2
Roma-Fiorentina 4-0

Roma tops Serie A

Malen converted three passes from Paolo Dybala to score in the 27th, 52nd and 60th minutes and make Roma one of nine clubs with full points after the Serie A opening weekend. Substitute Niccolò Pisilli completed the rout four minutes from time.

Second half substitute Davide Frattesi scored five minutes into his Lazio debut to give the capital club a 1-0 win at Bologna.

In a game that featured few chances and eight yellow cards, five in the first half, Frattesi's cool finish from Boulaye Dia's superb back-heeled pass, ensured a winning start for new Lazio coach Gennaro Gattuso.

Rogers scores on debut

In an entertaining London derby, Brazilian Joao Pedro put Chelsea ahead in just 32 seconds only for Josh King to level midway through the first half. Rogers restored Chelsea's lead four minutes from half-time and the impressive Cole Palmer made it 3-1 four minutes into the second period.

Gonzalo Garcia cut the deficit five minutes later with a close-range header. Fulham pressed hard but couldn't find an equaliser.

Ahmedabad to host CW Cue Sports C'ships

FPJ News Service
BENGALURU

As one of the world's premier destinations for cue sports, India will host the second Commonwealth Cue Sports Championships from October 7-10 at the Veer Savarkar Sports Complex in Ahmedabad.

The four-day extravaganza will see cueists from nearly 46 countries compete across five disciplines – billiards, snooker, heyball, 10-ball pool and black-ball -- in both categories (men and women). The championships will feature 16 players in each category in four disciplines, while billiards, which has been included in the programme this year, will be an eight-player draw in each section.

Snooker Federation of India (BSFI) named the squad for the Ahmedabad championships on Tuesday. Thirteen cueists (six men and seven women) will represent the country at the four-day event. Vidya Pillai, Shivam Arora and Chitra Magimairaj received direct entries.

Jamnabai Narsee enjoy a field day

Aryan Gupta scores a hat-trick in Ahmed Sailor Cup MSSA Football

FPJ News Service
MUMBAI

Jamnabai Narsee, Juhu thrashed St. Xavier's HS, Fort 5-0 in the Ahmed Sailor Cup Boys U16 Knockout Inter-School Football tournament organised by MSSA and sponsored by Dream Sports at Azad Maidan on Tuesday.

Aryan Gupta scored a hat-trick for Jamnabai school while Jinash Gandhi and Evan Shah scored a goal each in the emphatic win.

In a thrilling clash, Jamnabai Narsee International, Juhu edged Yashodham, Goregaon 4-3 via tiebreaker to enter the next round. Both the teams were locked at 1-1 in the regulation time.

Rustomjee Cambridge 'A' International, Dahisar crushed Greenlawns BP Road 5-0 in another match. Arjun Nair and Megh Rawte scored a brace each and Brendon D Mello netted one goal. St. Mary's ICSE A Mazgaon beat Utpal Sanghvi, Borivali 2-0.

RESULTS
St. Mary's ICSE A Mazgaon - 2 (Jihaan Mehta, Thian Sanjana) beat **Utpal Sanghvi, Borivali - 0**
St. Paul, Dadar -1 (Ayan Shaikh) beat **Bunts Sangha SM Shetty Intl, Powai - 0**
Rustomjee Cambridge A Intl, Dahisar -5 (Brendon D Mello, Arjun Nair 2, Megh Rawte 2) beat **Greenlawns BP Road - 0**
Jamnabai Narsee, Juhu- 5 (Aryan Gupta 3, Jinash Gandhi, Evan Shah) beat **St Xavier's Fort -0**
St Stanislaus, Bandra- 1 (Rudra Sarmalkar) beat **Billabong Intl. Mulund -0**
St Dominic Savio, Andheri got a walk over against **CNS, Kandivali**
Jamnabai Narsee Intl, Juhu- 4 (Jehaan Shroff 2, Shinen Kejriwal, Shivank Shetty) beat **Yashodham, Goregaon -3** (Kshitij Ghadge, Vedant Yadav, Arnav salunke) via a tie breaker
Full time score (1-1)

US Open

Federer coming back to play but not keen on pro tennis

Tennis legend Roger Federer in a file pic. AP

AP
NEW YORK

Roger Federer is actually nervous about his tennis.

The man who won five straight U.S. Open championships during the height of his dominance of the sport is set to play again in Arthur Ashe Stadium on Tuesday night for the first time since 2019.

And he's not quite sure how the game that perhaps nobody ever made look more elegant will appear now.

"I haven't played a singles set in, I don't know, (Hubert) Hurkacz at Wimbledon maybe, so it's been five years," Federer said Monday, referring to his 2021 quarterfinal loss in his last Grand Slam match.

"I don't know how it's going to go tomorrow. So there is a lot of uncertainty but a lot of happiness that I can return to Arthur Ashe, a place where I have had so many beautiful moments." It's only one set of singles in an exhibition against Andy Roddick and one set of doubles with John McEnroe against Roddick and Andre Agassi. The winner of 20 Grand Slam singles titles should be fine for those.

IMPRESSIVE RECORD
20 Grand Slam Titles
5 US Open Titles

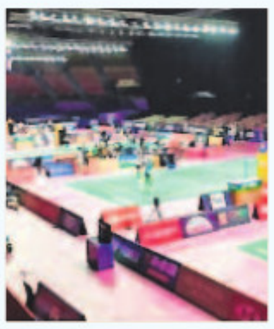
But a return to tennis beyond that, competing in major tennis tournaments in his mid-40s like Venus and Serena Williams? "No, no, no, no. No, not at all," Federer said during a news conference. "Thanks for asking. I wasn't sure if the question was going to get asked, but I'm happy you did so I can clarify in case anybody thought." At 45, Federer still looks fit, and said he enjoys working out in the gym. But he said he goes through long stretches where he is rarely on the court.

His lengthy absence from the U.S. Open has done little to dampen his popularity, based on the amount of people around the grounds who were mentioning his name. The appearance of "Roger Federer" up on the big board for all to see again, ahead of his afternoon practice on Ashe, where Federer collected the trophy every year from 2004-08, was a welcome sight for his fans.

The trip to New York is a stop for Federer on his way to Newport, Rhode Island, where he will be enshrined in the International Tennis Hall of Fame on Saturday.

Federer never really had the chance to say goodbye to New York as a player, because there was no way to know his loss to Grigor Dimitrov in the 2019 quarterfinals would be his last match.

Guwahati to host India Open amid R-Day schedule clash



SP News
MUMBAI

The 2028 edition of the India Open badminton tournament will be held in Guwahati instead of New Delhi, Badminton Association of India (BAI) secretary general Sanjay Mishra said on Sunday. Mishra said the decision was taken as the tournament dates will coincide with Republic Day security arrangements in the national capital.

“The 2028 India Open will be held in the last week of January, and due to the tournament dates clashing with Republic Day security arrangements in the National Capital, we felt that only for that year should we shift the tournament to Guwahati. It will return to New Delhi in 2029,” Mishra said.

The announcement came on the final day of the BWF World Championships 2026, which witnessed several new records at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium in New Delhi.

Mixed doubles combination Thom Gicquel and Delphine Delrue won France’s first gold medal, while Alex Lanier added the men’s singles crown.

Korea’s An Se Young also secured her second gold medal in women’s singles.

Last edition’s bronze medallists Gicquel and Delrue defeated top seeds Feng Yan She and Huang Dong Ping of China 22-20, 19-21, 21-15 in an hour and 18 minutes to claim the title, according to a release.

France then became only the second European nation to win more than one gold medal in single edition.

The announcement came on final day of the BWF World Championships which witnessed several records

EPL | New version of iconic anthem blends the league’s familiar sound with Indian instruments and the local musical identity

Premier League tunes anthem for Indian fans

SP News
MUMBAI

On the eve of the new season, the Premier League celebrated its fanbase in India with the launch of a new reimagining of its iconic anthem.

Created in collaboration with Indian artist Dhruv Visvanath and London-based music production company Molecular Sound, the original creators of the League’s current anthem, the new version brings an Indian musical identity to the familiar anthem while retaining the spirit of the original.

Visvanath is a Delhi-based singer-songwriter, guitarist and producer with more than 16 years of experience in the industry. Known for his work as a solo percussive acoustic guitarist, he has also produced music across independent and Bollywood projects. He is also a lifelong Premier League fan and Chelsea supporter.

The reimagined anthem retains the original’s core melodic identity while introducing distinctly Indian instrumentation, including sitar, sarangi and bansuri, which echo the anthem’s vocal and rhythmic motifs. The original strings were also adapted to an Indian rhythmic feel, blending the League’s established sound with a fresh, local sensibility. The result is an energetic and uplifting anthem created not to replace the original, but to give fans in India a version they can call their own.

