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NATION

INDIA bloc and other Oppn parties hold a protest against EC's SIR of electoral rolls in Bihar.



GAMES

Rishabh comes out to bat after being ruled out of wicket-keeping duties due to a fractured toe



Cinema ...And we ran into the Saiyaara jodi!

Edit Thaw in India, China ties



ED searches 35 locations; Anil Ambani group downplays link



Ashish Singh
MUMBAI

The ED on Thursday conducted searches at over 35 locations in Mumbai linked to entities of the Reliance Anil Ambani Group (RAAGA) companies, as part of its probe into alleged money laundering involving over Rs 24,000 crore, officials confirmed.

The searches, conducted under Section 17 of the PMLA, are focused on senior executives associated with RAAGA. The ED is examining financial transactions involving more than 50 companies and 25 individuals. The Mumbai residence of industrialist Anil Ambani has not been covered in the operation, sources clarified.

The group (Reliance Anil Ambani) has distanced itself from the ongoing probe. In an official statement, the group clarified that Ambani had resigned from the board of RCom in 2019 and currently holds no board position in either RCom or Reliance Home Finance Ltd (RHFL).

▶ Contd on | nation

India, UK in landmark Free Trade Agreement

- Doubling of bilateral trade to \$120 billion by 2030
- Unprecedented access into each other's markets
- Duty free access to 99% of Indian exports
- Adoption is expected only by mid-2026

Ashwin Ahmad
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Modi signed the long-awaited FTA - officially known as the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement - with his British counterpart Keir Starmer in London on Thursday. Government officials stated negotiations for the agreement that began three years ago would see a doubling of bilateral trade to \$120 billion by 2030 and also unprecedented access into each other's markets.

Speaking at a joint press conference with Starmer, PM Modi stated today marked a "historic day in our bilateral agreements." Describing the agreement as a "blueprint for our shared prosper-



perity," he said the trade deal also had global ramifications. "Agreements reached between two democracies and two of the world's major economies will lend support to global stability and prosperity," he said.

The FTA will see a drop in tariffs from both nations. Fig-

ures released by the Commerce Ministry stated that the agreement has ensured duty free access to 99% of Indian exports unlocking \$23 bn in opportunities for labour intensive sectors.

▶ Contd on | nation

▶ See also | Money, nation

Looking ahead

The two prime ministers announced the strategic roadmap for India-UK relations through the India-UK Vision 2035 document. The document, which outlines deeper partnerships in trade, technology, defence, climate and education over the next decade. The document states both PMs will meet regularly to provide strategic direction and oversight while its implementation will be reviewed annually by the External Affairs Minister of India and the Foreign Secretary of the UK.

SC STAYS BOMBAY HC 7/11 VERDICT ACQUITTING 12

Urvi Mahajani
MUMBAI

The Supreme Court on Thursday stayed the verdict of the Bombay High Court acquitting all the 12 accused in the 7/11 Mumbai train blasts case of 2006, while hearing a plea by the Maharashtra government.

A bench of Justices MM Sundresh and NK Singh, while issuing notices to the accused,

Issues notices to accused, clarifies they need not surrender

clarified that they need not surrender.

Solicitor General (SG) Tushar Mehta, representing the state, told the bench they were seeking a stay on the high court order, and not ask-

ing to bring the accused back to jail. "There are certain findings by the high court which may affect our other ongoing MCOCA trials," Mehta said, adding that the same can be recorded by the apex court.

The clarification was sought after Justice Sundresh remarked that all the accused were released from prisons after the HC verdict.

▶ Contd on | nation

Rahul claims '100%' proof of EC cheating

Gaurav Vivek Bhatnagar
NEW DELHI

A day after he alleged that the Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls in Bihar ahead of the Assembly elections in the state was nothing but an exercise to deprive eligible voters their right to franchise, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Thursday claimed that this party, which had carried out a sample exercise in Karnataka to show how "theft" of votes, had "100% proof" of its "tactics to steal votes".

Talking to the media on the issue in the Parliament complex, Gandhi charged that "The Election Commission is not functioning as the Elec-

Thousands and thousands of new voter registrations, voter deletion; we've caught them. I want to send a message to the Election Commission: if you think you're going to get away with it, you're mistaken. We are going to come after you.

Rahul Gandhi

tion Commission of India should. Today, they made a statement that's complete nonsense. The fact of the matter is, the EC isn't doing its job."

▶ Contd on | nation

▶ See also | nation

Cannot allow the dead on voters list: CEC

PTI
NEW DELHI

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar on Thursday strongly defended the Election Commission's ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the voters' list in Bihar, stating that the poll body cannot allow names of deceased individuals, those who have permanently migrated, or those registered at multiple locations to remain on the electoral rolls.



names of deceased individuals, those who have permanently migrated, or those registered at multiple locations to remain on the electoral rolls.

▶ Contd on | nation

Immersion of PoP idols above 6 feet in natural water bodies

Urvi Mahajani
MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court on Thursday cleared the way for immersion of Plaster of Paris (PoP) idols over six feet in natural water bodies, while directing the State to ensure that the PoP idols up to six feet are mandatorily immersed in artificial water tanks.

A bench of Chief Justice Alok Aradhe and Justice Sandeep Marne clarified that the interim directions will be applicable till March 2026 with regard to all festivals which involve idol immersion.

PoP idols up to six feet are to be immersed in artificial water tanks. HC interim directions will be applicable till March 2026 with regard to all festivals which involve idol immersion.

"As the Ganesh festival will be celebrated from August 26 till September 6, we grant permission for immersion this year," the bench noted.

The court was hearing petitions challenging the Central Pollution Control Board's (CPCB) 2020 guidelines banning both manufacture and immersion of PoP idols in

natural water bodies. Initially, a PIL was filed by Thane-based environmentalist Rohit Joshi, through advocate Ronita Bhattacharya, seeking strict implementation of the CPBC guidelines banning immersion of PoP idols in natural water bodies.

▶ Contd on | nation

WHODUNNIT? KOKATE CLIP PROBE POINTS TO 'OUTSIDER'

Ravikiran Deshmukh
MUMBAI

The legislature secretariat has submitted an internal inquiry report to State Council Chairman Prof. Ram Shinde regarding the viral video clip showing Agriculture Minister Manikrao Kokate allegedly playing rummy on his cellphone during House proceedings.

The report is believed to have concluded that the cameras installed inside the Council to record the proceedings did not capture any member of the House recording the incident. Instead, the clip appears to have been filmed by an outsider using a cellphone with HD quality from the visitors' gallery on the first floor, the secretariat is believed to have said in its report. Efforts to contact Prof. Shinde for confirmation of the report's contents were unsuccessful.

Meanwhile, Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar told media-persons on Thursday that a decision on action against Kokate will be taken after meeting the minister next week and consulting CM Devendra Fadnavis. Pawar, who is the NCP president, urged ministers to be cautious about their public conduct and statements.

▶ Contd on | nation

'112 AI pilots called in sick after crash'

AI witnessed a "minor increase" in sick leaves reported by pilots across its fleet in the aftermath of the AI-171 crash, with 112 pilots reporting sick in a single day on June 16, Civil Aviation MoS Murlidhar Mohol told the Lok Sabha on Thursday. This year till July 21, five airlines reported to DGCA 183 technical defects, including 85 by the AI group, in their aircraft, he said.

▶ Contd on | nation

DGCA slaps 4 notices on Air India for lapses

Agencies
MUMBAI

Aviation regulator DGCA has warned Air India of action for breaching safety standards related to crew fatigue management and training.

DGCA has issued four show-cause notices to the airline for violations related to cabin crew rest and duty norms, training rules and operational procedures. The notices were issued on July 23 on the basis of volun-

tary disclosures made by AI on June 20 and 21. The airline self-reported the problems, which occurred this year and last year, just days after one of its Boeing 787 Dreamliners crashed in Ahmedabad, killing 260 people. "We will respond to the notices within the stipulated period. We remain committed to the safety of our crew and passengers," an AI statement said on Thursday.

▶ Contd on | nation

Next VP will be our own: BJP

Gaurav Vivek Bhatnagar
NEW DELHI

BJP sources on Thursday made it clear that the party had no intention of yielding the post of Vice-President, vacant after the sudden resignation by Jagdeep Dhankhar, to any of its NDA allies and would like to see one of its own leaders, who believes in the party's ideology, occupy the second highest constitutional post in the country.

The party sources spoke up on the matter as there was speculation that the post may

The decision on the new Vice-President will be taken after PM Modi's return from his foreign tour next week.

next go to either Janata Dal United leader and Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar or his party colleague and union minister Ram Nath Thakur. The buzz got louder as Thakur also met BJP president J.P. Nadda on Wednesday.

However, the BJP has cleared the air around the subject and stated that it was a routine meeting and that the decision on the new Vice-President would only be taken following PM Narendra Modi's return from his visit to the UK and the Maldives next week. On why the names of Kumar and Thakur figured prominently in the media recently, the party sources said it was most likely because Bihar is headed for Assembly elections.

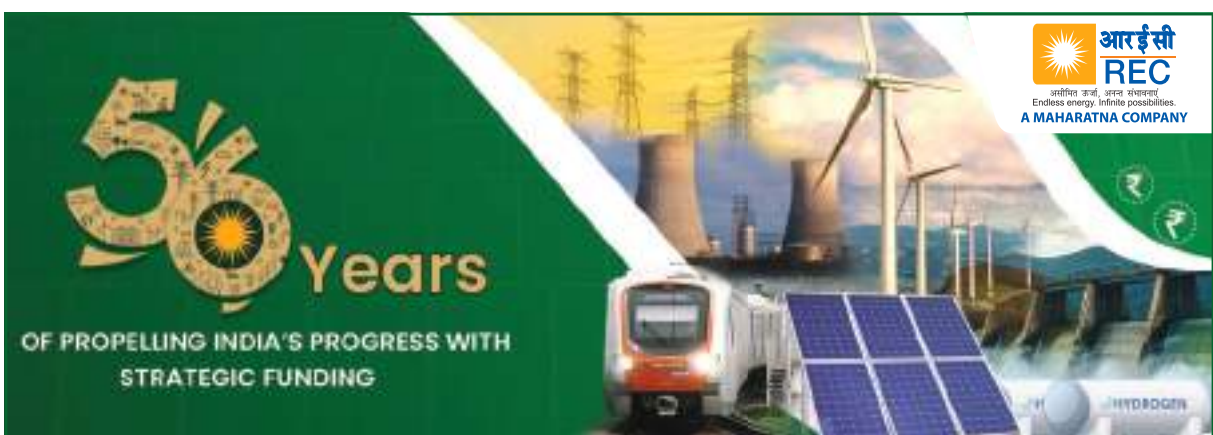
▶ Contd on | nation

Temple defaced in Melbourne

Agencies
MELBOURNE

A Hindu temple and two Asian-run restaurants in Melbourne were defaced with racist graffiti earlier this week, triggering deep concern and outrage among community members in Australia. The Shree Swaminarayan Temple in Boronia was found vandalised with red-painted racial slurs on Monday, Australia Today said.

▶ Contd on | nation



Extract of Unaudited Financial Results (Standalone & Consolidated) for the quarter ended 30-06-2025

(₹ in crore)

Sl. No.	Particulars	Standalone				Consolidated			
		Quarter ended		Year Ended		Quarter ended		Year Ended	
		30-06-2025	31-03-2025	30-06-2024	31-03-2025	30-06-2025	31-03-2025	30-06-2024	31-03-2025
		(Unaudited)	(Audited)	(Unaudited)	(Audited)	(Unaudited)	(Audited)	(Unaudited)	(Audited)
1.	Total Income from Operations	14,646.42	15,177.78	13,023.31	55,911.12	14,737.45	15,351.88	13,078.66	56,366.55
2.	Net Profit for the period (before Tax, Exceptional and/ or Extraordinary items)	5,646.90	5,384.67	4,325.82	19,859.78	5,666.41	5,489.89	4,349.23	20,117.47
3.	Net Profit for the period before tax (after Exceptional and/ or Extraordinary items)	5,646.90	5,384.67	4,325.82	19,859.78	5,666.41	5,489.89	4,349.23	20,117.47
4.	Net Profit for the period after tax (after Exceptional and/ or Extraordinary items)	4,451.02	4,236.20	3,442.45	15,713.21	4,465.71	4,309.98	3,460.19	15,884.23
5.	Total Comprehensive Income for the period [Comprising Profit for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax)]	1,986.86	3,186.06	3,525.02	14,196.41	2,001.55	3,259.84	3,542.76	14,367.43
6.	Paid up Equity Share Capital (Face Value ₹ 10 per share)	2,633.22	2,633.22	2,633.22	2,633.22	2,633.22	2,633.22	2,633.22	2,633.22
7.	Other Equity	77,054.44	75,004.75	69,718.14	75,004.75	77,807.22	75,742.84	70,302.97	75,742.84
8.	Securities Premium Account	1,577.53	1,577.53	1,577.53	1,577.53				
9.	Net Worth	79,687.66	77,637.97	72,351.36	77,637.97				
10.	Paid up Debt Capital/ Outstanding Debt	5,08,532.16	4,88,258.51	4,58,794.20	4,88,258.51				
11.	Debt Equity Ratio *	6.38	6.29	6.27	6.29				
12.	Earnings per Share (of ₹ 10 each) (for continuing and discontinued operations) (in ₹)								
(i)	Basic	16.90	15.96	13.07	59.55	16.96	16.24	13.14	60.20
(ii)	Diluted	16.90	15.96	13.07	59.55	16.96	16.24	13.14	60.20

* Debt/Equity Ratio = Net Debt / Net Worth (Net debt represents principal outstanding less cash and cash equivalents available.)

- The above financial results of the Company were reviewed by the Audit Committee and approved and taken on record by the Board of Directors at their respective meetings held on July 24, 2025. These results have been subject to limited review by the Statutory Auditors of the Company.
- The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarterly Financial Results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 & 52 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the financial results is available on the Stock Exchange websites (www.bseindia.com and www.nseindia.com) and also on the Company's website (www.recindia.nic.in).
- For other applicable disclosure as required under regulation 52(4) of SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, refer detailed format of the financial results filed with the Stock Exchange (www.bseindia.com and www.nseindia.com) and can also be accessed on the Company's website (www.recindia.nic.in).

Place: Delhi
Date: July 24, 2025

REC Limited
(A Maharashtra Government of India Enterprise)
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For REC Limited
(Jitendra Srivastava)
Chairman & Managing Director
DIN - 06817799





CLICK ON THE SECTION YOU WISH TO READ

Mumbai

Pune

Money

Market

Nation

**Fitness &
Sustainability**

Games

Cinema

**THE WORLD OF PUZZLES IS
JUST A CLICK AWAY!**

**ENGAGE YOUR MIND WITH OUR NEW E-PUZZLES -
WHENEVER, WHEREVER**

JUST CLICK AND START SOLVING!

Briefs

Nikam takes oath in RS

New Delhi: Special public prosecutor Ujjwal Nikam, known for handling the



26/11 terror attack trials, took oath as a member of the Rajya Sabha on Thursday. He was nominated to the upper house by the President on July 13. Nikam took the oath in Marathi shortly after the Upper House was convened, with Deputy Chairman Harivansh on the chair. Earlier on July 13, Nikam shared that PM Narendra Modi personally informed him about the nomination via a phone call. The special public prosecutor is best known for handling high-profile criminal cases, including the 1993 blasts case. Modi had congratulated Nikam for his nomination, noting the latter's exemplary devotion to the legal field and Constitution.

—ANI

Bail to RaGa in Savarkar case

Mumbai: A Nashik court on Thursday granted bail to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in a defamation case filed against him for remarks against V D Savarkar during the Bharat Jodo Yatra in 2022. Appearing through video link before additional chief judicial magistrate R C Narwadia, Gandhi, the leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha, pleaded not guilty. Subsequently, his lawyers sought bail. The court allowed the plea on a bond of Rs15,000. Nashik resident Devendra Bhutada, through his lawyer Manoj Pingle, has filed the criminal defamation case, alleging that Gandhi's statements harmed Savarkar's reputation.

—PTI

HC FLAGS HEALTH RISKS | Asks for data related to respiratory illnesses; restrains BMC from demolitions till next hearing

Human health vital: HC on kabutarkhana debate

Urvi Mahajani
MUMBAI

Amid the debate over closure of kabutarkhanas, which according to the BMC, pose health risks to Mumbaikars, the Bombay High Court on Thursday noted serious public health concerns arising from pigeon droppings. It called for medical data to assess the impact on citizens, while extending the interim protection against demolition of kabutarkhanas.

On July 15, the HC had passed an interim order restraining the BMC from carrying out any further demolition of the pigeon feeding enclosures. The order will continue till the next date of hearing, which has been scheduled after two weeks.

On Thursday, a bench of Justices Girish Kulkarni and Arif Doctor said the matter must not be treated as adversarial as the BMC's objective is to protect the health of all sections of society, including children and senior citizens. "Nothing can be more vital than human health," the court remarked, observing that the congregation of pigeons at kabutarkhanas posed a "grave social concern".

Further, the court sought expert medical opinion from



Dr Sujeet Rajan, a consultant pulmonologist at Bombay Hospital, who had earlier provided inputs on the health risks associated with kabutarkhanas in a 2018 case.

The court has also called for data from government and private hospitals on how many patients from all age groups have been treated for respiratory illnesses linked to pigeon droppings. "It may not be a pandemic but may be an epidemic. Get the data. It will show the gravity of the situ-

ation," the bench said.

The Animal Welfare Board of India informed the court of its intention to make suggestions to the BMC to ensure that birds are not adversely affected. The court permitted the board to submit its recommendations to the BMC commissioner.

The bench also took strong exception to allegations that civic staff were using firecrackers to scare away pigeons. It directed that if firecrackers were being used, the

KEY POINT

During the hearing, the bench allowed an intervention application filed by A Pai, son of a senior advocate who recently passed away. In his application filed through senior advocate Jamshed Cama, Pai claimed that his father was diagnosed with lung disease allegedly caused by prolonged exposure to pigeon droppings. The high court said this real-life example demonstrated the "direct health hazard" posed by kabutarkhanas.

practice must stop immediately.

The court was hearing a petition filed by three Mumbai-based animal lovers, Pallavi Patil, Sneha Visaria, and Savita Mahajan, who alleged that the BMC had started demolishing kabutarkhanas since July 3 without legal authority. The petitioners contended that the civic body's actions were arbitrary and in violation of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960.

SEBI fine default case: ₹2cr or 6-mth jail

Charul Shah Joshi
MUMBAI

In the case of defaulting on a penalty of Rs1 crore imposed by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), the special SEBI court has asked the two directors of M'Belle International Pvt Ltd to pay Rs1 crore each or serve six-month jail.

As per the prosecution, the market regulator conducted an investigation into the

transaction of share prices of M/s Roofit Industries Ltd (RIL). In 2002, the investigating officer had asked M'Belle International to furnish information pertaining to share prices of RIL. However, the firm sought time till August 20, 2002, but failed to reply, prompting the SEBI to initiate proceedings.

On June 20, 2004, a fine of Rs1 crore was imposed on M'Belle International for non-compliance. The order

was challenged by the firm, which was dismissed.

The prosecution said that SEBI issued a notice in 2007, asking the company to pay the penalty, warning that a criminal proceeding would be initiated otherwise. However, M'Belle International paid no heed and hence in November 2014, SEBI filed a criminal case.

An offence was registered against the firm's five directors — Suresh Hemwani,

Gopu Belani, Anupama Motwani, Rita Motwani and Sushil Thakkar. The case against Hemwani was abated after his death in December 2021.

Rita has been acquitted from all the charges, while Thakkar's matter has been separated. Now, Belani and Anupama have been asked to pay Rs1 crore each. The SEBI will recover the fine from the amount once paid, said the court.

No tender given to contractor who ended life: Govt defends

Kalpesh Mhamunkar
MUMBAI

The state government on Thursday clarified that it had no direct contractual relationship with Harshal Patil, the deceased sub-contractor linked to works under the Jal Jeevan Mission. Patil, 35, allegedly died by suicide earlier this week in the Sangli district. As per the contractor association, he took the extreme step as the government had not cleared his Rs1.5 crore arrears pending for more than a year. The incident comes amid the association's fervent appeals to clear their dues running into several thousand crores. The alleged suicide has led to widespread outrage, with the association squarely blaming the state government for the tragedy.

Deputy CM Ajit Pawar said that Patil was not the primary contractor for the Jal Jeevan Mission, instead he was working under a private contractor appointed by the government. "We had awarded the tender to another contractor, who in turn, subcontracted the work to Patil. Hence, we

We had awarded the tender to another contractor, who in turn subcontracted the work to Patil. Hence, we have no official connection with him.

Deputy CM Ajit Pawar

This is not an isolated case. Thousands of contractors across the state are facing similar issues. Bills worth nearly ₹89,000 crore remain unpaid by the state.

State Contractors' Association

have no official connection with him," Pawar said. He asserted that the state makes payments to the main contractor and that any financial arrangements with sub-contractors are solely the contractor's responsibility.

Water supply minister Gulabrao Patil too said that Patil had not been officially assigned any work. "The work might have been sublet to him as there is no record of any official contract or pending

bills in his name. We have verified this with the district administration and engineers," the minister said. "The police are checking his phone records, conversations and whether he left behind any note to understand the real reason behind the suicide," Deputy CM Pawar added.

On July 22, Patil was found hanging in his field. According to the Maharashtra State Contractors' Association, he was under financial distress as the government had not cleared his dues for water supply projects, which he had completed over a year ago. The locals claimed that Patil had taken loans from private lenders and sold part of his farmland to complete the Rs1.4 crore project. Association president Milind Bhosale claimed that Patil had had been following up for his payments, which were delayed for over a year.

"This is not an isolated case. Thousands of contractors across the state are facing similar issues. Bills worth nearly Rs89,000 crore remain unpaid by the state," Bhosale said.

Cong MPs gherao Dubey over Marathi remarks

FPJ Political Bureau
MUMBAI

Three Lok Sabha members from Maharashtra — Prof Varsha Gaikwad, Shobha Bachhav and Pratibha Dhanorkar — cornered BJP MP Nishikant Dubey at Parliament House on Wednesday, questioning him over the remarks on Maharashtra and Marathi people. During the recent Marathi row, Dubey passed remarks, targeting leaders from Maharashtra.

City Congress chief and Mumbai North Central MP Varsha Gaikwad said, "We asked Dubey why he hates Maharashtra and Marathi people so much." Referring to his apparent 'patak patak ke marengi' remark, she added, "We will not tolerate so much hate against our state and the people." Pratibha Dhanorkar, who represents Chandrapur, said, "We were looking for Dubey for the last two days. Finally, when we spotted him, we asked him why he has a

grudge against the state, but he folded his hands and did not say much."

Dubey, while talking to a news agency, had made certain comments about Marathi people, their earning capacity and how people from the northern states are running Maharashtra's economy. He had also reacted to the incidents wherein Hindi-speaking people were thrashed for not speaking Marathi. "If you come here (in northern states), we will beat you up," Dubey had said.

The MP trio asked the BJP MP on Wednesday how he could make such unsavory remarks against Marathis. "How can you beat up people from Maharashtra," they asked, asserting that they will not tolerate such language against Marathi people.

The trio also raised slogans 'Jai Maharashtra', attracting the attention of other MPs from the state. Dubey reportedly told the women that they were his sisters and left the scene.



BMC to get land parcel for mega sports facility

Facility to come up in Anushakti Nagar; Ajit Pawar asks to expedite the project spread over 10,000 sq m

Kalpesh Mhamunkar
MUMBAI

Deputy CM Ajit Pawar on Thursday directed that 10,333.91 sq m of land reserved for a municipal sports complex in Anushakti Nagar be transferred to the BMC to expedite the project. He also confirmed that funding will be made available for the development of modern sports facilities.

Pawar emphasised that the proposed sports complex will be vital for providing quality training and infrastructure to athletes in Mumbai. The decision was announced during a meeting at the Mantralaya, which focused on the issues concerning the minority development department. The meeting was attended by ministers Dattatray Bharne, Hasan Mushrif, former minister Nawab Malik and MLA Sana Malik.

The deputy CM also instructed officials to terminate any existing lease agreements with The Children Aid Society, which currently holds rights over the plot, and clear encroachments, if any. The authorities concerned will work in tandem with the revenue department to complete the land transfer process.

In another development, Pawar also directed the minority development department to initiate the construction of an engineer-



Representative pic

IN BRIEF

1 Proposed sports complex will be vital for providing quality training and infrastructure to athletes in Mumbai, says Ajit Pawar

2 Funding will be made available for the development of modern sports facilities, he assured

3 He asked to terminate any existing lease agreements related to the land parcel

ing college for girls from the minority community on a reserved plot in Mouje Anik, Chembur. He emphasised the need for planning faculty positions, recruitment and infrastructure upkeep post-

establishment. Pawar also ordered full operationalisation of the Minority Research and Training Institute in Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar, with immediate recruitment to 11 sanctioned posts.

To support the educational and economic development of minority communities, the deputy CM proposed the implementation of a term loan scheme under the Maulana Azad Minority Economic Development Corporation, which is modelled on the Annasaheb Patil Corporation. Funds will be allocated for the Dr APJ Abdul Kalam educational loan scheme and student intake limits will be set annually, Pawar assured.

He also stressed the need for effective implementation of ongoing scholarship schemes to support higher and international education for minority students.

SNAKE RESCUERS TO GET ID CARDS, ₹10L INSURANCE

The state government on Thursday announced that snake rescuers or 'sarpa mitra' will soon receive official identity cards and accident insurance coverage of ₹10 lakh

► A proposal to be sent to CM Devendra Fadnavis to include them under essential services

► Talks underway to designate snake rescuers as frontline workers

LONG-STANDING DEMAND MET

Govt acknowledges the vital role of snake rescuers

To save others, they capture and relocate snakes, often at great personal risk

There has been a long-standing demand to provide them with accident insurance

Initiative aims to support volunteers and recognise their bravery

Chandrashekhhar Bawankule
Revenue minister

Text: Kalpesh Mhamunkar



ON THE ANVIL

► A standard operating procedure is being developed to streamline issuance of identity cards

► For transparency, the forest department will soon launch an online portal

► It will contain verified information about registered rescuers

► This will enable citizens to easily reach out for help during emergencies

Two big properties of former MLA to go under hammer

Charul Shah Joshi
MUMBAI

In a major relief for depositors of scam-hit Karnala Nagari Sahakari Bank Ltd (KNSB), the special MP and MLA court has allowed the official liquidator to auction two big properties of politician Vivekanand Patil booked in the Rs512 crore fraud. The assets include the



properties of Patil. The ED too has a dual attachment in some of the properties. The latter seized 76 properties; of which, nine of them were exclusively attached by the ED.

The bank's official liquidator had recently approached the court to release the properties attached by the EOW and ED. The liquidator had pleaded that the properties be made absolute (be cleared of legal issues) and permission be granted to proceed with auction so that the depositors can be paid and the others debts can be cleared. Giving his nod for auction, Patil said that the auction of these two properties would settle the entire debts. The process of auction is to be undertaken immediately in the interest of the depositors, ruled the court.

₹512CR BANK FRAUD

CASE DETAILS

On the midnight of September 9, 2004, the police initiated proceedings against BJP's Netaji Shinde

Gopal Shetty and Ganesh Khankar arrived at the police station at around 1am

Constable Udesb Mohite said they pushed, abused and threatened him

Ex-MP among 2 cleared of cop assault

Charul Shah Joshi
MUMBAI

The special MP and MLA court has acquitted BJP leaders Gopal Shetty, an ex-MP, and Ganesh Khankar in a 2004 case where they were accused of assaulting and abusing police officials following the arrest of another BJP leader.

Special judge Satyanarayan R Navander said, "The evidence on record failed to establish the essential ingredients beyond reason-

able doubt. The only witness, who partly supported the prosecution case, was the complainant (a constable). Even his testimony was contradictory, vague and substantially weak during cross-examination."

The judge continued, "No independent or neutral witnesses were examined and no other officer supported the allegations despite being named in the FIR. The investigating officer (IO) himself did not corroborate the allegations made in the FIR." Hence,

a serious doubt arises regarding the prosecution's case, the judge observed.

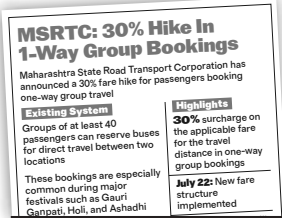
The complainant, constable Udesb Mohite, said on the instructions of his senior officers, he restrained the duo and the protestors accompanying them. However, Shetty and Khankar pushed Mohite and stormed into the police station, said the FIR.

Mohite had further alleged that they also abused him and threatened to make his "life miserable in the next few months". Subsequently, they

were booked for not only preventing the police officials from doing their duty but also threatening them with dire consequences. The case against them was lodged on September 10, 2004.

The court noted that during the trial, Mohite turned hostile and denied having lodged any complaint. It further pointed out that the second witness, the IO, also turned hostile. Hence, there is no evidence against the leaders, said the court, while acquitting them.

to sources, the decision was politically motivated, given the upcoming BMC polls. Shinde reportedly intervened after concerns that the hike could alienate Mumbai's sizable Konkani-origin population, many of whom travel home during the Ganesh festival. In a presser, Sarnaik explained that the fare hike was implemented to address financial losses incurred last year during the Ganesh festival.



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World’s Biggest Slum Redvpt Project Takes Off

SVR SRINIVAS, the CEO of Dharavi Redevelopment Project, speaks to **S BALAKRISHNAN** about the super-gigantic mission. Explaining how everyone’s home and livelihood will remain intact, he says Dharavi is ‘Mini India’ and every faith and language will be respected without bulldozing the residents



FPJ Interview
SVR Srinivas
CEO, Dharavi Redevelopment Project

The Dharavi Redevelopment Project (DRP) is the biggest urban renewal programme ever undertaken in the country. For the past several decades, there have been talks of redeveloping Asia’s largest slum, but this is the first time a concrete project, which is being jointly executed by the Maharashtra government and the Adani Group, has taken off the drawing stage, holding hope for lakhs of residents.

The sheer numbers are mind boggling. About 50% of the one million population might be eligible to be accommodated in Dharavi itself, while the remaining ineligible people will have to be relocated at different places in the metropolis. The total estimated cost is Rs96,000 crore and the project is to be executed over a period of seven years. The man at the centre of it all is SVR SRINIVAS, 59, a seasoned IAS officer of the 1991 batch, who is the CEO of DRP. He spoke exclusively to S BALAKRISHNAN on Wednesday. Excerpts:

When you took charge of the Dharavi project, what were the three main challenges you had in mind?

The first challenge was on-boarding the people, the residents of Dharavi. A project of this scale cannot happen without their involvement. Our approach is totally inclusive. So, the first step was to bring all the stakeholders together.

The second challenge was preparing a proper framework to attract market response. You see, this project had seen multiple failed bidding rounds in the past. It had earned the dubious distinction of being the world’s longest-running bid process; going on for nearly 20 years!

The third challenge was to ensure livelihoods in Dharavi are protected. That required proper financial structuring, which was missing earlier.

So, to sum up:

- Stakeholder integration
- Financial structuring
- Ensuring project viability and financial closure

This has been the longest-drawn project since the days of Rajiv Gandhi in 1985. What makes you confident it will succeed this time?

Let me answer in two ways. First, we’ve already seen half-success. Well begun is half done, they say. Work has started. Financial mobilisation has begun. India’s largest survey was conducted; we’ve finished about 85-90% of it. Survey work started today in Kumbharwada. So yes,

it’s definitely moving forward, unlike earlier attempts.

Second, the stakeholders are on-boarded now. There is still some resistance, but it is far less than before. Earlier, during the bidding stage, protests used to break out. Now, it’s more of a dialogue. The locals want to be heard, and our job is to listen and offer solutions. That’s what’s happening now.

The opposition has accused the government of “selling out” the project and displacing people. Please comment.

Not at all. In fact, I don’t even call this a ‘project’; it’s a movement. This is the most inclusive slum redevelopment scheme in Indian history. Our goal is simple: housing for all. For the first time, we’re giving homes to everyone – eligible or ineligible. Shops, factories, and commercial units are also being rehabilitated.

Normally, in Mumbai’s schemes, 50% are marked ineligible and left out. But here, even they are being accommodated. I won’t comment on politics, but yes, this is a brownfield project like no other. I’ve handled Mumbai Metro and other big projects, but nothing as complex as this. Also, this is the world’s largest urban renewal project.

SOCIAL & CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Multi-specialty hospital, schools, community centres, library, women’s hostel

Dharavi Museum to preserve cultural legacy

Religious structures to be regularised or relocated respectfully

What about livelihoods and the economy of Dharavi?

That’s central. Dharavi has a bubbling informal economy. We’re protecting it. Eligible residents will stay in Dharavi – homes, shops, businesses – all remain. Ineligible residents’ commercial units will also remain; they’ll only move residences outside, but their work continues in Dharavi. We had to go out-of-the-box for this – even suggested this to the chief minister, and he supported it.

So, ineligible people get to keep their business in Dharavi but move out for housing?

Yes. Due to legal constraints and court rulings, we cannot keep extending cut-off dates for eligibility. It would jeopardise the project’s viability. So, ineligible commercial operators can stay and run businesses in Dharavi, but their homes will be in rental housing nearby; with an option to buy. Eligible families get 350 sq ft homes in Dharavi. In some non-slum sectors, we’re even increasing units to 500 sq ft.

What about infrastructure – roads, sewage, water?

That’s part of our 3-tier focus:

- Residential/Commercial/Industrial housing
- Physical Infrastructure: Roads, sewage, water, electricity
- Social Infrastructure: Schools, hospitals, community centres, temples, mosques, churches etc.

Today, Dharavi has 2-3 ft wide lanes, limited sunlight, and poor sanitation. We’re changing all that. The Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) is responsible for all construction, infrastructure, and handover to the Dharavi Redevelopment Authority.

Who bears the maintenance cost of these new buildings?

Great question. Usually, developers give Rs40,000 per tenement as a corpus. We felt that’s not enough. So, we introduced a new idea: 10% of every building’s area will be set aside as commercial units. Rent or sale income from this will go to the society for maintenance.

It’s a win-win situation. This is the first time such a model is being implemented. Ineligible people will be accommodated in rental housing units in Kurla, Malad and Mulund with buy-out options. So no one is rendered homeless.

What about religious structures?

There will be no bulldozing. Whether it’s a temple, mosque, or church; we respect all faiths. A committee led by retired High Court judges is handling rehabilitation of religious structures and their staff. Dharavi is Mini India; every faith and every language exists here. We aim to consolidate and rebuild grand structures, with community consensus.

When will Phase I be complete?

The goal is seven years. Mumbai’s average slum project takes 15-20 years. But we can’t say ‘you’ll get your home in 25 years’. As John Maynard Keynes said, “In the long run, we’re all dead.” So, 7 years is a practical target. Maybe a year or two of delay, but I’m reasonably confident.

How important is communication in this process?

Extremely important. I recently met people from Kumbharwada and Andolan groups – many weren’t aware of the commercial continuity assurance. That shows we need more communication. This interview itself is part of that effort – to inform people.

Dharavi’s informal economy generates nearly \$1 billion annually – leather, textiles, food, recycling, and electronics. But they’ve been trapped in a low-investment cycle due to uncertainty. This project offers permanence, which unlocks confidence, investments, and growth. Our master plan includes dedicated industrial hubs. So yes, it’s a social engineering and economic upliftment project. We’re working hard to make this vision a reality.

TIMELINE
Construction started in 2025
Rehabilitation by 2032
Full build-out by 2042

HOUSING & REHABILITATION
~72,000 new tenements planned
350-450 sq ft flats for eligible residents
Survey of 94,500+ tenements; eligibility based on residency before Jan 1, 2000

INFRA & TRANSPORT
Multi-Modal Transit Hub: Metro Lines 3, 8, 11, suburban rail, buses, airport express
7 new road connectors to Mahim, BKC, Sion, and beyond
Streets re-gridded every 125mt for better access and traffic flow



GREEN & OPEN SPACES

Central park, green corridors, riverfront promenade along Mithi River

Playgrounds, bioswale networks, and tree-lined shaded streets.

80% population within 5-min walk to transit and parks

LIVELIHOOD & INDUSTRY CLUSTERS

Dedicated zones for leather, garments, pottery, recycling, and food industries

Live-work mixed-use design to retain Dharavi’s economic fabric

Strong resident response as survey nears completion

Toll-free helpline registers 300 calls in past 30 days for eligibility survey



As the survey phase of the Dharavi Redevelopment Project (DRP) comes to an end, a significant number of residents, who had earlier missed or had not participated, are calling the project’s toll-free helpline for inclusion.

Out of 700 calls received in the past month, nearly 41% enquiries were related to requests to complete the door-to-door/household survey, a crucial step in the redevelopment process to decide eligibility. This response highlights the palpable anxiety among residents about missing out on the redevelopment scheme and foregoing its housing benefits.

As only a few tenements and communities remain who have volunteered to exclude themselves from the eligibility survey like the Kumbharwada, Compound 13, a handful tenements on private lands in various slum pockets, it is a sign that residents are sensing time is slipping away. Despite initial resistance, Kumbharwada residents have started volunteering to get their tenements numbered in the past two days.