Speaking on the launch, Visvanath said, “As someone who has grown up with the Premier League, this feels surreal. Indian fans have always been deeply invested in the League, from the late-night kick-offs and matchday rituals to the rivalries and celebrations, and this anthem acknowledges that passion. It gives us a sense that we’re not just watching the Premier League from afar, but that we are a meaningful part of its global community.”

Dave Connolly, Premier League anthem composer and founder of Molecular Sound, said, “When I created the original anthem, I always felt it had the potential to be reimagined and adapted for different audiences. It was exciting to see it take on a new identity through Indian instrumentation while retaining the energy, emotion and spirit of the original. It was wonderful to collaborate with Dhruv on this, he brought a brilliant perspective to the collaboration, and the result feels both familiar and completely fresh.”

The launch builds on the Premier League’s nearly two decades of engagement and presence in India. Following the opening of its office in India in April 2025, the League has further strengthened its presence across the country and created a stronger, ongoing platform to engage with fans, communities and the wider football ecosystem.

Premier League India managing director Hrishikesh Shende said, “The Premier League has had a longstanding relationship with fans in India, and the start of every new season brings a renewed sense of excitement among supporters who have followed the League.

Bombay Gym unveils ‘The Journey So Far’

A 284-page commemorative book documents club’s sporting achievements, personalities and milestones

SP News
MUMBAI

Bombay Gymkhana has unveiled a 284-page commemorative coffee-table book titled ‘The Journey So Far’, celebrating more than 150 years since the club’s establishment in 1875.

Edited, designed and printed by Spenta Multimedia, the book brings together archival photographs, historical records and contemporary images documenting the club’s sporting achievements, personalities and milestones. Key chapters cover the club’s association with India’s first home Test match against England in 1933, rugby’s presence at the club since 1890, and polo, including the Bombay Gymkhana Polo Challenge Cup established in 1882. The book also notes the release of a commemorative postage stamp by the Department of Posts to mark the club’s 150th anniversary.

Bombay Gymkhana President Sanjiv Saran Mehra said, “The Journey So Far is a celebration of our remarkable sporting heritage and the generations who have been part of Bombay Gymkhana’s journey. Our history is closely intertwined with the sporting history of Mumbai and India, and this book is an effort to preserve these memories for future generations. It also reminds us of the responsibility we carry to ensure that this legacy continues to inspire generations to come.”

Sunil Gavaskar said, “Being a member of Bombay Gymkhana has been an absolute honour and one of my most cherished experiences. I have spent many happy hours here, playing both badminton and cricket, and I feel truly blessed to have been a member of this wonderful club. Seeing so many sporting achievers and champions associated with the Gymkhana has always been a real thrill.

The legacy of legends such as Nariman Jamshedji Contractor, along with the memories of those who are no longer with us, truly reflects what Bombay Gymkhana stands for. The Journey So Far is a wonderful way to preserve and celebrate that rich legacy. Classy, always classy, that is what Bombay Gymkhana is.”

BCCI takes direct route to sell India home games title rights

SP News
MUMBAI

After a steep base price proved a tough sell, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) is reportedly holding direct discussions with prospective partners for the title sponsorship rights for India’s home games.

Google Gemini, Spinny and SBI Life are among the brands reported to be in the running for the rights.

The BCCI had set August 13 as its original deadline to finalise terms. However, no successful agreement emerged from the process, prompting the board to engage directly with interested companies as it seeks to close an agreement ahead of the start of India’s home campaign.

The tender process began on July 20, when the BCCI issued its Invitation to Tender (ITT). Interested parties had until August 4 to purchase the tender documents, while August 5 was the deadline for submitting requests for clarification.

Google Gemini, Spinny and SBI Life are among the brands reported to be in the running for the rights.

The sponsorship rights were previously held by IDFC First Bank, which paid ₹4.2 crore per match. For the new cycle, however, the BCCI has increased the base price to ₹4.75 crore per match. This higher valuation is believed to be one of the key reasons potential sponsors have been reluctant to “bite the bullet”.

The new agreement is expected to run for two years, compared with the three-year deal secured by IDFC First Bank in 2023.

The BCCI has estimated that around 35 matches could fall under the sponsorship period.

According to Cricbuzz, the BCCI has projected approximately 35 chargeable matches during the rights period, although the final number will depend on the schedule eventually approved by the board.

Several companies have nevertheless shown interest in exploring the property, with GroupM, ITW and Sporty Solutions among those said to have purchased the tender documents.

‘Not a gentleman’s game’: Harmanpreet

SP News
MUMBAI

Sony Sports Network has launched a campaign titled ‘Not a Gentleman’s Game’ ahead of the Women’s T20 Asia Cup 2026. The film opens with Amitabh Bachchan invoking the phrase “Cricket is a gentleman’s game,” before India captain Harmanpreet Kaur dismisses it with the line: “Na hum gentle hain, aur na hi humara game.”

The campaign captures India’s training intensity and on-field aggression, with India entering the tournament as world champions. The marquee India-Pakistan clash is scheduled for September 5 in the UAE.

Sony Pictures Networks India chief revenue officer and Business head – Sports and International Rajesh Kaul said, “The Indian women’s team has transformed both how cricket is played and how it is followed in this country.

They are world champions, they play an aggressive and fearless brand of cricket, and they enter every contest expecting to win. ‘Not a Gentleman’s Game’ captures that confidence through Harmanpreet Kaur and celebrates a team that has made the nation believe. The Women’s T20 Asia Cup promises high-intensity cricket, and we are delighted to bring every moment of it to audiences on Sony Sports Network and Sony LIV.” Harmanpreet said, “There is nothing gentle about the way we prepare or the way we play. This film captures the intensity, confidence and ambition of our team. We know what it takes to win on the world stage, and we are now focused on carrying that momentum into the Women’s T20 Asia Cup and bringing the title home.”

Campaign captures India’s training intensity and on-field aggression, with India entering the tourney as world champions

The campaign will run across Sony Sports Network and Sony LIV. The Women’s T20 Asia Cup 2026 takes place in the UAE from August 28 to September 13, 2026.

EA SPORTS brings FC Mobile to India’s college gaming

SP News
MUMBAI

College Rivals Season 4, India’s premier collegiate gaming and youth culture movement, has announced EA SPORTS as its Official Game Partner for the upcoming season, bringing EA SPORTS FC Mobile to campuses across India.

With an estimated 300 million football fans, India is one of the world’s largest football audiences. The collaboration reflects the growing intersection of football, gaming and youth culture, bringing one of the world’s leading football gaming experiences closer to the country’s next generation of gamers.

The partnership aims to make EA SPORTS games a core part of the College Rivals experience. Across 80-plus colleges in 35-plus cities, students will engage through on-campus activations, competitive esports formats, creator-led experiences and community initiatives, while also leveraging College Rivals’ nationwide student ambassador network, according to a press release.

As India’s largest collegiate gaming and youth culture movement, College Rivals continues to expand across multiple gaming platforms, spanning mobile, PC and console experiences. The partnership brings one of the world’s biggest football gaming franchises into the College Rivals ecosystem, expanding opportunities for students to connect, play and compete while celebrating the passion, creativity and competitive spirit of young gamers across the country.

The collaboration will also explore campaigns aligned with key gaming and entertainment moments throughout the season, including opportunities around the launch of EA SPORTS FC 27, further strengthening the connection between football gaming, youth culture and campus communities.

Season 4 marks College Rivals’ most ambitious edition yet, featuring a season-long calendar of campus activations, online competitions and community-led experiences across 100-plus colleges in 40-plus cities. Built for India’s Gen Z audience, the platform merges gaming, pop culture, music and dance through immersive experiences.

GamingCon Bharat will serve as one of several marquee on-ground moments during the season, alongside digital experiences and campus engagement across the country.

AG.AL crowned Esports World Cup Club champions

SP News
MUMBAI

AG.AL has been crowned Esports World Cup 2026 Club Champion, claiming the $7 million title with 5,300 points after a dramatic final-weekend victory in Trackmania.

The title was secured when Gwendal “Gwen” Duparc won the inaugural EWC Trackmania tournament, with two-time defending champions Team Falcons eliminated in the quarter-finals.

AG.AL’s campaign included first place in Tekken 8, second-place finishes in Chess, Free Fire and the Honor of Kings World Cup, third place in Teamfight Tactics, and the Trackmania title. Team Falcons finished second with 4,600 points, followed by Team Vitality with 3,300, Natus Vincere with 2,950 and Team Liquid with 2,700.