“We are heartened by the volume and quality of engagement we are receiving from the residents. The fact that nearly half of the calls are about the survey process shows that people are informed, interested, and eager to participate in the transformation. We remain committed to a transparent, people-first redevelopment effort that keeps communication open at every stage. This is a ‘housing for

GOVERNANCE & IMPLEMENTATION

Managed by Navbharat Mega Developers Pvt Ltd (Adani Group 80% + Govt 20%)

Use of LiDAR & drone mapping for transparency and planning accuracy

Public consultations for relocation, amenities, and service delivery

all’ project,” a DRP official said.

The toll-free helpline continues to serve as a vital two-way communication channel, ensuring that residents are heard, their doubts addressed, and their concerns recorded.

The DRP is among the largest and the most inclusive urban renewal initiatives in the world, aiming to uplift over 10 lakh residents through well-planned housing, infrastructure, and community services without displacing the social and economic fabric of the area.

Other queries received on the helpline were requests for a list of documents to complete eligibility verification, timeline expectations, and when new homes will be allotted. There were also inquiries about location, size of new housing units, numbering of upper floors and the recent campaign urging residents to come forward for the survey.

Baby born mid-air on AI Express flight

Dhairya Gajara

MUMBAI

While the Indian aviation sector is facing tremendous challenges, a brief joyous moment was observed in the sky as a baby was born on a Mumbai-bound Air India Express flight. The cabin crew and a nurse among the passengers helped a Thai woman deliver a baby successfully thousands of feet up in the air. The moment the Thai national went into labour, the crew responded swiftly by drawing on their training to ensure a secure and compassionate environment for the birth. The pilots promptly alerted air traffic control to request priority landing at Mumbai, where medical teams and an ambulance were ready on arrival. Upon touchdown, both mother and baby were immediately transferred to a nearby hospital.

Official held in graft case

Mumbai: The Mumbai Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) has caught Ganesh Kadam, a sanitary inspector from the BMC's R/South ward, for allegedly demanding a bribe from a hotelier. The complainant, who runs a kitchen in a friend's hotel, was asked to shut down his restaurant due to lack of licenses. On June 28, Kadam allegedly demanded Rs40,000 to allow the restaurant to operate, later agreeing to accept Rs30,000. The complainant filed a complaint with the ACB, which conducted a trap operation and caught Kadam red-handed accepting the bribe.

Pilgrims duped

Mumbai: Thirty Haji pilgrims from Amravati were devastated after their pilgrimage was cancelled due to fake visas provided by Kurla-based travel agent Sohail Khan of Al Izma Tours. The group paid Rs15 lakh, only to discover at Mumbai Airport on July 21 that their visas were counterfeit. Sohail has been arrested and an investigation is on.

Road repairs back on track

The BMC will resume its road concretisation works from October 1 and this time the citizens will be informed in advance on the roads that will be undertaken for repairs.

The project aims to make Mumbai's roads pothole-free by the end of 2027. The project, paused on May 31 due to monsoon, will prioritise partially completed roads.

The BMC will publish the road works list on August 15, Commissioner Bhushan Gagrani emphasised citizen complaint redressal and preserving existing sidewalks.

Total road works 2,121, covering 698.44 km

Completed roads 1,385 (342.74km), with 771 fully done (186km) and 614 partially done (156.74km)

Remaining roads

736

Completion status: **49%**

"On August 15, we will publish the road works list on BMC website," said Girish Nikam, Chief Engineer.

Gagrani's directives

Address citizen complaints promptly

Prevent road digging post-completion.

Existing and well-maintained sidewalks should not be demolished

Tackle flooding spots, evict unsafe buildings, and improve sanitation, health, and education services.

PoP IDOL ROW | Activists say CPCB guidelines selectively implemented, potential environment harm from PoP idols and chem-based colours

PoP vs pollution: Activists claim voter appeasement

Devashri Bhujbal

MUMBAI

The environment activists have slammed the state government for interpreting the Central Pollution Control Board's (CPCB) guidelines on banning Plaster of Paris (PoP) idols as per their convenience, especially eyeing the upcoming local bodies elections in Maharashtra.

"It is appeasement of the Hindu voters. Ganeshotsav was recently declared as the 'State Festival'. They do not want to disappoint their vote bank. Maybe next year their stand will change," activists say.

The Bombay High Court on Thursday gave an interim order on the PIL filed by environment activist Rohit Joshi on banning the PoP idols. The court has allowed manufacturing and sale of PoP idols and immersion in natural water bodies of idols above six feet height.

However, PoP idols below six feet have to be mandatorily immersed into artificial ponds installed by the civic bodies. The HC recently reversed its order on complete ban on usage of PoP idols after the CPCB said that its guidelines are not mandatory but advisory in nature, which irked the environmentalists.



Petitioner Rohit Joshi said: "It is surprising, the CPCB guidelines on total ban on PoP idols is accepted by the states of Goa and Karnataka, who are also taking strict actions towards its implementation. And in Maharashtra, ahead of civic elections, the guidelines become 'advisory'. What is the use of having a central body if its guidelines are not mandated. In future, any central body's guidelines will be interpreted by authorities as per their convenience."

Director of NGO Vanashakti, Stalin D slammed the CPCB calling it spineless for choosing to sing the politicians tunes instead of promoting scientific temperament. "Politicians are out to eradicate science to appease their vote bank. Hindu religion sees nature as something to be worshipped and preserved. The politicians are encourag-

IN BRIEF

- 1 **State govt criticised for selective implementation of CPCB guidelines on PoP idols**
- 2 **Environmentalists raise concerns about pollution and lack of surveillance**
- 3 **Govt claims local bodies will collect immersed PoP materials and appoint Expert Scientific Committee**
- 4 **Activists accuse govt of appeasing vote bank ahead of local body elections**

ing people to degrade the environment. If CPCB is meant to only issue advisories, it should be immediately disbanded. Chat GPT and Grok will do their job," Stalin said.

Questions are also raised on surveillance and accountability for environment-friendly disposal of artificial ponds, water where PoP idols will be immersed, and retrieval, transportation and disposal of remains of PoP idols from

natural water bodies. The state government's environment department in its affidavit to the HC said that all PoP idols will be red marked.

"The local bodies are directed for collection of these immersed materials from these water bodies on the very next date of immersion. The government is also in process of appointing an Expert Scientific Committee for suggesting methods for reuse and recycling of PoP which is used for idols," the affidavit said.

However, Joshi highlights that there is mere or no surveillance if the PoP idols immersion water from artificial lakes is scientifically processed or released in natural water bodies unprocessed. He also added that it is practically impossible in the rush of visarjan at public places to measure idols above six feet.

The PoP materials float back to the seashore, however in the rivers once immersed it flows.

The state has not clarified on how they will collect immersed PoP materials from flowing water and its scientific disposal, Joshi added.

"It is more of the chemical based colours which harms the water bodies and aquatic life more than the PoP materials."



Traffic cop mowed down by crane

Raina Assainar

NAVI MUMBAI

A traffic constable attached to the Mahape traffic unit was crushed to death while on duty after being hit by a crane under the Mahape flyover on Thursday afternoon. The deceased, constable Ganesh Patil, was regulating traffic near the Mahape Traffic Division when the incident occurred.

According to police, the crane was being driven recklessly from Rabale MIDC towards Turbhe when it veered towards the roadside and struck Patil, who was standing near the road managing traffic. The impact caused him to fall, and he was tragically run over by the vehicle. Fellow traffic police officers rushed Patil to the Navi Mumbai Municipal Hospital in Vashi, but doctors declared him dead before admission.

The crane driver, identified as Rajesh Gound, was immediately detained by the traffic police and later handed over to the Turbhe MIDC police. A case has been registered against him, and further investigation is underway.

Rotary Club donates devices

As a part of its constant goal to push new digital learning, the Rotary Club of Bombay Mid-Town donated e-learning panels to five municipal schools. The initiative has reached to a total of 20 schools in the city, benefiting over 10,500 students. Since 2019, the Rotary Club of Bombay Mid-Town has transformed learning environments across 20 municipal schools, empowering over 10,500 students, many from the city's most disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

Water cooler & eye camp held

The Lions Club of Chembur recently donated a water cooler to Bhajan Samaj, Ninety Feet Rd, Ghatkopar (E), as a part of community service. The cooler will be used to provide clean drinking water to the public. A free eye check camp was also held jointly by the Club and the Samaj.

Sai Prema Pravahini

The Satya Sai Prema Pravahini is in Chembur from July 25 to 27. The rath carrying the "padukas" of the late Sai Baba of Puttaparthi will be on display during this period. The "padukas" will also be taken to the homes of various devotees. Details can be had over phone nos. 9820449065 and 9483576895.

Oxygen kits provided

Pratibha Prabhakar Pulmonary Rehabilitation Centre recently arranged an event in Goregaon to highlight the importance of healthy lifestyle and pure air for the patients of pulmonary diseases. On the occasion, noted businessman and philanthropist Dhananjay Datar donated six oxygen kits to patients who are required to use them regularly. Each kit includes an oxygen concentrator of 5-10kg capacity to supply oxygen at home, a portable oxygen machine to supply oxygen for a few hours during travel and pulse oximeter to check oxygen saturation level in blood.

From broken to best: Sion Circle traffic island repaired



The broken traffic island at Sion Circle was repaired after its condition was flagged by the FPJ on July 19 - Salman Ansari

City woman gang-raped in Abu Dhabi

Megha Kuchik

MUMBAI

A 24-year-old Indian woman was allegedly gang-raped by her friends in Dubai on October 27, 2024, and is currently admitted to Shatabdi Hospital in Kandivali West. Severely physically assaulted and mentally traumatised, she is unable to speak to anyone.

The woman had gone to Dubai through a Dubai-based agent, Majid, 50, in July 2023. Initially, he made her stay with two women where she did household chores. Later, he gave her a job in the kitchen of a McDonald's outlet at the SEAF branch in Abu Dhabi.

Her mother alleges that her five Nepali and Indonesian friends raped her in their room and brutally assaulted her. She was first admitted to a private Cleveland hospital there but was later shifted to a government hospital. On June 19 this year, the McDonald's officer deported her to Mumbai.

On June 26, her mother filed a complaint with the Versova police, who forwarded the

complaint to the Kandivali police station. However, an FIR has not been registered yet. The mother is a divorced, middle-aged woman who lives with her three daughters in Versova. The victim is her eldest daughter, whom she sent to Dubai for work due to their poor financial condition after her husband abandoned the family. To meet daily expenses, she depends on help from relatives and acquaintances. Her other two daughters are in Standard 10 and 12.

The victim is 24 years old and studied in an English-medium school till Class 10. Her mother knew Majid, who lured the young woman with a good job. When she reached Dubai, he made her stay with his Indonesian wife, where several other girls from different countries were also staying. He promised them jobs and told the victim that her CV had been sent to good companies.

Majid asked her to help his wife, which she did for several weeks until she grew suspicious of his intentions. He then

THE CASE

She was working at a McDonald's outlet in Abu Dhabi, arranged by a Dubai-based agent, Majid

Allegedly assaulted by five Nepali and Indonesian men

She was hospitalised in Abu Dhabi and later deported to Mumbai due to her critical condition



shifted her to the house of his friends Pakistani wife, who turned out to be his second wife. There, he mentally harassed her but she did not tell her mother everything at the time.

Once, when her mother confronted Majid about her job, he assured her he treated her like his own daughter. After a few months, he got her

a job at McDonald's in Abu Dhabi. She was the only Indian woman working there and stayed with other girls in a room near her workplace. Her male colleagues lived upstairs in the same building. Her mother claimed physical and mental harassment by other staff members. At the time, her colleague Sandeep Pali, a Nepali citizen, pretended to be sympathetic, befriended her and then physically and mentally assaulted her.

Pali too lived with the male colleagues upstairs. On October 27, 2024, he called her to their room under the pretext of some work, where she was raped and beaten up by five persons. When admitted to Cleveland Hospital, her colleagues allegedly told the doctors that she had consumed sleeping pills and attempted suicide.

When the mother called McDonald's manager Salman, he told her that the daughter was on medical leave. When the victim's phone remained switched off, the mother grew suspicious and tried to contact her through the Indian

Embassy. Eventually, she received a call from the hospital. The victim's grandmother, who was in Dubai at the time, reached the hospital and found her granddaughter in the ICU. The grandmother returned to India after her visa expired, while the hospital shifted the victim to a government hospital.

The government hospital repeatedly contacted the victim's mother but she could not travel to Dubai as she did not have a passport. She applied for one but McDonald's senior officer Pradip allegedly arranged her daughter's return ticket and sent her back to Mumbai. Pradip also arranged for an ambulance that took her to Seven Hills Hospital.

The mother further alleged that Seven Hills Hospital repeatedly asked her to discharge her daughter, but her condition was critical; she was being fed through a tube, and both her hands were stiff and immobile. She then shifted her daughter to Shatabdi Hospital in Kandivali West, where she is currently being treated.

Nurses want vacant posts filled and end to contractual hiring

30,000 nurses back at work

Amit Srivastava

MUMBAI

The Maharashtra State Nurses Association has called off its statewide strike from July 24, 2025, after receiving a written assurance from the Principal Secretary of Medical Education and Research.

Around 30,000 nurses across the state had been on strike since July 18 to press for various demands, including immediate recruitment for vacant posts, an end to contractual hiring, and equal implementation of Seventh Pay Commission benefits for all nursing staff.

Sumitra Tote, General Secretary of the Maharashtra State Nurses Association, said the strike was withdrawn following a positive meeting with Dheeraj Kumar, Principal Secretary, Medical Education and Research. "We have received a written assurance regarding our demands. Therefore, the Maharashtra State Nurses Association, Headquarters Latur, is calling off its statewide strike from July 24, 2025," Tote said.

Earlier, the association had refused to end the strike even after a key meeting with Medical Education Minister

We have received a written assurance regarding our demands. -Sumitra Tote

Hasan Mushrif, insisting that the strike would continue until they received written confirmation of their demands.

The nurses' protest also received support from the State Government Group-D (Class IV) Employees Federation. Core demands included immediate cancellation of contractual hiring, 100% permanent recruitment, timely promotions to fill thousands of vacant posts, and resolution of long-pending pay anomalies under the Seventh Pay Commission.

Despite two sets of recommendations by the Bakshi Committee since 2017, pay disparities among staff nurses, sister-in-charges, and nursing tutors remain unresolved.

During the strike, state-run hospitals managed with the help of nursing students; however, many major surgeries were postponed. According to officials, around 2,000 major and minor surgeries and procedures were postponed in Mumbai during this period.

Cracks appear on GMLR flyover, civic body assures safety



Shefali Parab-Pandit

MUMBAI

Just four years after its inauguration, the Ghatkopar-Mankhurd Link Road (GMLR) flyover has developed cracks on one of its pillars, prompting a complaint from a Mankhurd-based social activist. However, civic officials have reassured that a structural audit has confirmed the flyover's stability and safety, and vehicular movement will continue without disruption.

The GMLR flyover, which was opened to traffic in 2021 at a cost of Rs732 crore, is a vital arterial route connecting the Sion-Panvel Highway with the Eastern Express Highway. One of its connecting arms extends towards Deonar, enabling vehicles from Shivaji Nagar to access the flyover and head towards Vashi or Navi Mumbai.

Faiyaz Ahmed Shaikh,

founder of the Govandi Citizen's Welfare Forum, alerted the BMC about cracks on the Deonar arm of the GMLR flyover on Wednesday. The cracks include vertical cracks on plinth beams of support pillars and horizontal cracks on the carriageway base. Shaikh also shared a video of the damage on social media platform X.

According to a senior civic official, "During micro-tunnelling for an underground sewer near the flyover's approach ramp, water pumped from the excavation pit caused soil erosion beneath the foundation wall. This led to cracks in several panels and beams." Following a technical inspection by Veermata Jijabai Technological Institute (VJTI) experts, the Sewerage Project Department has begun repair work as per their recommendations and has been directed to complete it urgently.

Final touches on cable-stayed flyover; traffic woes to ease

FPJ News Service

MUMBAI

Mumbai's much-anticipated cable-stayed flyover on the Western Express Highway — part of the Santacruz-Chembur Link Road (SCLR) extension — is in its final stages. With structural work complete, the removal of the temporary support system beneath the 100-meter curved arm is currently in progress.

Finishing touches, including pier surface preparation, painting, and detailing, are being carried out at a brisk pace. These final steps are essential for ensuring the bridge's long-term strength, safety, and visual impact.



Once opened, the bridge is expected to significantly ease traffic flow between BKC, Vakola, and adjoining areas, offering smoother east-west connectivity across the city.

Reckless sunroof dancing: 5 unknown persons booked



Megha Kuchik
MUMBAI

A video of three young women performing dangerous stunts from the sunroof of a moving car in Malad West has gone viral. Acting on a complaint received via social media, the Goregaon traffic police filed a report with the Bangur Nagar police on Thursday.

According to the FIR, the incident took place on Wednesday night between Link Road, Mariyappan Temple, and the Mith Chowki Signal in Kandivali West and Malad West. A person travelling in a vehicle behind the car filmed the stunts on his phone. The video shows three young women dangerously dancing from the sunroof of a

speeding car. A young man seated next to the driver was also seen leaning out of the door and performing stunts, while others shouted and danced inside. All of them appeared to be under the influence of alcohol.

The police have booked five unidentified persons under section 281 (rash or negligent driving or riding on a public way) and section 125 (acts endangering life or personal safety) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, along with sections 123 (prohibition of riding on the running board, top, or bonnet of a motor vehicle), 177 (general penalties for violating the Act), and 184 (dangerous driving) of the Motor Vehicles Act, as well as relevant sections of the Maharashtra Police Act.

EV CHARGING | First-of-its-kind feature in a historic precinct of this scale; system can charge 40-50 two-wheelers, 10-20 cars

Redvpt project in SoBo is future ready with EV fix

FPJ News Service
MUMBAI

Bhendi Bazaar, one of south Mumbai's oldest and most densely packed neighbourhoods, is emerging as a model for electric mobility and eco-conscious redevelopment. Under the Saifee Burhani Upliftment Trust's (SBUT) ambitious redevelopment project, the area is being reshaped with future-ready infrastructure, including dedicated EV charging facilities, a first-of-its-kind feature in a historic precinct of this scale.

The newly completed Al Ezz tower features parking spaces with charging stations



Representative Pic

for 40-50 two-wheelers and 10-20 four-wheelers, setting the stage for a green transition in an area once known for its narrow lanes and traffic chaos.

"This is not just a facelift; it's a reimagining of what a historic urban space can be," said an SBUT spokesperson. "EV

integration was a core part of the planning process, not an afterthought," he said.

Sources said the redevelopment goes well beyond EVs. Rooftop solar panels installed across the precinct are also expected to generate over 600 kW of renewable energy, significantly reducing reliance

on fossil fuels. Rainwater harvesting systems, sewage treatment plants, and organic waste converters have been embedded into the infrastructure to promote circular water use and responsible waste management.

A major feature of the project is the redesign of the internal street network. What were once cramped alleyways have now been transformed into 18mt-wide roads, built to accommodate both vehicular and pedestrian traffic. These new thoroughfares are designed to support EVs and shared mobility services while providing safer and more accessible public spaces.

With eye on NMAI, Navi Mumbai Police Commissionerate rejigged

Raina Assainar
MUMBAI

With the upcoming Navi Mumbai International Airport (NMAI), the state government has approved a major restructuring of the Navi Mumbai Police Commissionerate. A new Belapur Division (Zone-2) will be carved out from the existing setup, bringing the total to three Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) divisions – Vashi, Belapur, and Panvel.

The decision, formalised in a government resolution

NAVI MUMBAI POLICE COMMISSIONERATE

ESTABLISHED: 19 November, 1994

INITIAL SETUP: 8 police stations carved out from Thane Commissionerate (Zone-5)

EXPANSION: Panvel taluka police station added from Raigad in 2006

CURRENT STRUCTURE: 2 Zones; 4 Assistant Commissioner Offices (Panvel, Port, Turbhe, Vashi)

issued by the home department on July 23, comes in response to rising challenges, including increasing population, urban expansion, and mounting pressure on traffic regulation, particularly in light of the upcoming airport.

As per the restructuring plan, the Commissionerate will now be reorganised with Vashi as Zone-1, Belapur as the newly created Zone-2, and Panvel as Zone-3.

The new Belapur division will include three newly sanc-

Torn tale: Inspection ordered as docus returned in ripped state

FPJ News Service
MUMBAI

In an example of unprofessionalism displayed by the Department of Post, the Stock Exchange branch sub-office in Mumbai's Fort area returned the articles back to a sender in torn condition. The sender also alleged that the articles, which bore demand notices against cheque dishonour, were returned to him although the previous orders to the same person at the same address were successful.

On July 8, Advocate SK Balodi booked 10 articles with India Post's Stock Exchange branch sub-office to be sent to Vivek Kanoria, Rupali Vivek Kanoria, Anil Kumar Kanoria, Sarita Kanoria and M/s Kanoria Traders Pvt Ltd at their official and residential addresses at Lake Homes in Chandivali. However, he

claimed that all the articles were returned to him in ripped condition.

In a letter to the post master, Balodi alleged that the articles came with remarks that no such person lives at the address. However, he claimed that another article on June 13 to Vivek Kanoria was successfully delivered.

Balodi said the article bore demand notice against alleged dishonour of cheque as the recipient's acknowledgement was necessary for legal action. However, he alleged that due to the irresponsible behaviour of the department, he will not be able to proceed with his legal action as there is no conclusion on why the articles were returned. He urged the department to take action under the Indian Postal Act against the postman as well as the person who wrote the

remark on the letter.

"After the article's envelope is sealed, it becomes a public document. How was the department's person then allowed to make sub-remarks without any name, signature and date?" Balodi asked.

The FPJ contacted Stock Exchange branch sub-office's postmaster Lata Iyer, who said that on receipt of the complaint, the department is investigating the matter with the Sakinaka sub-office.

"If the articles are sent back to the sender in bad condition, they should not be accepted. However, we have forwarded the complaint to the sub-office concerned. The postal inspector will inspect the site and if there are errors found, the postman and others involved would be questioned and appropriate action will be taken," she assured.

Skippping Ferries, Taking A Bridge

In the Madh-Versova bridge plan, the state government has written to the Deputy Director General of Forests (Central) seeking final clearances. When completed, the bridge will reduce travel time from 90 minutes to just five minutes.

Project cost
₹3,990 cr

Will reduce the distance between Madh and Versova from 22km to 1.5km

Bridge will span 2.06km across Versova Creek

Width 27.5mt with four lanes (two in each direction)

Amaranth Road near Versova Koliwada to Madh Jetty

There's no existing road connection; commuters currently rely on ferries

Ferry services suspended during monsoon

August 29, 2024
Contract awarded

Project completion expected in 42 months

Awaiting final clearance from Union Ministry of Environment and Forests

July 21 (2025) Revenue and Forest Department recommended environmental clearance

Text: Shefali Parab-Pandit

Bullet's Maha section by 2029

Kamal Mishra
MUMBAI

The completion of the ambitious Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail (MAHSR) project (Bullet train) has been pushed to December 2029. Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said the Gujarat segment of the corridor (Vapi to Sabarmati) is expected to be completed by December 2027. The remaining stretch, including the critical Maharashtra portion, is now slated for completion by the end of 2029.

Sources revealed that out of

Vaishnaw says Vapi, Sabarmati section by Dec 2027; 24 out of 28 tender packages awarded

28 tender packages, 24 have already been awarded. Construction progress includes 392km of pier work, 329km of girder casting, and 308km of girder launching completed as of now.

The total cost of the project stands at nearly Rs1.08 lakh crore. The bulk of the funding,

around Rs88,000 crore or 81%, comes from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), with the remaining Rs20,000 crore funded through equity contributions from the Ministry of Railways (50%), and the state governments of Maharashtra and Gujarat (25% each). So far, Rs78,839 crore has been spent on the project.

Delays in land acquisition, particularly in Maharashtra, had stalled progress until 2021. However, land acquisition is now complete, with the full 1,389.5 hectares secured.

Orange alert for Mumbai, Thane; red for Raigad

FPJ News Service
MUMBAI

The incessant rains in Mumbai and its metropolitan regions continued on the fourth consecutive day on Thursday. For Friday, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has placed Mumbai, Thane under orange alert and Raigad under a red alert (heavy rainfall).

As per the local weather forecast for Mumbai and suburbs for the next 24 hours, the skies will be generally cloudy with moderate rain and possibility of heavy to very heavy rain at isolated places.

The BMC has also issued an alert for high tides for the next three days. The highest tide will be on Saturday at 1.20pm at the height of 4.67mt. Citizens are urged to not visit the beach, venture into the sea during the high tide period and follow instructions given by the authorities.

Some of the areas that received highest rainfall on Thursday included Nariman Point (26mm), CSMT (21mm), Mankhurd (28mm), Mulund (21mm), Sewri (18mm), Chakala (17mm), Chembur (16mm), and Aarey R(14mm).



PRASHANT SHIRSATH'S LOVE LETTER TO MUMBAI

Prashant Shirasath never imagined art would become the core of his life. Growing up in Nashik, he always felt a pull towards colours and sketches but didn't know where it would take him. Today, Shirasath's latest collection is on proud display at the FPH Gallery, and it speaks volumes, quite literally, of his admiration for Mumbai. Though he hails from Nashik, it's Mumbai that has truly captured his heart and imagination. "There's no place like it," he says with a soft smile. "I look at the city with kinder eyes. Even the chaos looks heavenly to me." His paintings beautifully capture the soul of Mumbai, from its narrow lanes to its majestic skyline, each brushstroke carries affection.

Free Press House, Free Press Journal
Marg, 215, Nariman Point, Mumbai

When: On till July 31
Where: Gallery FPH...

HC refuses to recall demolition order of unauthorised dargah

Urvi Mahajani
MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court has refused to recall its earlier order directing demolition of an allegedly unauthorised Dargah structure in Thane. The court has dismissed a plea by the Gazi Salauddin Rehmattulla Hoole alias Pardesi Baba Trust. The Trust had sought to overturn the May 30 order, claiming that crucial facts had been overlooked.

A bench of Justices Ajay Gadkari and Kamal Khata, in an order dated July 9, observed that the Trustees had “usurped” private land and expanded the Dargah from 160 sq. ft. to over 17,000 sq. ft. without any civic permissions. The detailed order copy was made available on July 22.

“In our view, the Applicants have neither paid any consideration for acquisition of the land nor have taken any permission for constructing the structure. It is clearly a usurpation of rights,” the court remarked, rejecting the Trust’s reliance on a public notice by the Assistant Charity Commissioner to claim ownership.

The bench reiterated its earlier findings, noting that “mob fury” or mere “footfalls of people on a particular piece of land” do not establish the

The demolition was originally upheld by the High Court on April 30

legality of a structure. “This is a classic case of usurpation of land, and for such a method, the Court cannot grant its imprimatur,” it added.

The demolition was originally upheld by the High Court on April 30. However, the Supreme Court later granted the Trust liberty to approach the High Court afresh, pointing out that a civil court ruling dismissing the Trust’s suit had not been brought to its notice.

Responding to this, the Trust filed an interim application asserting that the Dargah existed on the site before 1982. But the High Court found that the Trust had failed to produce any documents proving ownership or municipal approval for construction.

The judges referred to the April 5 civil court judgment, which found that the Trust had encroached upon private land and failed to establish ownership by conveyance or adverse possession. Notably, the Trust had itself admitted in those proceedings that the Dargah referred to in the 1982 government gazette was on a different property.

EMERGENCY MEASURES | BMC chief orders police complaints against haphazardly parked vehicles that block fire brigade

Tight noose on vehicles blocking narrow streets

Shefali Parab-Pandit
MUMBAI

After several past incidents where fire-fighting operations were delayed due to vehicles parked in narrow lanes, Municipal Commissioner Bhushan Gagrani has directed officials to file police complaints against such offenders. The crackdown specifically targets those who park irresponsibly particularly on narrow, congested, or winding roads hampering timely access for fire services.

In fire emergencies, every minute within the golden hour is crucial for saving lives and reducing damage. However, in recent years, Mumbai’s narrow lanes, chronic traffic congestion, and indiscriminately parked vehicles have increasingly hindered the fire brigade’s response time, placing both lives and property at risk. To tackle these challenges, the Mumbai Fire Brigade (MFB) introduced mini fire stations and compact fire engines in 2021, enabling faster access and quicker intervention in densely populated and congested areas.

Meanwhile, a tragic fire at a medical store in Andheri West on June 30, 2016, claimed nine lives and highlighted the



In high-rise buildings, haphazard parking of vehicles severely hinders fire operations by obstructing access for fire tenders and personnel. Fire officials have to face the flak for the delay in rescue operations. — A fire official

urgent need for mini fire vehicles such as fire bikes capable of navigating congested areas, leading to the early adoption of compact fire vehicles. However, while these mini units serve as a crucial first response until larger fire engines arrive, major fires still require the timely arrival of

full-sized fire engines for effective rescue operations.

A fire official said, “In high-rise buildings, haphazard parking of vehicles severely hinders fire operations by obstructing access for fire tenders and personnel. Fire officials have to face the flak for the delay in rescue operations.”

KEY POINTS

Target areas
Crackdown focuses on narrow, congested, and winding roads

Broader obstructions
Besides parked vehicles, abandoned vehicles, scrap materials, and unauthorised hawkers also impede emergency access

Reason for delays
Fire officials often face blame for delays caused by these accessibility issues

During a review meeting on Wednesday, Gagrani directed fire officials to file police complaints against owners of vehicles obstructing fire engines during emergencies. He also ordered the immediate removal of abandoned vehicles and scrap materials hindering traffic or pedestrian movement. Gagrani called for a multi-departmental campaign to clear unauthorised hawkers from congested areas and railway stations.

Ketamine worth ₹90cr seized, four arrested

Raina Assainar
NAVI MUMBAI

In one of the biggest anti-drug operations in the Konkan region, the Raigad police seized illegal Ketamine worth Rs 88.92 crore from an industrial unit in Mahad MIDC and arrested four persons. The operation was carried out based on a tip-off.

The accused have been identified as Machhindra Tukaram Bhosale, 52, from Jite in Mahad, Sushant Santosh Patil, 30, from Mahopre in Mahad, Shubham Sadashiv Sutar, 30, from Kolhapur (currently residing in Nangalwadi, in Mahad), and Rohan Prabhakar Gavas from Malad West, Mumbai. Bhosale, who was an employee of Gavas who owned Rohan Chemical Pvt Ltd, was under the watch of Anti Terrorist Squad (ATS) unit of Raigad as his expenditure was noticed to be more than his income.

“Bhosale was on the radar of ATS Raigad and when we found the first evidence of him linking to the drug manufacturing, we raided the factory,”

assistant police inspector Jeevan Mane from Mahad MIDC police station said.

The raid was conducted jointly by Mahad MIDC, Mahad City, Poladpur and Local Crime Branch (LCB) units of Raigad police under the leadership of Raigad Superintendent of Police Aanchal Dalal. Raigad police had sought guidance from the Anti Narcotic Unit of Mumbai too.

According to police, Gavas has two narcotic cases against him while his father too has three cases against him. “The father-son duo have been in the drug manufacturing business since 1985. Bhosale used to provide the raw material for the same. This year in May, Bhosale too started manufacturing after getting the formula to make it from Gavas,” API Mane said. Bhosale was 10th fail but Patil and Sutar were BSc in Chemistry and hence Bhosale asked them to join him in manufacturing the drug.

The case was registered at Mahad MIDC Police Station on July 24 under multiple sections of the NDPS Act.

Taloja jail in a jam over poor conditions

Pranali Lotlikar
MUMBAI

The Maharashtra State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) has taken strong exception to the inhuman treatment and substandard conditions at Taloja Central Prison, raising concerns over dehumanising frisking procedures, overcrowding, food quality, hospital infrastructure, and CCTV protocol failures.

Acting on multiple complaints, the SHRC has now initiated formal proceedings and directed the Chief Secretary of Maharashtra, the Additional Director General (ADG) and Inspector General (IG) of Prisons, Pune, and the Superintendent of Taloja prison to file detailed replies within eight weeks.

A team led by SHRC member Sanjay Kumar, Registrar Vijay Kedar and several others had visited Taloja Central Jail on June 18 following serious allegations about abusive frisking methods and the overall condition of the prison.

The SHRC report states that



prison officials admitted to requiring inmates to strip naked — including removal of undergarments — and bend over and cough inside a temporary enclosure to expose any contraband items hidden internally. This process, described by the Commission as “dehumanising, archaic, and degrading,” has no legal sanction and was deemed a gross violation of human dignity. “In today’s era of technological advancement, such regressive methods are unacceptable,” the SHRC noted, recommending the urgent use of body scanners and other modern equipment to replace manual frisking. Taloja Central Prison, which became operational in 2008, was built to house 1,830 prisoners but is currently accommodating 2,155 inmates—an 18% excess.



Deeppuja on Ashadh Amavasya

Over 300 students created a mesmerising spectacle in Ghatkopar (East), simultaneously lighting more than 1000 lamps during a “Deeppuja” event. It was held at the Shivaji Shikshan Sanstha premises, marking the auspicious occasion of Ashadh Amavasya. – Vijay Gohil

The MUNify Project: Students Lead The Way In Youth Diplomacy

Simple Vishwakarma
MUMBAI

In a bid to make global issues and diplomacy accessible to all, students of Bombay International School (BIS) have spearheaded a unique initiative, MUNify — a Model United Nations (MUN) project that reaches beyond their own school to engage students from BMC schools, run by The Akanksha Foundation, and semi-private schools across Mumbai.

The program was held on Saturday (July 19) in the school premises. Led by BIS students Arjun Vora, Gayatri Mehta, and Hriday Rajani, MUNify is a simulation-based program that introduces young students to the workings of the United Nations. Through role-play, participants represent countries and debate real-world challenges from environmental crises to international conflicts.

“Our mission at MUNify is to empower young minds from different backgrounds by providing them with the knowledge and skills to participate in Model United Nations,” said the student organisers in a joint statement. “We aim to bridge the gap for students who lack access to these enriched experiences by organising and hosting MUN events. Through our various committees, we raise awareness about critical global issues such as environmental sustainability, social inequality, and diplomacy. We want to inspire a new generation of leaders through debate and collaboration.”

As Chief Guest at the culmi-



nating MUNify conference, BIS Principal Arjun Rao applauded the efforts of the students, highlighting the importance of democratising such platforms.

“You, as fellow students, have chosen to share these wonderful ideas with your peers, whether they go to BIS or a BMC school. You all will share the world together in your generation, and seeing that collaboration come to life is incredibly powerful,” he said.

Rao also underlined the role of youth in driving societal change. He said, “I believe change is only truly possible when young people decide to make it happen.” Educators from participating schools expressed surprise and delight at how transformative the initiative proved to be.

“This is a very innovative and unconventional approach,” said Hetal, a teacher from a BMC school. Mamata Sangani, a teacher leader from Sitaram Mills Compound Public School, who has been part of the MUNify journey since its inception last year, described her experience as a guide and motivator. “None of them had even heard of MUN before this. Watching them gain clar-

ity, confidence, and collaboration skills has been beautiful. Honestly, I wouldn’t be surprised if they now came up with their own Junior MUN.”

Student delegates like Yash Prajapati from Sitaram Mills Compound Mumbai Public School (SMCMPS) and Aliza Khan from Mahalaxmi Mumbai Public School (MLMPS), representing China and South Korea, respectively, reflected on their transformation through MUNify.

“I used to think China was just a corrupt country,” Yash admitted. “But through research, I’ve realised it has many positive sides and has done a lot of good as well.” Sharing a similar perspective, Aliza said, “I always associated South Korea with K-pop. But now I know it also contributes to vaccines and healthcare around the world.”

Arjun Vora reminded the audience that “The MUNify Project is not just a conference organiser; we’re building a community of architects of tomorrow. Diplomacy shouldn’t be a privilege; it should be a launchpad.” With each placard raised, MUNify is not just simulating global discussions; it’s shaping future voices that are ready to be heard.

Tribal students live in filth at Panvel govt school: SHRC

Pranali Lotlikar
MUMBAI

The Maharashtra State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) has come down heavily on a government’s residential school in Panvel, after finding that the tribal students housed there were living in inhuman and unsafe conditions.

The SHRC has initiated proceedings in the case and issued notices to the Chief Secretary of Maharashtra, the Tribal Development Department, and other concerned authorities, including the headmaster of the Shaskiya Madhyamik Ashram Shala, directing them to file a comprehensive report within eight months.

The suo motu action follows a surprise inspection conducted on June 18 by an SHRC team comprising member Sanjay Kumar, Registrar Vijay Kedar, and other officials. The team visited the Panvel-based Ashram Shala, which has been operational for over 21 years and is run by locals Hemant and Sharda Patil. The

The building lacks basic security arrangements, posing serious risks to the students

government reportedly pays a monthly rent of Rs 1,46,477 for the facility.

The SHRC’s six-page inspection report paints a sorry picture of the conditions at the school, which is sanctioned for 500 Adivasi students (400 residential and 100 non-residential) studying from Class 1 to Class 10. However, only 244 students were enrolled at the time of the visit—237 residential and 7 non-residential. Among them were 106 boys and 138 girls.

According to the report, the school is housed in a dilapidated, unhygienic, and unsafe structure, surrounded by pollution from a nearby brick kiln located just 100 metres away. The building lacks basic infrastructure and security arrangements, posing serious risks to the students, especially girls.

Centre asks CM to stop quarrying

Sameera Kapoor Munshi
MUMBAI

The Centre has asked Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis to ensure the illegal quarrying activities on the Kharghar Hills behind the Tata cancer hospital is stopped immediately. Dr. Pankaj Chaturvedi, Director of ACTREC highlighted how blast-



ing operations and deep drilling in the northwest hill near the hospital have led to the destruction of green cover, excavation of multiple pits, and intense noise and dust pollution.

“The blasting not only compromises air quality but also directly endangers patients undergoing sensitive treatments like bone marrow transplants and proton therapy,” he warned.

The illegal activities have already caused visible structural damage.

City’s beloved mall dog Laila remains missing after 2 mths

FPJ News Service
MUMBAI

For more than two months now, the BKC police have been unable to locate the widely-admired community dog Laila, which went missing from a suburban mall. The dog was allegedly subjected to forceful relocation from the mall post midnight after being fed biscuits.

Although living on the premises of a suburban mall in Mumbai, Indie-breed community dog Laila was widely popular on social media and was admired by several people. However, the dog was allegedly abducted and illegally relocated from its territory on May 21. The BKC police registered a first information report (FIR) in the matter on May 30.

According to the FIR reported by BKC-based animal activist Shiraj Ahmad, a restaurant worker had seen a few men serving biscuits to Laila post lam and when he enquired about it, they claimed that they were there to take the dog away. The men, who were identified as Chetan Salvi, Suraj Chauhan and Parvez among others, allegedly lodged the dog in their car and took it away.

However, Ahmad was informed about the issue four days later after which he filed a



complaint with BKC police. The animal activist also tried looking for the Indie dog with the employees of his organisation and even pasted posters in the area, but in vain. However, a person who came across his social media post, had informed him that he had seen Laila in Sanpada.

Even after more than two months now, the police and the activist have not been successful in locating Laila. A lot of animal lovers have also taken it to their social media to spread a word about the missing dog. Animal lovers have also been expressing sadness over Laila missing and are keeping a tab on its status.

Ahmad, who runs Humanity World Foundation, said, “I hope that Laila is found soon and is brought back to its home.”

Mumbai Drug Bust

Mumbai police seized **926 kg** of drugs worth **₹174.19 cr** in first half of 2025. **744** arrested in **634** drug-related cases

Seizure statistics

GANJA

Seized: **865 kg**

Value: **₹31.59cr**

402 Cases Registered	416 Persons Arrested
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CHARAS

Seized: **16.27 kg**

Value: **₹14.39cr**

10 Cases Registered	16 Persons Arrested
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HEROIN

Seized: **0.85 kg**

Value: **₹2.09cr**

28 Cases Registered	35 Persons Arrested
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ADDITIONAL STOPPAGE AT VALSAD STATION TO MUMBAI CENTRAL ⇄ GANDHINAGAR CAPITAL VANDE BHARAT EXPRESS



Train No. 20901 Mumbai Central – Gandhinagar Capital Vande Bharat Exp. w.e.f 28.07.2025	STATION NAME	Train No. 20902 Gandhinagar Capital – Mumbai Central Vande Bharat Exp. w.e.f 27.07.2025	
		Existing Timings	Revised Timings
Existing Timings		Existing Timings	Revised Timings
06.00 (D) –	MUMBAI CENTRAL	20.30 (A) –	No Change
06.23 (A) 06.25 (D)	BORIVALI	19.32 (A) 19.34 (D)	No Change
07.56 (A) 07.58 (D)	VAPI	18.13 (A) 18.15 (D)	No Change
–	VALSAD	–	17.51 (A) 17.53 (D)
08.55 (A) 08.58 (D)	SURAT	17.10 (A) 17.13 (D)	17.05 (A) 17.08 (D)
10.13 (A) 10.16 (D)	VADODARA	15.53 (A) 15.56 (D)	15.48 (A) 15.51 (D)
10.38 (A) 10.40 (D)	ANAND	15.30 (A) 15.32 (D)	15.25 (A) 15.27 (D)
11.25 (A) 11.30 (D)	AHMEDABAD	14.45 (A) 14.55 (D)	14.40 (A) 14.50 (D)
12.25 (A) –	GANDHINAGAR CAPITAL	– 14.05 (D)	– 14.00 (D)
For detailed information regarding composition, passengers may please visit www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in			
WESTERN RAILWAY www.indianrailways.gov.in Like us on: Facebook , Instagram , YouTube Follow us on: WhatsApp , Telegram			
PLEASE CARRY ORIGINAL ID PROOF FOR ALL RESERVED TICKETS			

POOR SERVICES | City requires over 8,000 shelters to meet commuter needs

PMPML faces ₹700cr losses

Ankit Shukla
PUNE

The Pune Mahanagar Parivahan Mahamandal Limited (PMPML) continues to be in the limelight for its annual loss, poor shelters, old buses and subpar facilities. The transport body is going through a massive financial loss, reportedly crossing Rs700 crore annually. Along with this, the commuters are questioning the quality of services offered by PMPML, pointing out fewer buses and a severe lack of bus shelters, especially during the monsoon season.

Currently, PMPML operates 1,758 buses on the road, including PMPML-owned and leased buses in Pune city, PCMC and the PMRDA area, which is too few for as per the population of the city. The transport body has only 1,650 bus shelters at a staggering 4,500 bus stops, leaving lakhs of daily commuters vulnerable to harsh weather conditions in summer and rainy seasons.

According to officials, the city requires over 8,000 shelters to meet commuter needs adequately. "I take the



PMPML bus daily from Pimple Gurav to Deccan. Since the monsoon started, I've had to wait in the rain every day because there's no shelter at our stop. They have increased the fare, but there is no improvement in facilities," Rupali Patil, a daily commuter, told The Free Press Journal (FPJ).

Akshay Ghadge, a college student from Katraj, highlighted, "The buses are fewer and often overcrowded. Sometimes I wait for 25-30

minutes just to get a bus. For students, time is precious. We have read many times that the buses will be equipped with CCTV cameras. However, it has not been done so far. Chain snatching cases and mobile theft have become common at bus stations."

Meanwhile, speaking to the FPJ, PMPML's Joint Managing Director Nitin Narvekar said, "Before June 2024, PMPML's daily earnings were Rs1.3 crore per day. After the fare hike in July, it has gone up to

Rs2.3 crore per day." However, this increased income is not enough to cover the growing operational and maintenance costs." An estimated 8,215 staff members, including drivers, conductors, and technical staff, work with PMPML. While the workforce is essential, insiders admit that a large part of the loss comes from high maintenance costs, fuel expenses, and underutilised buses due to low footfall. The loss could be reduced by increasing the buses, leading

“Currently, PMPML is in a loss of around ₹700 crore per year. This could only be neutralised by increasing the fleet and footfall.”

— Nitin Narvekar
Joint Managing Director,
PMPML

to more footfall.

When asked about the facilities for passengers, Narvekar said, "From the past, many facilities have been added, like a live tracking system, CCTV cameras in buses, an app for tickets and complaints, and dedicated buses for women, etc." "The construction cost of bus shelters at many places, which are far from the city, is high in comparison to earnings and the number of footfall, leading to a delay in its installation of new shelters. Currently, PMPML is in a loss of around Rs700 crore per year. This could only be neutralised by increasing the fleet and footfall," he added.

Rural Police arrest NCP MLA's brother for firing

Staff Reporter
PUNE

Pune Rural Police have arrested Nationalist Congress Party's (NCP) Bhor MLA Shankar Mandekar's younger brother, Kailas Mandekar, and two others on Thursday on the charge of firing in the air during a folk dance performance. The incident occurred late evening on Monday, July 21, at the Ambika Lok Kala Kendra, near Yavat in Daund taluka, where traditional lavani and tamasha performances are held.

According to a police official, Kailas, alias Balasaheb Mandekar, Ganpat Jagtap, Chandrakant Marne, and Raghunath Avad have been booked in the case. "We have arrested three persons — Kailas Mandekar, Ganpat Jagtap, and Raghunath Avad — under Section 125 (endangering human life or the personal safety of others) and relieving sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). We have also recovered the weapon and a vehicle from the accused," he said.

According to the police, while a dance performance was underway, Kailas allegedly fired a shot in the air around 10.30pm, while dancing, after which he and his friends left the venue. The official said that no one was harmed in the incident. The MLA informed that Kailas doesn't hold a valid arms licence.



Attempt to suppress the case?

NCP (SP) leader Rohit Pawar on Wednesday said that an attempt was made to suppress the case. Taking to X (formerly Twitter), he wrote, "In Daund, at an arts centre, the brother of a ruling MLA from Pune district opened fire and created a ruckus, with reports indicating that a young woman was injured in the incident. Instead of identifying who these individuals firing recklessly are, information suggests that the police, under pressure from the ruling powers, are attempting to suppress the case. Will action be taken against the culprits? Or will they be let off because they are from the ruling party? What kind of 'spectacle of power' is this?"

Brother does not have an arms licence

On Thursday, speaking to reporters, MLA Shankar Mandekar admitted that his brother was involved in the

I clearly told them (the police) to take proper action as per the law. If something wrong has happened, I will not interfere — then it will be okay even if it is my brother."

— Shankar Mandekar
MLA, Bhor

incident and said that if he was guilty, necessary action should be taken against him. He said, "Yesterday afternoon, I received a call from the police officers. I clearly told them to take proper action as per the law. If something wrong has happened, I will not interfere — then it will be okay even if it is my brother," he said. The MLA claimed that his brother does not have any arms licence and does not possess any firearm. "The firearm belongs to Ganpat Jagtap, and he possesses a valid licence," he added.

Pune Metro's rents out train to Patna

Ankit Shukla
PUNE

Maha Metro Rail Corporation has rented out a reserved Pune Metro train set to Patna Metro for three years. The train, comprising three coaches, has reportedly reached the Geetagad depot in Bihar, where it is being prepped for the inaugural run of Patna Metro, scheduled on Aug 15, coinciding with India's Independence Day.

The decision has been questioned by the Maharashtra Pradesh Youth Congress, which has termed the move as a "politically motivated diversion of resources" from Maharashtra to Bihar, allegedly for electoral gains ahead of the upcoming Bihar assembly elections.

What is the controversy?

According to official data, Pune Metro requires a total of 34 train sets to operate at full efficiency. However, only 33 have been delivered so far. Of these, one train set was kept in reserve for emergencies or technical maintenance.

That lone reserved train is now on lease to the Patna Metro project, which reportedly did not have its own trial-ready train set to begin operations. Trial runs in Patna are currently being carried out using the Pune train, and the same rake is expected to be featured during the public launch on Independence Day.

Pune's growing urban transit needs

Pune's metro ridership currently averages 1.8 lakh passengers daily, and the city is gearing up for the launch of new corridors such as Shivajinagar-Hinjawadi, Pimpri-Swargate and Vanaz-Ramwadi extension.

With rising demand, the need for increased frequency and standby units is critical. The now-leased train was intended to serve as a backup for service augmentation and breakdown scenarios, especially as several stations face peak-hour overcrowding and operational delays.

Prathamesh Abnave, general secretary of the Maharashtra Pradesh Youth Congress, criticising the decision, said, "Commuters in Pune are struggling with long wait times and overcrowded trains. Diverting the city's only reserved metro rake to another state without public or political consultation is unacceptable."

Abnave alleged that the move is politically timed to ensure Patna Metro's symbolic launch before the Bihar Assembly elections, aiming to gain mileage for the ruling parties.

"If the decision is not reversed and the train is not returned immediately, the Youth Congress will stage a protest at the Maha Metro office in Pune," he added.



Pigeon feeding continues

Despite pigeons causing lung disease, also known as Bird Fancier's Lung, feeding the birds continues in the city unabated. Picture taken at the Shukrawar Peth area. — Anand Chaini

Teacher, husband found dead

Ankit Shukla
PIMPRI

A married couple were found dead in their house in Pimpri-Chinchwad's Sangvi area. The incident came to light on Thursday morning. Police are investigating the matter to determine whether this is a case of murder or suicide.

The deceased have been identified as Shyam Vaghela (50) and his wife Rajashree Shyam Vaghela (45), a school teacher in Pimpri. As per the information, a repetitive dispute was occurring between the duo, with the husband suspecting his wife's character, leading to arguments with her the night before the incident.

Last night, the couple's daughter was informed about the dispute by her mother,

who promised to visit in the morning. However, when she arrived in the morning at the Sangvi residence, she knocked on the door, but no one responded.

With the help of neighbours, when she broke the door open, she found her father dead by hanging and her mother lying nearby, unresponsive.

According to the police, the duo's dead bodies have been sent for postmortem, and the matter is under investigation. Whether it is suicide or murder is part of the investigation.

Speaking to The Free Press Journal (FPJ), Deputy Commissioner of Police Sandeep Atole said, "The couple has two daughters who are married and living at Navi

Sangvi and Pimple Saudagar, respectively. After a heated argument between them, the mother called the two daughters and narrated the argument. When one of them came to meet them in the morning, she found the duo dead."

"The couple was from Gujarat but resided in Pune for the last 40 years. Shyam was working as an attendant in a real estate company, and his wife was a professional teacher. As the husband doubted his wife's character, repetitive fights were happening, which could have led to suicide, but it would be too early to comment before the investigation," Jitendra Koli, Senior Police Inspector of Sangvi Police Station, told the FPJ.

Mutton bone chokes farmer's windpipe

Rambhau Jagtap
SATARA

A farmer from a village in Khatav taluka, Satara, ended up hospitalised for two days after a mutton bone lodged in his food pipe. The 50-year-old host was enjoying a non-veg meal when a cat lunged at his plate. Startled, he swallowed a piece of meat with a hidden bone. He immediately felt discomfort but tried home remedies. Over the next two days, he suffered chest pain and difficulty swallowing.

Worried about a possible heart condition, his family even consulted a cardiologist. However, the pain persisted, pointing instead to an oeso-

phageal issue. Finally, they rushed him to Meenakshi Hospital in Satara. Doctors performed an endoscopy and successfully removed the bone lodged in the lower oesophagus. The pain subsided soon after.

In many parts of rural Maharashtra, Akhad is a customary gathering held just before the holy month of Shravan, when many people observe vegetarianism and religious fasting. It is often seen as a final non-vegetarian feast where families and friends come together to enjoy traditional dishes, especially mutton, before transitioning into the more austere rituals of Shravan.

Staff Reporter
PIMPRI

In a strong push towards improving academic excellence, Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation (PCMC) Commissioner and Administrator Shekhar Singh today called upon all civic school teachers to develop focused strategies to enhance students' performance in various school-level and competitive exams, beyond just board results and scholarship tests. He was speaking at a city-wide dialogue session with principals and teachers, organised by PCMC's Education Department at Ramkrishna



More Auditorium, Chinchwad. The session saw enthusiastic participation from school heads, teachers, education department officials, and representatives from partner organisations such as ZEP

Foundation. "While the achievements of our students in the past academic year are commendable and a matter of pride for all of us, we must now raise the bar. It is time to actively plan for stronger

— towards academic excellence —

PCMC head urges focus on competitive exams

Teacher-principal conclave:

■ Launch of a new computer literacy curriculum and textbooks

■ Presentation of QCI evaluation results and academic year 2025–26 planning

■ Introduction to the revised Saksham Project framework

■ Briefing on the MIS system developed under the CHDC initiative

■ Presentation on Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya entrance support efforts

outcomes in competitive exams and ensure our students are future-ready," said Singh. He added that PCMC schools have seen remarkable progress through the use of technology in education, and the next step would be to introduce students to artificial intelligence (AI) and digital literacy. Referring to initiatives like Spandan, QCI assessment, and Bharat Darshan, Singh highlighted how such programmes have contributed positively to student learning outcomes and holistic growth.

"We are committed not just to academic excellence but to nurturing well-rounded individuals.

Through school-based activities, our aim is to build character and life skills among students. All teachers and principals must ensure 100% implementation of educational initiatives in the current academic year," Singh emphasised. Additional Commissioner Pradip Jambhale Patil also addressed the gathering, urging all schools to work towards a 100% pass rate in the SSC board exams this year. He assured full support from the municipal corporation, including the timely provision of sports teachers, skill training materials, and the resolution of any resource gaps.

Briefs

CSN

Lokshahi Day on August 4

The next district-level Lokshahi Day will be organised on Monday, Aug 4, at the District Collector's Office at noon, informed Deputy District Collector (General Administration) Sangeeta Rathod. The residents should submit their application on this day between 11am and noon in the prescribed format. The application submitted at the taluka-level Lokshahi Day should be accompanied by receipts. The applications regarding the sub-judice cases, revenue appeals, service-related and establishment-related will not be accepted.

CSN

Police detain history-sheeter

History-sheeter Bharat Kaduba Hajare (26), a resident of Apatgaon, Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar, has been detained in the Harsul prison under the Maharashtra Prevention of Dangerous Activities (MPDA) Act. He was arrested at Zalta Phata and detained in Harsul prison on July 22. Serious crimes like dacoity, kidnapping, thefts and others have been registered against Hazare with various police stations in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar, Ahilyanagar and Pune. Earlier, preventive action was taken against him, but that didn't stop him. Hence, this severe action has been taken.

UPCOMING DEMOLITION | Civic body issues demolition notices to illegal structures; awaits police bandobast

CSMC continues marking

Manish Gajbhiye
CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR

The Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar Municipal Corporation (CSMC) resumed its road marking drive on Thursday as part of preparations for an upcoming demolition campaign to clear illegal encroachments for road widening.

Marking work, which began on Wednesday, continued today on key routes, including the 30-metre stretch from Seven Hills to Sut Girni Chowk and the 24-metre road from Sut Girni Chowk to Shahnoor Mia Dargah Chowk. The anti-encroachment department identified 63 unauthorised sheds, shops, and compound walls during the drive, officials said.

Santosh Wahule, head of CSMC's Anti-Encroachment Department, informed that the notices for demolition have been issued to the owners of the illegal structures.

The roads are being widened as per the CSMC's sanctioned development plan (DP). Two



town planning squads marked both sides of the roads, each 15 metres wide. Property cards and completion certificates were examined during the process.

On the Sut Girni to Dargah Chowk stretch, most constructions were found to be legal, although some owners who had originally built with proper permits later erected unauthorised sheds, shops, or compound walls on adjoining open spaces. In a related development,

Public Works Department's Engineer SK Chavan and his team conducted road measurements and markings near Ellora Caves and Grushneshwar Temple on Tuesday and Wednesday. Marking was done on 15-metre-wide roads, and many owners voluntarily removed encroachments following the survey.

The CSMC plans to proceed with the demolition drive once security arrangements are finalised, officials added.

Marking of the roads done so far

Harsul
30 metres

Seven Hills to Sut Girni
30 metres

Naregaon
60 metres

Sutgirni to Anand Gade Chowk
24 metres

Gajanan Maharaj Temple to Jaibhavani Chowk
30 metres

Champa Chowk Road
100 feet

Jatwada Road
45 metres

Mahaveer Chowk to Delhi Gate
35 metres

Dharashiv hotel owner suffers assault, abduction

FPJ News Network
DHARASHIV

On Wednesday evening, Nagesh Madke—the owner of the popular Hotel Bhagyashree in Dharashiv—was kidnapped, brutally assaulted and thrown off a bridge. He is currently undergoing treatment at a local hospital and is out of danger.

According to police, Madke was abducted around 7pm while standing in front of his hotel. A group of men in a four-wheeler approached him under the pretext of taking a selfie. When Madke walked up to them, he was forcibly pulled into the vehicle and driven away.

The abductors allegedly beat him inside the car and issued death threats, telling him they would not spare him. He was taken approximately 5km away and then thrown off a bridge in Vadgaon. Despite his injuries, Madke managed to contact his family by phone and was subsequently admitted to hospital.

CSMC removes dangerous dome after 45 days

Manish Gajbhiye
CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR

The Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar Municipal Corporation (CSMC) on Wednesday dismantled a hazardous iron dome at the entrance of Siddharth Garden—over 45 days after a collapse near the structure killed two women.

Despite repeated orders, the contractor responsible for building the dome on a build-operate-transfer (BOT) basis had failed to act. CSMC finally removed the 800kg structure at its own expense using a crane. Civic officials said the cost would be recovered from the contractor.

The incident occurred on June 11 when part of the entrance wall near the dome collapsed suddenly, killing two women. The civic body had lodged a case of culpable homicide against the contractor, who also constructed a shopping complex at the site under the BOT model.

Following the accident, CSMC ordered the removal of the dome, citing poor construction quality.

However, the contractor ignored the directive, prompting civic authorities to intervene directly. “The dome posed a serious risk to public safety. We removed it in the public interest,” an official said.

The delay in action has led to losses for the civic body, as Siddharth Garden and the zoo remained shut for nearly one and a half months. The closure is estimated to have caused a revenue loss of Rs20–30 lakh from entry ticket sales.

Under the BOT agreement, CSMC had leased the



On June 11, a part of the entrance wall near the dome collapsed suddenly, killing two women who took shelter under it due to the weather

entrance and surrounding land to the contractor for 99 years.

He was expected to construct a durable, high-quality structure and had built a two-storey parking facility for the corporation. However, several parts of the project, including the entrance, were allegedly built with substandard materials.

While CSMC has paid for the demolition, officials confirmed that the expenses would be recovered from the contractor through legal or administrative means.

Admin reviews temple's Shravan preparations

FPJ News Network
CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR

With lakhs of devotees expected to visit the Grishneshwar temple in Ellora during the Shravan month and the Kumbh Mela, the district administration has initiated a review of facilities to ensure smooth and safe darshan for pilgrims.

District Collector Dilip Swami chaired a review meeting at the temple premises on Wednesday, directing all concerned departments and the Grishneshwar Mandir Sansthan to prepare a compre-



hensive plan for crowd management, sanitation, health services, drinking water, transport, and security.

Swami instructed officials to set up a control cell at the temple to provide emergency medical assistance and gui-

dance to devotees. He stressed the need for special arrangements for women, children, senior citizens and persons with disabilities. The administration, he said, should work with volunteers to ensure orderly and safe access to the

sanctum.

Also present at the meeting were SP Vinaykumar Rathod, Sub-Divisional Officer Santosh Gorad, Deputy CEO Chandrabhar Dhokane, Tehsildar Swarup Kankal, District Health Officer Dr

Abhay Dhanorkar, Tourism Assistant Director Vijay Jadhav, and officials from the electricity, transport and other departments.

Swami directed the Food and Drug Administration to inspect all food stalls in and around the temple to ensure hygiene and safety. Stern action will be taken against vendors found selling substandard or unhygienic food, especially items like bhagar commonly consumed by fasting devotees, he said.

Temple trustees appealed to devotees to bring only belpatra and white flowers for offerings.

Centre's scheme to digitalise 614 Nashik cooperatives

Prashant Nikale
NASHIK

In a major push to modernise the cooperative sector, 614 Primary Agricultural Cooperative Societies (PACS) in Nashik district are being fully computerised under a Central government initiative. Once completed, the system will allow real-time access to their operational data at the Union Ministry of Cooperation in Delhi with a single click.

The digitisation initiative aims to strengthen the cooperative movement and streamline the functioning of District Central Cooperative Banks (DCCBs), which rely heavily on grassroots-level PACS for credit distribution and rural outreach. The Centre has launched the ambitious project across all villages in Maharashtra, targeting the full computerisation of 15,000 PACS in the state. In Nashik, the first phase includes 614 societies.

SWITCHOVER | Duo to join the saffron camp after the cases against them have been withdrawn

Bagul, Rajwade set to join BJP

Prashant Nikale
NASHIK

In a significant political development in Nashik, former Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) leaders Sunil Bagul and Mama Rajwade are set to join the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) after assault and theft charges against them were withdrawn. The duo had earlier been expelled from the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena for alleged anti-party activities.

Earlier, Bagul confirmed to a private news channel on July 24 that he and Rajwade would officially join the BJP at a ceremony in Nashik on Sunday, July 27, in the presence of senior party leaders.

Both Bagul, a former deputy leader, and Rajwade, who was briefly appointed general secretary of the Shiv Sena (UBT) after Vilas Shinde joined the Eknath Shinde camp, faced internal disciplinary action shortly after signalling their intention to defect. Their expulsion was swiftly



followed by speculation regarding their BJP entry, which was temporarily halted due to pending criminal cases.

With those cases now reportedly withdrawn, preparations are underway for a high-profile induction. According to Bagul, Nashik MLAs, including Minister Girish Mahajan and state BJP president Ravindra Chavan, will attend the event. Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis is not expected to participate due to the cancellation of his Nashik visit. Bagul claimed that thousands of Kamgar Aghadi func-

tionaries and workers from across the district would also join the BJP during the event, adding that he is returning to active politics with “new vigour and fresh momentum”.

The induction is being projected as a show of strength and is viewed as a setback for the Shiv Sena (UBT). Political observers say it aligns with the BJP's aggressive push to secure over 100 seats in the upcoming Nashik Municipal Corporation elections, as it continues to poach leaders from rival parties, particularly the Shiv Sena (UBT).

Rocket science lessons for tribal students

Prashant Nikale
NASHIK

Around 500 students of a tribal ashram school in Mohapada, Surgana taluka, got a rare opportunity to learn about rocket technology during a workshop organised to mark the memorial day of Karmaveer Ganpatdada More.

The event was jointly conducted by the MVIPR Alumni Association and Maratha Vidya Prasarak Samaj's KBT Engineering College, Nashik.

Engineering students Shriram Khandbahale, Ayush Ahirrao and Atharva Pardeshi introduced the fundamentals of rocket engineering and demonstrated how hobby rockets can be built using everyday household waste. The interactive session saw curious students engaging with the presenters, who responded to questions in simple, accessible language.

A live rocket launch on the school grounds marked the highlight of the session, sparking enthusiasm among the children and giving them a practical glimpse into the principles of aerodynamics and propulsion.

Commissioner cancels Khedkar's certificate



Prashant Nikale
NASHIK

The Nashik Divisional Commissionerate has cancelled the 'non-creamy layer' certificate of controversial IAS trainee Pooja Khedkar after it was found she secured the document despite her family possessing assets worth crores.

According to sources, the decision was taken after it was confirmed that Khedkar had misrepresented facts to obtain the certificate, which is meant for candidates from the Other Backwards Classes (OBC) whose parents' annual income does not exceed Rs8

lakh. A detailed report has been submitted to the state government.

The cancellation follows a confidential report by the local administration, which found that Khedkar, now dismissed from training, had fraudulently obtained the certificate from the office of the then Provincial Administrator in Pathardi, Ahmednagar district. Following the objection, the Divisional Commissionerate had issued a show-cause notice to Khedkar, offering her an opportunity to respond. Her father, Dilip Khedkar—a retired government officer and recent Lok Sabha candi-

date—submitted his side through a lawyer. The process was kept confidential as it was quasi-judicial in nature.

Dilip Khedkar had declared assets worth Rs40 crore in his election affidavit. During scrutiny, it was confirmed that the family owns multiple high-value assets and luxury vehicles. Officials concluded that the certificate was issued on the basis of misleading information.

Despite the apparent fraud, the Commissionerate has not filed a fresh criminal case, saying relevant cases are already underway and the matter is not under active investigation.

Kisan Morcha urges CM to extend buying

Prashant Nikale
NASHIK

Amid concerns over a likely crash in onion prices due to oversupply, the Maharashtra BJP Kisan Morcha has urged Chief Minister Eknath Shinde to request the Centre to extend the ongoing onion procurement drive till Aug 15. The procurement window, being carried out by the Centre through NAFED and NCCF, is currently scheduled to end on July 28.

Ravindra Amritkar, the Kisan Morcha's state general

secretary, warned that halting procurement at this stage would severely hurt farmers who are already grappling with excess stock, falling prices and rotting produce. In a letter to the chief minister, Amritkar pointed out that onion production in the state has risen by 20–30% this year, with Nashik district – India's onion hub – witnessing an unprecedented glut.

The onion chawls are full, but procurement agencies are not lifting adequate quantities, he highlighted, adding that while several organisations



have begun purchasing onions, the pace and volume remain far below expectations.

Amritkar explained that onion prices in Nashik are sig-

nificantly influenced by production and weather conditions in the southern states. As southern India has had favourable weather this year, a bumper harvest of red onions has begun flooding the market from those regions. This supply is expected to intensify with arrivals from Madhya Pradesh in the coming weeks.

Under normal circumstances, unseasonal rains in the south damage onion crops and create an opportunity for Nashik's onions to fetch better prices. But this year, the opposite has happened.

To make matters worse, the heatwave in March and April led to considerable spoilage of onions in farmers' storage sheds, further increasing their losses. Traders, too, have not built up stockpiles this year, he said. Highlighting the urgent need for intervention, Amritkar requested that the Centre's procurement scheme be extended till Aug 15 to facilitate the lifting of surplus stock from farmers' sheds and into government godowns. He urged the state to press the Union Ministry of Consumer Affairs to act swiftly.

Vijay Pathak
JALGAON

Despite rising incidents of abuse and molestation of minor girls in Jalgaon district, over 2,100 schools have failed to install CCTV cameras as mandated by the state government, raising serious questions about student safety. The education department, too, appears apathetic towards enforcing compliance. Of the 3,312 schools in the district, only 1,175 have installed CCTV cameras. The remaining 2,137 schools, including most government and

aided institutions, have yet to comply. Officials claim that budget constraints and administrative indifference are key reasons behind the inaction.

The situation has gained urgency following the death of a student who was assaulted by peers during the midday break in a city school. When police sought CCTV footage, they discovered that no cameras had been installed on the premises.

From January to May this year, 46 cases of sexual abuse against minor girls and 45 cases of molestation have been reported from across the dis-

trict. These figures underscore the pressing need for surveillance systems to ensure the safety of students, particularly girls. While English-medium schools—especially private ones—have largely complied with the order, the Zilla Parishad has fared poorly. Of its 1,818 schools, 1,714 have no CCTV coverage. Municipal and private aided schools have also cited funding problems for their failure to comply. Many unaided schools are reportedly struggling financially and are unable to invest in surveillance infrastructure.



542.47 pts



157.80 pts



1 paise



₹1400



₹3000

SENSEX 82,184.17 | NIFTY 25,062.10 | USD/INR 86.40 | GOLD 99,620.00 | SILVER 1,15,000.00

Mumbai, Friday, July 25, 2025

Briefs

I-T dept working to give shape to rules, procedures under new Bill

The Income Tax department is working to give shape to the rules, forms and procedures for the new Income Tax Bill, 2025, which aims to simplify the six-decade old direct tax law. Speaking at the 166th Income Tax Day event here, Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) Chief Ravi Agarwal also said the department is following the principle of 'enforcement with empathy', wherein it is enabling taxpayers to review and voluntarily update their finances.

Air traffic pax dips to multi-mth low in Jun

Domestic airlines carried 13.60 million passengers in June, up 3% on year, but the lowest in absolute terms since September last year, data released by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation showed Thursday. Airlines flew 85.17 million passengers between January and June this year, 7.3% more than in the corresponding period a year ago. InterGlobe Aviation Ltd.'s IndiGo airline retained the number one position in the domestic market with a market share of 64.5%, largely unchanged from a month ago.

IFL Ent to enter into organic waste mgmt biz

Ahmedabad-based IFL Enterprises on Thursday said its board has approved a proposal for entering into the business of organic waste management & recycling. The new venture is part of the company's strategic plan to diversify its portfolio and tap into emerging and high-demand sectors, the company said in a statement.

Aditya Infotech IPO to open on Jul 29

Aditya Infotech, which offers video security and surveillance products under 'CP Plus' brand, is aiming to raise Rs 1,300 crore through its Initial Public Offering (IPO) opening for subscription on July 29. The issue, with a price band of Rs 640 to Rs 675 per share, will conclude on July 31, the company announced.

Executive Centre files IPO papers with Sebi

Premium flexible workspace solutions provider Executive Centre India has filed preliminary papers with markets regulator Sebi to garner Rs 2,600 crore through an initial public offering (IPO). The IPO is entirely a fresh issue of equity shares with no offer-for-sale (OFS) component, according to the draft red herring prospectus (DRHP) filed on Wednesday.

Kaytex Fabrics IPO to open on Jul 29

Kaytex Fabrics, a digital textile printing company, on Wednesday said it has fixed the price band at Rs 171-180 per equity share for a nearly Rs 70 crore initial public offering (IPO) which will hit the capital market on July 29. The SME IPO will open on July 29 and conclude on July 31. The company's shares will be listed on the NSE's Emerge platform, Kaytex Fabrics said in a statement.

INDIA-UK PACT | It's a modern, forward-looking trade partnership: Industry 'Transformational milestone'

Business Desk
LONDON

Leading Indian business tycoons on Thursday hailed the India-UK free trade agreement as a "transformational milestone" to deepen economic engagements between the two countries.

Businesses across both countries are set to "gain tremendously" from the deal, Sunil Bharti Mittal, Founder and Chairman of Bharti Enterprises, said.

"Indian industry across all sectors welcomes the India-UK FTA with great optimism. This agreement establishes a modern, forward-looking partnership that will stimulate innovation, ease market access, and foster investment," said Mittal.

The business tycoon is also Co-Chair of the India-UK CEO Forum.



Businesses in India as well as the UK stand to gain tremendously, as it lays the groundwork for scaling up bilateral cooperation across key growth sectors," he said.

Once implemented following British parliamentary ratification, CETA is expected to reduce trade barriers, enhance investor confidence, and promote joint ventures and technology transfers, especially in labour intensive sectors like

textiles and apparel, leather and leather goods, gems and jewellery, marine products, among others.

The agreement will provide a strong framework for unlocking new opportunities in clean energy, digital technologies, life sciences, and advanced manufacturing.

India's rapidly growing market and manufacturing capabilities, combined with the UK's strengths in innovation,

finance, and high-end services, will further accelerate bilateral economic relations, the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) said.

Another key benefit of the FTA is a reciprocal Social Security Agreement, allowing Indian professionals in the UK to continue home country contributions for up to three years.

"CII has been a longstanding advocate for a comprehensive and forward-looking India-UK Free Trade Agreement. This FTA marks a defining moment in our bilateral relationship, reflecting a shared commitment to inclusive growth, economic resilience, and industrial transformation," said Chandrajit Banerjee, Director General of CII.

Kirit Bhansali, Chairman of the Gem & Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC), described the trade deal as a "landmark accord" that

unlocks exciting new opportunities for the country's gem and jewellery sector.

"Currently, exports to the UK stand at USD 941 million; with the duty concessions in place, this figure is poised to surge to USD 2.5 billion within the next three years, elevating overall bilateral trade in our sector to an estimated USD 7 billion," said Bhansali.

"This is a watershed moment in India-UK economic relations. The signing of the FTA under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, marks the beginning of a new era of strategic collaboration between the two nations. By lowering tariffs, easing market access, and deepening services and investment flows, this landmark deal unlocks immense potential for both economies," said Prashant Ruia, Group Chief Executive, Essar.

HISTORIC CETA TO CUT TARIFFS, UNLOCK ECONOMIC GROWTH

Business Desk
MUMBAI

Trade is the cornerstone of a thriving economy breaking down barriers that hinder growth and opening doors to new opportunities. The Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) will unlock trade and economic growth, and is widely backed by large and small businesses across various sectors, including aerospace, financial and professional services, food and drink, and the automotive sector.

Agriculture

India to get duty-free access in several agri goods in the UK, such as fruits, vegetables, cereals, turmeric, pepper, cardamom, and processed goods like ready-to-eat food, mango pulp, pickles, and pulses. Over 95% of agricultural and processed food tariff lines will attract zero duty. Duty-free access is expected to boost agri exports by over 20% in the next three years, contributing to India's goal of \$100 billion agri-exports by 2030.

Marine

Despite the UK's \$5.4 billion marine import market, India's share remains at just 2.25%, underscoring a significant untapped opportunity. Shrimp, tuna, fishmeal, and

WINNING THE TRADE WAR

feeds, currently taxed between 4.2% and 8.5%, will become completely duty-free. Indian firms to benefit in marine, agro and food processing sector include Avanti Feeds, LT Foods, KRBL (India Gate), Venky's India, Hatsun Agro, and Parag Milk Foods.

Textiles

Zero-duty market access for the textiles and clothing sector accounts for 1,143 tariff lines. India is facing a duty disadvantage vis-a-vis Bangladesh, Pakistan and Cambodia, which had duty-free access to the UK market. In textiles and clothing, while the UK's total imports (\$26.95 billion) are lower than India's global exports (\$36.71 billion), India still supplies worth only \$1.79 billion to the UK.

Sectors poised for exponential growth include ready-made garments, home textiles, carpets, and handicrafts, where the removal of duties creates immediate and substantial competitive advantages. India is expected to gain at least 5% additional market share in the UK within 1 to 2 years. Listed Indian companies likely to benefit include, Gokaldas Exports, K.P.R. Mill, Arvind Ltd, Rupa & Company, and Lux Industries.

DUTY CHANGES UNDER INDO-UK FTA		
Revised Tax Rates for Indian Exports to the UK		
Sector	Current duties	Revised duties under FTA
Machine Products	Up to 20%	Zero Duty
Aeronautics	Up to 25%	Zero Duty
Electrical Machinery	Up to 20%	Zero Duty
Gems & Jewellery	Up to 4%	Zero Duty
Leather/Footwear	Up to 10%	Zero Duty
Processed Food	Up to 20%	Reduced duties or Zero Duty
Textiles/Clothing	Up to 10%	Zero Duty
Transportation	Up to 10%	Zero Duty

Engineering

The UK is India's 6th largest engineering export market. India's global exports are \$77.79 billion, while the UK imports \$193.52 billion worth of such products, yet only \$ 4.28 billion comes from India, signalling strong potential for expansion. With tariff elimination, engineering exports to the UK could nearly double in the next five years, reaching over \$7.5 billion by 2029-30. Indian companies to benefit are Bharat Forge, Sundram Fasteners, Motherson Sumi, CG

Power, KEC International, Greaves Cotton, Elgi Equipment, etc.