AG.AL COO Eddy Chen said, “When we began expanding AG.AL globally in 2024, the same year the Esports World Cup launched, we set out to build a Club capable of succeeding across games, regions and cultures. This title shows how far that vision has come. Our journey in Paris reflected the strength of the entire organization, from M. Zubair’s breakthrough in TEKKEN 8 and our deep runs across multiple titles to Gwen delivering the decisive Trackmania victory under extraordinary pressure. But this trophy belongs equally to every player, coach, and staff member whose dedication brought us here. I want to thank our Chairman, Mr. Layne Le, whose belief and leadership made this journey possible, and the Esports Foundation for creating a global stage that rewards the depth and ambition of an entire Club. Winning the Club Championship is a historic milestone for AG.AL and a proud moment for everyone who believed in what we are building.”

Trackmania victory seals the title as AG.AL finishes ahead of Team Falcons in landmark Paris edition

The EWC 2026 brought together more than 2,000 players from 200 clubs across 100 countries, competing across 25 tournaments in 24 games for a record $75 million prize pool.

The Paris edition also produced several landmark moments. France’s Caliste Henry-Hennebert led Karmine Corp to the League of Legends Grand Final in front of a home crowd, while 15-year-old Chilean Jaime “Craime” Bustos became the youngest EWC champion in history.

AG.AL’s Khawaja “M. Zubair” won the Tekken 8 title, while Samy “dralii” Hajji became the first three-time EWC champion after securing his third Rocket League victory. Magnus Carlsen repeated as Chess champion without losing a single game.

The event reached 850 million viewers and generated 440 million hours watched, up 13% and 26% respectively. Peak viewership reached 4.3 million during the League of Legends tournament. The event was distributed by more than 100 broadcast and OTT partners in 47 languages, supported by 5,000 creators and co-streamers.

Tickets sold to esports competitions reached 175,000, up 94% from 2025, while two million total visits were recorded across venues, Fan Fest and city activations over seven weeks.

More than 1.5 million players competed through 330 Road to EWC events across the year-long competitive journey.

Esports Foundation CEO Ralf Reichert said, “Our ambition has always been bigger than a single event: to grow esports and establish it as a leading global sport.

The Esports World Cup brings that mission to life by bringing the best games, players, Clubs and communities together on one global stage.

India clinch FIFAe Continental title

SP News
MUMBAI

The Indian eFootball national team were crowned the inaugural champions of the FIFAe Continental Championship Asia 2026 ft. eFootball Mobile after defeating Japan 1-0 on aggregate in the final in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on Saturday.

The victory also marked India’s third successive qualification for the FIFAe World Cup, which will be held in Saudi Arabia later this year.

India were represented by Danial Patel (DaNiAL) and Mujtaba Husaini (MujjiCool), who capped a memorable campaign by securing the historic title for the nation.

“We’re feeling so proud about what we’ve done. All our fans sitting at home are also part of this. It feels incredible. We worked really hard for this, and we got home the trophy. I’m proud of my partner Danial. He’s been superb throughout the tournament,” Husaini said after the final.

The eTigers began their continental campaign on Wednesday in the group stage with a 1-0 win against Myanmar before suffering a 0-2 defeat to Jordan. The duo responded strongly, recording three consecutive victories — 1-0 against Japan, 2-0 against Uzbekistan and another 1-0 against Thailand.

A 0-1 defeat to Indonesia ended the winning run, but India secured a top-two finish with a 1-1 draw against Malaysia, earning them a bye to the semi-finals.

India faced Thailand in the semi-final on Friday evening. The eTigers edged the opening game 1-0 before a 1-1 draw in the second leg sent them through to the final and also secured their place at the World Cup.

Japan awaited India in the title decider on Saturday. Like their group-stage meeting, it proved to be a tight contest. India scored the only goal of both legs early in the first game before holding their East Asian opponents to a goalless draw in the second. The 1-0 aggregate victory made India the first-ever winners of the FIFAe Continental Championship Asia ft. eFootball Mobile.

For Patel, the triumph was a landmark achievement for the team.

Shravana Purnima

Dr. S. Ainavolu

The full moon day or the Purnima that occurs in Shravana month is celebrated as Raksha Bandhan and used for re-connect of siblings. Shravana Purnima is also celebrated by changing of the yagnopaveetam, thus rekindling the spirit of sadhana.

What is the significance of Raksha Bandhan has a puranic explanation. When faced with a stiff war with demons, the divine side leader and king Indra seeks the puja prasadam from his wife Shachi. She performs a powerful puja to protect her husband's shakti, and ties the protective thread (Raksha) to him. This became the tradition of Raksha Bandhan (tying).

There is also a reference of Yama affectionately visited by his sister Yamuna and Yama returning the visit after two days. The day when Yamuna receives and feeds her brother becomes the festival of "Bhagini Hasta Bhojanam". The sister prayed for the welfare of her brother(s) and fed them the worship's prasadam. Yamuna's request that the brothers of sisters who celebrate this festival should not suffer from "apa-mrutyu" (untimely death) is noteworthy.

guiding Light

Modern day reunion of brothers and sisters on the occasion of Raksha Bandhan is desirable. It rejuvenates the ties and is well understood. Secondly, the moral responsibility of the brothers to protect their sisters and vice versa get stressed.

The psychological prayers offer the Raksha which is much more powerful and lasting than any physical thread. Physical becomes symbolic and has to be understood. With busy nature and distances increased, such occasions help siblings come together.

(Dr. S. Ainavolu is a Mumbai-based teacher. Topic and views are inspired)

The Science of Skin Cycling: Why less is more for a healthier skin barrier

Neeta Senacha

For years, the gold standard in skincare was maximum intensity: daily chemical exfoliants, high-percentage retinoids, and multi-step layerings designed to resurface skin as quickly as possible. However, for many, this aggressive approach led to compromised skin barriers, chronic redness, breakouts, and irritation. Enter Skin Cycling—a strategic, doctor-backed framework that balances high-performance active ingredients with mandatory recovery periods. Developed by board-certified dermatologist Dr. Whitney Bowe, skin cycling transforms skincare from a daily barrage of actives into a deliberate 4-night routine. By structuring when and how you use powerful ingredients, skin cycling maximizes results while protecting your skin barrier.

What is skin cycling and how does it work?

Skin cycling is a deliberate four-night rotational regimen: Exfoliation Night, Retinoid Night, Recovery Night 1, and Recovery Night 2.

Rather than applying potent active ingredients like alpha hydroxy acids (AHAs) or retinoids every evening, skin cycling spaces them out. This structured cadence prevents product overlap, reduces inflammation, and gives your skin time to repair its natural acid mantle.

The 4-Night classic cycle

Night 1: Chemical exfoliation

The goal of the first night is to clear away dead skin cells, refine surface texture, and prepare the skin to absorb the active ingredients that follow on Night 2.

Step 1: Gentle, non-stripping cleanser. Pat dry completely.

Step 2: Leave-on chemical exfoliant (AHAs like glycolic or lactic acid, or BHAs like salicylic acid). Avoid harsh physical scrubs.

Step 3: Simple, fragrance-free barrier moisturizer.

Why it works: Chemical exfoliants dissolve the intercellular "glue" holding dull, dead cells on the skin surface without causing micro-tears.

Night 2: Retinoid application

Retinoids (including over-the-counter retinol, retinaldehyde, or prescription tretinoin) are the powerhouse of Night 2, stimulating cellular turnover and collagen production.

Step 1: Gentle cleanser. Pat dry completely (applying retinoids to damp skin increases irritation).

Step 2: A pea-sized amount of your chosen retinoid applied evenly across the face.

Step 3: Nourishing moisturizer. (Option: If your skin is extra sensitive, use the "sandwich method"—apply a thin layer of moisturizer before and after your retinoid).

Why it works: Because Night 1 cleared away surface debris, the retinoid penetrates more efficiently without needing a high concentration.

Nights 3 & 4: Recovery & barrier repair

Recovery nights are the foundation of skin cycling. During these two evenings, all active ingredients are paused to let the skin rest, repair, and hydrate.

Step 1: Gentle cleanser.

Step 2: Hydrating essence or serum containing hyaluronic acid, glycerine, or panthenol.

Step 3: A rich, barrier-repair cream packed with ceramides, fatty acids, and niacinamide.

Why it works: Pausing actives allows the lipid layer to repair itself, preventing the inflammation, dryness, and peeling often caused by daily retinoid use.

Key benefits of skin cycling

Protects the Skin Barrier: Minimizes the risk of over-exfoliation, contact dermatitis, and transepidermal water loss (TEWL).

Increases product efficacy: Active ingredients perform better when the skin barrier is intact and healthy.

Reduces purging & irritation: Eases beginners into retinoids with significantly fewer side effects.

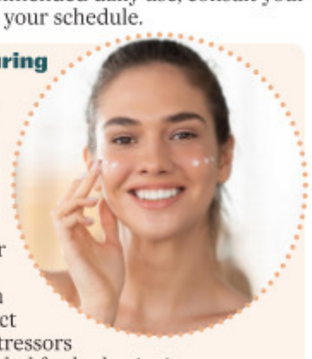
Simplifies your routine: Removes guesswork and stops you from mixing incompatible active ingredients (like Vitamin C, AHAs, and retinol) all at once.