Pharma

India exports stand at \$23.31 billion globally, and the UK imports were nearly \$30 billion, but Indian pharma accounts for under \$1 billion, indicating significant headroom for growth. Generics get the sweet medicine. Sun Pharma, Dr. Reddy's, Lupin, Cipla, Alkem Labs, and Zydus Lifesciences are expected to benefit.

Chemicals

The FTA is anticipated to trigger a dramatic 30-40% increase in India's chemical exports to the UK, propelling figures to an estimated \$650-750 million in 2025-26. In chemicals and allied products, India's exports stand at over \$40.52 bn globally, against the UK's imports of \$35.11 bn, but captures only \$843 million of that market, highlighting a potential to scale up, especially with improved market access under the FTA. Aarti Industries, Navin Fluorine, Gujarat Fluorochemicals, SRF Ltd., Deepak Nitrite to benefit from the deal.

Gems and Jewellery

India's total gems and jewellery exports to the UK are valued at \$941 million, with \$400 million coming from jewellery. The

FTA opens up a huge market as the UK imports approximately \$3 billion worth of jewellery annually. Tariff relaxations under the FTA are projected to double India's gems and Jewellery exports to the UK within the next 2-3 years. India's Titan Company (Tanishq), Vaibhav Global, Rajesh Exports, Kalyan Jewellers, etc., are expected to benefit from tariff elimination as the deal makes Indian jewellery cheaper compared with EU, China and other competitors.

Leather

From 16% to zero, tariffs eliminated on India's leather and footwear, empowering India's craftsmanship to walk tall worldwide. The FTA is projected to add 5% UK market share within 1-2 years. Exports are expected to exceed \$900 million. MSMEs in hubs like Agra, Kanpur, Kolhapur, Chennai to benefit from tariff-free exports; GI protection; simplified standards. Indian companies in leather, footwear, and miscellaneous sectors to benefit include Bata India, Mirza International, British footwear brand Red Tape, Relaxo Footwears, Aditya Birla Fashion, etc.

Information Technology

Firms expected to benefit include Infosys, TCS, HCL Tech, Wipro, LTIMindtree, Tech Mahindra, Persistent, and Coforge.

Mfg sector remains buoyant; biz confidence hits 2.5-year low

FPJ News Service
MUMBAI

Operating conditions across India's private sector continued to improve in July, with the latest HSBC 'flash' PMI data showing sharp expansions in total sales, export orders and output levels, S&P Global said on Thursday. India's flash composite PMI remained healthy in July at 60.7, according to the HSBC Flash India PMI, com-

pared by S&P Global. Although Indian firms continued to forecast output growth over the course of the coming 12 months, the overall level of positive sentiment fell to its lowest mark since March 2023.

Dampening sentiment were concerns around price pressures and heightened competition for new work. Subsequently, job creation eased in July. Employment



rose at a moderate pace that was the weakest in 15 months. "The strong performance was bolstered by growth in total sales, export orders, and

output levels. Indian manufacturers led the way, recording faster rates of expansion than services.

Meanwhile, inflationary pressures continue to heat up as both input costs and output charges rose in July," pointed out Pranjal Bhadani, chief India economist at HSBC.

At 60.7 in July, the HSBC Flash India Composite Output Index was little-changed from June's final print of 61.0, and

therefore signalled another substantial rate of growth. Moreover, the headline figure remained well above its long-run average of 54.8.

Goods producers registered a faster increase in output than service providers, as the pace of expansion picked up to the strongest since April 2024. There was a softer upturn in services activity during July, though growth remained sharp by historical standards.

Pivotal scrips lose amid profit-taking, FII selling

FPJ News Service
MUMBAI

Pivotal scrips declined on Thursday, reversing previous gains amid profit-taking and foreign fund outflows.

Despite a positive start, the 30-share BSE Sensex failed to carry forward the momentum and fell later in the trade. The benchmark tanked 542.47 points to settle at 82,184.17. During the day, it tumbled 679.42 points to 82,047.22. The 50-share NSE Nifty dropped 157.80 points to 25,062.10.

"Equities fell sharply, reversing previous gains despite

TOP LOSERS		
SEC	SENSEX	POINTS
9.00	Trent	1963.00
8.80	Tech Mahindra	1408.50
7.80	Reliance	1400.00
7.40	ICICI Tech	1300.00
7.40	Rajshree	1032.00
7.30	Infosys	952.00
7.20	Kotak Bank	254.00
7.10	WIPAC	318.00

positive global cues. Initial optimism around the India-UK free trade agreement gave way

Initial optimism around the India-UK free trade agreement gave way to caution as attention shifted firmly to earnings

to caution as attention shifted firmly to earnings. The IT and FMCG sectors dragged down large-cap stocks due to subdued Q1 performance. Though the Q1 earnings are broadly in line, it does not justify the premium valuation; India is trading at a 3-year high of 21x P/E," said Vinod Nair, head of

research, Geojit Investments.

"US striking trade deals with many countries is slowly removing concerns surrounding tariff wars. Even though global trade has been impacted this year and global growth will remain subdued at around 2.8% equity markets are slowly discounting recovery in trade and growth in 2026. This optimism explains the resilience and uptrend in global equity markets now. In the US, good corporate earnings are providing fundamental support to the market," said Dr VK Vijayakumar, chief investment strategist at Geojit Investments.

'Govt to notify new vegetable oil regulation order next wk'

PTI
NEW DELHI

The government will notify a new order next week to regulate vegetable oil products in India with modern, transparent and technologically advanced provisions, Food Secretary Sanjeev Chopra said on Thursday.

The 2025 Vegetable Oil Products, Production and Availability (VOPPA) Regulation Order will replace the existing 2011 order and emphasise enhanced monitoring of edible oil imports, pro-

duction, stocks and sales through digital tools.

"The associations have been consulted. It's in the final stages now, probably by next week it will be notified," Chopra told reporters on the sidelines of the fourth edition of Indian Vegetable Oil Producers' Association (IVPA) Global Roundtable. The new regulation makes it mandatory for the industry to report production, sales and pricing figures. "Right now we are groping in the dark because we are dependent on the association for the data," he said.

Contribution of growth-oriented equity-oriented schemes remained the maximum at 54.76 per cent, followed by debt-oriented schemes and liquid schemes, which contributed at 14.88 per cent and 12.50 per cent, respectively.

The contribution of equity-oriented schemes was the highest in Ladakh at 90.85 per cent, followed by Lakshadweep, for which the contribution of equity-oriented schemes stood at 84.07 per cent, the report said.

Number of employed people in India rose to 64.33 cr in FY24 from 47.5 cr in FY18



PTI
NEW DELHI

The number of employed people in the country rose to 64.33 crore in 2023-24 from 47.5 crore in 2017-18, Union Minister Shobha Karandlaje informed Parliament on Thursday citing RBI data.

According to a written reply by the Minister of State for Labour & Employment in Rajya Sabha, 'The KLEMS (K: Capital, L: Labour, E: Energy, M: Materials and S: Services)' database published by RBI provides employment estimates at all-India level.

Further, she told the House that as per the latest annual Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) reports, the estimated female Worker Population Ratio (WPR) for persons of age 15 years and above, during 2019-20, 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24 was 28.7%, 31.4%, 31.7%, 35.9% and 40.3%, respectively.

Briefs

National telecom policy draft aims ₹1L cr annual investment

The National Telecom Policy aims to attract Rs 1 lakh crore annual investments and create 10 lakh new jobs in the sector by 2030, according to the draft document released by the Department of Telecom. The draft policy aims to position India among the top 10 global hubs for innovation and research in emerging technologies, such as 5G and 6G, AI, IoT, and Quantum Communications. "The NTP-25 aims to accomplish the following strategic objectives in the Telecom Sector by 2030...universal and meaningful connectivity for all, double the contribution of the sector to India's GDP, ...achieve an annual investment of Rs 1,00,000 crore," the draft policy document issued on July 24 said.

Tesla shares sink

Tesla shares sank Thursday after CEO Elon Musk said the company could face a "few rough quarters" as it transitions to a future focused less on selling cars and more on offering people rides in self-driving cars. Late Wednesday, the electric vehicle maker reported another quarter of lack-luster financial results, with revenue dropping 12 per cent and profit falling 16 per cent.

NTPC gets nod to raise ₹18K cr via bonds

NTPC on Thursday said it has received shareholders' approval to raise up to Rs 18,000 crore through issue of non-convertible debentures on a private placement basis. The fund will be raised in up to 12 tranches, through a private placement during the period commencing from the date of passing of the special resolution till completion of one year thereof, according to a regulatory filing.

Lotte India debuts biscuit snack PEPERO

Lotte India, part of the South Korean conglomerate Lotte Group, expanded its product portfolio with the launch of its first biscuit snack, PEPERO, in India, as it aims to achieve Rs 2,000 crore in revenue this year. Available in 'original' and 'crunchy' flavours, PEPERO is Korea's No 1 biscuit snack brand and has been exported to over 56 countries, Lotte India managing director Milan Wahi said.

Fund buys 12.5L shares of Kajaria Ceramics

A fund on Thursday bought shares of Kajaria Ceramics for Rs 147 crore through an open market transaction. According to the bulk deal data on the BSE, Long Term India Fund purchased 12.5 lakh equity shares or 0.78 per cent stake in Kajaria Ceramics.

Earn taxpayer trust: FM

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday asked income tax officers to raise their benchmark in the timely execution of policies and earn taxpayer trust. Speaking at the 166th Income Tax Day event, Sitharaman strongly advocated for faster issuance of OGEs (Order Giving Effect) and said such delays are unpardonable from the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) which could draft the new income tax bill within just 3 months.

Strong growth in AUM, interest income lift Bajaj Finance PAT to ₹4,765 crore

Informist MUMBAI

Robust revenue arising out of strong growth in assets under management helped Bajaj Finance report a 20.1% year-on-year increase in its consolidated net profit for the quarter ended June. A sharp rise in net interest income also helped bolster the financier's bottom line.

Bajaj Finance reported a net profit of Rs 4,765 crore in the June quarter, beating the Street estimate of Rs 4,614 crore. Shares of the company closed 1% lower at INR 958.95 on the National Stock Exchange. The earnings were announced just before the



market closed.

The lender's assets under management rose 25% on year to INR 4.41 trillion as on Jun. 30, the non-banking finance company said. The company's assets under management increased by INR 247.50 billion during the quarter.

Bajaj Finance booked 13.49 million new loans in the June quarter against 10.97 million in the same quarter last year. The

deposit book of the non-banking finance company grew 15% on year to INR 721.09 billion as on Jun. 30. The lender's customer franchise stood at 106.51 million as on Jun. 30, up from 88.11 million a year ago. In the June quarter, the franchise increased by 4.69 million.

Deposits contributed 19% of consolidated borrowings as of Jun. 30. To optimise cost of funds, the company is reduc-

ing reliance on deposits for the next 12 months, it said in its investor presentation.

The net interest income of the financier increased by 22% in Apr-Jun to INR 102.27 billion.

Credit costs were elevated, especially in the two-wheeler and micro, small and medium enterprises. "The company has taken significant credit actions in both these businesses and AUM growth for both these businesses will be low for FY26 (2025-26)," Bajaj Finance said. Loan losses and provisions were up 26% to INR 21.20 billion in Apr-Jun against INR 16.85 billion a year ago.

"Consumer leverage continues to remain an area of

concern. The company has taken several actions across all products to reduce the contribution of customers with multiple loans," the company said. The gross non-performing asset ratio and the net non-performing asset ratio stood at 1.03% and 0.50%, respectively, as of Jun. 30 against 0.86% and 0.38% a year ago. These were amongst the lowest in the industry, the company said.

On the cost of funds, there was an improvement of 20 basis points from the previous quarter to 7.79% in Apr-Jun. The company expects the cost of funds to be within 7.60-7.65% for the rest of the current financial year.

MOFSL Q1 profit jumps 40% to record ₹1,430 cr

PTI NEW DELHI

Motilal Oswal Financial Services on Thursday reported its highest-ever quarterly net profit of Rs 1,430 crore for the June quarter, marking a 40 per cent year-on-year jump, buoyed by robust performance across asset management, private wealth and capital markets businesses.

Its consolidated net operating revenue rose 24 per cent to Rs 1,412 crore in the first quarter of the current fiscal,

the company said in a statement.

The operating profit after tax stood at Rs 522 crore, up 21 per cent, reflecting strong momentum in Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd's (MOFSL) twin-engine growth model, comprising core operations and treasury investments, it added.

The firm's asset and private wealth management vertical delivered a 43 per cent growth in profit to Rs 224 crore, while revenue from this division climbed 46 per cent to Rs 560 crore, the company said.

Nestle India Q1 profit slips 13.4% to ₹646 cr; sales rise to ₹5,073 cr

PTI NEW DELHI

FMCG major Nestle India Ltd on Thursday reported a 13.4 per cent decline in consolidated net profit to Rs 646.59 crore for the June 2025 quarter, mainly impacted by high commodity prices.

The company had posted a net profit of Rs 746.6 crore a year ago, according to a regulatory filing by Nestle India, which owns popular brands such as Maggi, NESCAFÉ and KitKat.

Its revenue from the sale of



products increased 5.86 per cent to Rs 5,073.96 crore in the April-June quarter. It was Rs 4,792.97 crore in the corresponding period of the last financial year.

"The quarter was impacted by elevated consumption prices across the commodity portfolio. In addition, we witnessed higher operations costs as a result of significant expan-

sion in manufacturing in the last seven to eight months," Nestle India Chairman and Managing Director Suresh Narayanan said.

Nestle India on Thursday announced the appointment of Manish Tiwary as the Chairman of the board of the company.

The incumbent Suresh Narayanan, will relinquish his office as Chairman and Managing Director of the company upon his retirement on July 31, 2025, according to a regulatory update from Nestle India.

NSDL eyes ₹4K cr via IPO



PTI NEW DELHI

National Securities Depository Ltd (NSDL) is set to launch its Initial Public Offering (IPO) on July 30, with the issue size pegged at around Rs 4,000 crore.

The depository's maiden public issue will conclude on August 1. The one-day bidding for anchor investors is scheduled to open on July 29, according to the Red Herring Prospectus (RHP).

The IPO only consists of Offer For Sale (OFS) component of 5.01 crore shares and those selling shares under this are -- the National Stock Exchange of India (NSE), State Bank of India (SBI), HDFC Bank, IDBI Bank, Union Bank of India and Administrator of Specified Undertaking of the Unit Trust of India (SUUTI).

Since the public issue is entirely an OFS, NSDL will not receive any proceeds from the IPO. Market sources have pegged the IPO size to around Rs 4,000 crore.

This upcoming listing will make NSDL the country's second publicly traded depository after Central Depository Services (CDSL), which was listed on the NSE in 2017.

The listing of NSDL is crucial in order to comply with Sebi's ownership norms. These regulations require that no entity can hold more than 15 per cent of the shareholding in a depository company.

REC Q1 profit rises 29% to ₹4,466 cr

PTI NEW DELHI

State-owned REC Ltd on Thursday posted a 29 per cent rise in its consolidated net profit to Rs 4,465.71 crore June quarter compared to the year-ago period, mainly on the back of higher revenues.

The company had reported a consolidated net profit of Rs 3,460.19 crore in the quarter ended on June 30, 2024, a BSE filing stated.

Total income rose to Rs 14,823.98 crore in the quarter from Rs 13,092.44 crore in the same period a year ago.

The board in its meeting also approved the declaration of the first interim dividend at the rate of Rs 4.60 per equity share of Rs 10 each for the financial year 2025-26.

Further, the record date for reckoning eligibility of share-



holders for the purpose of payment of said interim dividend is Friday, August 1, 2025.

On a standalone basis, the company said that disbursements rose to Rs 59,508 crore in the quarter from Rs 43,652 crore a year ago, up by 36 per cent, out of which disbursement to the renewable sector rose by 35 per cent.

Total income also rose to Rs 14,734 crore from Rs 13,037 crore. The Net interest income (NIM) rose to Rs 5,247 crore from Rs 4,474 crore.

The standalone net profit increased to Rs 4,451 crore from Rs 3,442 crore.

Adani to partner MetTube for copper tubes business

Adani group flagship company will divest 50% of its copper tubes business to MetTube, while simultaneously acquiring a 50% stake in MetTube's Indian unit, the company said on Thursday.

The two firms will collaborate to manufacture copper tubes used in air conditioning, renewable energy, and smart construction applications.

"Adani Enterprises Ltd (AEL) has entered into a share purchase and shareholders agreements with MetTube Mauritius Private Limited (MetTube)," the firm said in a statement. "Under the agreement, Adani Enterprises will

divest a 50% stake in its wholly owned subsidiary, Kutch Copper Tubes Lt, to MetTube. Additionally, AEL will invest 50% in MetTube Copper India Pvt Ltd, which is a wholly owned subsidiary of MetTube and operates a plant near Ahmedabad in Gujarat," the statement added. This is aimed at delivering next-generation solutions to the HVAC industry through their facilities, the Adani group firm said, adding that the alliance is aimed at reducing India's dependence on imported copper tubes and building a robust domestic ecosystem for copper-based applications.

-PTI

PhysicsWallah, 6 others get Sebi's nod to launch IPOs

As many as seven companies, including edtech unicorn PhysicsWallah and solar panel maker Saatvik Green Energy, have received Sebi's go ahead to launch IPO, an update with the regulator showed on Thursday. Others that received regulatory clearance are Vinir Engineering, real estate company Pranav Constructions, roof-top solar solutions provider Fujiyama Power Systems, cash logistics solutions provider SIS Cash Services and chemical manufacturing firm Anlon Healthcare.

-PTI

Sri Lotus Developers' IPO to open on Jul 30

PTI MUMBAI

Sri Lotus Developers, real estate company backed by Bollywood stars and renowned investor Ashish Kacholia, on Thursday fixed a price band of Rs 140 to Rs 150 per share for its Rs 792 crore IPO. The initial share-sale will open for public subscription on July 30 and conclude on August 1, the company announced.

The IPO is entirely a fresh issue of shares with no Offer For Sale (OFS) component.

Proceeds from the fresh will be used for investment in its subsidiaries, Richfeel Real Estate Pvt Ltd, Dhyan Projects Pvt Ltd and Tryksha Real

CORPORATE Q1 FY26 RESULTS

Canara Bank

Canara Bank on Thursday posted a 22 per cent growth in standalone net profit to Rs 4,752 crore during the first quarter of the current financial year, supported by a decline in bad loans. The Bengaluru-based bank had earned a net profit of Rs 3,905 crore in the same quarter of the previous fiscal year. The total income rose to Rs 38,063 crore during the June quarter from Rs 34,020 crore in the same quarter of FY25, Canara Bank said in a regulatory filing. Interest earned by the bank increased to Rs 31,003 crore compared to Rs 28,701 crore in the June quarter FY25.

Adani Energy

Adani Energy Solutions Ltd (AESL) on Thursday posted a consolidated net profit of Rs 538.94 crore for June quarter FY26 mainly due to higher revenues from transmission business. The company had incurred a loss of Rs 1,190.66 crore in the year-ago period, a BSE filing said. Total income rose to Rs 7,025.49 crore in the quarter from Rs 5,489.97 crore in the same period a year ago. Revenue from transmission business increased to Rs 2,188.19 crore from Rs 1,746.18 crore.

ACC

Cement maker ACC Ltd on Thursday reported a 4.35 per cent increase in its consolidated net profit to Rs 375.42 crore for the June 2025 quarter, helped by volume gains and operational efficiencies. The company had posted a profit of Rs 359.74 crore in the April-June quarter a year ago, according to a regulatory filing by ACC, now a part of Adani Cement. Its revenue from operations rose 18 per cent to Rs 6,035.11 crore. It was Rs 5,113.05 crore in the corresponding period a year ago.

IEX

Indian Energy Exchange on Thursday posted an over 25 per cent rise in its consolidated net profit to Rs 120.69 crore in the June quarter compared to a year ago, mainly on the back of higher revenues. The company had reported a consolidated net profit of Rs 96.44 crore in the quarter ended on June 30, 2024, according to a regulatory filing. Total income rose to Rs 184.17 crore in the quarter from Rs 154.47 crore in the same period a year ago. Its electricity volumes in Q1FY26 stood at 32.4 billion units (BUs), increased 14.9 per cent year-on-year (YoY).

Indian Bank

State-owned Indian Bank on Thursday posted a 24 per cent rise in net profit to Rs 2,973 crore in the first quarter of the current financial year. The Chennai-based lender had earned a net profit of Rs 2,403 crore in the same quarter of the previous fiscal year. The total income rose to Rs 18,721 crore during the June quarter of 2025-26 from Rs 16,945 crore in the same period of FY25, Indian Bank said in a regulatory filing.

Bikaji Foods

Bikaji Foods International Ltd has reported a 1.3 per cent increase in consolidated net profit to Rs 58.52 crore in the quarter ended in June 30, of this financial year. The company had posted a consolidated profit of Rs 57.77 crore in the April-June quarter a year ago, according to a regulatory filing from Bikaji Foods.

Aditya Birla Sun Life AMC

Aditya Birla Sun Life AMC, part of Aditya Birla Capital, on Thursday posted an 18 per cent increase in profit after tax to Rs 277.1 crore for the three months ended June 2025. In comparison, the asset management firm had posted a PAT of Rs 236 crore in the same quarter of the preceding fiscal.

CG Power and Industrial Solutions

CG Power and Industrial Solutions on Thursday posted nearly 11 per cent increase in its consolidated net profit to Rs 267 crore in the June quarter compared to a year ago, mainly on the back of higher revenues. Aggregate sales for the quarter were up at Rs 2,878 crore at a growth of 29 per cent compared to Rs 2,228 crore in the same period a year ago, stated a company statement.

eClerx Services

eClerx Services Ltd on Thursday announced its working results for the fiscal Q1 2026. Operating revenue for the quarter stood at Rs 934.6 crore vs. Rs 781.9 crore posted in the corresponding period last year, recording a 19.5% y-o-y increase. Total revenue including other income for the period was Rs 945.1 crore, y-o-y increase by 17.7%. EBIT for the period is Rs 197.7 crore, up by 27.1% y-o-y. PAT for the quarter ended June, 2025 was Rs 141.7 crore compared with Rs 111.6 crore in the previous year, increase of 26.9% y-o-y.



Estate Pvt Ltd for part-funding the development and construction cost of its ongoing projects, Amalfi, The Arcadian and Varun, respectively; besides, a portion will be used for general corporate purposes.

The Anand Kamalnayan Pandit-promoted company is a real estate developer engaged in construction of residential and commercial premises in Mumbai, Maharashtra, with a focus on redevelopment pro-

jects in the ultra luxury segment and luxury segment in the western suburbs.

As of June 30, 2025, the company completed projects, 5 ongoing projects and 11 upcoming projects. Sri Lotus Developers and Realty's revenue from operations rose by 19% to Rs 549.68 crore in Fiscal 2025 from Rs 461.57 crore in the preceding fiscal, and profit after tax surged by 90% to Rs 228 crore during the period.

-PTI

AB Cotspin India plans ₹1,500 crore investment to expand mfg capacity

PTI MUMBAI

Integrated textile firm AB Cotspin India has announced plans to invest up to Rs 1,500 crore to significantly expand its manufacturing capacity.

The investment will be funded through a combination of bank financing, internal accruals, and government incentives, ensuring a robust and balanced capital structure, the company said in a stock exchange filing.

The expansion project will involve the addition of approximately 2,00,000 spindles to the company's existing capacity of



50,832 spindles, effectively doubling its production scale, the Bathinda-headquartered firm said.

The new capacity will be established across India, with key locations in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, and is expected to become fully operational within the next three years.

"This strategic project covers a wide spectrum: acquiring land on lease; setting up state-of-the-art manufacturing plants for spinning, ginning, yarn manufacturing, and processing; developing modern warehousing and logistics infrastructure; and building facilities for the sustainable utilisation of by-products," it said.

A key pillar of the project is reinforcing the company's commitment to green manufacturing through renewable energy adoption-including its existing solar energy investments-and aggressive resource optimisation, AB Cotspin said.

Godrej Ent Group's aerospace biz inks pact with Pratt & Whitney

Godrej Enterprises Group's aerospace business has inked a pact with aircraft engines maker Pratt & Whitney for aerospace parts manufacturing. The contract will significantly expand the company's offerings in aircraft engine applications, both in terms of technology and production volumes, it said. The mandate reinforces Godrej's commitment to advancing India's aerospace manufacturing capabilities and aligns with its vision to become a key supplier to global aircraft engine OEMs, Godrej Enterprises Group said.

Pratt & Whitney is a part of the RTX business, and a world leader in the design, manufacture and service of aircraft engines and auxiliary power units. "By leveraging our advanced infrastructure, deep expertise, we are proud to play a role in shaping the future of aviation manufacturing in India. We look forward to strengthening this relationship and expanding our footprint in the global aerospace supply chain," said Maneck Behramkamdin, Business Head, Aerospace business of Godrej Enterprises Group. -PTI

VA Tech WABAG bags ₹2,332 cr deal for mega desalination plant in Saudi

Water treatment company VA Tech WABAG Ltd received a Letter of Award for the construction of a seawater desalination plant valued at USD 272 million (approximately Rs 2,332 crore) in Saudi Arabia, a company official said on Thursday.

The city-based company has secured the contract for the 300 MLD (million litres per day) mega seawater desalination plant, which will be set up by the Saudi Water Authority in Yanbu, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

In a press release on Thursday, Rohan Mittal, Head

of Strategy and Business Growth for the Gulf Cooperation Council at WABAG, said, "We are immensely proud to have emerged successful in this prestigious project. This underscores the strength of our technical competence, competitiveness, and our deep-rooted capabilities in executing large and complex desalination projects." "This prestigious project aligns with and contributes to the ambitious goals of Saudi Vision 2030 and reinforces WABAG's global leadership in the desalination sector," he added.

-PTI

DII / FPI trading activity	BUY VALUE	SELL VALUE	NET VALUE
	13,507.17	10,890.03	2,617.14
FII / FPI	13,725.46	15,859.15	-2,133.69

All figures in ₹ crores

Management in place. Find a good business that makes sense, and make sure there are good people running it.

Warren Buffett



Range-bound movement continues



Motilal Oswal Team

MUMBAI

Nifty index opened positive and failed to cross an immediate hurdle of 25250 zones and aggressive profit booking led to the index nosediving by almost 230 points in the first half of the session. It was followed by minor attempts of recovery with buyers emerging at psychological 25k marks but the bounce was again sold into. It surrendered all of the gains of the last couple of days and closed with losses of around 160 points. It formed a bearish engulfing candle on daily scale with resistances migrating lower. However the broader trend remains intact to positive despite short term jitters. Now it has to hold above 25000 zones, for a bounce towards 25250 than 25350 zones else a hold below the same could open the downside move towards 24900 then 24800 zones.

On option front, Maximum Call OI is at 25200 then 25500 strike while Maximum Put OI is at 25000 then 24500 strike. Call writing is seen at 25200 then 25100 strike while Put writing is seen at 25000 then 24800 strike. Option data suggests a broader trading range in between 24600 to 25600 zones while an immediate range between 24800 to 25300 levels.

S&P BSE Sensex index opened on a flat to positive note and witnessed selling pressure from the initial tick itself. It has broken an important support of 82500 which is also close to its 20 DEMA levels. Every minor intraday rebound faced renewed selling pressure. It formed a bearish engulfing pattern on daily frame indicating weakness in the near term. It ended the session with losses of over 540 points. Now till it holds below 82500 zones, weakness can be seen towards 81900 then 81700 zones while hurdles can be seen at 82500 then 82700 zones.

Bank Nifty index opened on a positive note but failed to hold 57300 zones and gradually drifted lower towards 56850 levels in the first half of the session. However some recovery was seen from lower levels towards 57100 zones but it remained consolidative in a narrow range of 150 points with overall negative bias. It formed a bearish candle on daily scale as selling pressure is seen at higher zones but multiple supports are intact at lower levels as Index is hovering near its 10 DEMA. Now it has to hold above 57000 zones for a bounce towards 57250 then 57500 levels while a hold below the same could see some weakness towards 56750 then 56500 zones. Nifty future closed negative with losses of 0.68% at 25082 levels.

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DATA SOURCE: CAPITALINE

Hot stocks

Company Name	7/23/2025	7 DSMA	21 DSMA	50DSMA	250 DSMA	BSE 1 Year High Price	Pulscore
Siemens	3142.70	3130.22	3196.40	3232.69	3192.41	4041.64	100.00
Glaxosmi. Pharma	3130.55	3146.40	3246.84	3216.38	2702.84	3515.95	100.00
SRF	3194.70	3182.57	3201.39	3083.12	2675.19	3319.00	100.00
TCS	3179.35	3197.30	3329.55	3408.70	3909.29	4585.90	100.00
M & M	3267.65	3212.31	3181.27	3112.79	2933.39	3302.90	100.00
AIA Engineering	3353.80	3376.80	3355.92	3379.97	3644.15	4940.00	100.00
Escorts Kubota	3477.65	3412.78	3360.90	3350.79	3479.01	4422.00	100.00
Titan Company	3471.70	3434.39	3535.08	3535.70	3405.88	3866.15	100.00
Timken India	3525.40	3455.90	3397.29	3277.10	3211.41	4438.00	100.00
Larsen & Toubro	3485.25	3483.99	3563.37	3600.64	3531.68	3963.00	100.00
Torrent Pharma.	3554.05	3501.35	3393.89	3282.78	3275.06	3589.95	100.00
Gujarat Fluoroch	3583.60	3506.26	3497.25	3627.04	3847.48	4875.00	100.00
Cummins India	3613.15	3582.84	3470.52	3310.99	3297.88	3926.60	100.00
eClerx Services	3681.60	3661.62	3525.46	3502.48	3066.94	3875.15	100.00
Akzo Nobel	3764.95	3666.86	3544.46	3432.91	3536.16	4649.00	100.00
CEAT	3485.35	3717.62	3713.11	3720.63	3080.58	4048.95	100.00
Thermax	3869.85	3801.87	3555.99	3521.93	4064.62	5721.20	100.00
KEI Industries	3970.15	3937.72	3820.58	3698.50	3858.06	4776.85	100.00
Avenue Super.	4042.70	4045.19	4187.08	4150.91	4163.19	5484.00	100.00
P I Industries	4072.50	4122.77	4133.72	3999.28	3959.47	4801.40	100.00
Ingersoll-Rand	4072.95	4147.35	4031.91	3942.85	3964.65	4699.90	100.00
Supreme Inds.	4132.30	4197.32	4244.45	4226.69	4384.44	5724.50	100.00
Schaeffler India	4214.65	4224.01	4108.92	4092.07	3662.58	4372.70	100.00
Cams Services	4240.55	4234.12	4212.82	4126.31	4203.88	5367.45	100.00
L&T Technology	4313.25	4358.34	4356.21	4394.61	4901.65	5990.00	100.00
Hero Motocorp	4363.25	4404.86	4324.86	4319.20	4536.54	6245.00	100.00
Hind.Aeronautics	4714.20	4775.51	4867.90	4943.16	4377.87	5166.00	100.00
SKF India	4993.30	4930.19	4887.86	4739.39	4639.36	5747.65	100.00
Navin Fluo.Intl.	5048.55	4982.79	4930.96	4638.10	3881.64	5179.00	100.00
Alkem Lab	4975.90	4984.78	4891.45	4972.50	5336.89	6440.00	100.00
BASF India	5092.30	5051.74	5090.42	5072.93	5627.22	8748.10	100.00
LTIMindtree	5298.10	5217.55	5281.36	5239.89	5529.99	6764.80	100.00
Pfizer	5290.90	5340.36	5559.18	5500.96	5100.33	6452.85	100.00
Fine Organic	5334.90	5353.72	5178.80	4893.10	4723.96	5950.00	100.00
Trent	5363.65	5380.04	5646.53	5652.75	6152.82	8345.85	100.00
HDFA AMC	5597.80	5508.79	5238.93	5041.74	4360.74	5655.30	100.00

Upwardly & Downwardly Cos

Company Name	7/17/2025	7/24/2025	Days	Gain/Loss %	Per Day Average
Indian Energy Ex	205.55	132.45	5	-35.56	-14.62
CEAT	3855.25	3344.80	5	-13.24	-102.09
Atul	7285.90	6603.85	5	-9.36	-136.41
Birlasoft Ltd	432.25	396.15	5	-8.35	-7.22
Ujivian Small	49.09	45.68	5	-6.95	-0.68

Top gainers (%)

Company Name	7/17/2025	7/24/2025	% chg
HLE Glascoat	423.30	447.75	5.78
V-Mart Retail	763.85	807.40	5.70
Rainbow Child.	1536.45	1622.65	5.61
Ipcas Labs.	1462.05	1541.65	5.44
Canara Bank	107.80	113.50	5.29
Coromandel Inter	2330.65	2438.85	4.64
JBM Auto	645.35	674.00	4.44
Indian Bank	624.65	652.30	4.43
Samvardh. Mothe.	98.85	103.10	4.30
Borosil Renew.	626.00	648.90	3.66
Eternal Ltd	302.00	312.40	3.44
Capri Global	181.55	187.65	3.36
Rain Industries	155.55	160.75	3.34
One 97	1070.95	1106.15	3.29
Krishna Institu.	763.70	788.65	3.27
Guj Pipavav Port	161.10	165.85	2.95
Ajanta Pharma	2716.85	2794.85	2.87
Akzo Nobel	3764.95	3872.15	2.85
La Opala RG	271.20	278.70	2.77
Shyam Metalics	925.50	950.60	2.71
Fortis Health.	824.55	846.75	2.69
Supreme Inds.	4132.30	4239.60	2.60
Zydus Wellness	2083.40	2135.95	2.52
Dr Lal Pathlabs	3017.00	3091.55	2.47
Welspun Living	137.60	140.85	2.36
Jindal Steel	977.60	999.80	2.27
K E C Intl.	856.90	876.25	2.26
ICIICI Securities	876.85	895.70	2.15
R C F	153.95	157.20	2.11
Metropolis Healt	1990.80	2032.35	2.09
Jubilant Ingrev.	801.85	818.45	2.07
Finolex Inds.	207.65	211.75	1.97
Century Plyboard	728.85	743.10	1.96
Oracle Fin.Serv.	8772.00	8938.45	1.90
Vardhman Textile	484.35	493.45	1.88
Sundram Fasten.	1016.20	1034.35	1.79
Trident	31.00	31.52	1.68
Laurus Labs	822.30	835.85	1.65
Bandhan Bank	181.35	184.20	1.57
Bank of Baroda	243.10	246.80	1.52
Tata Motors	690.20	700.60	1.51
Indiamart Inter.	2581.10	2619.85	1.50
Aarti Industries	427.25	433.65	1.50
G R Infraproject	1259.95	1277.65	1.40
Bajaj Holdings	13969.10	14164.20	1.40
Dr Reddy's Labs	1247.55	1264.85	1.39
Mazagon Dock	2919.65	2960.00	1.38

Top losers (%)

Company Name	7/23/2025	7/24/2025	% chg
Indian Energy Ex	187.85	132.45	-29.49
Coforge	1849.10	1674.95	-9.42
Persistent Sys	5605.35	5171.25	-7.74
RRP Semiconductor	9387.90	8801.95	-6.24
Nestle India	2452.80	2320.15	-5.41
Chemplast Sanmar	470.20	450.00	-4.30
Intellect Design	1192.25	1141.75	-4.20
Latent View	448.15	429.75	-4.11
CEAT	3485.35	3344.80	-4.03
Trent	5363.65	5153.20	-3.92
Mahanagar Gas	1483.05	1428.30	-3.69
UTI AMC	1469.10	1415.20	-3.67
Natco Pharma	1034.75	997.70	-3.58
RHI Magnesita	523.90	507.10	-3.21
Esab India	5775.55	5591.75	-3.18
Shriram Finance	645.05	633.35	-3.16
Tech Mahindra	1547.10	1498.30	-3.15
ACC	1951.30	1890.60	-3.11
Poonawalla Fin	445.90	432.25	-3.06
Redington	311.00	301.55	-3.04
Prestige Estates	1752.10	1699.00	-3.03
Mastek	2552.95	2476.35	-3.00
Prince Pipes	354.15	343.70	-2.95
Cyient	1280.00	1242.25	-2.95
Mphasis	2734.60	2655.10	-2.91
Ujivian Small	47.03	45.68	-2.87
Motil.Oswal.Fin.	931.05	904.70	-2.83
Kajaria Ceramics	1213.55	1179.30	-2.82
M R P L	155.65	151.40	-2.73
Star Health Insu	442.25	430.55	-2.65
India Cements	369.70	359.95	-2.64
Tata Chemicals	971.70	946.65	-2.58
Sterilite Tech.	117.95	114.95	-2.54
Sammaan Capital	134.15	130.75	-2.53
ITI	314.00	306.60	-2.36
Welspun Corp	918.15	896.55	-2.35
Engineers India	240.60	234.95	-2.35
Archean Chemical	697.70	681.50	-2.32
IRB Infra.Devl.	48.58	47.46	-2.31
Gillette India	11187.10	10937.75	-2.23
Jindal Worldwide	41.36	40.45	-2.20
Whirlpool India	1443.15	1412.20	-2.14
City Union Bank	214.15	209.75	-2.05
PCBL Chemical	406.40	398.15	-2.03
Birlasoft Ltd	404.35	396.15	-2.03
Marico	720.20	705.85	-1.99
V I P Inds.	460.05	450.90	-1.99

52-week high

Company Name	7/24/2025	52-week High	52-week Low	Change Rs	Chg (%)
Force Motors	19181.55	20563.00	6128.55	14434.45	235.53
SML ISUZU	3994.70	4239.70	1030.90	3208.80	311.26
RRP Semiconductor	2889.60	2889.60	22.12	2867.48	12963.29
J K Cements	6616.95	6688.55	3893.80	2794.75	71.77
Navin Fluor.Intl.	5074.00	5179.00	3164.00	2015.00	63.69
GHV Infra	1375.80	1375.80	19.78	1356.02	6855.51
GE Vernova T&D	2520.50	2570.20	1252.85	1317.35	105.15
Midwest Gold	1289.50	1289.50	42.00	1247.50	2970.24
Jubilant Agri	2205.85	2212.85	1026.55	1186.30	115.56
Anand Rathi Wea.	2629.70	2699.95	1586.05	1113.90	70.23
Muthoot Finance	2661.45	2717.00	1686.00	1031.00	61.15
Manorama Indust.	1593.25	1632.00	634.25	997.75	157.31
Emergent Indust.	970.75	990.15	106.00	884.15	834.10
Thyrocare Tech.	1338.30	1356.95	658.00	698.95	106.22
One 97	1106.15	1128.00	448.35	679.65	151.59
CreditAcc. Gram.	1365.00	1400.40	750.05	650.35	86.71
DCM Shriram	1430.50	1501.70	904.55	597.15	66.02
EID Parry	1184.70	1195.15	639.30	555.85	86.95
Sinnar Bidi Udy.	1000.90	1000.90	547.85	453.05	82.70
Laurus Labs	835.85	841.30	390.30	451.00	115.55
Arunis Abode	473.40	473.40	25.70	447.70	1742.02
HDFA Bank	2014.00	2035.00	1588.50	446.50	28.11
Datamatics Glob.	889.15	945.70	515.50	430.20	83.45
Omnitex Industri	545.00	572.65	142.60	430.05	301.58
Faze Three	734.80	747.00	318.00	429.00	134.91
Fischer Medical	965.30	980.00	573.60	406.40	70.85
Krishna Institu.	788.65	798.00	404.12	393.88	97.47
Syrma SGS Tech.	706.25	737.15	355.05	382.10	107.62
Fortis Health.	846.75	849.40	480.45	368.95	76.79
Gallantt Ispat L	644.80	654.45	287.20	367.25	127.87
Exhicon Events	551.95	569.30	208.00	361.30	173.70
Stellant Secu.	375.25	375.25	28.44	346.81	1219.44

52-week low

Company Name	7/24/2025	52-week High	52-week Low	Change Rs	Chg (%)</
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corporate gallery

HURL and NSDC enter into an MoU for a Skill Devpt Program Titled Project “SAKSHAM”



In a significant move toward empowering rural youth and fostering inclusive economic growth, Hindustan Urvarak & Rasayan Limited (HURL) and the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) have officially signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to implement HURL's Flagship Project “SAKSHAM” — a comprehensive skill development program under HURL's Corporate Environmental Responsibility (CER) initiative. The MoU signing ceremony was held at NSDC Headquarters, New Delhi, in the presence of Dr. S.P. Mohanty, Managing Director – HURL, senior officials from NSDC, and representatives from HURL. Project “Saksham” will be executed in the districts of Gorakhpur (Uttar Pradesh), Begusarai (Bihar), and Dhanbad (Jharkhand). It has been meticulously designed following a demand-supply skill gap assessment study, carried out in consultation with public and private stakeholders, as well as members of the target communities.

ICSI-WIRC Celebrates Student Month July-2025

23rd July – Submission of Article by student on academic topic



As part of the celebrations for “Student Month – July 2025”, the Western India Regional

Council (WIRC) of the Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI) organized “Submission of Articles by the students on any academic topics” on 23rd July 2025 at the WIRC premises in Mumbai. The event was conducted under the leadership of CS Hrishikesh Wagh, Chairman, ICSI-WIRC. Around 10 students of the ICSI participated in the event and submitted the articles.

22nd July – Mock Interview



As part of the celebrations for “Student

Month – July 2025”, the Western India Regional Council (WIRC) of the Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI) organized “National Flag Adoption Day” on 22nd July 2025 at the WIRC premises in Mumbai. The event was conducted under the leadership of CS Hrishikesh Wagh, Chairman, ICSI-WIRC. Around 50 students of the ICSI participated in the event.

Central Railway organised Heritage exhibition as part of Station Mahotsav at CSMT



Central Railway organised a Heritage exhibition as part of Station Mahotsav at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus on July 16, 2025. The highlight of the exhibition was a miniature replica of the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus heritages building with colour lightings along with miniature models of Steam Locomotives, Wooden Coaches of the GIPR era. The exhibition also displayed various artefacts belonging to the GIPR era including Brass bells, Brass badges of Railway workers, Old Lamp Posts, Heritage wooden chairs, Coat & Umbrella stand, Heritage Pendulum Clocks, Iron Box used for Railway Cash earnings, Hand Signal Lamps, Ball & Token Machine (once used at stations) and displayed Charts, Content and Photographs with information about Railways' progress over the years. In addition to the Old, the exhibition also displayed a model of the Vande Bharat Trains in service presently and a model of the Bullet Train expected to be operational in the near future. Visitors to the exhibition were also taken on a virtual tour of CSMT with VR Oculus glasses offering a 360 degree visual. The exhibition was a trip down memory lane with hundreds of visitors including Students, Office going people, Professionals, Heritage enthusiasts, Rail Fans and passengers having come to board long distance trains.

CR organizes Station Mahotsav at Byculla Station



After the successful completion of Station Mahotsav events at 7 stations of Central Railway, Station Mahotsav was organized at Byculla Station on Mumbai Division on 23.07.2025 as part of the Station Mahotsav Celebrations of Railway Stations as advised by Railway Board. 7 Station Mahotsavs had recently been held at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus, Nagpur, Reay Road, Asangaon, Vasind, Kasara and Igatpuri stations of Central Railway. A total of 15 stations on all 5 Divisions of Central Railway are among those identified for celebrations of Station Mahotsavs. *Byculla Station*- is one of the oldest Railway stations in India, in operation since 1853. It was one of the halts of the first train that ran on the Indian subcontinent from Bori Bunder to Tannah (known as Thane now) on 16th April 1853. The current station building built in 1891 is a fine example of Victorian architecture.

Railway authorities and State Pollution Control Board hold joint meeting on Plastic Waste Management



In a major step towards environmental sustainability and waste management, the Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) held a collaborative meeting with officials from the Assam State Pollution Control Board (PCBA) and representatives of M/s Kusum Udyog, Rangia, a PCBA-approved recycling agency. The meeting, chaired by M. Kalimuthy CME/EnHM/NFR, focused on initiatives to make Guwahati Railway Station the first plastic-free railway station in India. During the meeting, key strategies were discussed to ensure efficient segregation, shredding, washing, and recycling of plastic waste collected from trains and station premises. M/s Kusum Udyog will be submitting a comprehensive proposal for handling, cleaning, and transporting plastic waste from the station's garbage storage area to an authorized recycling unit. The agenda also included reviewing current waste disposal practices, identifying high-impact areas and formulating a joint action plan to minimize single-use plastics and enhance sustainable practices. Further, the Scouts and Guides of NFR organized a public awareness activities such as placard displays, Nukkad Natak (street plays) and drama performances. Immediate steps have also been initiated to inspect and ensure proper functioning of the Effluent Treatment Plant (ETP) and Sewage Treatment Plant (STP).

PM Modi distributes 51,000 appointment letters to recruits at the 16th Rozgar Mela via video conferencing on July 12



Piyush Goyal, Minister of Commerce and Industry, Govt. of India distributed 183 appointment letters to candidates in the august presence of Mangal Prabhat Lodha, Minister of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, Govt of Maharashtra, Prateek Goswami, Additional General Manager, Central Railway and other dignitaries at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus Auditorium, Mumbai on 12.07.2025 as part of the 16th Rozgar Mela. The 16th Rozgar Mela was held at 47 locations across the country. A total of 297 appointment letters to newly recruited candidates were distributed at functions held at Mumbai Division and Pune Division of Central Railway which included appointment letters to 183 candidates at Mumbai and 114 candidates at Pune. Rozgar Mela is a step towards fulfilment of Prime Minister's commitment to accord highest priority to employment generation. The Rozgar Mela will play a significant role in providing meaningful opportunities to the youth for their empowerment and participation in nation building. More than 10 lakh recruitment letters have been issued so far through the Rozgar Melas across the country.

whispersinthecorridors

Dr Suresh Mehrotra



SP Pinak Mishra Leverages AI and technology for Safer, Smoother Darshan at Jagannath Temple, Puri

IPS Pinak Mishra is a 2011 batch officer of Odisha cadre and is currently posted as Superintendent of Police in Puri, known for the world-famous Jagannath Temple. Regarding his mission for the district it focuses on enhancing the pilgrimage experience by leveraging advanced technologies. The aim is to ensure smoother darshan of Lord Jagannath, enhance service delivery, and strengthen crowd and crime management. “In Puri, where lakhs of devotees come to have darshan of Lord Jagannath, the number of visitors from other states has grown exponentially over the years. Now, we're working to leverage technology to manage this better,” Mishra explained. Recognising the unique challenges it presents from its complex rituals to deep-rooted traditions -which often make it difficult to streamline the darshan process. “Technology becomes a great enabler,” he said. “We're using tools like crowd mapping and artificial intelligence to manage the flow of people more effectively” This tech driven approach not only improves the darshan experience and access to service, but also contributes to overall safety and reduced crime. Balancing faith, heritage, and public safety is no small task but Mishra is proving that with the right tools and vision, it can be done effectively.



Who is the real boss of bureaucracy?

A candid comment from a bureaucrat of a Southern state in an anonymous survey said “PS to CM, is the real boss of bureaucracy - very soon everyone understands this.”



Tenure of Govind Jaiswal as Joint Secretary, Higher Education extended

The central deputation tenure of Govind Jaiswal working as Joint Secretary, Department of Higher Education has been extended for a period of two years beyond October 11, 2025. He is a 2007 batch IAS officer of AGMUT cadre.

Tenure of Rahul Rastogi as Joint Secretary, CIC extended

The central deputation tenure of Rahul Rastogi working as Joint Secretary at Director level in the Central Information Commission (CIC) has been extended upto August 29, 2026. He is a 1998 batch ITS officer.

Vivekanand Choubey is CGM, SBI, Chennai Circle

Vivekanand Choubey has been appointed as Chief General Manager (CGM), State Bank of India (SBI), Chennai Circle.

Why is the BJP not able to finalise its new Chief?

The party with a difference - BJP is facing unusual political backlash over the much awaited delay in the announcement of the new party president, which is due for the last almost 8 months. In political circles, it is being heard that the ruling part is reportedly facing internal bickering which the leadership is not able to control. Sources said that J P Nadda is reportedly not ready to continue as the Chief but due to unforeseen reasons he is pulling the party.



About one dozen new Judges of MP HC likely soon?

High Court of MP is going to get 12 judges in a week according to informed sources. Out of 11 there are expected two judges from schedule caste category.



Who will decide the new BJP Chief?

In the corridors, the BJP's reported reluctance to announce a new Chief is now becoming a talking point. They ask- who will decide about the new party boss- RSS or the Govt? Who will answer this question?

Will VA Krishna Swaminathan be new WNC FOC?

Vice Chief of Naval Staff (VCNS) Vice Admiral Krishna Swaminathan is likely to be appointed as the next WNC FOC-in-C after the superannuation of Vice Admiral SJ Singh, Flag Officer Commanding in Chief (FOC-in-C), Western Naval Command (WNC) on July 31.

IAS officers assigned new responsibilities in MP

IAS officers have been assigned new responsibilities in MP. K C Gupta has been appointed as ACS, Cottage and Village Industries, while Dr Navneet Mohan Kothari will take over as PS to Governor. Besides, Ashok Barnwal, ACS, Forest will also hold charge of posts of ACS, Environment and Environment Commissioner and DG, EPCO; Chandramauli Shukla, MD, MP Industrial Development Corporation, will hold additional charge of Additional Secretary, Chief Minister; Deepak Arya, CEO, Rural Road Development Authority, gets additional responsibility of ED, EPCO. Besides, Amit Rathore, PS, Commercial Tax and PS, Cottage & Village Industries, will be relieved of additional responsibility of PS, Cottage & Village Industries and Mrs Uma Maheshwari is relieved of additional charge of ED, EPCO.

Nita Kejrewal, PESB Secretary retiring in July

Ms Nita Kejrewal is retiring after attaining the age of superannuation in July this year. She is a CSS officer.

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Major Human Trafficking Bid Foiled by RPF of NFR at New Jalpaiguri Station



In a major success in the fight against human trafficking, the Railway Protection Force (RPF) of Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) rescued 56 young women and arrested two suspected traffickers from the New

Jalpaiguri – Patna Capital Express on the night of 22nd July, 2025, at New Jalpaiguri railway station. The women, aged between 18 and 31 years, belonged to the districts of Jalpaiguri, Cooch Behar and Alipurduar in West Bengal. They were reportedly lured with false promises of employment in a company based in Bengaluru, but were instead being transported to Bihar, raising serious suspicions of trafficking. The alert RPF personnel, during routine checks, noticed a large group of young women travelling together without valid tickets. Instead, coach and berth numbers were stamped on their hands, a method often associated with illegal trafficking networks. Upon inquiry, the two escorts – a man and a woman – gave contradictory statements and failed to provide valid documents regarding the purpose of travel or job offers. Both suspects were immediately taken into custody and handed over to the Government Railway Police (GRP). A joint investigation by GRP and RPF is currently underway, with a strong focus on uncovering potential human trafficking networks operating in the region. All rescued women were provided with immediate support and later safely reunited with their families. Additionally from January to 22nd July, 2025, the RPF of NFR has apprehended four human traffickers and successfully rescued six minor boys and 56 women in multiple operations, reflecting its unwavering commitment to safeguarding vulnerable passengers and curbing trafficking activities on the railway network.

Odisha Governor Felicitates Jindal Foundation's Wushu Champions for Intl Achievements



Dr. Hari Babu Kambhampati, the Governor of Odisha, on Thursday felicitated two exceptional young athletes, Prem Munda and Rajkumar Munda, from the Jindal Foundation's Wushu Training Program in Barbil. The ceremony, held yesterday, July 23rd, at Raj Bhawan, Bhubaneswar, celebrated their recent gold medal victories at an international Wushu championship in Moscow, Russia.

Prem Munda secured gold in the men's 48 kg category, while Rajkumar Munda triumphed in the men's 52 kg category, showcasing the remarkable success of dedicated grassroots sports development. Both Prem and Rajkumar reside at the Jindal Sports Hostel in Barbil, where the Jindal Foundation provides comprehensive support. This includes expert sports coaching, nutritious meals, customised nutrition plans, clothing, education, healthcare, and other essential facilities crucial for athletes to thrive and compete on global platforms. Ms. Shallu Jindal, Chairperson of the Jindal Foundation, expressed her profound gratitude to the Governor for recognising the young athletes. “This is a moment of immense pride for all of us,” she stated. “These young boys from Barbil have not only demonstrated excellence in sport but have proven that talent, when nurtured with the right support, can shine on the world stage. Their achievements echo our belief that rural India holds unlimited potential, waiting to be empowered.” Mr. Prashanta Hota, President and Group Head, CSR & Education, Jindal Steel, highlighted the inspiration behind the program. “Inspired by the vision of our Hon'ble Chairman of Jindal Steel and Member of Parliament, Shri Naveen Jindal Ji, our Wushu training programme aims to transform lives and instil confidence, discipline, and global competitiveness in youth in the hinterland.

Briefs

LUCKNOW
DENSO to invest 250 cr in EV plant
Strengthening Indo-Japanese industrial ties, DENSO Corporation —a global leader in automotive innovation—has announced an investment of ₹250 crore to set up a Motor Generators manufacturing plant in Gautam Buddha Nagar Uttar Pradesh. These components are vital for hybrid and electric vehicles, underscoring DENSO's commitment to sustainable mobility and clean technology. The announcement followed a strategic meeting between DENSO leadership and the Uttar Pradesh delegation led by Alok Kumar, Principal Secretary (Infrastructure & Industrial Development), and senior members of Invest UP, at DENSO's global headquarters in Kariya, Aichi, Japan.
- **Biswajeet Banerjee**

BERHAMPUR
Newlywed tries to kill jobless hubby
A 19-year-old woman in Odisha's Ganjam district was arrested for attempting to murder her newlywed husband. Police reported she pushed her 35-year-old husband into a well and threw stones at him after discovering he was disabled and unemployed. The incident occurred Sunday night, but came to light after the husband's father filed a complaint. The couple had married on June 16. After a heated argument, she allegedly pushed him. He was rescued after shouting for help and is now hospitalized. Police have arrested the woman, with investigations ongoing.

KOLKATA
Mithun: Didi spreading false narrative
BJP leader Mithun Chakraborty on Thursday blasted West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, calling her claims of harassment against Bengali migrant workers in other states "baseless." He accused her of spreading fear for political gain before the 2026 Assembly elections. Chakraborty alleged the TMC leadership fears losing their "illegal vote bank" due to the EC intensive revision of electoral rolls. He stated that without "infiltrators" on voter lists, TMC would not win even 70 seats.
- **Aritra Singha**

BSF downs 6 Pak drones, seizes heroin
BSF shot down six Pakistani drones since Wednesday night in multiple operations along the international border. Troops recovered four pistols, several magazines, and over 1 kg of heroin attached to the downed drones. Five of neutralized China-made DJI Mavic 3 Classic drones with drugs and weapons were intercepted in Amritsar alone.
- **Rajesh Moudgil**

STERN STANCE | Remaining firm against poll panel's move, opposition parties accuse Centre of running away from discussion and forcing adjournments

DIN AT SIR-STRUCK HOUSE

Gaurav Vivek Bhatnagar
NEW DELHI

The INDIA bloc and other Opposition parties, on Thursday, held a protest in Parliament complex against the EC's SIR of electoral rolls in Bihar.
Holding banners decrying the SIR as an "Attack on Democracy," protesters, including Congress Parliamentary Party leader Sonia Gandhi and party general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, demanded a rollback of the revision and a formal discussion in both Houses of Parliament.
Priyanka criticised the Centre for avoiding discussions on Opposition-raised issues. She expressed surprise at disruptions originating from the treasury benches in the last session, suggesting they instigate reactions to create "hungama" and adjournments. She implied the government might be using these disruptions to avoid accountability and discussion on matters like the SIR. Trinamool Congress MP Derek O'Brien expressed similar views in a post and wrote: "As usual, the creaky Modi coalition will themselves continue to disrupt Parliament. They will run away from discussing issues like Special Intensive Revision (SIR) and the targeting of Bengal. The government do not want Parliament to run".
When the House convened, the Opposition MPs trooped into the Well raising



The Bharatiya Janata Party on Thursday took a dig at the opposition parties for displaying a banner with incorrect spelling of 'loktantra' in Hindi during a protest on Parliament premises, saying those who do not even know how to write the said word have come out to give lessons on democracy.

Congress MPs protest threats to Golden Temple
Congress MPs from Punjab, Haryana, and Chandigarh protested outside Parliament on Thursday, demanding urgent action against threats to Amritsar's Golden Temple. Leaders including Amarinder Singh Raja Warring and Charanjit Singh Channi highlighted the continuous threats, criticizing Punjab's AAP government for allegedly arresting the wrong person. Warring urged the Union government and Home Ministry to seriously investigate and apprehend the true culprits, emphasizing the matter's sensitivity. He also dismissed Punjab BJP President Sunil Jakhar's suggestion of an alliance with the Akali Dal, citing internal BJP opposition and expressing confidence that any such alliance wouldn't deter the Congress, given their past victories against them.
- **Rajesh Moudgil**

slogans and holding placards. This was objected to by Speaker Om Birla who termed their behaviour "unparliamentary" and said it

Readjustment of Representation of Scheduled Tribes in Assembly Constituencies of the State of Goa Bill, 2024 despite unabated protests from the Opposition. The House was subsequently adjourned for the day.
In the Rajya Sabha too the Chair, Deputy Chairman Hariwansh refused to accept the notices under Rule 267 for discussions. The House also bid farewell to six of its members. Thereafter as Question Hour began, the Opposition too began protesting leading to the House being adjourned till 2 p.m.. When the House reassembled, the Opposition MPs continued shouting, "take back SIR", leading to the proceedings being adjourned for the day.

30-day leave for aged parents
When asked if there was any provision for government employees to avail leave to take care of their elderly parents, Union Minister of State for Personnel Jitendra Singh said in Rajya Sabha, "The Central Civil Services (Leave) Rules, 1972 provides for 30 days of earned leave, 20 days of half pay leave, eight days of casual leave and two days of restricted holiday per annum, apart from other eligible leaves, which can be availed for any personal reasons, including that of taking care of elderly parents."

POLL PANEL WILL ENSURE NO ELIGIBLE VOTER IS LEFT OUT

Dheeraj Kumar
PATNA
Election Commission of India (ECI) on Thursday asserted that it was carrying out special intensive revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls in Bihar with an aim that no voter would be left out during the exercise even as 99 percent voters had already been covered under the SIR.
According to a press release issued by the EC, the booth-level lists of those voters who have not filled their forms, of deceased voters, and voters, who have permanently migrated have already been shared by BLOs/EROs/DEOs/CEOs with all political parties on July 20,

so that they can point out any errors.
As per the SIR Order, any voter or any political party can file a claim in case of any missing names or raise an objection in case of any wrong inclusion till September 1, 2025. As per the release, BLOs/BLAs have reported names of 21.6 lakh deceased electors while they have reported names of 31.5 lakh voters who have permanently migrated. They have also found seven lakh voters are registered at more than one place. According to local BLOs/BLAs, one lakh voters are untraceable.
Despite door-to-door visits by local BLOs/BLAs, forms of

Nitish has lost trust of Shah: Tejashwi

Dheeraj Kumar
PATNA
A day after Nitish Kumar attacked him with his child (bachcha) barb, RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav on Thursday alleged that Bihar chief minister no longer enjoyed the trust of union home minister Amit Shah as the latter had not declared him the NDA's CM candidate for the upcoming assembly election so far. Tejashwi, also the Leader of the Opposition in the assembly, made the remark while taking part in a debate on a cut motion moved by the opposition in the house.
Tejashwi asked what was the reason Nitish was losing the trust of Shah, who

repeatedly said that the assembly election would be fought under the JD (U) supremo's leadership but at the same time he would say that time would tell who was going to become the next CM. "If indeed Shah still has faith in the leadership of Nitish, he should put to rest all speculations and declare that the JD (U) leader will continue to be chief minister till 2030. Let the home minister make the announcement during his upcoming tour of Sitamarhi," Tejashwi remarked, while alleging that NDA will not return to power in Bihar as this government is 20-year-old and has become like a rickety car.

JD(U) ISSUES NOTICE TO MP OVER COMMENTS ON SIR
Dheeraj Kumar
PATNA
Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar's JD (U) on Thursday issued show-cause notice to the MP Girdhari Yadav for his remark on the ongoing special intensive revision of the electoral rolls by contending that it "inadvertently lent credibility to the baseless and politically motivated allegations made by the opposition".
Asking the JD (U) MP to reply within 15 days of the receipt of the notice, the

notice, signed by the party's national general secretary Afaq Ahmad Khan, the party viewed his conduct as a lapse in discipline and not in consonance with its stated position on the matter (SIR).
"...your public comments on such a sensitive matter, especially in an election year, not only cause embarrassment to the party but also inadvertently lend credibility to the baseless and politically motivated allegations made by the opposition," the notice reads.

China: Border talks with India 'candid'

PTI
BEIJING
China on Thursday said its diplomatic talks with India on the border situation was "candid". The two sides held talks under the framework of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination (WMCC) on border affairs in New Delhi on Wednesday.
The Chinese Foreign Ministry called the talks "candid" in a press release issued here. "The two sides focused on in-depth communication regarding the implementation of the outcomes of 23rd meeting of Special

Representatives (SRs) for China-India Boundary Question and agreed to jointly prepare for the 24th meeting," added the ministry.
Following the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination talks India's Ministry of External Affairs on Wednesday said the two sides expressed "satisfaction with the general prevalence of peace and tranquillity in the border areas, leading to gradual normalisation of bilateral relations".
The meeting also prepared ground for the next edition Special Representative talks scheduled to be held in India.

At UN, Delhi for Gaza truce

Agencies
NEW YORK / NEW DELHI
India on Wednesday called for a ceasefire in Gaza, saying that "intermittent pauses in hostilities" amid Israel's war on the Palestinian territory were inadequate to address the scale of challenges faced by its residents.
India's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ambassador Harish P, delivered an address at the UN Security Council Quarterly Open Debate on the Situation in the Middle East, where he also said that all the remaining Israeli hostages must be released immediately.
Highlighting the "persisting humanitarian crisis" in Gaza at a United Nations Security

Council debate, Parvathaneni Harish, India's permanent representative to the United Nations, said that residents of the country are grappling daily with "acute shortages of food and fuel, inadequate medical services and lack of access to education".
There is a need to deliver humanitarian assistance in a safe, sustained and timely manner, Harish said during the Security Council debate on the "Situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question".
"There is no substitute for peace," the diplomat said. "A ceasefire must be put in place. All hostages must be released. Dialogue and diplomacy remain the only viable paths to achieving these objectives.

There are no other fixes or solutions."
On Wednesday, Harish also told the Security Council that the health and education situation in Gaza was "particularly troubling", citing World Health Organisation estimates that around 95% of hospitals in the region had been damaged or destroyed. He said that over 6.5 lakh children have had no schooling for over 20 months as per reports by Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights.
Harish added that India's commitment towards the Palestinian cause is "unwavering" and expressed hope that upcoming UN conference on the conflict would lead to 'concrete steps' towards achieving a two-state solution.

Oppn bloc may opt out of Bihar polls

Dheeraj Kumar
PATNA
A day after RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav hinted at a possible boycott of the upcoming assembly election over the process being adopted for special intensive revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls in Bihar, Congress said that INDIA bloc was considering the 'unprecedented' option of boycotting the upcoming Bihar assembly election.
Congress asserted that it would not accept the electoral rolls being prepared through the Election Commission's ongoing Special Intensive

Revision (SIR) in the state
AICC in-charge for Bihar, Krishna Allavaru said, INDIA bloc's allies were discussing on this. "We challenge CEC Gyanesh Kumar to pick 1000 random people in every constituency in Bihar and scrutinise if the laid down processes are being followed or not. Even if 25 percent turns out to be genuine, then we will accept the procedure," he added
On Tejashwi's option of boycotting polls, Allavaru said, "The INDIA bloc has maintained from day one that the SIR is designed to steal the elections. So talks are underway on all options. All our routes are open."

CHITTHI AAYEE...

In 'E'-ra, SP banks on postcards to woo voters

Biswajeet Banerjee
LUCKNOW
In an age where WhatsApp forwards, Instagram reels, and Twitter (X) trends dominate political discourse, the Samajwadi Party (SP) is reaching for something refreshingly analog: the humble postcard.
As the battle for the 2027 Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections heats up and the 2026 panchayat polls draw near, the SP has launched a grassroots initiative that

turns back the clock. Through its women's wing — the SP Mahila Sabha — the party is distributing pre-printed postcards to women across the state, asking them to write directly to party president Akhilesh Yadav.
A Personal Touch: On one side of the postcard is a photo of Akhilesh Yadav, on the other a simple prompt: "A Message to National President Akhilesh Yadav Ji." Women are being encouraged to pen down their grievances, suggestions, and



expectations — whether about personal safety, education, inflation, or access to opportunities.
It is a campaign that delib-

erately avoids digital filters. Instead, it invites real ink, real voices — and perhaps, real emotions.
SP national spokesman Rajendra Chaudhry said the campaign launched by the women wing of the party asks the women to share their grief. "We are not just asking for votes. We are asking for stories — and offering a platform to those who are often unheard in political spaces."
Going Hyperlocal: The initiative is being executed

through a tightly knit organisational web. From the state and district levels to the Vidhan Sabha, block, and even panchayat units, women cadre are distributing postcards during PDA Panchayats (a nod to the SP's Pichhda, Dalit, Alpsankhyak alliance strategy) and Mahila Sabha meetings.
Why Go Analog? At first glance, the choice of postcards may appear quaint, even outdated. But for the SP, that is exactly the point. The SP leaders argue that in rural

Uttar Pradesh, not every woman owns a smartphone. But the post office is there. Therefore, postcard is a simple, private, and powerful mean on communication
Sense of Belonging: The campaign also serves another purpose: building emotional connect. By physically holding and writing on a postcard addressed to Akhilesh Yadav, women feel acknowledged — not as passive beneficiaries, but as stakeholders in the political process.



— MIKA'S MATRIX

Briefs

SC dismisses freebies plea

The SC refused to hear a plea asking for a detailed study on the harm caused by freebies and cash handouts by governments. A bench led by CJI BR Gavai and Justice K Vinod Chandran dismissed the petition, saying, "We are not inclined to entertain this." The plea sought to direct the Centre and states to allow schemes only after expert review and clearance from bodies like the RBI and NITI Aayog.

66 Naxals surrender

A total of 66 Naxals, including 27 women, surrendered in Chhattisgarh's Bastar region on Thursday, police said. Of them, 49 rebels had a combined reward of ₹2.27 crore. Of the 5 districts, the significant surrender came from Bijapur, where 25 Maoists, including a top Odisha leader with a ₹25 lakh reward, gave up arms. Others include Dantewada (15), Kanker (13), Narayanpur (8), and Sukma (5).

SC contempt notice issued

SC issued notice on a plea seeking contempt action against the Assam chief secretary and others for allegedly conducting a mass eviction and demolition drive in Goalpara's Hasila Beel in violation of the apex court guidelines.

Jharkhand DGP dispute

The SC agreed to urgently list a plea challenging the appointment of Anurag Gupta as the Jharkhand DGP. CJI BR Gavai agreed to list it before a 3-judge bench next week.

'PERVERSE EXERCISE' | Manner in which HC dictated bail worrying. Has it applied mind: SC

Apex court fumes over Darshan bail

PTI
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday called the Karnataka High Court's decision to grant bail to Kannada actor Darshan Thoogudeepa and six others in the Renukaswamy murder case a "perverse exercise" of discretionary power.

A bench of Justices JB Pardiwala and R Mahadevan reserved the verdict on Karnataka government's appeal against the December 13, 2024 order of the HC bail to the actor and co-accused.

The SC heard submissions of senior advocates Siddhath Luthra, appearing for the state government, and Siddharth Dave and others, representing the accused. It took on records the written note by the state and others, asking the counsel for remaining accused to file short notes within a week.

Questioning the reprieve, Justice Pardiwala asked

Plea for parties' POSH compliance

A petition in the SC has sought a direction to political parties to comply with the provisions of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013. The plea argues parties are covered by the ambit of the 2013 Act, therefore, bound to follow the procedures outlined in it. It said in 2024 the petitioner, Yogamaya MG, and advocate, filed a similar plea in SC, which granted her the liberty to move the competent authority. The petitioner sent a representation to the EC but has received no response to date. Before the SC now, she sought directions to ensure a safe and inclusive work environment for women in political parties and holding political parties accountable to prevent and address sexual harassment. With Centre and parties, including BJP and Congress as respondents, the plea sought a direction to set up a grievance redressal mechanism to tackle sexual harassment in line with the SC's directions in the Vishaka verdict and the 2013 Act.

defence counsel, "Don't you think HC has dictated an order of acquittal of 7 accused while deciding bail petitions?"

The judge said, "What is worrying is the manner in which HC dictated the bail order. Does HC dictate the same kind of order in every bail matter?" It questioned the

way HC dealt with the statements of two eyewitnesses, Kiran and Puneet, calling them "unreliable witnesses".

Pointing out all accused persons were out on bail and the trial was yet to start, the court asked, "Has the high court applied its mind judicially?"

8 die, 21 hurt in HP bus mishap

Mandi: Eight people, including 4 women, died and 21 were injured when a state-run bus veered off the road and fell 100 feet down in Sarkaghat area of Himachal's Mandi on Thursday, police said.

The accident took place at Tarangla near Maseran when the Himachal Road Transport Corporation bus with 29 people including the driver and the conductor on board was on its way to Durgapur from Sarkaghat. Five people were declared dead at the Civil Hospital Sarkaghat, two at the Government Medical College Nerchowk and one in AIIMS Bilaspur, police said.

KANGANA, SHAH SHARE FLOOD DETAILS

BJP MP Kangana Ranaut met Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who assured her that all



flood-hit people in Himachal will be provided every possible assistance and prompt rehabilitation. On 'X', Ranaut, the LS MP from Mandi, said the Centre stands with Himachal in this hour of crisis.

LIGHTNING KILLS 13 IN WEST BENGAL DISTS

At least 13 people were killed in lightning strikes in West Bengal's Bankura and Purba Bardhaman on Thursday, officials said. Bankura SP Vaibhav Tiwari said 8 people were killed the district during thunderstorms. In Purba Bardhaman, 5 people were killed and 4 injured, officials said.

Mohalla clinics now Mother Teresa Advanced Health Clinics in J'khand

Ranchi: The Jharkhand government on Thursday renamed Atal Mohalla Clinics, launched by the previous BJP regime, as Mother Teresa Advanced Health Clinics, an official said.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the state cabinet, chaired by CM Hemant Soren, who heads a coalition government of the JMM-Congress-RJD alliance. "The cabinet approved the proposal of changing the name of the Atal Mohalla Clinic scheme as Mother Teresa Advanced Health Clinic," Cabinet Secretary Vandana Dadel said. Former CM Raghubar Das launched the scheme in August 2019 to address the lack of quality healthcare in urban slums in the state.

As many as 140 Atal Mohalla Clinics are functioning in the state, providing free and primary healthcare services. A total of 21 decisions were taken by the cabi-

net, including approval to the Jharkhand State University Bill, 2025.

Other important decisions include: Appointment in government service on special ex-gratia grant and compassionate grounds to the dependents of Central Paramilitary Force personnel, who are residents of the state and who were martyred during terror incidents or while performing their duty to protect the national borders.

Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India for the period ended March , 2023, Government of Jharkhand, (Performance and Compliance Audit - Civil) of 2025 was approved to be presented on the table of the Jharkhand Legislative Assembly in the next session.

Acceptance of notional pay increment for calculation of retirement benefits of employees retiring on 30 June / 31 December, was cancelled.



U'khand temple appointment challenged

New Delhi: The 'Sevayat' of Maa Chandi Devi Temple in Haridwar has moved the SC for a stay on the order directing the Badri Kedar Temple Committee to appoint a receiver to oversee the temple's management. Mahant Bhawani Nandan Giri in his plea said Uttarakhand HC, without any evidence and complaint, delegated the control of the temple to a committee despite there being a panel of DM and SSP of Haridwar constituted by HC in 2012. The direction to appoint the receiver was passed while hearing the anticipatory bail plea of an accused in a criminal case. Maa Chandi Devi Temple was founded in 8th century. Since then the ancestors of the petitioner have been managing and looking after it as a Sevayat.

Order in Vadra case reserved

New Delhi: The Rouse Avenue court on Thursday reserved its order on whether to issue notice to Robert Vadra and others in a money laundering case linked to Gurugram land deals. Special Judge Sushant Changotra said he would pass the order on July 31 after reviewing documents.

'Udaipur Files' in HC? SC's call

New Delhi: The Supreme Court said it may send the case over the stay on the film 'Udaipur Files' back to Delhi HC. A bench of Justices Surya Kant and Joymalya Bagchi said it would hear the matter briefly on Friday before passing orders. It noted the filmmakers had followed the Centre-appointed panel's suggestions for cuts and disclaimer changes. The panel's order was challenged by petitioners who alleged the film targets Muslims. The court said it might send a related plea by an accused back to the HC.

Puri, Gokhale told to settle feud

New Delhi: Delhi HC urged former diplomat Lakshmi Puri and TMC MP Saket Gokhale to settle their defamation dispute, noting that "courts are overflooded." A bench of Justices Anil Kshetarpal and Harish Vaidyanathan Shankar suggested a meet after learning that Gokhale had issued an apology, which Puri accepted. The court said the property attached for ₹50 lakh damages would remain so. Lawyers for both sides said they would speak to their clients about the settlement proposal.

From the front page

India, UK in landmark...

Taking to X, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal wrote that "this agreement is a big win for farmers, ensuring duty-free exports on nearly 95% of agricultural products, while fisherfolk gain from Zero Duty on 99% of marine exports, boosting their incomes."

The minister added the deal would have a transformative impact on manufacturing-intensive sectors like engineering goods, electronics, pharma, chemicals, food processing, and plastics," while providing Indian consumers high-quality goods at competitive prices.