Who should try skin cycling?

Skin cycling is ideal for sensitive, reactive, or dry skin types, as well as skincare beginners looking to introduce retinoids without flare-ups.

Note: If you have severe acne or are using a prescription-strength retinoid under the guidance of a dermatologist who recommended daily use, consult your physician before altering your schedule.

Morning routine during skin cycling



While your evening routine rotates, your morning routine remains consistent and simple across all four days:

- Gentle Cleanser (or plain water rinse)
- Antioxidant Serum (like Vitamin C) to protect against environmental stressors
- Moisturizer (if needed for hydration)
- Broad-Spectrum Sunscreen (SPF 30+) — crucial, as chemical exfoliants and retinoids increase sun sensitivity

Beyond Myths: Why organ donation is one of healthcare's greatest gifts

Dr. Asma Bibi

Chief of Lab, Neuberg Diagnostics

Sometimes, the greatest gift a person leaves behind is not something their family can hold, but something that allows another family to hold on to hope.

Organ donation can transform an unimaginable personal loss into a second chance for several people living with serious, life-threatening illnesses. A donated heart can give someone more years with their loved ones. A kidney can free a patient from years of dialysis. A liver, lungs or other donated tissues can help people return to a healthier and more independent life. Yet, despite its life-saving potential, organ donation continues to be surrounded by hesitation, fear and misinformation.

One common concern is whether doctors will make every possible effort to save a registered donor. This fear is unfounded. The medical team treating a critically ill patient is completely focused on saving that person's life. Organ donation is considered only after the patient has been formally declared brain-dead through established medical protocols. Brain death is not the same as a coma. A person in a coma may show signs of recovery, while brain death means that all brain functions have permanently and irreversibly stopped.

Another misconception is that people who are older or have existing health conditions cannot become donors. In reality, medical professionals evaluate every possible donation individually. Age alone may not decide eligibility. The condition and suitability of each organ are assessed carefully before it is considered for transplantation. Therefore, people should not rule themselves out based on assumptions.

What is often less visible to the public is the complex and highly coordinated medical process that begins after a donation becomes possible. A single cadaver alert can bring together doctors, transplant coordinators, hospitals, laboratories, transport teams and government authorities. Every minute matters because donated organs remain viable only for a limited period. Laboratory testing plays a crucial role in this process. Before an organ can be transplanted, doctors must understand whether it is medically suitable for the intended recipient. Transplant immunology testing helps assess compatibility and reduces the risk of the recipient's immune system rejecting the organ. Blood samples may need to travel quickly from hospitals, sometimes even from cities outside the laboratory's immediate location.

This is why round-the-clock laboratory support is important. When an urgent cadaver sample arrives, teams must be ready to begin testing without delay. Logistics may bring the sample to the laboratory within a few hours, and the report must be generated as rapidly and accurately as possible. In such situations, speed cannot come at the cost of quality. A timely laboratory report can support doctors in making a critical transplant decision while the organ is still viable.

Families also play a central role. Even when an individual has expressed the wish to donate, it is important to discuss that decision openly with family members. During an emotionally overwhelming situation, a prior conversation can provide clarity and help relatives understand that the decision reflects the person's values.

Organ donation is not only a medical decision. It is an act of compassion that extends beyond the donor, the recipient and their immediate families. It represents trust in science, cooperation across healthcare systems and the belief that life can continue through another person.

The myths surrounding organ donation can cost valuable time and lives. Clear conversations, accurate information and stronger public awareness can help more families view donation not with fear, but with dignity. In the most difficult moment, one decision can become a lasting legacy—and one of healthcare's greatest gifts.

Morning Tea First Thing? Why your favourite habit might need a tweak

Aparna Rao

For millions, reaching for a warm, fragrant cup of tea is the ultimate waking ritual—a cozy cue that the day has officially begun. But while that first sip feels instantly comforting, pouring tea into an empty stomach right after waking up might be doing your body more harm than good. From subtle morning nausea to spike-and-crash energy levels, consuming caffeine and tannins before fuel can quietly disrupt your gut health and metabolism. Before you boil the kettle tomorrow morning, here is a look at what happens when you drink tea on an empty stomach—and how a simple timing tweak can let you enjoy your daily brew without the unpleasant side effects.

While tea offers plenty of antioxidants and health benefits, consuming it before eating anything presents several drawbacks:

Triggers acid reflux and acidity: Tea contains compounds like caffeine, theophylline, and tannins that stimulate stomach acid secretion. On an empty stomach, this high acid concentration can irritate the gastric lining, causing heartburn, acid reflux, or a burning sensation.

Causes digestive discomfort: Tannins present in tea can bind with digestive enzymes and interfere with digestion, leading to morning nausea, bloating, or stomach cramps.

Interferes with nutrient absorption: High tannin and phytate levels in tea impair your body's ability to absorb essential nutrients—particularly iron and calcium—from food consumed later in the morning.

Dehydration risk: After hours of sleep, your body is naturally dehydrated. Caffeine acts as a mild diuretic, which can further dehydrate your system if tea is the first liquid you consume.

Disrupts cortisol and metabolism: Cortisol (the stress and wakefulness hormone) peaks naturally upon waking. Introducing caffeine immediately can disrupt your body's natural circadian rhythm and hormonal balance.

The right way to enjoy morning tea

You don't need to give up your morning brew entirely. Adjusting the timing and preparation makes a significant difference:

Rehydrate first: Drink 1–2 glasses of lukewarm water right after waking up to kickstart your metabolism and hydrate your body.

Eat a small snack: Consume a light bite—such as a handful of soaked almonds, a banana, or a biscuit—before taking your first sip. This buffers the stomach lining against acidic irritation.

Wait 30–45 minutes: Allow your body time to wake up naturally before introducing caffeine.

Choose herbal alternatives: If you prefer a hot beverage first thing, opt for caffeine-free alternatives like warm lemon-honey water, ginger tea, or fennel tea.

Drinking tea immediately after waking up on an empty stomach is generally not recommended due to acidity, dehydration, and nutrient absorption risks. Having a glass of water and a light bite first allows you to enjoy your favourite cup of tea without the unwanted side effects.

Unlocking Relief: Understanding and managing menopause-related lower back pain

Savitha B

While hot flashes and mood shifts often dominate discussions around menopause, persistent lower back pain remains one of the most widespread yet under addressed challenges of this transition. For many women in perimenopause and menopause, simple daily activities—like waking up, bending down, or sitting for long stretches—suddenly bring a deep, nagging ache across the lumbar spine.

This discomfort is not merely a sign of aging; it is directly linked to the rapid hormonal shift occurring within the body. Estrogen acts as a key guardian of musculoskeletal health, influencing bone structural integrity, spinal disc hydration, and joint lubrication. As estrogen levels diminish, the body undergoes profound structural adjustments that place new stresses on the spine. Understanding these biological changes empowers you to take proactive steps toward restoring spinal strength, mobility, and comfort.

Why menopause triggers lower back pain

Loss of Bone Density: Estrogen suppresses osteoclasts—the cells responsible for bone resorption. As estrogen declines, bone breakdown outpaces bone formation, heightening the risk of osteopenia and lumbar vertebral weakness.

Accelerated disc degeneration: Estrogen maintains the hydration and collagen structure of intervertebral discs. Lower hormone levels accelerate disc thinning, diminishing the spine's natural shock-absorption capacity.

Systemic joint & muscle stiffness: Estrogen exerts anti-inflammatory protection throughout connective tissues. Its reduction leads to tighter ligaments, loss of core muscle tone, and increased vulnerability to soft-tissue inflammation around the lower spine.

Common symptoms

- **Persistent lumbar ache:** A heavy, continuous ache in the lower back that worsens after standing or sitting for extended periods.
- **Morning stiffness:** Rigid, tight sensations in the lower spine upon waking that require 30 to 60 minutes of gentle movement to loosen.
- **Radiating discomfort:** Sharp or shooting sensations that travel into the buttocks, hips, or down the thighs (sciatica-like symptoms).
- **Restricted mobility:** Reduced range of motion when bending forward, twisting at the waist, or reaching for objects.
- **Postural shifts:** Subtle loss of standing height or an involuntary stooped posture due to weakening core support or spinal compression.

Key strategies for pain relief and long-term management

Calcium and vitamin D optimization: Ensure adequate daily intake of bone-supporting nutrients through diet (leafy greens, dairy, fortified foods) or supplements recommended by a healthcare provider.

Ergonomic adjustments: Use a firm lumbar roll or support cushion while sitting, avoid bending from the waist when lifting, and wear supportive shoes with arch support.