From the UK's side, the FTA is also being seen as a win. A British government statement said the FTA ensured India's tariffs on UK goods have fallen from 15% to 3%. Tariffs on individual goods such as whisky have been slashed from 150% to 75% with immediate effect that drops to 40% after 10 years. Tariffs have been lowered on UK cars from 100% to 10% ensuring models like Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) Rolls Royce and Aston Martin will become much cheaper. The changes should give the UK an edge over its competitors in targeting India's luxury market.

British Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer said the "landmark trade deal with India is a major win for Britain. It will create thousands of British jobs across the UK, unlock new opportunities for businesses and drive growth in every corner of the country, delivering on our Plan for Change." The statement added that the UK would welcome nearly Euro 6 billion in new investment that would create over 2,200 British jobs across the country.

While industry bodies both in India and the UK have voiced their approval, they will feel the need to remain cautious. The announcement of the FTA does not mean that its provisions will come into effect immediately. The agreement will be scrutinised by both the Indian and British Parliaments and its adoption is expected only by mid-2026.

The other issue to consider here is local laws. The alcohol industry in India is subject to state taxes that could nullify the benefit of reduced import duties. For cars, the government will have to specify what categories of cars come under the tariff exemption, what happens to cars already 'Made in India' and do other categories like EV cars qualify.

FTA aside, Modi thanked Starmer for the UK's condemnation of the Pahalagam attack. "We are united in the belief that there is no place for double standards in the fight against terrorism. We agree the forces which espouse extremist ideologies should not be allowed to misuse democratic freedoms."

SC stays Bombay HC...

The bench issued notice to the accused and stayed the high court noting: "We have been informed that all the respondents (accused) have been released and there is no question of bringing them back to the prison." Mehta also urged that the court specify that the high court judgment may not be treated as a precedent in other cases.

"However, taking note of the submission made by the SG on the question of law, we are inclined to hold that the impugned judgment shall not be treated as a precedent. To that extent, there is a stay of the impugned judgment," the bench added.

The bench queried on how that state plans to bring back the accused who are Pakistani nationals. To this, additional solicitor general for the state Raja Thakare said that those accused are still wanted in the case.

Mehta has mentioned the appeal for hearing citing "urgency" in the matter.

Rahul claims '100% proof...

Stating his party now had "concrete, 100% proof of the Election Commission allowing cheating on a seat in Karnataka", the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha added that while the wrongdoings have been "found" in once constituency the Congress took up as a test case, it was convinced of similar discrepancies elsewhere.

"We've just looked at one constituency and we've found it. I am absolutely convinced that this drama is taking place constituency after constituency. Thousands and thousands of new voter registrations, voter deletion; we've caught them. I want to send a message to the Election Commission: if you think you're going to get away with it, you're mistaken. We are going to come after you."

Gandhi later also wrote on X, "The Election Commission should not remain under any illusion! We have 100% solid proof of your tactics to steal votes. We will bring them to light, and you will not escape the consequences - those who try to destroy democracy and the constitution will not be spared."

Earlier in the day, the EC had issued a statement saying, the "aim of Bihar SIR" was that "no eligible voter should be left out". It had added that, "As per the SIR Order, any elector or any political party can file a claim in case of any missing names or raise an objection in case of any wrong inclusion till 1st September, 2025" and that "99% electors have already been covered." The EC said the exercise found 21.6 lakh deceased electors, 31.5 lakh electors who have permanently migrated, 7 lakh electors who were registered at more than one place, 1 lakh electors who were untraceable; and 7 lakh electors who were yet to submit their forms. It added, "Forms of 7.21 crore electors (91.32%) have been received and digitised; names of all the electors will be included in the Draft Electoral Roll."

Meanwhile, Congress MP Manish Tewari claimed the SIR process was undermining the foundation of democracy. Citing a statement of JDU MP Girdhari Yadav, he said, the lawmaker had said it took him several days to gather all the documents. "So imagine what the common people must be going through? Now, what greater proof could there be the SIR process is against democracy?" he asked.

ED searches 35 locations...

"RCom and RHFL are not part of the current Reliance Group led by Anil Ambani. RCom has been undergoing Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 for over six years. RHFL has been fully resolved pursuant to the judgment of the Supreme Court. As of now, the Reliance Group comprises only two listed entities, Reliance Infrastructure Ltd and Reliance Power Ltd. The ongoing proceedings have no impact on their operations, financial performance, or stakeholders," the statement added.

Officials said the ED action was initiated based on inputs from multiple agencies, including the National Housing Bank, the Securities and Exchange Board of India, the National Financial Reporting Authority and the Bank of Baroda.

A senior ED official said preliminary findings indicated a scheme to divert public funds by misleading banks, shareholders, and other institutions. The agency is probing alleged bribes paid to bank officials, including to a promoter of Yes Bank. Officials confirmed Ambani is facing a separate probe under the Foreign Exchange Management Act for sus-

pected violations involving offshore transactions.

At the heart of the investigation is a suspected financial fraud involving Yes Bank Ltd, with evidence indicating loan diversions of nearly Rs 3,000 crore between 2017 and 2019. ED's probe suggests that, prior to the disbursement of these loans to companies under RAAGA, entities affiliated with Yes Bank's promoters received funds in their private concerns, indicating a possible collusive arrangement. The probe has revealed serious lapses in the loan sanctioning process, including the use of backdated credit approval documents, absence of due diligence, and instances where loans were approved even before formal applications were submitted.

Funds were allegedly diverted to shell companies and entities with overlapping directors and registered addresses, raising red flags over a potential "evergreening" strategy designed to conceal defaults and artificially sustain asset quality.

The role of Yes Bank's senior officials, including its promoter, is under the scanner for their alleged involvement in facilitating these high-value unsecured loans in exchange for bribes. The ED has identified loans from Yes Bank, Canara Bank, and Bank of Baroda to RAAGA-linked entities. Officials say Canara Bank alone incurred a loss of Rs1,050 crore due to suspected fraud by RCOM. RCOM is under ED's scrutiny for loan fraud exceeding Rs14,000 crore, impacting multiple public sector lenders.

In a significant disclosure to Parliament, Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary stated that the SBI has officially classified RCom and Ambani as "fraudulent" under RBI guidelines. SBI has informed the RBI and is preparing a complaint to the CBI. Another leg of the investigation involves a Rs 2,850 crore investment made by Reliance Mutual Fund in Yes Bank's AT-I bonds. The ED suspects these investments may have been part of a quid pro quo arrangement, potentially benefiting both bank officials and borrower companies in return for regulatory or financial favours.

The ED is also probing transactions by Reliance Infrastructure Ltd, which allegedly routed large sums disguised as Inter-Corporate Deposits (ICDs) to RAAGA-linked entities through an undisclosed related-party company dubbed "C Company."

Investigators believe "C Company" was deliberately excluded from official disclosures to bypass audit oversight and shareholder approval, violating key corporate governance norms. As part of this suspected diversion, RIL reportedly took a Rs5,480 crore haircut, recovering only Rs4 crore in cash, while settling the remaining Rs6,499 crore through rights in defunct power distribution firms that haven't operated in years. Officials believe the recovery prospects of these diverted funds are minimal.

PoP idols immersion...

The state government had framed a policy on July 21, allowing immersion of PoP idols up to five feet in height in natural water bodies. However, the court found this insufficient to address the ecological impact and directed the government to amend its policy to raise the restriction threshold to six feet.

"The court has to ensure that the impact of immersion of idols on the environment is reduced to the minimum," the bench observed. "We, therefore, direct that all idols made of Plaster of Paris, which are six feet in height, shall necessarily be immersed in artificial water bodies."

Advocate General Birendra Saraf informed the court the state will ensure strict implementation of the amended policy and will issue directions to all local bodies accordingly. He said the government is

later on Monday afternoon.

There was also a view in BJP after the Opposition had termed him "partisan" and moved a motion to impeach him in December 2024, Dhankhar had become wary and more accommodative of them.

Cannot allow the dead...

His remarks come in response to criticism from opposition parties, who have alleged that the revision exercise could lead to the disenfranchisement of crores of eligible voters in the state.

"Isn't a pure voter list being prepared by the Election Commission through a transparent process, the foundation for fair elections and a strong democracy?" Kumar said, according to a statement from the Election Commission. He further stated allowing ineligible people to vote, first in Bihar and later across the country, would go against the Constitution. "On these questions, someday or the other, all of us and all the citizens of India will have to think deeply, going beyond political ideologies," he added.

As part of the ongoing house-to-house verification in Bihar under the SIR process, poll officials have found that over 52 lakh registered voters were not present at their listed addresses, while another 18 lakh voters have been confirmed dead.

Whodunnit? Kokate clip...

The clip, shared by NCP(SP) MLAs Rohit Pawar and Jitendra Awhad on their social media handles, was recorded around 1.40 pm on July 10 when the Upper House was in session.

The video recording shows Public Works Department Minister Shivendrasinh Bhosale and BJP MLC Sadabhau Khot sitting besides Kokate. None of the members from the ruling side seated near Kokate are seen using their cellphones or recording during the session, sources said. Although the minister has said he will write to the Chairman for a probe, no such request has been made so far. But Kokate can seek a deeper probe if the recording was by an outsider, sources told the FPI.

Temple defaced...

The same hateful messages were also painted on two nearby Asian-run restaurants on Boronia Road the same day. Victoria Police confirmed 4 linked incidents are under investigation, including graffiti on a healing centre on Mountain Highway, the temple, and the two restaurants. A police spokesperson said, "There is absolutely no place at all in our society for hate-based and racist behaviour."

One of the slurs sprayed on the temple read, "Go Home Brown C**t", according to the 'Australia Today' report. The incident has been condemned as a targeted hate crime, causing widespread distress in Melbourne's Indian diaspora.

President of the Hindu Council of Australia (Victoria chapter), Makrand Bhagwat, expressed shock and sadness over the attack. Victoria's Premier Jacinta Allan, though yet to issue a public statement, sent a private message to the temple's management. "What happened this week was hateful, racist and deeply disturbing. It wasn't just vandalism - it was a deliberate act of hate, designed to intimidate, isolate, and spread fear," Allan stated in the letter. "It was an attack on your right to feel safe and to belong, and on the values that bind us together." She added her government stands firmly with the community and that Victoria Police are taking the matter seriously. Allan also said that the Minister for Multicultural Affairs would soon visit the temple to offer direct support.

Hindu community leaders have urged support from interfaith groups.

GTDC set to float fresh tender for ropeway project


THE GOAN | NETWORK

PANAJI
After terminating the concession agreement with Royal Rides Pvt Ltd, the Goa Tourism Development Corporation (GTDC) is set to float a fresh tender for the proposed ropeway project from Panaji to Reis Magos.

Tourism Minister Rohan Khaunte on Thursday informed the House that the project will be completed within a period of three years from the date of appointment of new bidder.

Responding to the Question tabled by BJP MLA Kedar Naik, Khaunte said that the GTDC has terminated the Concession Agreement entered with the Concessionaire M/s Royal Rides Private Limited for “Development, Operations and Maintenance of Passenger Ropeway.

“Further, it may be noted that GTDC is in the process of floating new tender for the said project,” he said adding that upon floating the new tender and appointment of a “successful bidder” the time allotted to the Concessionaire is three years for completion of the project.

WEATHER >>> 	
Max:	27.4 C
Min:	24 C
Humidity:	95%

Chaos in Assembly as Min stays mum on TCP queries

■ SEC 39A MATTER PENDING BEFORE HC, SUB-JUDICE, SAYS RANE

THE GOAN | NETWORK

MAPUSA

Pandemonium broke out in the Goa Legislative Assembly on Thursday morning after Opposition MLAs stormed into the well of the House, protesting the Town and Country Planning (TCP) Department's refusal to answer questions related to the contentious Section 39A of the Goa TCP Act.

The House was briefly adjourned for 10 minutes amidst slogans and heated exchanges.

The uproar began when Revolutionary Goans Party MLA Viresh Borkar objected to TCP Minister Vishwajit Rane's assertion that no replies could be provided on Section 39A, citing that the matter is sub-judice and pending before the High Court.

Rane invoked the “Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business of the Goa Legislative Assembly,” claiming the department was bound by rules and could not disclose information under legal scrutiny.



KNEE-JERK PROTEST: Opposition MLAs -- except Vijai Sardesai – fall on their knees at the well of the House demanding accountability from the TCP Minister. Narayan Pissurlenkar

“What’s the problem in giving answers? Every time this issue comes up, it’s postponed. This is an attempt to withhold vital information from the public,” Borkar lashed out, expressing frustration over the minister’s response.

Leader of Opposition Yuri Alemao strongly countered Rane’s stand.

“How can the TCP Department deny legislators answers? This is in public interest. Just two days ago, we

debated the Mhadei issue in this House even though it is also in court. Why is the TCP hiding behind the sub-judice excuse?” Alemao questioned, sarcastically suggesting the department be renamed “Sub-Judice Department.”

CM steps in to calm tempers, assures action

PANAJI: Amidst furore in the Assembly regarding Section 39(A) of the TCP Act, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant stepped in saying the Speaker would call a meeting with the Chief Secretary and TCP Secretary to examine the reasons. “Place the questions which have not been answered by the minister before the Chief Secretary, and ask why it cannot be replied to. Put it before the concerned TCP Secy. Call the TCP Secy, and ask why there is no reply,” CM told the MLAs.

Despite the minister standing firm on his decision, claiming, “There are rules. I am following them. They can say what they want, but no discussion can be held on this,” even as the Opposition intensified its protest.

Soon, workday will be 10-hour job in factories

Assembly amends factory law

THE GOAN | NETWORK

PANAJI

The Goa legislative assembly on Thursday passed the Factories (Goa Amendment) Act, 2025, by which the work day in factories in the State will henceforth become a 10-hour affair instead of the previous nine hours.

The bill amends Section 54 and Section 65 of the principal Act to the extent that ‘nine hours’ is replaced with ‘10 hours’ s the maximum number of hours that an adult factory worker can be made to work in a day.

The amendment to Section 65 of the principal Act replaces ‘one hundred and twenty-five’ with ‘one hundred and forty-four’ as the maximum amount of overtime hours that an adult factory worker can be allowed to work in a quarter (three months).

The amendment was piloted by Fisheries Minister Nilkant Halarnkar who also holds the Factories and Boilers department and argues

FROM 9 TO 10

■ The bill amends Section 54 and Section 65 of the principal Act to the extent that ‘nine hours’ is replaced with ‘10 hours’ s the maximum number of

hours that an adult factory worker can be made to work in a day

■ The amendment to Section 65 of the principal Act

replaces ‘one hundred and twenty-five’ with ‘one hundred and forty-four’ as the maximum amount of overtime hours that an adult factory worker can be allowed to work in a quarter (three months)

in its statement of ‘objects and reasons’ that it is aimed at reforming and simplifying regulations and procedures to facilitate the Ease of Doing Business.

Courts can issue summons, warrants on cellphones

GOVT NOTIFIES RULES UNDER BNSS

THE GOAN | NETWORK

PANAJI

The State government has notified rules to facilitate courts to issue and serve summons, warrants, and other judicial processes electronically under the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023.

Titled the ‘Goa Electronic Processes (Issuance, Service and Execution) Rules, 2025’, the notification comes into effect after consultation with the High Court of Bombay at Goa, paving the way for digital handling of judicial processes through the Case Information System (CIS).

According to the notified rules, all courts in Goa will generate and issue summons, warrants, and other notices electronically in prescribed formats, encrypted and digitally signed, bearing the seal and eSign of the competent court authority. These processes will be transmitted through secure systems and can be served via email or messaging apps.

In cases where the court lacks the electronic contact details of the recipient, or electronic service fails, the

THE E-ROAD AHEAD		
■ All Goa courts to issue summons, warrants, notices electronically in prescribed, encrypted, and digitally signed formats	police to serve documents physically	■ Police must collect and record electronic contact details of accused, witnesses during arrests or investigations
■ These documents will be transmitted securely and served via email or messaging apps		
■ If electronic contact details are missing or service fails, courts may direct		

court may direct police or another public servant to serve the summons or warrant physically.

The rules make it mandatory for police to collect and record the electronic contact details such as email, phone number, and messaging application of accused persons and witnesses during arrest, investigation or inquiry. This data is to be updated in the CCTNS (Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems) and a dedicated register shall be transmitted in electronic form and maintained in CIS and may be used for issuance of process,” it added.

Where private complaints

are filed, complainants must also provide the electronic details of the accused and witnesses, or declare unavailability. These details will be used for service of process and stored digitally within CIS records.

“If any of such information is not available, the complainant shall make an endorsement to that effect. The details relating to address, disclosed electronic mail address, phone number and messaging application shall be transmitted in electronic form and maintained in CIS and may be used for issuance of process,” it added.

CM, Congress MLA spar in House over ‘land grab’ law

FERREIRA QUESTIONS SCOPE OF ESCHEATS ACT; SAWANT DEFENDS SIT PROBE



THE GOAN | NETWORK

PANAJI

The Goa Legislative Assembly on Thursday witnessed chaotic scenes with a heated exchange between Chief Minister Pramod Sawant and Congress MLA Carlos Ferreira over the Goa Escheats, Forfeitures, and Bona Vacantia Bill, 2024, which sought to manage and dispose of unclaimed and abandoned properties in the State.

The verbal duel erupted after Ferreira raised a Calling Attention on the Bill – now an Act – questioning its implications and expressing concerns about the broad powers it could vest in the government.

“This Bill claims to protect Goa’s land, especially those lying vacant or abandoned and vulnerable to illegal encroachments and fraudulent transfers. But if you look at the Preamble, it clearly states the Bill seeks to make provisions for the administration, control, custody, and disposal of such properties,” Ferreira

FACEOFF OVER LAND GRAB ACT			
OPPN’S CONCERNS		CM’S RESPONSE	
■ Ferreira in a Calling Attention motion, questions the wide powers the Act grants the government	dispose of un-claimed properties ‘as prescribed’	■ Sawant says the discussion was out of context and defends the Bill as necessary to prevent land grabbing	are those unclaimed for 10 years and treated as ‘no man’s land’
■ He cites Section 9, which allows the government to	■ Ferreira argues that such properties should be auctioned and expresses fears of misuse	■ He highlights SIT action on land scam cases: 22 cases registered, 8 FIRs transferred, 12 chargesheeted, 75 arrests made (including 6 government staff)	■ Sawant tells Opposition members to challenge the Act in court instead of making ‘defamatory’ speeches
	■ Vijai Sardesai joins in, asks how many properties had been identified		
	■ Ferreira points out that 60 properties were already known, implying prior awareness by the	■ Sawant clarifies that such properties	

said.

He referred to Section 9 of the Act, which mentions that once such properties revert to the government, they will be disposed of “in such manner as may be prescribed.”

Ferreira, former Advocate General, argued that when-

ever the government takes a property, it has to be auctioned.

This prompted a sharp reaction from the Chief Minister, who objected to the line of discussion, stating this was not a Bill discussion. He went on to defend the government’s

action on land grab cases, claiming that a Special Investigation Team (SIT) was constituted to investigate. “So far, 22 cases have been registered, 8 FIRs transferred to police stations, 12 chargesheeted, 3 FIRs quashed and 2 final reports filed. A total of 75 people

have been arrested including 6 government servants. Accused Mohd Suhail has been arrested 13 times,” Sawant disclosed as he updated the House on the probe.

Sawant further took a swipe at the Opposition’s criticism, while the latter indicated the government was intending to take over the abandoned properties deliberately.

“For them, is it fine when people grab land, forge papers, and even get cases registered? But when we bring in a Bill to fix the problem, suddenly the government is accused of land grabbing,” he said angrily. “Where were you all when the cases were being registered?”

Ferreira, however, continued to press the issue, asking for the definition of abandoned property to which the Chief Minister explained, “It means properties which have not been claimed, that have become no man’s land... We have kept (a gap of) 10 years for it (for owners to claim the abandoned property).”

Special Vailankanni train ticket bookings to open from today

THE GOAN | NETWORK

VASCO

In a major relief for Goan pilgrims travelling to Vailankanni for the annual feast, a ticket booking counter for the special Vasco-Vailankanni trains will open on Friday at 8 am.

This was announced by Divisional Railways Users Consultative Committee (DRUCC) member August D’Costa during a media briefing on Thursday. D’Costa informed that the special trains (07361/07362) between Vasco and Vailankanni have been sanctioned for three trips each. Train 07361 (Vasco-Vailankanni) will depart on August 27, September 1,



Divisional Railways Users Consultative Committee member August D’Costa.

and September 6, while Train 07362 (Vailankanni-Vasco) will return on August 29, September 3, and September 8.

“These trains will have 21 coaches including AC, sleeper, and general class. I urge pilgrims to book early to avoid the rush,” said D’Costa, adding that schedule details are available at Vasco station and on the NTES and IRCTC portals.

D’Costa credited South Goa MP Captain Viriato Fernandes for backing the demand and said he was personally directed to pursue the matter in Hubli. “I had been directed by MP Capt. Viriato Fernandes to go to Hubli as the DRUCC member and follow up on the issue of special trains for the Vailankanni feast,” he said.

“I was helped by Railways Senior Divisional Commercial Manager Santosh Hegde, who immediately called the headquarters to seek confirmation from the Chennai side for the Vasco-Vailankanni train.”

TEMPLE CLASH CASE

CM steps in after villagers lay siege to Valpoi PS

Angered locals demand withdrawal of cases; Sawant agrees to hear out agitators today

THE GOAN | NETWORK

VALPOI

Hundreds of people marched to the Valpoi police station on Thursday evening to demand the immediate withdrawal of cases filed against 37 persons linked to group clashes over the rights to perform rituals at a temple in Poriem.

The protesters sat outside the police station, and Police Inspector Videsh Shirodkar tried to pacify the people, but they refused to leave the premises and demanded a written assurance to them about the withdrawal of the cases.

Taking serious note of the



Villagers protest outside the Valpoi police station.

situation, Poriem MLA Dr Deviyan Rane spoke to Chief Minister Pramod Sawant and sought his intervention in the

matter.

Sawant decided to convene a special meeting with a delegation of agitators at the

Assembly complex on Friday at 12 pm. Satisfied with this assurance, the protestors dispersed from the Valpoi police station at around 7 pm.

According to sources, a dispute had arisen about six months ago regarding the conduct of rituals at a temple in Poriem. One group had conducted the rituals at the temple early in the morning, which angered the other group, and this led to clashes between the two groups.

Several people were assaulted in the incident, and stones were also pelted at a police force, which rushed to

the site. The protestors had also blocked the Goa-Belagavi road for some time.

The Valpoi police had registered cases against 37 persons, and a charge sheet had been filed in court. The first hearing in the matter was fixed on Friday, and summons had been sent to 37 people in this connection, causing anger among people.

Speaking to reporters, the aggrieved villagers claimed that when the tense situation had arisen around the temple, hundreds of people were present, and yet, police had booked cases only against 37 persons.

Briefs

AHMEDABAD

New Balvatika in Ahmedabad's Kankaria

Ahmedabad's iconic Balvatika at Kankaria has been redeveloped after 68 years and will be inaugurated on Friday evening by the Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel.The ₹22-crore redevelopment includes attractions such as Gujarat's tallest glass tower, a maze, moving dinosaur park, lifelike wax museum, illusion house, go-karting, mud rides, and more.Entry has been set at ₹50 for all age groups, with separate fees for rides. The Snow Park, which includes the jacket, will have a fee of ₹450. Selfie zones, landscaped gardens, and glow stations will be accessible at no additional charge.Developed under the PPP (public private partnership) model with Superstar Amusement Park, the new Balvatika is expected to double the Amdavad Municipal Corporation's (AMC) annual revenue to over ₹20 lakh, with the contractor managing all maintenance and operational costs.

SURAT

Surat MLA seeks proper implantation of Disturbed Areas Act

The issue of property transfers in areas falling under the Disturbed Areas Act in Surat has once again flared up. Arvind Rana, MLA from Surat East, met with Additional Chief Secretary of the Revenue Department, Dr. Jayanti Ravi, alleging irregularities and improper approvals granted in Surat Central Zone over the past few years.The MLA also leveled serious allegations of corruption against the police, Mamlatdar, and Deputy Collector (Prant Office), demanding that all orders passed without consulting nearby residents be canceled.In his written representation, MLA Rana claimed that large-scale corruption by the Mamlatdar and Deputy Collector offices has led to unilateral approvals, undermining the law's intent to maintain communal harmony.

AHMEDABAD

GMRC to increase metro frequencies

In response to the steadily increasing number of passengers, Gujarat Metro Rail Corporation (GMRC) has decided to increase the frequency of metro trains on the East-West corridor, which runs from Vastral Gam to Thaltej Gam.From now on, metro trains will operate every 7 minutes during morning and evening peak hours on the East-West corridor. During non-peak hours, trains will be available every 10 minutes. Meanwhile, on the North-South corridor from APMC to Motera, the frequency remains unchanged, with metro services every 12 minutes.On Sundays and public holidays, metros will run every 10 minutes during peak hours and every 12 minutes during non-peak hours.

AIR SAFETY | 4 decades-old 36-inch & 42-inch SBHT gas pipelines beneath the runway have been flagged as potential hazards

ONGC pipeline sparks safety concerns at Surat airport

Melvyn Thomas
SURAT

In a major development that raises alarming questions about aviation safety, four decades-old gas pipelines running beneath the Surat Airport runway have come under intense scrutiny. The 36-inch and 42-inch South Basin Hazira Trunk (SBHT) pipelines owned by ONGC have been flagged as potential hazards, with calls to immediately prevent aircraft from running or landing over them.

This follows a letter by Sanjay Ezhava, President of the Surat Airport Action Committee, who exposed seven critical risks of a catastrophic accident at Surat Airport. His detailed complaint led the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas to seek clarification from ONGC on June 24, 2025. ONGC has since responded, but the explanation has raised more questions than answers.

According to ONGC's response, the 36" SBHT pipeline is laid on the Dumas beach (west) side and the 42"



pipeline on the Vesu (east) side, running about 1.5 to 2 meters beneath the surface on both sides of the runway before reaching the Hazira plant. The pipelines are separated by 3.5 kilometers and are currently certified as "fit for purpose" until late 2028.

ONGC stated, "All relevant safety aspects are constantly monitored and reviewed. There is no vibration or residual stress detected on the pipelines due to aircraft activ-

ity, as confirmed by a government scientific institute."

However, the same study also strongly recommends that "runway crossovers and aircraft landing or running over the pipelines should be avoided."

This contradiction did not go unnoticed by Ezhava, who slammed ONGC for "hiding its sins."

"On one hand, ONGC says the pipelines are safe. On the other hand, their own survey

warns against aircraft movement over these pipelines. If a plane overshoots, it could lead to disaster," Ezhava said.

He further pointed out that the 36" pipeline, laid in 1990 with a 25-year lifespan, had technically expired in 2015.

"For three years, ONGC ran it without a fitness check. Only after my complaint in 2018 did they assess it again. Now it has completed 35 years. It's a ticking time bomb beneath Surat Airport," Ezhava warned.

Sustainable urban planning and green initiatives set pace for future-ready Cities

FPJ News Service
AHMEDABAD

As climate change and urbanisation challenge cities across India, Ahmedabad is emerging as a trailblazer in climate resilience and sustainable urban planning. The Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) reaffirmed its forward-looking vision during a high-impact technical workshop and outreach programme held at Riverfront House, aligning with the insights of the World Bank-supported report India's Resilient and Inclusive Cities.

The report—jointly released with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs

(MoHUA)—warns of unprecedented urban growth and climate pressures by 2050, when India's urban population is expected to swell to 951 million. With more than 50% of the country's future urban infrastructure yet to be built, the report underscores a historic opportunity to embed climate resilience from the ground up.

Speaking at the event, Ahmedabad Municipal Commissioner Banchhanidhi Pani highlighted the city's proactive, multi-pronged approach to urban sustainability.

"Ahmedabad has already installed over 21 MW of wind energy and 2 MW of solar



energy capacity. Our street lighting is fully LED-based, drastically cutting emissions. We've also enforced green building norms to ensure sustainable construction practices," said Pani.

To combat the dual threats of heatwaves and urban flooding, the AMC is investing

heavily in green infrastructure, early warning systems, and public cooling strategies.

The city's waste management ecosystem is evolving rapidly, with composting units for organic waste already operational. Future infrastructure includes a bio-CNG plant and a waste-to-

energy facility, designed to curb methane emissions from landfills. Notably, a sludge hygienisation plant—developed in collaboration with BARC—has been launched to further bolster sanitation.

"Cities like Ahmedabad are not waiting for climate disasters to strike. We are building future-ready infrastructure today," an AMC official stated.

Ahmedabad's investments in public transport—AMTS, BRTS, metro rail, and cycling paths—are aimed at reducing the city's carbon footprint and enhancing air quality.

The city's hallmark Riverfront Development Project not only enhances recreational access but serves as a vital flood barrier.

Rahul to visit Guj 4th time in 4 months

FPJ News Service
AHMEDABAD

Rahul Gandhi will visit Gujarat again. After starting the Organization Creation Campaign from Gujarat, the organization formation in Gujarat has been completed. Rahul Gandhi will come to Gujarat on July 26. He will meet with newly appointed district presidents at the Congress event to be held in Anand from July 26 to 28 and teach lessons in politics.

Previously, Rahul Gandhi visited Gujarat on March 7-8 and then attended the Congress National Convention held on April 8-9. After the convention, he came to Modasa on April 16, where he addressed 1,200 workers.

Now he will visit Gujarat from July 26 to 28, 2025. Thus, he will be coming to Gujarat for the fourth time in 4 months.

After the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, Rahul Gandhi visited Gujarat in July 2024. Addressing Congress

workers, he said that we will defeat the BJP in Gujarat the same way we defeated them in Ayodhya.

Congress's top leaders' visits to Gujarat have also increased. Gujarat Congress leaders say that Rahul Gandhi had challenged to defeat the BJP in Gujarat last year. At that time, he had said in Parliament, that Write it down, this time we will defeat you in Gujarat. The opposition INDIA alliance will defeat the BJP in Gujarat.

Surat teen invents 'Who Safe' device to empower women

FPJ News Service
SURAT

Eighteen-year-old Harmit Shaileshkumar Godhani from Surat has developed 'Who Safe,' a compact, one-inch personal security device. This innovation, the result of a year's dedicated effort, aims to provide immediate assistance to women in distress, addressing the growing concerns around crimes against them.

Harmit, a Diploma in Computer Engineering student, was driven by a powerful vision: "Every woman deserves to feel safe, no matter the place or time." The 'Who Safe' device acts as a digital lifeline, designed to be easily carried. At the press of a single button, it instantly alerts over 500 pre-saved contacts by initiating calls and sending the user's live location via WhatsApp. Harmit emphasized its speed, stating,



"The call goes first, and within two seconds, a message with the live location is delivered. Even if there's a server delay, everything happens within five seconds."

Adding another layer of security, the device triggers a loud beep, even if the user's phone is on silent mode, drawing crucial attention. The linked mobile application also sends a high-alert notification with a siren sound, ensuring emergency awareness.

Harmit's inspiration for 'Who Safe' comes from a personal tragedy within his community, where a girl, subjected to harassment and stalking, tragically took her own life.

4 linked to Al-Qaeda propaganda remanded in police custody

FPJ News Service
AHMEDABAD

Four individuals linked to the banned terror outfit Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) have been remanded to 14 days of police custody after the Gujarat Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) unearthed a dangerous digital propaganda network operating through Instagram.

The accused—arrested in a meticulously coordinated inter-state operation—were allegedly using social media to incite jihad, glorify terrorism, and provoke violence against India's democratic institutions under the radical ideology of Ghazwa-e-Hind.

The arrested accused are identified as Mohammad Faiq, Chandni Chowk, Delhi,Zeeshan Ali, Sector 63, Noida, Uttar Pradesh, Fardeen Shaikh, Fatehwadi, Ahmedabad, and Sefullah Qureshi, Modasa, Aravalli district

"These men were not just social media trolls; they were digital foot soldiers of Al-Qaeda," said a senior ATS official. "They were spreading jihadist propaganda, recruiting minds, and calling for violent rebellion through encrypted Instagram handles."

The operation was launched after Gujarat ATS received actionable intelligence on June 10, 2025, regarding multiple Instagram accounts, promoting extremist content. Posts included calls for armed jihad, anti-national sentiments, and religious incitement, all aimed at destabilising democratic governance.



On July 21-22, Gujarat ATS, in collaboration with Delhi Police Special Cell, UP ATS, and local law enforcement, conducted synchronised raids in Delhi, Noida, Ahmedabad, and Modasa. All four suspects were apprehended and brought to the ATS headquarters for intensive interrogation.

From Fardeen Shaikh, officials seized AQIS literature related to Operation Sindoor and a sword featured in a video where he declared, "This was the only thing missing. Now it's complete. Allahu

Akbar."

Mobile phones retrieved from all four contained disturbing content: videos inciting jihad, fatwas calling for violence, and digital materials glorifying Ghazwa-e-Hind.

Investigators also uncovered communication between Mohammad Faiq and suspected Pakistan-based handlers.

The ATS is now examining 62 linked Instagram accounts and has flagged 25 high-risk profiles for detailed analysis.

"This is just the tip of the iceberg," said a senior investigator. "They were part of a wider digital terror network that used social media platforms as weapons of radicalisation and rebellion."

An FIR has been registered under multiple sections of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 and the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

CM Patel Pushes 'Viksit Gujarat' with welfare focus

FPJ News Service
GANDHINAGAR

In a decisive move to fast-track development goals, Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel held a high-level review meeting with senior secretaries of state departments to assess the first-quarter performance of the 2025-26 budget. The session underlined the government's determination to implement its Viksit Gujarat Roadmap in sync with the national vision of Viksit Bharat.

During the review, the Finance Department reported a significant 23.4% increase in expenditure compared to the same quarter last year, indicating a strong push in executing planned schemes and infrastructure development.

"Such an increase in early-stage spending shows we are not just planning — we are delivering," said a senior finance official, emphasizing the government's commitment to timely execution.

Over 98% of administrative approvals for new schemes announced in the budget have already been processed in the first quarter, further demon-

strating the state's aggressive implementation strategy.

Chief Minister Patel urged department heads to adopt a saturation approach in executing welfare schemes, ensuring that every eligible beneficiary is covered without exception. "We must aim for total coverage — not partial impact. Every citizen who qualifies must receive the benefit. That is the essence of good governance," he said firmly during the session.

The meeting was also attended by Finance Minister Kanubhai Desai, Chief Advisor to the CM Dr. Hasmukh Adhia, and Chief Secretary Pankaj Joshi. Strategic directions were shared to streamline fund utilization and monitoring across departments.

An official present at the meeting added, "The Chief Minister is clear — speed must match strategy. The roadmap for a developed Gujarat is actionable, and results must reflect that."

With this strong start to the fiscal year, the Gujarat government is positioning itself as a frontrunner in effective governance, focused implementation, and inclusive growth.

Ahmedabad ride the 'Saiyaara' wave to promote helmet safety

FPJ News Service
AHMEDABAD

As Mohit Suri's emotional film Saiyaara sweeps the country with viral social media moments and box office success, the Ahmedabad Traffic Police have cleverly seized the cultural moment to promote a life-saving message: Wear your helmet — even when riding with your Saiyaara.

In a creative and timely post on their official X account, the Ahmedabad Traffic Police shared a clip from the film featuring actors Ahaan Panday and Annet Padda holding helmets. The caption read, "Going for a drive with Saiyaara? Then make the helmet your companion too... Otherwise, your love will remain incomplete."

The message struck a chord

with the audience, merging the viral sentiment of the film with a powerful public safety reminder. The video underlined: "Alone or with your Saiyaara (partner), you must wear helmets."

With Saiyaara crossing the Rs100 crore mark within just four days of its July 18 release, its emotional impact and romantic themes have created waves.



their employers — a relationship filled with everyday emotion, drama, and subtle humor.

Director Viral Shah, known for his National Award-winning work, described Maharani as, "A celebration of the invisible relationships that shape our lives. The bond between a housemaid and a modern working woman isn't often talked about, yet it carries incredible depth. This film is drawn from the real experiences of everyday

homes, told with humor and warmth."

Mansi Parekh, who plays the role of the house owner, shared her thoughts: "Working on Maharani made me reflect on the meaningful yet understated connection we have with our domestic helpers. The story goes beyond just laughter — it's about female friendships, self-worth, and the importance of mutual respect. It's a heart-warming story told with a big smile."

INDUSTRIAL BOOST | Bhoomi Pujan ceremony of 6 new units organised

Youths to get Rs 5K for job-oriented industries: CM

Our Staff Reporter

BHOPAL

CM Mohan Yadav has said for encouraging youths in employment-oriented industries, Rs 5k will be provided as incentive.

He was addressing the Bhoomi Pujan ceremony of 6 new industrial units with an investment of Rs 416 crore in Acharpura Industrial Area near Bhopal on Thursday.

He said that Acharpura will emerge as a special industrial centre.

He also laid the foundation stone of Acharpura Industrial Area Extension Phase-3 (Village Hajjam-pur), which will be developed in an area of 31.21

hectares.

He said that along with Bhoomi Pujan of new industries, the state government is also distributing letters of intent for land allotment to young entrepreneurs.

He said that within a week, the police post in Acharpura will start functioning. He directed the IG (Police) present in the programme to deploy women police personnel at this post.

He said that in terms of economy, India was ranked 15th in the world in 2014, now India is moving towards the third position.

He said that 20 years ago, per capita income was Rs 11k in MP, which has now become Rs 1.52 lakh.

All eligible Ladli Behna beneficiaries will be given Rs 1500 every month after Diwali. It is the month of Sawan, they will also be given shagun amount. The amount will be increased year after year and it will be increased to Rs 3k by the year 2028.



Defence minister Rajnath Singh will lay the foundation stone of a rail coach manufacturing unit in Raisen with an investment of Rs 1800 crore on August 10. Preparations

are being made for the foundation stone laying of a state-of-the-art rail coach factory in village Umaria of Gauharganj tehsil of Raisen district. Around 1,575 people

will get direct and indirect employment. The process of acquisition is being done to connect the government land allotted to the unit with the railway line.

Report on OBC before caste census

The government will present a study report to the court for giving 27% in jobs

Nitendra Sharma

BHOPAL

The state government is preparing a report on the OBC before the beginning of the caste census.

The government will present a report on the number of OBC people, their financial status, and their social condition to the Supreme Court, which is hearing a petition on the 27% quota in jobs to be given to the people of this category.

The report will be prepared through the OBC Welfare Commission. Former minister Ramkrishna Kusmaria will preside over the commission, and Musam Bisen will be its member. The commission will submit a report on the OBC in the state.

Amended bill to be brought to the House

The government is getting ready to bring the amended bill to the House for giving 27% of reservation in jobs. The bill will be brought to the House after the commission submits the study report. The Congress government led by Kamal Nath brought the bill to the House to give 27% reservation to the OBC. But the bill did not consist of any study or survey report. Now, the government is preparing to bring a bill to the House on a strong foundation.

Because the triple test was not done, the Supreme Court stopped giving reservations to the OBC in the civic bodies' election of 2022.

Nevertheless, the government prepared a report through the OBC Welfare Commission and presented it to the court. On the basis of the report, the OBC candidates got a reservation in the civic bodies' election.

According to the report prepared by the commission, the number of OBC voters was 48%.

On the basis of the report, the OBC candidates were given a reservation in the election.

Now, the government is prepared to give 27% reservation to the OBC in jobs on the same pattern.

To give 27% reservation in jobs, the government will add the new findings to the old report and submit it to the court.

The Chhattisgarh government is giving 58% reservation in jobs. After the high court passed an order calling such reservation unconstitutional, the SC cancelled the order.

Now, the government is also making efforts to get court permission for giving over 50% of the reservation.

This is how the government will be able to give 27% of the reservation to the OBC.

HC seeks report over affiliation of paramedical colleges

Recognition issued to more than 150 institutions

Our Staff Reporter

BHOPAL

High Court, principal bench of Jabalpur, on Thursday has sought inspection report from the state government over paramedical colleges' affiliation. <

HC has continued its stay regarding irregularities in recognition and admission of paramedical colleges. The High Court had stayed the order of the state government which allowed the Paramedical Council to distribute recognition for academic sessions (2023-24 and 2024-25) with retrospective effect.

During the hearing of the

PIL filed by the Law Students Association in the nursing case, an application was submitted by the petitioner recently and the High Court was informed that like nursing, irregularities are being noticed in recognition of paramedical colleges as well.

The MP Paramedical Council is distributing recognition of academic sessions 2023-24 and 2024-25 with retrospective effect without getting affiliation from Madhya Pradesh Medical University, Jabalpur. Government and private paramedical colleges are illegally admitting students and the Paramedical Council is now distributing recognition to paramedical colleges in buildings which have been declared unsuitable by the CBI under the investigation of nursing scam.

NHRC flags police bias in DJ Yaseen sex abuse case

Cops trace wider sex racket as case deepens

Our Staff Reporter

BHOPAL

The investigation into DJ Yaseen, already booked for drugging and sexually exploiting multiple girls, has taken a troubling turn as the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has raised serious concern about possible police bias and protection. Bhopal Police have recovered 20 obscene videos from Yaseen's mobile phone, allegedly showing young school and college girls being abused after being addicted to drugs.

NHRC member Priyank Kanungo, in a post on X, alleged that a fair and impartial investigation is unlikely due to Yaseen's family's close ties with senior police officials. He said the accused deliberately targeted Hindu girls by luring them to parties, supplying drugs and then raping and filming them to blackmail them into continued sexual exploitation. Kanungo also alleged that several girls were pressured to convert to Islam and were kept as sex slaves.

Calling the police inquiry inadequate, Kanungo said the focus of the investigation must shift to those protecting the accused rather than just the crime. He posted viral photographs showing Yaseen's uncle Sohel and other family members with several police



Photo of family members of Drug peddler Yaseen, who is police custody, with police officials.



Yaseen's uncle seen with senior cop in viral photographs.

officials, including a woman officer of CSP rank who was earlier posted in Bhopal.

Yaseen and his uncle Shahwar were arrested by the Crime Branch on Tuesday and are currently in custody. Police seized over 15 grams of MD drug, a pistol and two SUVs during the operation.

Club 90 manager held

Although cops have denied connection of Yaseen with rape and blackmailing case at TIT college, the Crime Branch has detained the manager of Club 90, Mohit, into custody.

FAKE DOCTOR ON THE RUN

Investigators are now hunting for an alleged doctor, close to Yaseen, who reportedly advised young people to use drugs like MD as a health and weight loss solution. His role in the wider drug network is being probed. Additional DCP (Crime) Shailendra Singh Chauhan said that source of drugs is being traced, and the accused are being interrogated further. Victims identified so far are being supported through counselling.

The club is allegedly owned by Yaseen's uncle Shariq Machhli, whose name surfaced in the rape and blackmailing case. It was alleged that prime accused Farhan and his aides raped the victims at Club 90.

Several NCTE-recognised courses face admission shortfall

Our staff reporter

INDORE

The Department of Higher Education has completed seat allotments in NCTE-recognized courses, but several programmes like BPED, MED and integrated BED-MED continue to face a shortfall in student admissions. Colleges across the state are now urging the department to conduct an

additional round of counselling to fill the remaining seats.

While the Bachelor of Education (BED) course has seen satisfactory enrollment, other programmes have not fared well. In BPED, 30% of the seats remain vacant. MED has 85% seats still vacant and the integrated BED-MED course is short by around 15%. This has led to mounting concern among college administrators.

According to the Devi Ahilya Education College Association, although seat allotment has been completed in three rounds of counselling, student interest remains low. The state currently offers about 65,000 seats across NCTE-approved programmes such as BED-MED, BPED-MPED and part-time BED (three-year). Yet, nearly 25,000 seats remain vacant even after three phases of counselling.

Shortage, lack of transparency fuel fertiliser black-marketing

Our Staff Reporter

BHOPAL

A persistent shortage of fertilisers in Madhya Pradesh has sparked anger among farmers, who allege that the failure to uphold allocation details in the public domain is fuelling black-marketing and hoarding.

Despite the government's digitisation of the fertiliser distribution system, farmers claim they are left in the dark about how much stock has been allocated to them individually. "Five years ago, this data was available publicly, but that transparency has vanished," said Rahul Dhoot, general secretary of Bharatiya Kisan Sangh. "Now, farmers don't know what's allotted in their name. This has opened the door to black-marketing."

Several districts, including Barwani, Khandwa, Shivpuri, Ashoknagar, Burhanpur, Khar-gone, Narmadapuram and Vidisha, are reportedly witnessing long queues and shortages at cooperative outlets, even as fertiliser is freely available in the open market at inflated prices. Madhya Pradesh has set a tar-

Farmers in distress

Fertiliser allotments to farmers not visible online despite system digitisation

MP received 10L MT of urea (out of 17L MT) and 3L MT of DAP (out of 5L MT) so far, saysMarkfed

Farmers blame hoarding, poor distribution and demand-supply mismatch

SSP suggested as alternative to DAP, but adoption remains low

get of distributing over 36 lakh metric tonnes of fertiliser for the ongoing Kharif season, including 17.40 lakh MT of urea, 5 lakh MT of DAP, 6.5 lakh MT of SSP, 5,000 MT of MOP and

86,000 MT of NPK. However, so far the state has received only 10 lakh MT of urea and 3 lakh MT of DAP, according to MP State Cooperative Marketing Federation (Markfed).

Markfed general manager B.S. Khedkar said the shortage is largely due to farmers hoarding stock for the upcoming Rabi season, combined with a rise in the area under maize cultivation during Kharif.

Farmer leader Kedar Sirohi dismissed these explanations, calling it a systemic failure. "If there is a shortage, why is fertiliser being sold openly at higher rates? There's no transparency in the distribution process," he said.

The agriculture department has suggested that farmers consider using Single Super Phosphate (SSP) as a viable alternative to Di-Ammonium Phosphate (DAP), but many remain hesitant to make the switch. As the sowing season progresses, farmer organisations are demanding immediate corrective action and restoration of transparency in allocation data to curb hoarding and black-marketing.

Business illegal, don't give in to firm's request to switch to new website, warns STF

Our Staff Reporter

BHOPAL

The accused in the recent investment fraud are diverting the investors to new websites and apps, promising them that their money is safe, according to the Special Task Force (STF) investigating the scam.

Calling it 'total cheating' as he spoke to mediapersons

Investment scam

here on Thursday, DG, STF, Pankaj Shrivastava said, "Company officials are misguiding the people by stating that the Enforcement Directorate (ED) is conducting an audit and their present website has been blocked, so investors can see their amount in other websites and can also submit their amount." He also added that the said companies are not

Rs 180 cr seized in banks; fraud of Rs 3,200 cr unearthed

registered under the provisions of the RBI and their business is illegal.

While the scam is being probed, the amount of the transactions has reached Rs 3,200 crore. The police have already arrested two accused in the case. The ED has also registered a case against the company. The DG added that they seized Rs 180 crore deposited in the bank accounts of 10 companies. He added that the kingpin of the scam is operating his business from Dubai, but the agencies are still not sure about his location. He said that they were in contact with the federal agencies to issue Red Corner Notice to arrest the accused.

Books meant for students sold to scrap dealer

FP News Service

UNCHEHARA (SATNA)

The text books supplied by the government for free distribution among students were sold to a scrap dealer in a CM Rise School at Unchehara in Satna district on Friday.

The incident came to light when villagers saw a pick-up on the school premises in the morning.

When then went inside the school compound, they saw a bagful of books being kept on the vehicle.

The text books meant for distribution among students were being sold to the scrap dealers.

When the officials of the education department informed about the incident, they said they would act against the school authorities.

The incident rattled the school administration. Princi-



Officials assure action against school authorities

pal of Vinod Kumar Shukla said the peon of the school Praveen met him in the morning and took the key of the midday meal room where the books and notebooks had been kept.

He brought out the books from there, Shukla said, adding that he did not know that the books had been sold.

The block development education officer Ramnaresh

Patel said the books are given only after they are demanded through Vimarsh Portal.

The books are generally received from the depots, he said, adding that he had no knowledge about the sale of books by the CM Rise School. The books are issued to the schools on the basis of the number of students, but there are no provisions for selling extra books, Patel said.

When the issue was put up before the district education officer, Kanchan Shrivastava, he said he would act against the guilty only after an inquiry.

CM inaugurates Harihar Rashtriya Natya Samaroh

Our Staff Reporter

BHOPAL

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav inaugurated the six-day 'Harihar Rashtriya Natya Samaroh' evam Bharatmuni Rashtriya Sangosthi' at Ravindra Bhawan in the city on Thursday. A play 'Samundra Manthan,' directed by Chittaranjan Tripathy and written by Asif Ali was staged on the inaugural day. It was presented by artistes of Rangamandal, National School of Drama (NSD),



New Delhi.

The play is a re-imagination of the ancient tale of Samudra Manthan, presented for a modern audience. It took viewers on a

journey through the timeless saga of gods and demons, as they churn the cosmic ocean in search of immortality. Audiences were enchanted by the di-

vine spectacle as Lord Vishnu, disguised as Mohini, skillfully navigated the conflict, ensuring that devas received the elixir while outsmarting the asu-

'Samundra Manthan' staged, exhibitions on snakes and tigers held on inaugural day

ras. The tale of the play echoed the timeless wisdom of Bharat Muni's 'Natyashastra'.

Besides, the Chief Minister inaugurated the 'Bagheshwar and Manidhar' exhibition. Folk and tribal artistes of the country have showcased their artworks,

based on snakes and tigers. A book 'Lok Mein Manidhar-Bagheshwar' published by Veer Bharat Nyas was also released. Lecture of noted artistes Vani Tripathi Tikku (New Delhi), Vidyanidhi Vanarase (Pune), Chittaranjan Tripathy (New Delhi) and Sanjay Mehta (Bhopal) will be held on Friday under Bharatmuni Rashtriya Sangosthi'. A play 'Mohe Piya,' directed by Vaman Kendre and presented by Rangpith Theatre, Mumbai will be staged on the same day.

Over 25K consumers make cash bill payments in four days

Our Staff Reporter

INDORE

In a span of just four days, more than 25k electricity consumers in Indore have made their bill payments in cash, according to Dilip Kumar Gathe, superintendent engineer of Madhya Pradesh West Zone Electricity Distribution Company. Gathe confirmed that all city zones are accepting cash payments for electricity bills without any reported issues. On average, 700 to 800 con-

sumers per zone have paid their bills in cash during this period. He further stated that in addition to MPOnline agents, authorised agents registered under the electricity company's door-to-door service are also accepting cash payments. "So far, no consumer has reported any difficulties in making payments," he assured. To further assist the public, Gathe advised that any consumer facing issues should feel free to contact their respective zonal engineer for help.

Briefs

SITAPUR
HC halts merger of primary schools

The Lucknow High Court has temporarily halted the merger of primary schools in Sitapur, directing authorities to maintain the status quo until the next hearing on August 21. The court questioned the state's rationale, citing lack of surveys or planning. Teachers and parents protested, alleging violations of the RTE Act. Legal experts suggest the order could set a precedent for other districts.

PRAYAGRAJ
₹95 Crore road washed away

A ₹95-crore Ganga Path road, built for the Mahakumbh, was swept away by floodwaters in Prayagraj. Meanwhile, heavy rain caused water-logging in Firozabad and overflowed the Govind Sagar Dam in Lalitpur. Authorities are on alert as 31 UP districts face rain warnings.

AGRA
Gurdwara Metro station plan revised



A proposed metro station opposite Gurdwara Guru Ka Tal's main gate in Agra faces objections from the gurdwara committee and local MLA, citing disruptions to devotees. UPMRC is surveying alternate locations to shift the station while preserving the religious site's sanctity.

AZAMGARH
Locals spray mosquito repellent themselves

Residents of Uchhuwa village in Azamgarh are forced to self-spray anti-mosquito chemicals due to administrative inaction. With stagnant water and overgrown grass, fears of malaria and dengue outbreaks loom.

MAU
Drug inspectors honored by traders

The Ghosi Drug Sellers' Welfare Committee honored drug inspector Ashutosh Chaubey for his cooperative approach. Traders praised his balance of regulatory compliance and business-friendly measures during a ceremony.

MAU
Village launches cleanliness drive

Nemdhar village in Madhuban launched a cleanliness drive under the Swachh Bharat Mission, with locals and sanitation workers clearing garbage. The gram pradhan emphasized Gandhi's vision of hygiene as a public duty.

MORADABAD
Daylight robbery caught on CCTV

Masked thieves stole ₹15,000 cash and jewelry from a home in Mundapande, Moradabad, while the owner was away. Police are reviewing CCTV footage and have detained one suspect for interrogation.

DECISION | Allahabad HC puts a stay on merger of primary schools in Sitapur

HC questions government's rationale over school mergers

UP State Bureau
PRAYAGRAJ

The Allahabad High Court has ordered status quo on the merger of council-run primary schools in Uttar Pradesh's Sitapur district, offering temporary relief to affected students and parents. The directive came after hearings on two separate appeals filed by children from Sitapur, challenging the state government's broader school consolidation policy. A division bench comprising Chief Justice Arun Bhansali and Justice Jaspreet Singh issued the order on Thursday, scheduling the next hearing for August 21. The appeals contest a July 7 ruling by a single-judge bench that upheld the government's merger policy. Petitioners argued that the move violates the Right to Free and Compulsory Education under the RTE Act, 2009, by forcing younger students to travel longer distances to reach their



new assigned schools.

The state's June 16 order mandates merging primary schools with low enrollment into nearby upper primary or composite schools. The government has maintained that the policy aims to rationalize resources and improve education quality, especially in schools with zero or negligible student attendance. Officials cited data showing that 18 primary schools in Sitapur had no students at all.

However, during Thursday's hearing, the court took note of

State defends consolidation as resource optimization move

alleged procedural irregularities in the merger documents presented by the state. Senior advocate Dr. L.P. Mishra and advocate Gaurav Mehrotra, appearing for the petitioners, argued that the merger order lacks transparency and fails to account for the logistical and

educational challenges faced by young children.

In response, Additional Advocate General Anuj Kudesia and Standing Counsel Shailendra Kumar Singh, representing the state, defended the policy as being in the long-term interest of educational reform. They contended that consolidating underutilized schools would allow for better teacher deployment, improved infrastructure use, and enhanced learning outcomes. The High Court's interim order halts merger proceedings in



Sitapur until the matter is heard in full, signaling a cautious approach to school consolidation efforts. While the state's broader objective remains improving education delivery, the court's intervention highlights the need for safeguards to protect children's access to nearby, quality schooling. The outcome of the August hearing could influence similar merger plans in other districts, as the case taps into the delicate balance between policy efficiency and grassroots educational equity.

Bhatkhande university rocked by arrests in multi crore scam

UP State Bureau
LUCKNOW

In a shocking development, the Heads of Department for Tabla and Bharatanatyam at Lucknow's Bhatkhande Sanskriti Vishwavidyalaya have been arrested. Fearing similar action, the university's administrative officer, reportedly only fifth grade educated, has absconded along with his girlfriend. The CB-CID made significant arrests on Tuesday, taking into custody Professor Manoj Mishra (Tabla Department) and Professor Gyanendra Dutt Bajpai (Bharatanatyam Department). Both are accused of being complicit in a massive ₹3.31 crore scam involving illegal appointments and construction during the tenure of former Vice-Chancellor Professor Shruti Sadolikar Katkar. Seven contractors from twelve associated firms have also been jailed in connection with the scandal. Both HODs have been sent to 14 day judicial custody.

The absconding administrative officer, Ramkumar, is being described as the "man-



HODs and Adminstrative officer arrested

ager" of this extensive scam. CB-CID teams are actively raiding his and his relatives' residences, but he remains at large, with sources suggesting his girlfriend has also disappeared. The scandal first came to light in 2020 when a complaint reached Governor Anandiben Patel, leading to orders for former Vice-Chancellor Shruti Sadolikar Katkar's removal and an FIR filed against her at Kaiserbagh police station. While the CB-CID did arrest Katkar, she was released due to a pre-existing stay order on her arrest.

Clashes & Controversies: Kanwar yatra turns tense across UP

UP State Bureau
LUCKNOW

As the Kanwar Yatra enters its 14th day, cities across Uttar Pradesh witnessed a mix of devotion, disruption, and debate. In Kasganj, tempers flared when a state-run bus accidentally damaged a kanwar. Enraged devotees halted the vehicle, evacuated passengers, and vandalized the bus. The drivers fled the scene, prompting police intervention. Officials assured the kanwariyas their kanwar would be refilled and appealed for calm. Elsewhere in Jhansi, SDM Ajay Kumar sang devotional songs for pilgrims, while Kotwali in-charge Vidyasagar Singh was seen kneading dough and preparing food for the devotees along the roadside. Tensions simmered in



Communal gestures, road rage, and political sparring mark the 14th of Sawan

Lucknow after politician Swami Prasad Maurya's remarks alleging that "criminals in the guise of kanwariyas" were behind violence during

the yatra. Right wing groups attempted a symbolic "purification" outside his residence, leading to heavy police deployment. Protesters were detained and relocated. Maurya doubled down, stating, "True devotees don't indulge in violence. Those doing so are state-protected criminals masquerading as pilgrims." Meanwhile, in Varanasi, the faithful continue to pour in.

Family attempts self-immolation over false case

UP State Bureau
LUCKNOW

A family from Barabanki attempted self-immolation outside Gate Number 4 of the Vidhan Sabha today, alleging that Barabanki police falsely implicated their son in a case and sent him to jail. Alert anti-self-immolation police deployed at the location swiftly intervened as family members tried to douse themselves with petrol brought in bottles.

The family's head, Janki Prasad of Bajgaini village in Ghunghter police station area, Barabanki, stated they came to Lucknow to attempt self-immolation out of distress over his son, Santosh Kumar, being wrongly imprisoned in a murder case. He claimed local authorities had ignored their pleas.

Biogas units to be installed in 2.5 lakh homes

UP State Bureau
LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh is set to launch a large scale rural biogas initiative by installing biogas units in 2.5 lakh households across the state. The pilot phase will begin in Ayodhya, Varanasi, Gorakhpur, and Gonda, where 2,250 household biogas units will be set up initially.

Each biogas unit is estimated to cost ₹39,300, but under the scheme, farmers will contribute only ₹3,990. The remaining cost will be covered through government assistance and a carbon credit model, according to Shyam Bihari Gupta, Chairman of the Uttar Pradesh Cow Service Commission.

The initiative is expected to significantly reduce LPG usage in rural kitchens by as much as



Households to get gas and organic fertilizer from a unit

70% leading to substantial savings on domestic fuel expenses. In addition to supplying gas for cooking, these biogas units will produce slurry that can be used to make natural fertilizers, cutting reliance on chemical alternatives. Officials also noted

that the gas generated may be used as vehicle fuel in the future, adding another potential benefit for rural users.

As part of the broader program, cowsheds (gaushalas) will be built under MGNREGA. In the first phase, biogas and organic fertilizer units will be activated in 43 gaushalas. Each is expected to generate about 50 quintals of slurry per month, offering added income opportunities for local farmers.

AK Sharma blasts officials over power crisis

UP State Bureau
LUCKNOW

In a fiery meeting at Shakti Bhawan on Wednesday, Uttar Pradesh Energy Minister A.K. Sharma severely reprimanded electricity department officials, including UPPCL Chairman Ashish Goyal, for the state's worsening power situation. Expressing extreme displeasure, Sharma accused them of being "blind, deaf, and one eyed," stating he wasn't there to listen to "nonsense."

The minister conveyed the frustration of MLAs and public representatives who are "abusing us and the government" over unreliable power supply. He criticized officials for preparing reports from "AC offices," calling it meaningless and detached from ground realities.

Harshvardhan's web of luxury and shell firms

UP State Bureau
GHAZIABAD

Harshvardhan Jain, the man behind the fake "West Arctic Embassy" in Ghaziabad, lived a life of luxury fuelled by deception. Despite belonging to a well-off industrialist family, he set up an elaborate fake diplomatic identity complete with foreign suits, luxury vehicles, and photoshopped pictures with top officials to run a shell company network and alleged hawala racket.

Educated in Paris and London, Jain reportedly traveled frequently to Dubai, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, and Europe. Four luxury vehicles, including a Mercedes and Sonatas, were found outside his residence, alongside ₹44 lakh in Indian and foreign currency and a dozen high-end foreign watches worth around ₹5 crore.



Lived lavishly running a fake embassy just 100 metres from his home

Interrogated for over two hours by UP ATS, Jain admitted to deep ties within the bureaucracy. He claimed his reputation gave him VIP style access to ministries in Delhi. His fake embassy operated from a lavish villa just 100 metres from his family's home ironically, a home he was reportedly barred from due to his shady dealings.

achievement

DENSO to invest ₹250 crore in Noida EV component plant

UP State Bureau
LUCKNOW

In a significant boost to Indo-Japanese industrial ties, DENSO Corporation, a global leader in automotive innovation, has announced a ₹250 crore investment for a new Motor Generators manufacturing plant in Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh. These components are crucial for hybrid and electric vehicles, highlighting DENSO's commitment to sustainable mobility.

The announcement followed a strategic meeting between DENSO leadership and an Uttar Pradesh delegation, led by Shri Alok Kumar, Principal Secretary (Infrastructure & Industrial Development), and Invest UP officials at DENSO's headquarters in Kariya, Japan.

Female cop trainees protest abuse and poor facilities

UP State Bureau
GORAKHPUR

Gorakhpur PAC training centre turned into a site of mass outrage on Wednesday morning as over 600 female trainee constables erupted in protest over inhuman conditions. Tearful recruits claimed they were forced to bathe in the open under surveillance of CCTV cameras and were denied basic needs like water and hygiene.

One trainee collapsed screaming, "CCTV is installed where we bathe, Why call us without arrangements?" Others alleged threats like "pipes will be shoved down your throats" when they asked for water. The women said 30 recruits were crammed into rooms with a single fan, while 14 lived in tin sheds. "We slip and fall every day, one of us



broke a tooth," a woman said. The protest created panic among officials, especially since CM Yogi Adityanath was present in Gorakhpur for a program at the same PAC tower. Top police brass rushed to the scene. Only after 7 hours of complaints and assurances, including removal of cameras from bathrooms, did the women return to training.

After political outrage, three officers were suspended. DIG Rohan P. Kanay who contro- versially ordered pregnancy tests was removed and sent to DGP HQ.

Dr. Gita Khanna on 30 years of IVF journey

UP State Bureau
LUCKNOW

On World IVF Day, July 25, Dr. Gita Khanna, a distinguished IVF specialist with over thirty years of



experience, shared profound insights into the evolution of infertility treatment. She emphasizes that the most gratifying aspect of her work extends beyond scientific achievement, resting in the unparalleled joy of a mother finally holding her longed for child.

Dr. Khanna recounted that when she began her career, infertility was a silent struggle for many couples. She felt drawn to IVF as a beacon of hope, leading her to help bring this possibility to others.

“I Could’ve Defeated Rahul Gandhi again”, Smriti Irani

UP State Bureau
AMETHI

While from a break from active politics, former Union Minister Smriti Irani has reignited the political discourse around Amethi. In a recent interview, she claimed that had Rahul Gandhi contested from Amethi in 2024, she would have defeated him once more. "The Gandhis didn't dare face me," she remarked pointedly.

Irani expressed sorrow over her defeat but stood firm on her legacy: "If people had said I didn't work or broke promises,



that would've hurt more. But I did everything I could." She dismissed Amethi as a "never winnable" seat, historically skewed by social equations favouring the Gandhi family. "No wise politician chooses a seat where loss is certain," she quipped.

UP sees major rise in Kharif crop cultivation

UP State Bureau
LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh has recorded a sharp surge in the cultivation of key Kharif crops, particularly oilseeds and pulses, marking a season of broad agricultural expansion across the state. According to the latest figures from the Agriculture Department, significant increases have been noted in sesame, groundnut, soybean, pigeon pea, paddy, and maize cultivation.

The total area under oilseed cultivation has increased by nearly 1.25 times—from 432.25



thousand hectares in 2024 to 547.14 thousand hectares in 2025. Sesame has seen the most dramatic rise, with acreage jumping from 180.26 thousand hectares to 303 thousand hectares. Groundnut and soybean have also expanded steadily, reaching 218 thousand and 40

thousand hectares respectively.

In pulses, pigeon pea (arhar) has witnessed major growth, with the cultivated area rising from 184 thousand hectares last year to 273 thousand hectares this season. Moong cultivation has also increased marginally from 30,000 to 32,000 hectares this year. Maize acreage

Sesame acreage nearly doubles; cotton and maize also regain ground in state

Agriculture officials expect further growth, as sowing in some regions will continue into early September.

Staple Kharif grains have shown parallel gains. Paddy cultivation has risen significantly, with area expanding from 4,193 thousand hectares in 2024 to 5,546 thousand hectares this year. Maize acreage

also grew—from 636 thousand to 701 thousand hectares.

An unexpected but notable development is the resurgence of cotton cultivation in the state. The area under cotton, once in steady decline, has grown from just 7,000 hectares to 18,000 hectares this year reflecting renewed farmer interest and potential shifts in crop economics. Altogether, the total area sown under Kharif crops in Uttar Pradesh has increased by over 1.6 million hectares in just one year from 6,574 thousand hectares in 2024 to 8,262 thousand hectares in 2025.

IAS officer faces probe over social media remarks

HD Bureau
KOCHI

The state government has directed an official inquiry into senior Indian Administrative Service officer NPrasanth following social media posts deemed insulting towards higher-ranking colleagues. The order, released on 23 July 2025, appoints Additional Chief Secretary Rajan Khobragade as investigating officer and Principal Secretary Tinku Biswal as the presenting officer. Prasanth had been suspended since November last year and is now facing formal charges. The suspension stemmed from posts in which Prasanth alleged

conspiracy, forgery and document fabrication against then Additional Chief Secretary K Jayathilak and Industries Department Director KGopalakrishnan. Authorities initially issued a show-cause notice, and found his responses unsatisfactory, prompting the probe. That process included two extensions of his suspension before the government greenlit the current investigation. Khobragade, a veteran 1988-batch IAS officer known for his administrative rigor, holds broad authority to collect evidence, interview witnesses and review Prasanth's digital communication records. The



presentation of findings by Principal Secretary Biswal is expected to shape potential disciplinary outcomes, which may range from reinstatement to departmental

Disciplinary outcomes may range from reinstatement to departmental penalties or dismissal,

flashpoint in administrative ethics across India. Transparency and accountability advocates argue that official channels exist for grievances, and misuse of public platforms risks eroding institutional integrity. This case appears indicative of tightening tolerance for unguarded commentary by government officials.

The proceedings are likely to follow the Central Civil Services Rules and the Kerala Civil Services Conduct Rules. If misconduct or breach of discipline is formally established, Prasanth could face consequences such as reduction in rank, withholding of promotion, or compulsory retirement. Prasanth, who earned attention on social media under the handle "Collector Bro", gained popularity for his approachable style as a district collector. His supporters on social platforms have applied considerable pressure, claiming the investigation is disproportionate and politically motivated.

Devotees brave rain for Vavu Bali

HD Bureau
KOCHI

Thousands of worshippers gathered before dawn across Kerala on 24 July to perform the traditional bali tharpanam ritual at riverbanks, temple ghats and beaches despite heavy monsoon showers. Key sites such as Thiruvallam Sree Parasurama Temple, Varkala's Papanasam beach and Aluva Manappuram witnessed dense crowds offering rice balls and sesame seeds to departed ancestors. In Thiruvananthapuram district, authorities deployed police, fire personnel and scuba teams to secure devotees against heightened flood and water-flow risks at ritual sites. The Travancore Devaswom Board reported that morning ceremonies commenced as early as 2.30 am at Aluva, with additional KSRTC buses ferrying participants to Manappuram. Preparatory measures were robustly implemented.

SERIOUS LAPSES | Regular recurrence of the problem has highlighted poor construction quality and contractor oversight

15 highway collapses due to poor construction

At least 15 structural failures have occurred during ongoing National Highway construction works in Kerala, according to official figures submitted to Parliament. The data was revealed in a written reply by Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari to Member of Parliament K C Venugopal in the Lok Sabha on Thursday. The mishaps, spanning from the start of the Bharatmala and other highway expansion initiatives, range from minor cracks and subsidence to partial collapses of newly laid road surfaces and supporting structures. While no casualties have been officially recorded in these incidents, the recurrence of defects has raised serious concerns about construction quality, contractor over-



sight, and long-term road safety in the state. The minister's statement lists incidents affecting several national highway stretches across Kerala, including NH-66, NH-183, and NH-744, among others. Many of these are part of high-priority projects aimed at improving connectivity and boosting logistics in south-west India. Specific mishaps cited include failure of retaining walls, collapse of box culverts, road caving in due to improper compaction, and widening works

underplayed the frequency of such failures. Engineering experts and transport analysts say the repetition of structural issues points to deep-rooted lapses in quality control, material usage, and supervision standards enforced by the executing agencies and contractors. The highway construction in Kerala is largely being undertaken by agencies such as the National Highways Authority of India and the Kerala State Infrastructure Investment Fund Board, in coordination with multiple contractors. These include major national infrastructure firms as well as regional construction players, many of whom operate under the Engineering, Procurement and Construction model or Public-Private Partnership mode.

Jagadeesh heads list of AMMA chief aspirants



HD Bureau
KOCHI

A fiercely contested election is unfolding within the Association of Malayalam Movie Artists (AMMA), with multiple prominent figures filing nominations for key positions, marking a significant shift in the body's traditionally unanimous leadership process. Jagadeesh and Shwetha Menon have formally entered the fray for the post of president, setting the stage for the organisation's first-ever election featuring a direct contest for the top post. Jagadeesh, a long-time member of AMMA and well-known for his extensive film and television career, is seen as a seasoned contender, while Shwetha Menon, an acclaimed actress and TV personality, is positioning herself as a fresh, assertive voice within the association's hierarchy. Other aspirants include actor Raveendran, Anoop Chandran and veteran actor Devan. This is the first time that the president's seat is being openly contested, with over five nominations already filed for the role. The development signals a departure from the customary practice where key

office-bearers were chosen through consensus rather than electoral rivalry. Baburaj has filed his nomination for the general secretary position, bringing his years of experience as both actor and producer into the organisational fold. Meanwhile, actress Ansiba Hasan, best known for her role in Drishyam, has submitted her nomination for joint secretary, adding youthful representation to the

This is the first time that the president's seat is being openly contested, with over five nominations already filed for the role

poll roster. A total of 125 nominations have been filed so far for various posts, indicating heightened enthusiasm and deeper participation among AMMA's nearly 500-strong membership. The organisation, founded in 1994, has long functioned as a key body for Malayalam film artists, with its leadership playing a pivotal role during industry disputes, welfare matters, and public controversies.

Cyclone Wipha spurs heavy rainfall alert

HD Bureau
KOCHI

Tropical Cyclone Wipha has triggered intensified monsoon conditions over Kerala, prompting heightened weather alerts across the state. The India Meteorological Department has issued an orange alert for Pathanamthitta and Idukki, warning of very heavy rainfall expected to range between 115.6 mm and 204.4 mm within 24 hours. The low-pressure system, originating in the western Pacific Ocean and tracking westward, has interacted with the prevailing south-west monsoon winds, increasing the moisture load over peninsular India. This interaction has resulted in stronger convection zones over southern Kerala.

Harrowing evidence of abuse in Sharjah deaths

HD Bureau
KOCHI

An initial re-postmortem in Thiruvananthapuram has determined that 33-year-old Vipanchika Maniyan of Kollam died from strangulation of the neck, with nerve damage consistent with either hanging or forceful strangulation. Investigators also found bruise marks and signs of physical abuse on her body, according to medical officials. The report escalates suspicion surrounding the deaths of Vipanchika and her one-and-a-half-year-old daughter, Vaibhavi, whose bodies were discovered in a flat in Al Nahda, Sharjah on 8 July. The initial Sharjah investigation had suggested

suicide, but the presence of abuse marks has intensified scrutiny. Sasthamcotta DySP Mukesh GB reported that a six-page note posted by Vi-

Suspicion surrounding the deaths has escalated

panchika on Facebook, along with a photograph sent to her family, indicates she took her own life after enduring "torture" at the hands of her husband, Nidheesh Mohan. The allegations are echoed in family statements and the contents of a related suicide note,

which reportedly detailed systematic dowry harassment, forced isolation, confiscation of identity papers, head shaving, and sexual abuse by Nidheesh, his sister Neethu Benny and their father Mohanan. The Kundera police in Kollam have filed an FIR naming Nidheesh as first accused, with Neethu and Mohanan charged under provisions including dowry prohibition and abetment of suicide. Vipanchika's mother, Shailaja, has appealed to both Indian and UAE authorities—filing complaints with the Kerala chief minister's office, the Indian Embassy in Abu Dhabi, and the Ministry of External Affairs—for a comprehensive investigation and

repatriation of the bodies. Vaibhavi's body was cremated in Dubai on 17 July after intervention by the Indian Consulate; Vipanchika's body was flown back to Thiruvananthapuram on 23 July and cremated in Kollam following the re-postmortem. Former Union Minister V Muraliedharan visited the Medical College to meet the grieving family and urged swift action against the accused. This tragedy is unfolding amid a broader pattern: another Kollam woman, Athulya Sathesh, reportedly took her life in Sharjah after alleged domestic violence, prompting renewed calls for protections for expatriate women.

Call unveils final hours before suicide

HD Bureau
KOCHI

A harrowing phone exchange between Reema MV and her husband, Kamalraj, has come to light following her death by suicide, during which she leapt from the Chemballikundu bridge into a river with her three-year-old son. The call, made just hours prior, underscores the domestic strain that preceded the tragedy. The distressed call reveals Reema speaking anxiously about tensions at her marital home. Though the full transcript has not been released, sources say she hinted at her emotional exhaustion. Authorities believe the phone exchange may have been her final attempt to seek solace or explanation from her husband before taking the irreversible step.