Thermic therapy: Apply heating pads to ease muscle spasms and improve circulation, or use cold packs to numb sharp inflammation after physical exertion.

Medical consultations: Discuss options such as Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) with your physician, which can help stabilize bone mineral density and reduce systemic inflammation.

Gentle yoga poses for daily back relief

Practicing targeted, gentle yoga poses helps decompress the lumbar spine, stretch tight hips, and rebuild protective core stability without straining sensitive joints.

Cat-cow stretch (Marjaryasana-bitilasana):

How to do it: Start on all fours with hands under shoulders and knees under hips. Inhale as you arch your back gently and lift your chest (Cow); exhale as you round your spine toward the ceiling and tuck your chin (Cat).

Benefit: Gently mobilizes every segment of the spine, relieving rigidity and restoring fluid flow to intervertebral discs.

Child's pose (Balasana):

How to do it: Kneel on the floor, bring your big toes together, sit back on your heels, and lengthen your torso forward, resting your forehead on the mat with arms extended.

Benefit: Lengthens the lumbar spine, relieves lower back tension, and gently stretches tight hip flexors.

Knees-to-chest pose (Apanasana):

How to do it: Lie on your back, draw both knees gently up toward your chest, and wrap your arms around your shins. Slowly rock side to side.

Benefit: Provides a gentle massage to the lower back muscles while neutralizing spinal pressure.

Supported bridge pose (Setu bandha sarvangasana):

How to do it: Lie on your back with knees bent and feet flat on the floor, hip-width apart. Lift your hips slightly and slide a yoga block or firm cushion under your sacrum for support.

Benefit: Opens tight hip flexors while stabilizing the pelvis without taxing lower back muscles.

Supine spinal twist (Supta matsyendrasana):

How to do it: Lie flat on your back, bring your right knee up to your chest, and gently lower it across your body to the left side while keeping both shoulders grounded. Repeat on the other side.

Benefit: Decompresses tight spinal rotators, relaxes the oblique muscles, and releases tension along the sacroiliac joint.

When to see a doctor

While home care and exercise relieve most back discomfort, seek professional medical evaluation if you experience any of the following warning signs:

Unrelenting or severe pain: Pain that fails to diminish with rest, thermal therapy, or gentle movement.

Numbness or tingling: Sensations of numbness, pins-and-needles, or muscle weakness spreading down the legs or into the groin region.

Bowel or bladder disturbance: Any sudden loss of bowel or bladder control (which requires emergency medical care).

Post-impact pain: Sharp, severe pain following a fall or minor bump, indicating a potential spinal compression fracture.

Constitutional symptoms: Back pain accompanied by unexplained fever, chills, or sudden, unintended weight loss.

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Onam at the Mohanans

Steeped in tradition

Malavika Mohanan opens up about why *Onam* holds a special place in her heart

Ria Sharma

For many, *Onam* is a festival filled with colourful celebrations, traditional food and cherished family moments. For those who have grown up away from Kerala, the festival can also be a special way of reconnecting with their roots and keeping cultural traditions alive.

FPJ EXCLUSIVE

Sharing her thoughts on the festival with ***The Free Press Journal,*** actress Malavika Mohanan said that *Onam* holds a special place in her heart. Born and brought up in Mumbai but rooted in Kerala, she looks forward to celebrating the occasion with her family and cousins in the state every year.

"*Onam* is not just a festival for me, but also a time to touch base with the traditions of my roots as a Keralite who was born and brought up in Mumbai. I always wait for this festival to celebrate with my family and cousins in Kerala," she stated.

For her, the celebrations are tied to memories created with loved ones. "Making the *pookalam*, the fun of wearing the Kasavu *saree* and eating the delicious *Onam Sadhya* are just a few of the various memories that I have associated with this occasion." However, beyond the rituals, food and festive traditions, she believes that the true meaning of *Onam* lies in spending time with family and staying connected to one's heritage. "What matters most to me is the essence of togetherness among family members, being surrounded by loved ones and valuing my cultural heritage that comes along with *Onam* celebrations," she concluded.

> ***Onam* is not just a festival for me, but also a time to touch base with the traditions of my roots as a Keralite who was born and brought up in Mumbai**
> **— Malavika Mohanan**

Photo: Instagram_@malavikamohanan_

Man faked gang threat to extort money

SALMAN KHAN THREAT CASE

Mumbai Police have claimed to have busted an alleged extortion plot targeting Salman Khan, with the accused allegedly creating fake WhatsApp chats and identities to make it appear that an organised crime gang was threatening the Bollywood superstar.

The police said the investigation found discrepancies in the WhatsApp chats and CCTV footage failed to support the accused's claims, leading to his alleged confession that he had fabricated the entire story to extort money. During questioning, the accused allegedly admitted to creating a fake identity and fabricated WhatsApp chats using electronic means with the intention of scaring Salman & extorting money from him. Police said the accused had hidden two mobile phones near the Bandra seafront. The devices were later recovered and seized based on his information. Screenshots of the alleged fake WhatsApp chats were also seized in the presence of witnesses. The investigation revealed that the accused allegedly received around Rs 1.30 lakh from Siwan in Bihar through PhonePe and later collected the money in cash through a money transfer agent.

Photo: Instagram_@beingsalmankhan

Trading jibes: Kangana v/s Kriti

KANGANA: WHY WOULD YOU TIE YOUR BROTHER A *RAKHI* IN YOUR BIKINI?

Actress and BJP MP takes a subtle dig at Kriti's *Raksha bandhan* advertisement

Kangana Ranaut has questioned Kriti Sanon's choice of outfit in a recently released *Raksha Bandhan* jewellery advertisement, saying the actor had several styling options available to her. Joining the debate on social media, Ranaut shared a note on her Instagram Stories on Monday evening. She wrote, "It's a wonderful time to be a woman. Our closets are full of variety of clothes, today's woman is a global woman. From cocktail dresses to *lehenga cholis,* jeans to *saris,* bikinis to *salwar kameez,* from all the options that are available to us today why would you tie your brother a *rakhi* in your bikini/undergarments? Where are all your styling options? Ha ha the advert looks intentionally creepy!"

FASHION CHOICE SPARKS DEBATE: The advertisement, which features Sanon in an Indo-Western ensemble comprising a bralette-style blouse, cape and draped skirt, has drawn criticism on social media over its styling for the traditional festival.

KRITI: CULTURE & TRADITIONS ARE IN HER HEART, NOT IN HER NECKLINE!...

Kriti Sanon breaks silence over *Rakhi* advertisement row

Responding to the online backlash over her new advertisement and its Indo-Western outfit, actor Kriti Sanon on Tuesday said that while ethnic fashion has evolved over the years, a woman's respect for her culture is still measured by her clothes.

"Culture & Traditions are in her heart, not in her neckline!... Also, when will we stop telling women what to wear? Ethnic fashion has evolved over the years, but still a woman's respect for her culture is measured with just her clothes," Sanon said in a note on her Instagram Stories, a day after the advertisement for a jewellery brand saw her being subjected to hateful comments online.

Backing Kriti Sanon, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi shared her Instagram Story on his own account and wrote, "What a woman wears, what she does and where she goes - is her choice. Stop trolling women for exercising their freedom".

Photos: Instagram

When Malaika's *puja* outfit sparked controversy

Just earlier this month, Malaika Arora had landed in the middle of an online debate after videos of her performing a traditional *puja* for her newly purchased car began circulating on social media. Netizens asked why she was wearing footwear during the puja, while others questioned whether her outfit was appropriate for the occasion.

Taapsee goes fierce for *Gandhari*

Ria Sharma

The makers of Taapsee Pannu's *Gandhari* unveiled the trailer at an event in Mumbai on Tuesday, with ***The Free Press Journal*** in attendance. The film follows a fierce mother who will go to any length to protect her child.

Taapsee plays a visually impaired woman in the action thriller and revealed that she worked closely with a visually impaired person to understand the nuances of the character.

> **Kanika knew that after *Naam Shabana* and *Baby*, I was ready to do an action film. What attracted me was this was very different from the things I've done before — Taapsee Pannu**

"I worked with him in terms of understanding how the walk should be, how much you can see shadows, what your peripheral vision feels like. That helped me take care of my body language. Also, you will also get to see how my character's blindness helps her and to what extent it stays with her." Speaking about what drew her to the project, Taapsee said writer-producer Kanika Dhillon approached her knowing she was open to action films after *Baby* and *Naam Shabana.* "Kanika knew that after *Naam Shabana* and *Baby,* I was ready to do an action film. What attracted me was this was very different from the things I've done before."

Taapsee also explained that the action in *Gandhari* is driven more by her character's emotions. "This film is very emotional-driven. So there was no strategy like 'Okay, these are going to be my moves.' My character has no idea about martial arts. Her only qualification is that she is a mother and to what extent she can go for her daughter. All the action and thrill you will get to see through her emotions. That was also the beauty of this story for me."

Photos: Ashwini Sawant

Motherhood played a key role: Kanika

Kanika Dhillon revealed that motherhood played a key role in inspiring the story. Recalling an incident involving her own son, she said, "I completely changed as a writer after becoming a mother. My son was just born and I had to take him to get an injection. During my pregnancy I was researching about child abduction and how children get abducted from hospitals. So when we went to get my son an injection, I told my sister to run after the doctor and bring my child back. So this fear and emotion is something I discovered. I realised there is no limit to how far a mother can go to save her child."

Directed by Devashish Makhija, *Gandhari* also stars Ishwak Singh, Chhaya Kadam, Mita Vashisht and Jatin Sarna. It will stream on Netflix from September 3.

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Huma recalls Kiara's dedication

Actress recalls shooting a rain sequence with her *Toxic* co-star Kiara Advani despite battling a terrible headache

Huma Qureshi recently recalled shooting a rain sequence with her *Toxic: A Fairy Tale for Grown-ups* co-star Kiara Advani, who was pregnant at the time. Huma revealed that she was battling a terrible headache during the scene but refrained from complaining after seeing how effortlessly Kiara continued shooting despite being heavily pregnant.

At the *Toxic* pre-release event in Chennai, Huma spoke about Kiara and clarified that the anecdote did not contain any spoilers. Addressing the audience, she said, "Guys, I have to say a few things about Kiara, it's not spoiler." Huma then recalled a particular scene that involved a lot of rain. "But, there was a scene where we were a part of, there was a lot of rain involved," she said.

Talking about Kiara's condition at the time, Huma added, "And, she (Kiara) was just about to have her baby. And we were getting drenched in the rain and I had a terrible headache."

The actress admitted that there were several moments when she felt like complaining about the difficult conditions, but seeing Kiara continue with the shoot motivated her to carry on.

"Every single time I wanted to complain, I would look at her and, you know, she was what, 6 months? Almost pregnant," Huma said, with Kiara confirming it by nodding.

Huma continued, "And, she was just standing there doing that scene. Standing like a rock. Just looking at her, I was like, 'Oh my God, that is so inspiring.'" Huma ended her heartfelt praise for Kiara by saying, "I love you loads."

Photos: Instagram

Is Shriya Saran a part of Rajinikanth's *Dharman*?

A picture posted by actress Shriya Saran on her Instagram page in which the actress is seen next to Superstar Rajinikanth has now sparked off rumours that she too is a part of director Ashwath Marimuthu's eagerly awaited action entertainer, *Dharman*, featuring Rajinikanth in the lead.

Shriya, who took to her Instagram stories section to post the picture, captioned the picture, "Happy Day."

The picture has triggered rumours in the industry suggesting that the actress would again be seen working with Rajinikanth in *Dharman*.

Shriya had earlier starred opposite Rajinikanth in director Shankar's blockbuster film *Sivaji*.

Meanwhile, sources in the industry said that the third schedule of *Dharman* had commenced in Hyderabad on Monday.

It may be recalled that the unit had only recently completed the second schedule of the film. In fact, the unit had commenced its second schedule only on August 13 this year.

Raaj Kamal Films International, the production house of veteran actor and parliamentarian Kamal Haasan, had then taken to its social media timelines to drop an update with a video clip.

It wrote, "The deadly doctor. *#Dharman* Schedule 2 Begins, and this one's legendary. #KettaPaiyanSir. #SuperstarRajinikanth #KamalHaasan."

Photos: Instagram_@shriya_saran1109

Photo: Instagram–@sonamkapoor

Sonam reacts to Marathi driver notices

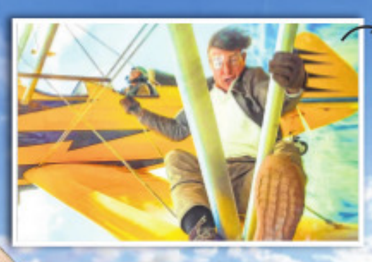
Actress Sonam Kapoor has reacted to the Maharashtra Transport Department issuing notices to commercial passenger vehicle drivers over their knowledge of Marathi.

According to reports, the Regional Transport Offices (RTOs) on August 20 issued notices to 1,268 commercial passenger vehicle drivers, mainly autorickshaw and taxi drivers, for inadequate knowledge of Marathi. A day later, notices were reportedly issued to another 1,499 non-Marathi-speaking drivers across Maharashtra.

Sonam reacted to the development on Instagram by commenting on a post shared by journalist Faye D'Souza about the Maharashtra State Transport Department's inspection in Mumbai. She wrote, "Huh (sic)."

Sydney takes on Cruise with airplane stunt

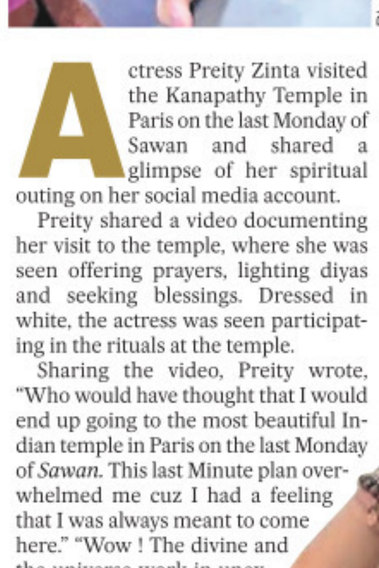
Actress Sydney Sweeney has proved that she's no stranger to high-octane action, matching icon Tom Cruise's daredevil spirit by strapping herself to the top of an airplane. Sweeney took to Instagram, where she shared a video of herself holding a camera in one hand in a movie single-engine plane as she was strapped to it. The clip showed the aircraft moving in fill speed and flipping upside down several times while she was attached to it. "Watch out Tom Cruise," she wrote as the caption.



Tom Cruise in a scene from *Mission: Impossible - The Final Reckoning*

Photos: Instagram_@sydney_sweeney/IMDb

Preity visits Kanapathy temple in Paris



Photos: Instagram_@realpz

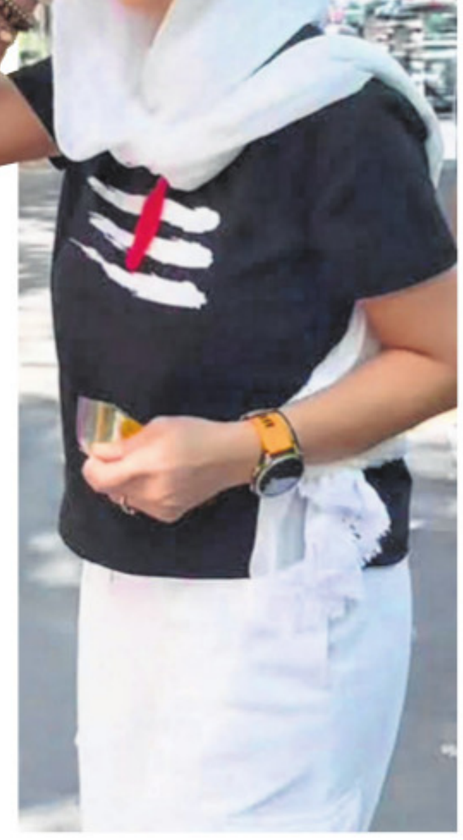
Actress Preity Zinta visited the Kanapathy Temple in Paris on the last Monday of Sawan and shared a glimpse of her spiritual outing on her social media account.

Preity shared a video documenting her visit to the temple, where she was seen offering prayers, lighting diyas and seeking blessings. Dressed in white, the actress was seen participating in the rituals at the temple.

Sharing the video, Preity wrote, "Who would have thought that I would end up going to the most beautiful Indian temple in Paris on the last Monday of *Sawan*. This last Minute plan overwhelmed me cuz I had a feeling that I was always meant to come here." "Wow ! The divine and the universe work in unexpected ways. My short trip to Paris has turned out to be extremely sweet after this visit. If you are in Paris do check out the Kanapathy Temple folks. I'm sure you will love it just the way I did."

"Thank you my darling @shailzaswami for taking me here & for making my trip. I'm smiling ear to ear. Ting ! *Har Har Mahadev*."

The actress' post offered a glimpse into her spiritual side as she described that the plan was very last-minute and the temple visit felt as if she was "always meant to" experience.



What lies beyond

New *Daayra* poster out; trailer to be unveiled on August 31

The makers of *Daayra* have unveiled a new poster featuring Kareena Kapoor Khan and Prithviraj Sukumaran, offering a glimpse into the world of the much-awaited crime thriller. The trailer of the film will be released on August 31. In the poster, Kareena and Prithviraj are seen standing back-to-back, surrounded by layers of police tape, with an obscured face visible in the background. Inspired by true events, *Daayra* is directed by Meghna Gulzar and written by Yash Keswani, Sima Agarwal and Gulzar, and shall release in cinemas on September 18, 2026.

Lollapalooza India announces fifth edition

Lollapalooza India will return to Mumbai's Mahalaxmi Racecourse on January 23 and 24 next year for its fifth edition, the organisers announced on Tuesday. The two-day festival, which has positioned itself as Asia's largest multi-genre music festival, will mark five years of its India edition by bringing together international and Indian artists across four stages and more than 20 hours of live performances, the organisers said in a statement. The lineup for the 2027 edition will be announced later.

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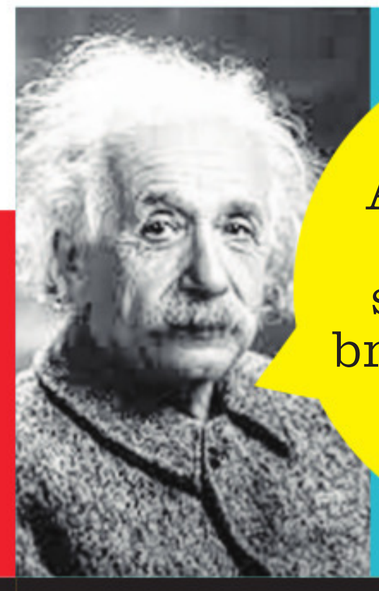


"All religions, arts and sciences are branches of the same tree

- Albert Einstein

While school buses, along with multiple vehicles including Honda City and Toyota Fortuner, struggled on the city's roads, people turned to tractors for their commute

Move over Fortuners! Here comes the tractor

Gurugram came to a standstill after heavy rainfall triggered widespread waterlogging and traffic snarls across the city. On the first day of rain, several vehicles, including school buses, ended up stranded for hours on submerged roads. While school buses, along with multiple vehicles including models like Honda City and Toyota Fortuner, struggled on the city's roads, people turned to tractors for their commute. Multiple viral videos show tractors carrying multiple people driving through flooded sections of road. In some videos, people even filled up the trolleys in an attempt to reach their destinations. It is to be noted that the tractors designed to work in farms have a engine placed higher as well as a high exhaust making them capable of navingating through flooded roads. Further, the bigger wheels and 4x4 system allows them to move through potholes unbothered.

DID U KNOW?

Bigger wheels and 4x4 system allows tractors to move through potholes unbothered.

Kanda Express to reach Delhi today

Delhi will sell onions at Rs 35/kg as the first Kanda Express brings 800 tonnes of onions to Delhi. The train is expected to reach the national capital on Wednesday. India's average retail onion price rose more than 28 percent within a month to Rs 44.72 per kg on August 25.

Globemaster lands in Moscow; Kremlin says no clue

A US Air Force Boeing C-17 Globemaster landed at Moscow's Vnukovo airport after flying from Riga, Latvia, according to flight-tracking data. The Kremlin said it had no information about the aircraft and no US meetings were planned. The unexplained visit has triggered speculation about a possible diplomatic mission or prisoner exchange amid stalled Russia-Ukraine talks.

Laptop purchases: Processor performance primary driver

Processor performance has emerged as the primary purchase driver for 87 per cent of laptop buyers, while 74 per cent of tablet seekers prioritise display quality, according to the 'Best in Tech' survey released by Amazon on Tuesday. The findings, based on more than 40,000 responses, indicate a significant shift towards specification-heavy preferences.

Persecution is not an original feature in any religion; but it is always the strongly marked feature of all religions established by law – Thomas Paine

"Stop trolling women for exercising their freedom
– Rahul Gandhi

MUMBAI | WEDNESDAY | AUGUST 26, 2026

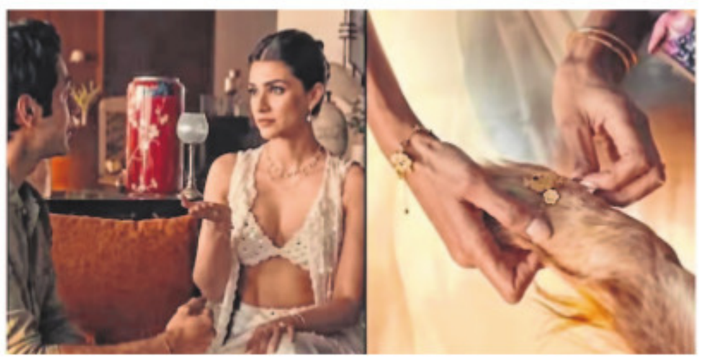
NO JUNK FOOD NEAR SCHOOLS

DID U KNOW?

"Government schools in rural and village areas continue to suffer from systemic deficiencies," the court said.

The Rajasthan High Court has banned the sale of carbonated drinks, chips and other junk food in school canteens and within 50 metres of school gates as it issued a slew of directions on balanced food and nutrition besides expressing concern over paper leaks, excessive screen time and inadequate infrastructure in rural schools. A Jodhpur bench of Justice Anoop Kumar Dhand directed every school to constitute a food safety and nutrition committee, display menu boards in canteens carrying information on calorie count, ingredients and nutritional value.

Rahul backs Kriti Sanon



Congress MP Rahul Gandhi has come out in support of Bollywood actress Kriti Sanon, who has faced backlash online over the outfit she wore in a Rakshabandhan advertisement for a jewellery brand.The 'Mimi' actor appears in the advertisement wearing an ivory lehenga featuring a deep-neck blouse and a cape. While many admired the look, some called it "inappropriate".

Guruvayur Temple gears up for Onam

Guruvayur Temple in Thrissur is gearing up for Onam celebrations as a large number of devotees thronged the temple on Uthradam day, marking the beginning of the main festivities in Keralam. The transition from the bustling Uthradam crowds to Thiruvonam is marked by devotional ceremonies at the temple. The key events include the traditional Kazhchakkula offering, the Onappudava offering on Thiruvonam, and a special prasada feast expected to be served to around 10,000 devotees.

STEEP FALL

In the fall 2025 semester, the tally of new international students studying in the US sank 17% compared to previous year

mid continued differences over immigration policies in the United States, a report by CNBC observed that fewer new students from overseas chose to attend American colleges in 2025, with new data highlighting that enrollment may drop further in the year ahead. Referring to the report released on Thursday by the Common App, CNBC noted that while application volume for undergraduate admission in the upcoming 2026-27 academic year rose overall, the number of international applicants through March 1 fell 10%- the steepest decline on record. According to a Fall 2025 Snapshot from the US Department of State and the Institute of International Education (IIE), the fall 2025 semester, the tally of new international students studying in the US sank 17% compared with the previous year. It further reported that the IIE's Spring 2026 Snapshot estimated another drop in overall international enrollment for the upcoming fall.

Lollapalooza India's 5th edition

Lollapalooza India will return to Mumbai's Mahalaxmi Racecourse on January 23 and 24 next year for its fifth edition, the organisers announced on Tuesday. The two-day festival, which has positioned itself as Asia's largest multi-genre music festival, will mark five years of its India edition by bringing together international and Indian artists.

Success is defined by the obstacles overcome, not just achievements
- Pelé

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Asia Cup, Asian Games

Indian women's cricket team Captain Harmanpreet Kaur says a winning culture is taking shape

Ye dil maange more

Indian women cricketers are "hungry for more" after a string of impressive victories, with captain Harmanpreet Kaur saying a winning culture is taking shape as they head into the Asia Cup in the UAE and Asian Games in Japan. Fresh from winning the first-ever women's Test match at Lord's by defeating England last month, India will now turn their attention to the UAE Asia Cup T20, where they are record seven-time champions, before embarking on their title defence at the Asian Games in Japan. "We of course expect to win. Our team has been playing very good cricket," the India skipper, who guided India to a historic Test win against England at the iconic Lord's recently, told Sony Sports. "The last 4-5 years has been good and where we have played good cricket, dominating cricket, have defeated big teams and won series also. The Kaur-led side had sealed a huge 270-run win over England at Lord's, marking India's second-highest win by margin of runs.

DID U KNOW?

"The team has already tasted success and will be hungry for more, Harmanpreet said

Rapid Chess Tournament today

Bengaluru will host the FIDE-rated Rapid Chess Tournament on Wednesday, which will bring together up to 1,000 players, creating a large-scale competitive platform for chess enthusiasts across age groups and skill levels. As the city gears up to host the world's top chess stars for season 4 of the Global Chess League (GCL), it will witness a major grass-roots chess celebration at Koramangala Indoor Stadium.

Prabath reprimanded, handed demerit point

Sri Lanka spinner Prabath Jayasuriya was hit with an official reprimand and handed a demerit point on Tuesday for his act after his dismissal during the second Test match against India at the Sinhalese Sports Club, Colombo. Jayasuriya has been found guilty of having breached Article 2.2 of the ICC Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel.

Emami ends investment in East Bengal

Emami Group on Tuesday concluded its role as an investor in East Bengal Football Club (EBFC), transferring all its shares and voting rights back to the club, while confirming that it will continue its association with the Kolkata giants as a sponsor. This development occurs just two days after East Bengal ended its 22-year wait for the Durand Cup, winning the tournament for a record-equalling 17th time.

QUICK NEWS

Musiala to miss opener

Bundesliga champions Bayern Munich will be without the services of their midfielder Jamal Musiala in their campaign opener against Stuttgart as the German star, who has suffered two fainting episodes recently, will be given some more rest.

Mourinho returns to Bernabeu

Jose Mourinho will make his return to Santiago Bernabeu as Real Madrid coach on Thursday when his side hosts Real Sociedad in a delayed La Liga opening-round fixture, with young striker Carlos Espi set to attract much of the attention.

Odisha T20 next month

The Odisha T20 League 2026 will get underway on September 18 at Cuttack's iconic Barabati Stadium, with the tournament final scheduled for September 27. The 10-day competition will bring together cricketers from across the state.

"The key for any batsman is to play the ball not the wicket
— Graham Gooch

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Melbourne Stars appoint Richard Pyrah as coach

The Melbourne Stars have turned to Yorkshire women's head coach Richard Pyrah to steer their WBBL side, with the 43-year-old Englishman set to take charge ahead of Weber WBBL 12 as the club reshapes its coaching structure. Pyrah arrives with experience spanning women's and men's cricket in both England and Australia. He is currently in his third season in charge of Yorkshire's women's team and has also recently completed his first campaign as an assistant coach.

Asia Cup: Big blow for SL

Sri Lanka have been dealt a blow ahead of the Women's T20 Asia Cup 2026 as their all-rounder Dewmi Vihanga has been ruled out of the tournament after sustaining a right knee injury during a practice session. SL have named Left-arm spinner Nimasha Meepage as her replacement in the 15-member squad.

Chhattisgarh takes the lead

Chhattisgarh is set to host India's first official state-level hockey league under the aegis of Hockey India, with the inaugural CHL from October 21

Maiden state-level Hockey league

hhattisgarh is set to host India's first official state-level hockey league under the aegis of Hockey India, with the inaugural Chhattisgarh Hockey League (CHL) scheduled to be held from October 21 to November 1 at the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Hockey Stadium in Raipur. The franchise-based league, announced by the Sports and Youth Welfare Department of Chhattisgarh on Tuesday, will feature six teams representing different regions of the state. Indian hockey stalwarts and Olympic medallists Gurjant Singh, Shamsher Singh and Surender Kumar have been named among the marquee players for the inaugural edition. The official logo, mascot and identities of the six participating teams were unveiled at an event attended by Chhattisgarh Deputy Chief Minister and Sports and Youth Welfare Minister Arun Sao.

DID U KNOW?

The league will follow a round-robin format, with the top four teams advancing to the semifinals.

Michele Di Gregorio joins Bournemouth

Premier League club AFC Bournemouth has completed the signing of Italian goalkeeper Michele Di Gregorio on a season-long loan from Serie A club Juventus FC on Tuesday. The 29-year-old goalkeeper joins the Cherries after establishing himself as one of Serie A's most highly regarded goalkeepers. Di Gregorio began his senior career with Inter Milan before gaining valuable first-team experience during loan spells with Renate, Novara, and Pordenone.

East Zone thrash North East Zone

Shahbaz Ahmed's commanding 167 and Anukul Roy's five-wicket haul powered East Zone to an innings and 210-run win over North East Zone in the Duleep Trophy quarterfinal at the BCCI Centre of Excellence Ground 2, Bengaluru on Tuesday. East Zone first posted a mammoth 467 before Abhijit Sarkar's five-wicket haul helped bowl North East Zone out for 111 in their first innings. After being sent to bat again through a follow-on, North East Zone managed 146, with Anukul Roy finishing with five wickets as East Zone completed a dominant victory.

FP SCHOOL EDITOR: AMRISH HERDENIA
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Tukaram Mundhe: The Sword Maharashtra Needed

Maharashtra's food-safety enforcement has entered a more assertive phase under FDA Commissioner Tukaram Mundhe. Since May 25, 2026, the department has reported hundreds of raids and FIRs, while a synthetic-milk probe in Bhoom taluka of Dharashiv district, Maharashtra. It was estimated that 2.3 crore litres of adulterated product had entered state markets. Yet the Bombay High Court has also cautioned against enforcement turning into overreach, ordering ₹5 lakh in compensation after Gurunanak Dairy and Sweets remained shut for 34 days despite 98 per cent compliance. The contrast captures the central challenge before the regulator: act firmly against violations, without allowing zeal to outrun due process.

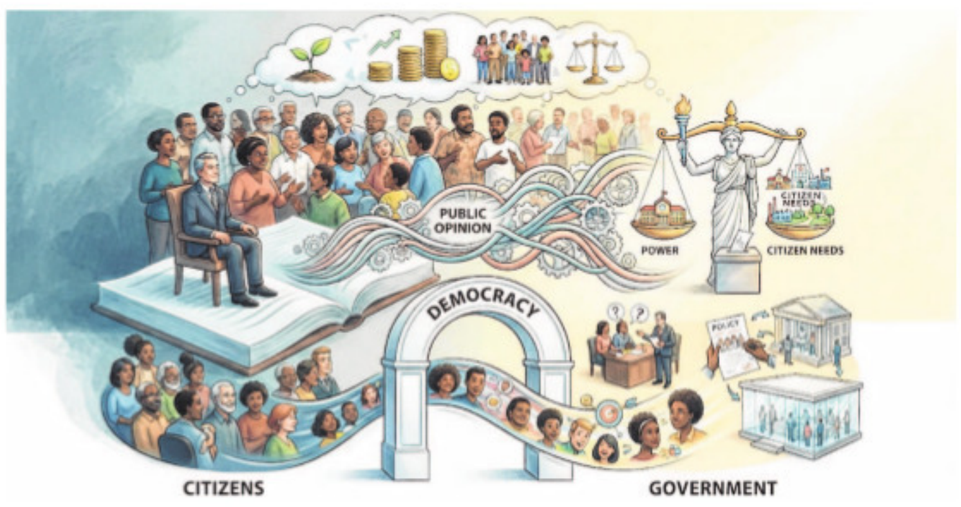
Food adulteration is not a technical violation confined to paperwork. It enters kitchens, schools and shops and, ultimately, people's bodies. That makes decisive enforcement not merely desirable but necessary. A regulator that fears disrupting businesses can preserve procedure while failing the public it exists to protect. Mundhe has made non-compliance costly and challenged a culture in which enforcement can become routine paperwork rather than genuine deterrence. When adulteration is profitable and the risk of detection uncertain, warnings alone rarely change behaviour. Visible action can.

That does not make every action indefensible. The answer is not to blunt the sword, but to sharpen the judgement behind it. Mundhe's resolve is an asset because Maharashtra's food-safety failures demand urgency. Matched with due process and proportionality, the crackdown could reset what businesses understand the law to require.

Aarav Tarkar,
XII, Jamnabai Narsee School, Juhu

The power of public opinion in a democracy

Before deciding whether public opinion is necessary in a democratic country, we must understand democracy itself. Democracy is a system of government in which power belongs to the people. Citizens exercise this power by voting for leaders, expressing their views and participating in decisions that affect their lives.



Public opinion is therefore a vital pillar of democracy. It allows citizens to express themselves, support good governance and question leaders when they fail to fulfil their responsibilities. Constructive criticism and diverse perspectives can help governments understand people's needs and make better decisions.

Public opinion also keeps power in check. It highlights citizens' priorities, influences policies, shapes elections and encourages leaders to remain accountable. Most importantly, it builds trust by making people feel heard and valued. Recent protests and public discussions surrounding the CJP demonstrate how collective voices can influence decisions and demand accountability.

No single person can always have the best solution. A country progresses when it listens to different perspectives and learns from its citizens.

As James Madison aptly said, "Public opinion sets bounds to every government, and is the real sovereign in every free one."

Asmi Patil,
IX, Pawar Public School, Bhandup

CREATIVE CORNER

Nature

The wonderful land
My beautiful sky,
Does it lie though
to the heaven up high.

The colourful butterflies
flying in the sky
The green trees ,
which soar up
to fly high.

The suspicious nature
the mischievous birds,
The fragrance of the flowers
Roam with alert.

So , remember
it's a beautiful life,
It's a new day
So , enjoy your moments
Through happy way.

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