Google Maps guides car into deadly stream



HD Bureau
KOCHI

An electric car carrying Josy Joseph and his wife Sheeba veered into a stream in Kuruppanthara, Kottayam, at around 11 am on Wednesday, guided astray by Google Maps. Water rapidly infiltrated the vehicle, prompting the couple to exit immediately. Had they travelled a further 1.5 feet, they would have plunged into deeper, fast-moving water. They escaped without serious injury, thanks to their swift reaction and assistance from nearby locals. The couple, travelling from Chethipuzha to a friend's home in Manvettom, followed Google's navigation through a flooded rural track. Witnesses reported that the route was barely visible due to pooling water and poor visibility. Timber mill workers nearby responded quickly, helping recover the partially submerged car and ensuring there were no casualties. Residents of Kuruppanthara are familiar with this problem. Despite the presence of signboards warning of flooding, drivers often ignore them while relying solely on satellite navigation, experts say. "The entire road was submerged, and we couldn't tell where it ended," commented one

local, underscoring how deceptive such routes can be when water levels rise. Monsoon-related accidents involving GPS misdirection are not uncommon in Kerala. Last May, a group of tourists from Hyderabad drove into a swollen stream near Kuruppanthara while following Google Maps; fortunately, all four escaped unharmed. That incident prompted Kaduthuruthy police to issue guidelines advising caution when using navigation services in flood-prone zones. Cyber-navigation analysts emphasise that mapping algorithms often prioritise the shortest or fastest route, without accounting for seasonal hazards like flooding. Unless regularly updated with ground-truth data—such as road closures, water levels or local barriers—the apps can unwittingly direct drivers into dangerous situations. Local authorities are now exploring ways to fine-tune GPS information around vulnerable rural roads, advocating for better integration between municipal warning systems and digital mapping platforms. Meanwhile, residents underscore one practical solution for drivers: switch off satellite guidance and check with local people.

Vinayakan faces backlash over poem on VS

HD Bureau
KOCHI

Malayalam actor Vinayakan has triggered outrage after he posted a poem referencing the deaths of several prominent political figures, including the late Communist leader and former Kerala chief minister V S Achuthanandan. The verse also mentions figures such as Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Rajiv Gandhi, K Karunakaran and Oommen Chandy's late father, but its tone has been widely condemned as irreverent and insensitive. Youth Congress in Ernakulam has escalated the matter, with district president Sijo Joseph lodging a formal complaint with the

state police chief. The complaint asserts that the poem insults Achuthanandan and offends public sentiment, urging immediate action against the actor. Among those expressing dismay, Congress members criticised the poem as a deliberate affront to the dignity of Kerala's political legacy. They emphasise that Achuthanandan, who died on 21 July 2025 at the age of 101, was a highly respected figure whose decades-long public service and role in championing labour rights earned him broad admiration. Opposition voices argue that even artistic expression must maintain a baseline of



Congress members criticised the poem as a deliberate affront to the dignity of Kerala's political legacy

respect for historical figures held in national esteem. Legal experts note that this incident falls under

provisions of the Indian Penal Code concerning insult to the memory of the dead and public order disturbances. They say the state's involvement could hinge on whether the poem is judged to incite unrest or hurt communal feelings. The police are reportedly reviewing the complaint to determine whether it merits charges under Sections 295A or 505 of the IPC, which address deliberate insults and statements likely to disturb public tranquillity. Vinayakan's social media feed shows he has previously courted controversy, notably for remarks on caste and religion that many viewed as confrontational. Supporters argue his poem

is satirical social commentary intended to spark debate, while detractors accuse him of seeking attention through provocation. Political analysts suggest that the swift complaint filing reflects the heightened sensitivity in Kerala politics to perceived disrespect toward party icons. They highlight a pattern where cultural commentary often quickly transforms into legal battles, especially when it involves figures tied to political legacies. There has been no official response from Vinayakan addressing the complaint. His team has remained silent, though insiders hint that further commentary may follow pending legal advice.



The Free Press Journal

Founder Editor: S Sadanand

Thaw in India, China ties

India's decision to resume issuing tourist visas to Chinese nationals is a much-needed and long-overdue step in the right direction. China has already welcomed the move, and rightly so, as it signals a tentative but important thaw in bilateral relations that have remained frosty since the pandemic and the Galwan Valley clashes in 2020. The breakthrough came after External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar held discussions with his Chinese counterpart on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation foreign ministers' meeting. It's a reminder that diplomacy, even when slow and incremental, can produce tangible results, especially when both sides are willing to look beyond past grievances.

India had suspended tourist visas for Chinese nationals after the coronavirus outbreak, widely believed to have originated in China. But it wasn't just the pandemic that soured ties. The situation deteriorated dramatically with the violent face-off in eastern Ladakh in June 2020, which led to casualties on both sides and hardened public opinion in India against China. One of the major sticking points continues to be China's refusal to acknowledge Arunachal Pradesh as part of India. Beijing's repeated assertions that residents of Arunachal don't require visas—because, in their view, they're already Chinese citizens—add insult to injury. Throw in occasional cartographic mischief and a few provocative statements, and you have a recipe for constant tension.

Yet, India is wise to not allow these longstanding disputes to freeze all avenues of engagement. After all, history cannot be rewritten—China did encroach on Indian territory in 1962 and continues to occupy the Aksai Chin region, not to mention the part of Kashmir that Pakistan handed over to China. But living in the past will only guarantee a colder, more hostile future. China's plans to build a massive dam on the Brahmaputra—reportedly the largest infrastructure project ever undertaken by humanity—may raise eyebrows in India and Bangladesh. But its assurances that downstream nations will not be affected should be taken as an opportunity for further dialogue and environmental cooperation. Meanwhile, both India and China are emerging as global tourism powerhouses. Chinese tourists are seen across Europe, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia, while Indian tourists are fast catching up. With iconic destinations like the Great Wall of China and the Taj Mahal, the two countries have much to offer each other. Cross-border tourism and people-to-people contact will help humanise perceptions, soften political rhetoric, and strengthen cultural and economic ties. Chinese language courses remain popular in Indian universities, reflecting strong trade and commercial interests. Border disputes remain unresolved, yes, but they should not prevent a much-needed warming of relations. After all, even the iciest mountains can melt, given enough sunshine.

The embassy next door

Fraudsters usually aim for modest goals: pretending to be cops, bureaucrats or even ministers to fleece the unsuspecting. But Ghaziabad, near Delhi, recently produced a scamster who thought bigger—much bigger. He didn't just impersonate a government official; he became an ambassador plenipotentiary, set up his own embassy, and represented not one but several countries no one has ever heard of. Meet Harshvardhan Jain, a man with diplomatic flair and, apparently, very poor geography. He claimed to be the envoy of countries like Lodonia, West Arctica, Seborga and Pulwavia—names that are, in reality, obscure villages tucked away under existing sovereign nations. If at all they exist.

From his "embassy" in Ghaziabad—a city more known for real estate scams than real diplomacy—Jain ran visa and consular services. He had a fleet of Mercedes cars bearing CD (Corps Diplomatique) number plates, flags fluttering from every bonnet, and a staff that likely wondered when they'd get actual passports to stamp. To make his act believable, Jain displayed morphed photographs with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and former President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, because nothing says "authentic diplomat" like a badly photo-shopped selfie with national icons. When caught, he was sitting on a cool Rs 44.5 lakh in cash. No one is sure whether it came from visa fees to nowhere, donations to Lodonia's imaginary government, or parking penalties avoided thanks to those CD plates. The External Affairs Ministry may have questions, but the Ghaziabad traffic police will miss him dearly.

Apparently, Jain was once in the glamorous company of godman Chandraswami and arms dealer Adnan Khashoggi. After such stellar networking, diplomacy must have felt like the next logical step. What's bizarre is that Jain's scam wasn't pulled entirely from thin air. Some small countries do appoint honorary consuls, usually well-heeled businessmen who spend their own money to host flags and snacks at fancy diplomatic parties. In return, they get prestige, a few perks, and an excuse to drive around with flags on their cars. Jain took this concept and ran a diplomatic marathon with it, without a finish line or a country. A few years ago, in Kerala, a conman claimed ownership of Moses' staff, Tipu Sultan's throne, and original paintings by Picasso and Raja Ravi Varma. Compared to him, Jain was almost modest. During Oommen Chandy's chief ministership, one man even sat on his chair and tried to "rule the state". What Jain's escapade reveals is not just the audacity of the conman but the gullibility of the public and the laxity of the system. That he managed to fool cops, journalists and officials for so long is a damning commentary. In a nation of a billion, he found no one who asked, Lodonia, where?



Guest Column

SUHIT K SEN

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee led a rally in Kolkata on July 16 to protest against the persecution of Bengali speakers, mostly migrant workers, in states run by the Bharatiya Janata Party. On the same day, the Calcutta High Court questioned the Union government's targeting of such people and asked it to file a report on July 28. On July 17, Banerjee perceptively pointed out that Rohingyas were not Bengali speakers, in response to Leader of the Opposition Suwendu Adhikari's delusional allegation that they had been registered as voters on a large scale.

Samik Bhattacharya, the recently elected West Bengal BJP president, justified on July 9 the harassment of Bengali migrant workers while seeming to shift to a moderate line. But fault lines were exposed. Bhattacharya took charge on July 3, handicapped because of his suavity and 'cultured' image, acceptability to both the 'old guard' and later entrants, and his suitability to push a more inclusive line.

Bhattacharya initiated an outreach to Muslims, belatedly realising perhaps that merely consolidating the Hindu vote won't

work in Bengal. The BJP peaked in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections with 40.7 per cent of the vote and 18 seats of 42. A dip to 38.15 per cent in the 2021 assembly elections saw them finishing a distant runner-up. They settled at 38.73 per cent and 12 seats in the 2024 general elections. This trend is hardly good augury for the 2026 assembly elections. But the inclusive approach foundered on the day of Bhattacharya's ascension, with Adhikari fulminating from the pulpit: "Let's unite the Hindus... If we can ensure 80 per cent turnout... we can oust this Muslim League-II govt, which is an affront to Hindus."

Bhattacharya said his party was not against Muslims and has since courted them. On July 6, he invited the support of 'progressive and nationalist Muslims' while inviting opposition parties to unite in ousting the TMC. The Communist Party of India (M) and Congress swiftly and brutally snubbed him. Winning Muslim support is a huge stretch. Additionally, the mixed messaging could confuse voters. Which brings us to Bhattacharya's attempt to defend the indefensible targeting of Bengalis in BJP-ruled states. Reports of Bengalis being detained and, in many cases, forced into Bangladesh began to surface in mid-June. On June 15, it was re-

ported that a Murshidabad resident working in Mumbai was detained and handed over to the Border Security Force (BSF), which pushed him into Bangladesh.

On June 16, reports of four earlier detentions and expulsions emerged; three had been rescued. On June 17, it was reported that two Bengal residents had been picked up in Maharashtra and forced into Bangladesh. On June 25, it was reported that over 300 Bengalis had been detained in Rajasthan. On July 1, it was reported that the Delhi Police detained seven Bengalis, including three children. They were reported freed on July 3. On July 2, 16 Bengal residents were reportedly detained in Odisha. On July 10, it was reported that over 200 migrant workers had been detained by the Odisha government and at least 600 had faced some harassment. The Odisha government was the most egregious offender, with Rajasthan close behind. Maharashtra and Delhi also figured noticeably. On July 14, it was reported that at least 600 migrant workers had been detained in the BJP-run states. The next day, it was alleged that the Chhattisgarh government had illegally confined eight Bengali migrant workers. On July 16, it was reported that six members of the

Matua community were detained in Maharashtra, which was ironic given that the BJP has made this Hindu Dalit sect from present-day Bangladesh a vote bank by promising citizenship. In the midst of these ethnolinguistically motivated attacks, it was reported on July 7 that a National Register of Citizens-related notice had been issued by the Assam police to a poverty-stricken Rajbanshi farmer in Cooch Behar district, accusing him of entering India illegally. He has never left the district.

Referring to this, Banerjee called on all opposition forces to fight the BJP's sectarianism. On July 3, Bengal chief secretary Manoj Pant wrote to his Odisha counterpart seeking an end to this 'continuing harassment', with the Odisha Human Rights Panel pulling up the Cuttack police two days earlier.

Two petitions were filed in the Calcutta High Court in connection with the Orissa detentions on July 4. On July 10, the court took cognisance of the issue and ordered Pant to appoint an officer to address migrant workers' problems. The next day, it asked him to seek details about the 'deportation' of six Bengali migrants. This chain of events establishes that a campaign of harassment has indeed been mounted

by BJP govts against Bengali migrant labourers, predominantly Muslims. It would hardly be preposterous to suggest that this connects with the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls underway in Bihar and in the pipeline for Bengal. The baseline is the last round of SIRs undertaken in Bihar in 2003, with the state adding 30 million voters till the 2024 general elections, and in Bengal in 2002, with 30.2 million voters being added.

These baselines are unjust, given millions of voters have voted in numerous elections since then. Calling into question their eligibility and, perversely, their citizenship is a malignant and partisan measure that exposes the Election Commission's partiality. Its meddling with citizenship earned a sharp rebuke from the Supreme Court on July 9.

The convergence of the SIRs and government-sponsored anti-Bengali campaigns threatens the franchise and citizenship of many migrant workers, whose peripatetic lives make them easy targets. A mass movement is needed to halt the ethno-fascist BJP regimes in their tracks.

Suhit K. Sen is a historian, author and freelance journalist.



Outlook

SUMIT PAUL

Last month, the Madras High Court called upon the Tamil Nadu government to take steps to pass a government order to enable issuance of a 'no caste, no religion' certificate to those who file applications with revenue authorities seeking the same.

A bench of Justices MS Ramesh and N Senthilkumar made the suggestion while allowing an appeal filed by H. Santhosh of Tirupattur district against a single judge's order refusing to direct the local tahsiladar to issue a 'no caste, no religion' certificate to his family members. Setting aside the single judge's order, the bench directed the authorities to entertain the appellant's applications and issue a 'no caste, no religion' certificate within a month.

"While the Constitution of India prohibits caste-based discrimination, caste and religion still play a significant role in social life, politics, education and employment through reservation policies," the bench said. Describing the appellant's efforts to have himself and his family members certified by the government as not belonging to any caste or religion as "laudable", the bench opined that this "would promote prohibition of caste-based discrimination" in the long run and be an "eye-opener" for like-minded citizens.

This example must be emulated by all the citizens of India. We're all humans, but, unfortunately, everywhere we've had to produce and show our borrowed identities, which don't define us; rather, they defile us. Religion and caste are the labels we love to flaunt, which ought to have been flouted long ago. Caste, class, creed, country and all that jazz are mere accidents of birth. Dividing people into rigid hierarchical orders based on birth and caste colonies creates an environment that stifles the collective well-being of a community. The emphasis on one's caste identity suppresses the development of a shared sense of responsibility towards the public and erodes the motivation to work for the greater good. Consequently, the fundamental values of unity, empathy, and generosity are undermined as caste affiliations take precedence over the welfare of society as a whole.

In recognising the devastating impact of this system, there's an urgent need for the eradication of caste barriers to foster an inclusive and compassionate society. Caste entrenches societal divisions, suppresses free thought, and weakens public discussions. In societies governed by caste, individuals are inherently pigeonholed into predetermined social roles, essentially stifling their autonomy and individuality. As a result, the ability to

form diverse and unbiased public opinions becomes severely compromised, as the dominant caste holds sway over power dynamics, social hierarchies, and the narratives that shape societal discourse. In essence, this serves as a stark reminder of the insidious influence of caste, which obstructs the formation of an inclusive and progressive public opinion.

In today's 'modern' India, caste may appear to have mellowed down, but to quote Dr Ambedkar from his book, *The Annihilation of Caste*, "Caste has often changed its frame, but it has never lost its spirit." This brings attention to the profound impact and deep-rooted nature of the caste system in society. While the physical manifestations of caste may have evolved over time, with new classifications and divisions emerging, the essence and belief in the superiority or inferiority of certain groups have remained ingrained within society. This reflects the resilience and enduring presence of caste, highlighting the need for sustained efforts to dismantle its oppressive structures and address the inherent inequalities it perpetuates. By dividing people into distinct groups and establishing a perceived superiority of one caste over another, caste annihilates the feeling of fraternity that is essential for a harmonious society. True fraternity encourages empathy, solidarity,

and a sense of belonging among individuals, regardless of their backgrounds. However, caste-based divisions suppress such sentiments and hinder the development of a society where equality, cooperation, and camaraderie flourish.

Thus, there's an urgent need to challenge and eradicate caste-based prejudices in order to foster a society built upon genuine fraternity and inclusive principles. In a caste-based society, individuals are assigned a social position at birth, determining their rights, privileges, and even opportunities. Such social stratification based on birth is inherently unnatural, as it denies individuals the right to define their own worth and potential. Consequently, it has impeded the social progress and overall development of the country, and it is essential to acknowledge and confront this inequality in order to pave the way towards a more just and inclusive society. The deeply ingrained social hierarchy and discrimination perpetuated by caste divisions make it impossible to enact true and lasting change while operating within its framework. Until the caste system is eradicated, any reforms will be superficial and ineffective, as they will always be operating within a fundamentally flawed and oppressive system.

Religion also acts in the same oppressive manner the way caste

does, though its malafide spirit may not be so obvious at first blush. Religion is a dogma, and dogmatism is a mindset that discourages skepticism, open-mindedness, and critical thinking, ultimately impeding the development of new ideas and solutions. By clinging to fixed doctrines and refusing to consider alternative perspectives, dogmatism restricts our ability to explore different paths or challenge established norms. It suppresses free thought, stifles creativity, and perpetuates the notion that one's own beliefs are the absolute truth, thereby limiting the evolution of societies and the minds within them.

To truly achieve progress, it is essential to embrace the principles of intellectual openness, flexibility, and the willingness to embrace diverse viewpoints. An evolved human needs to be called just a human sans his/her faith and caste. But have we evolved? Ironically, the government is hell-bent upon knowing the caste, even sub-castes, and religion of every citizen in the ensuing census. Will that help us by any means? Shouldn't the conscientious citizens of India resist and resent the whole shebang of religion and caste? These are indeed million-dollar questions.

Sumit Paul is a regular contributor to the world's premier publications and portals in several languages.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Border safety

After the conflict in the Galwan Valley, India has significantly increased the pace of infrastructure development along the border, keeping a strict watch on every move by China. As part of this effort, an alternative route connecting the strategically crucial Daulat Beg Oldi (DBO) in Ladakh, completely secure from Chinese surveillance, will be operational for transportation by next year. The new route will not only save time but also help the Indian Army transport troops and ammunition to the border without being detected by the Chinese.

Dattaprasad Shiroadkar, Mumbai

Save the heritage

India has requested the Bangladesh government to stop the demolition of the ancestral house, in Bangladesh, of the world-renowned film director Satyajit Ray. However, the local administration has said that the building has

become alarmingly dangerous. India has extended a helping hand to preserve this historic building. Instead of demolishing it, the building should be converted to a museum as a symbol of the shared culture of both countries. Cinema lovers will have the desire to save this place.

Santosh H. Raut, Satara

Tharoor an asset

The Kerala Congress unit has been at loggerheads with Tharoor for quite some time. Now Congress MP Muralaacharan has asked him to stay away from party meetings. Tharoor being chosen to lead the delegation to the US and South America has been a thorn in the flesh of the Kerala Congress. Understandably, Tharoor, being the statesman that he is, was considered to be the best bet for the job. That in no way brings into question his loyalty to the party. Congress should understand and admire Tharoor for what he is.

Manish Shukla, Kota

Heart-warming

A determined person can make it to the top; this has been proved by Atul Kumar, the son of a pony handler from Kedarnath in Uttarakhand. He has cleared the IIT-JAM (Joint Admission Test for Master's) and secured a seat at the most prestigious IIT Madras. Atul lived in a tent without any mobile network and worked to support his family and, at the same time, prepared for IIT. We wish the tribe of Atul to flourish in the future, not only to achieve their dreams but also to build a new India.

A.P. Thiruvadi, Chennai

VP resignation

The vice president's sudden resignation goes to highlight the ugly reality that only those who are subservient to the ruling dispensation will find their chairs cosy. Questioning the government is taken seriously. To go against the government will rub it the wrong way; this Dhankhar knew only too well. However, boldness, propriety and even emotions had

taken precedence. The timing of his exit was perhaps a wilful one, as it has put the govt in the dock in the middle of the monsoon session.

N.R. Raghuram, Hyderabad

Freebies for rich

The Congress has accused the government of distributing "freebies" worth Rs 12 lakh crore to its billionaire friends through

loan write-offs over the past nine years. It said "robbing the poor to benefit the rich" is the BJP's mantra. The opposition party's attack came over the government's reply in the Rajya Sabha that public sector banks have written off an aggregate loan amount of Rs 12,08,828 crore from FY 2015-16 to FY 2024-25. Economic inequality in the country is at its peak, yet the govern-

ment is squandering money from public sector banks on its "friends".

Bhagwan Thadani, Mumbai

Justice for devadasis

The proposed Karnataka Devadasi Bill marks a long-overdue but progressive shift in eradicating a dehumanising tradition. Recognising Devadasi children as legitimate heirs with rights to property and facilitating paternity through DNA finally confronts institutional apathy.

However, enforcement must not echo past failures. The legal reform must be paired with sincere rehabilitation, land rights and dignity. Without empathetic implementation, the law risks becoming another symbolic gesture in a lineage of forgotten promises.

Karnataka must lead not just in legislation but also in justice rooted in compassion.

Dr Vijaykumar H.K., Raichur



Briefs

BEIJING

Six students drown on visit to mining site

Six students from a Chinese university drowned after falling into an industrial tank during an educational visit to a mining operation connected to China's gold producing company, official media reported. The students from the Northeastern University fell into a flotation cell during the visit to a copper-molybdenum ore-dressing plant in north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region on Wednesday, state-run Xinhua news agency reported. The plant is operated by a mining company under China National Gold Group Co Ltd in Hulunbuir.

SYDNEY

5 women to sue airline for strip-search

Five Australian women who say they were pulled from a Qatar Airways flight by armed guards and strip-searched have won the right to sue the airline, after a court on Thursday overturned an earlier decision to throw out the case. Women on 10 Qatar Airways flights, including 13 Australians, were subjected to invasive examinations to see if they had recently given birth after a newborn baby was found abandoned at Doha's Hamad Airport in October 2020.

NEW YORK

WWE star Hulk Hogan dies aged 71



Professional wrestler Terry Bollea, better known as Hulk Hogan, died on Thursday at the age of 71, according to World Wrestling Entertainment. Bollea is widely recognized as the biggest wrestling star of all time and helped WWE become the behemoth that it is today. In the 1980s and 1990s, Bollea's larger-than-life personality – in and out of the ring – made him a household name and a crossover mainstream star, starring in movies and recognized around the world.

BORDER DISPUTE | Thailand deploys F-16 jets, drops bombs near ancient Hindu temple at the centre of frequent conflicts

Thai, Cambodian forces clash, at least 12 killed

Agencies

BANGKOK

Thai and Cambodian soldiers clashed in several areas along their border on Thursday in a major escalation of their conflict that left at least 12 people dead, mostly civilians. The two sides fired small arms, artillery and rockets, and Thailand also called in airstrikes.

Thai villagers could be seen on video fleeing their homes to seek shelter as the clashes began in the morning.

Fighting was ongoing in at least six areas along the border, Thai Defense Ministry spokesperson Surasant Kongsiri said. The trigger for the clashes was a mine explosion along the border on Wednesday that wounded five Thai soldiers and led Bangkok to withdraw its ambassador to Cambodia and expelled Cambodia's.

Thailand has also sealed all land border crossings while urging its citizens to leave Cambodia.

The Southeast Asian neighbours have longstanding border disputes that periodically flare up along their 800-km frontier and usually result in brief confrontations that sometimes involves exchanges of gunfire. But relations have deteriorated sharply since a confrontation in May that killed a Cambodian soldier, and Thursday's clashes were far bigger in scale and intensity than usual.

The first clash on Thursday morning happened in an area near the ancient Ta Muen Thom temple along the border of Thailand's Surin province and Cambodia's Oddar Meanchey province.

DAGGERS DRAWN

Thailand and Cambodia, who share more than 800km of land border, have clashed frequently over contentious areas. The contesting claims stem largely from a 1907 map drawn under French colonial rule that was used to separate Cambodia from Thailand.



Temple tension
Their hostilities concern overlapping claims around the Preah Vihear Temple, a centuries-old Hindu shrine dedicated to Lord Shiva. The temple has long been a symbol of contested sovereignty.

Latest trigger
Tensions worsened in May when a Cambodian soldier was killed during a clash in the contested border area of the Emerald Triangle, where Cambodia, Thailand and Laos meet.

Political turmoil
Thai PM Paetongtarn Shinawatra was suspended from duties in July after the leak of a phone call she had with Cambodia's former leader Hun Sen, in which she criticised her own army's actions in the dispute.

A video from the Thai side showed people running from their homes and hiding in a concrete bunker as explosions sounded.

The Thai army said its forces heard a drone before seeing six armed Cambodian soldiers moving closer to Thai military positions at the border. It said Thai soldiers tried to shout at them to defuse the situation, but the Cambodian side started to open fire.

Cambodia's Defense Ministry, however, said Thailand deployed a drone first before opening fire, and that Cambodia "acted strictly within the bounds of self-defense, responding to an unprovoked incursion by Thai

troops that violated our territorial integrity."

Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet wrote to the current president of the UN Security Council asking for an urgent meeting "to stop Thailand's aggression."

The Thai military said it has deployed six F-16 fighter jets to Kap Choeng district in Surin province - an area near the border, while the Cambodian Defence Ministry said Thai jets dropped bombs on a road near the ancient Preah Vihear temple, which has been the site of some of the most prominent and violent past conflicts between the countries. Thailand's Foreign Ministry accused Cambodia of attacking both military and

non-military sites in Thailand, including a hospital.

"The Royal Thai Government is prepared to intensify our self-defence measures if Cambodia persists in its armed attack and violations upon Thailand's sovereignty in accordance with international law and principles," said Nikorndej Balankura, the ministry's spokesperson.

Acting Prime Minister Phumtham Wechayachai said 11 people have died, including 10 civilians and one soldier. Meanwhile 28 have been injured, four of whom were soldiers and the rest civilians.

Cambodia released no details on deaths or injuries on its side.

ALL 49 FEARED DEAD IN RUSSIAN PLANE CRASH

AP

MOSCOW

The wreckage of a plane that crashed while carrying 49 people has been found in Russia's Far East, local emergency services said on Thursday.

Russia's Emergency Situations Ministry said that they had found the plane's burning fuselage on a hillside south of its planned destination in the town of Tynda.

Images of the reported crash site circulated by Russian state media show debris scattered among dense forest, surrounded by plumes of smoke.

An initial aerial inspection of the site suggested that there were no survivors, Russia's Interfax news agency said, citing unnamed sources in the emergency services. Its sources also said that there were difficult weather conditions in the area.

The transport prosecutor's office in the Far East reported



Images of the crash site show debris scattered among dense forest, surrounded by plumes of smoke

as six crew members were on board the An-24 passenger plane as it travelled from the city of Blagoveshchensk on the Russian-Chinese border to the town of Tynda, regional Gov. Vasily Orlov said.

Russia's Emergency Situations Ministry reported that 48 people were on board the flight, which was operated by Siberia-based Angara Airlines. The reason for the discrepancy was not immediately clear.

The authorities have launched a probe on the charge of flight safety violations that resulted in multiple deaths, a standard procedure in aviation accidents.

that the site of the crash was 15 kilometres south of Tynda. The office said in an online statement that the plane attempted a second approach while trying to land when contact with it was lost. Forty-three passengers, including five children, as well

Apology for S Korean woman jailed for biting attacker's tongue 61 yrs ago

A woman who bit off part of a man's tongue during an alleged sexual assault more than 60 years ago has received a formal apology from South Korean prosecutors, as they sought her acquittal during a retrial after decades of living as a convicted criminal.

Choi Mal-ja, now 80, was 18 when she bit the tongue of a 21-year-old man who she said was attempting to rape her in Busan, South Korea.

She was convicted of "aggravated bodily injury" for biting off 1.5cm of his tongue in self-defence and sentenced to 10 months in prison, sus-

ended for two years. Her alleged attacker received a lighter sentence for trespassing and intimidation after prosecutors dropped the attempted rape charges against him. "The prosecution failed in its role and went in the

opposite direction," he said. "We caused immeasurable pain and suffering to Ms Choi Mal-ja, who should have been protected as a sexual violence victim. We deeply apologise."

During proceedings, the prosecution asked the court to clear her of the past conviction.

After the hearing, Choi emerged from Busan district court with her fist raised, shouting three times: "We won!"



US prez in fresh row as DoJ's Epstein files reportedly name him

Agencies

NEW YORK

Donald Trump faced a fresh crisis on Wednesday as it was reported that his name appears in US justice department files about Jeffrey Epstein and the Congress subpoenaed testimony from the sex offender's partner in crime Ghislaine Maxwell.

The US president's spokesman denied an account in the

'Won't destroy Musk's companies'

President Trump on Thursday denied claims that he wants to wreck Elon Musk's companies and their work with the US government. "Everyone is stating that I will destroy Elon's companies by taking away some, if not all, of the large scale subsidies he receives from the US Government," he said in a post on Truth Social.

Wall Street Journal that Trump was told in May by the attorney general, Pam Bondi, that he is named in the now notorious Epstein files. Citing

release any more documents related to the investigation.

The White House sought to downplay the relationship between Trump and Epstein. Spokesperson Steven Cheung said, "The fact is that the President kicked him out of his club for being a creep. This is nothing more than a continuation of the fake news stories concocted by the Democrats and the liberal media."

Columbia varsity to pay \$220m in deal with Trump admin

New York: Columbia University announced on Wednesday it has reached a deal with the Trump administration to pay more than \$220 million to the federal government to restore federal research money that was cancelled in the name of

combating antisemitism on campus.

Under the agreement, the Ivy League school will pay a \$200 million settlement over three years, the university said. It will also pay \$21 million to resolve alleged civil rights violations against

Jewish employees that occurred following the October 7, 2023 Hamas attack on Israel, the White House said.

"This agreement marks an important step forward after a period of sustained federal scrutiny and institutional

uncertainty," acting University President Claire Shipman said.

The school had been threatened with potential loss of billions in government support, including more than \$400 million in grants canceled earlier this year.

'Indian firm shipped explosives to Russia'

Agencies

WASHINGTON/KYIV/NEW DELHI

An Indian company shipped \$1.4 million worth of an explosive compound with military uses to Russia in December, according to Indian customs data seen by Reuters, despite U.S. threats to impose sanctions on any entity supporting Russia's Ukraine war effort.

One of the Russian companies listed as receiving the compound, known as HMX or octogen, is the explosives

manufacturer Promsintez, which an official at Ukraine's SBU security service said has ties to the country's military.

The official said that Ukraine launched a drone attack in April against a Promsintez-owned factory. According to the Pentagon's Defense Technical Information Center and related defense research programmes, HMX is widely used in missile and torpedo warheads, rocket motors, exploding projectiles and plastic-bonded explosives for

advanced military systems.

The U.S. government has identified HMX as "critical for Russia's war effort" and has warned financial institutions against facilitating any sales of the substance to Moscow.

The HMX sale to Russian firms has not been previously reported. Russian defense manufacturers have been working around the clock for the past several years to sustain President Vladimir Putin's war in Ukraine, which intensified with Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022.

\$322m US arms sale for Ukraine

The US State Department said on Wednesday it has approved \$322 mn in proposed weapons sales to Ukraine, which include hawk missiles to enhance its air defense capabilities and Bradley armoured combat vehicles, coming as the country works to fend off escalating Russian attacks.

Agencies

HONG KONG

Chinese leader Xi Jinping urged the European Union to make "the right strategic choice" and enhance cooperation with China, while EU leaders called for a rebalancing of trade ties, as the two sides tackle deep-seated grievances during a tense summit, which is being held in Beijing.

European Council President Antonio Costa and European Commission



President Ursula von der Leyen met with Xi on Thursday morning and Chinese Premier Li Qiang during the afternoon, China's state broadcaster CCTV

reported. The European leaders used the meetings to voice their concerns over a host of thorny issues, from the gaping trade imbalance between the two

economies to China's ongoing support for Russia in the Ukraine war, and – more recently – Beijing's chokehold on the rare earths supply chain.

offgrid

Leonardo da Pinchy: Cat who steals underwear



AP

WELLINGTON

Most cat owners dread their pets bringing home mice or birds. But for the owners of one felonious feline in Auckland, New Zealand, there's a worse shame - being the unwitting accomplice to an unstoppable one-cat crimewave.

His prolific laundry-pinch-ing from clotheslines and bedrooms in the placid

beachside neighbourhood of Mairangi Bay has turned 15-month-old Leo into a local celebrity and earned him a new moniker. He now goes by Leonardo da Pinchy.

And he's got expensive taste. His frequent hauls include silk boxer shorts, thick men's work socks - preferably with clothespins still attached - and in one mortifying episode for his humans, a brand-new 300 New Zealand dollar (USD 181)

cashmere sweater.

"My daughter was at home sick and she rang me at work saying, 'It's bad, it's bad, this is the worst thing he's brought in, it's really bad,'" said Leo's owner, Helen North. "Because it was beautiful. I was like, 'Ooh, can I keep that?' But I couldn't."

Instead, North turned to a neighbourhood WhatsApp group to return Leo's stolen goods to their rightful owners. Her usual message:

"Are these your undies?"

But the pilfered stash kept piling up: socks (piles), underwear (loads) and even a 5-foot-long stuffed snake (bizarre). On one record-setting day, Leo returned with nine items, enough for a full outfit if you didn't mind a mix of everything from baby clothes to menswear.

"He brought in a jersey this morning at 10 past 8," North said. "The shops hadn't even opened." With dozens of

items unclaimed, the embarrassed owner took her search for Leo's victims wider this month, posting photos of his hauls on a local Facebook page along with an apology.

Those who showed up to claim their belongings included a woman who recognised her pink and purple underpants and a boy whose beloved and missing sports jersey was helpfully identifiable by his name printed on the back.

Macron sues influencer over 'lies' against wife

AP

PARIS

A lawyer for France's first couple said they'll be seeking "substantial" damages from US conservative influencer Candace Owens if she persists with claims that President Emmanuel Macron's wife, Brigitte, is a man.

The lawyer, Tom Clare, said in an interview with CNN that a defamation suit filed on

Wednesday for the Macrons in a Delaware court was "really a last resort" after a fruitless yearlong effort to engage with Owens and requests that she "do the right thing: tell the truth, stop spreading these lies."

"Each time we've done that, she mocked the Macrons, she mocked our efforts to set the record straight," Clare said. "Enough is enough, it was time to hold her accountable."

Briefs

BATUMI
All Indian chess final in Georgia



Grandmaster **Koneru Humpy** defeated Chinese top-seed Lei Tingjie in the tie-breaks to win her semi-final showdown with a 5-3 scoreline. She will now meet another Indian Divya Deshmukh in the FIDE Women's World Cup in Batumi, Georgia. Humpy is the reigning women's world rapid champion who will face International Master Deshmukh, who had won the other Sino-Indian semi-final showdown with a victory over veteran GM Tan Zhongyi 1.5-0.5 on Wednesday. World No 3 Lei had earlier dragged the semi-final into the tie-breaks after holding Humpy to a draw in the second Classical game on Wednesday. And she found herself leading 3-2 at one stage of the tie-breaks, before the Indian came back with a hat-trick of victories.

CLEARWATER (FLORIDA)
Pro wrestler Hulk Hogan, dies at age 71



Hulk Hogan, the mustachioed, headscarf-wearing icon in the world of professional wrestling, has died at the age of 71, Florida police and WWE said Thursday. In Clearwater, Florida, authorities responded to a call Thursday morning about a cardiac arrest. Hogan was pronounced dead at a hospital, police said in a statement on Facebook. Hogan, whose real name was Terry Bollea, was perhaps the biggest star in WWE's long history. The famous wrestler was the main draw for the first WrestleMania in 1985 and was a fixture for years, facing everyone from Andre The Giant and Randy Savage to The Rock and even company chairman Vince McMahon.

MANCHESTER
Indian teams travel to Eng next year



India will travel to England next year for a white-ball tour, including five T20Is and three ODIs, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) announced on Thursday. India's tour will begin with a T20 on July 1 in Durham, followed by matches in Manchester (July 4), Nottingham (July 7), Bristol (July 9) and Southampton (July 11). The three-match ODI series between the two sides will start at Birmingham from July 14, followed by matches at Cardiff, on July 16 and Lord's at July 19. The Indian women team will also engage with England women in a three-match T20I series and a one-off Test. The T20 series will begin at Chelmsford on May 28 and the Test will be at the Lord's from July 10.

FOURTH TEST | Rishabh ruled out of wicket-keeping duties; England bowl out India for 358

Pant battles with fractured toe

PTI
MANCHESTER

Rishabh Pant was on Thursday ruled out of wicket-keeping duties in the ongoing fourth Test against England after fracturing his toe but he came out to bat, even as Tamil Nadu stumper N Jagadeesan got ready to join the Indian team as cover for the injured star. The BCCI stated that Pant is "available" in the role of a batter as per team requirements during the crunch game at Old Trafford.

The 27-year-old Pant retired hurt at 37 on the opening day and went for scans after copping a blow on his right foot while attempting a reverse sweep off England pacer Chris Woakes on Wednesday.

"Rishabh Pant, who sustained an injury to his right foot on Day 1 of the Manchester Test, will not be performing wicket-keeping duties for the remainder of the match. Dhruv Jurel will assume the role of wicket-keeper," the BCCI posted on X.

"Despite his injury, Rishabh Pant has joined the team on Day 2 and will be available to bat as per team requirements," it added.

This was after early inputs from the Board indicated that Pant has been ruled out of the series and Ishan Kishan would be called in as cover for him. However, it later emerged that Jagadeesan is travelling to the UK to join the squad as a replacement for the injured Pant ahead of the fifth Test.

Jagadeesan is expected to fill in as wicketkeeper-batter in the absence of Pant, who received a standing ovation from the crowd at Old Trafford after he walked out to bat with a fractured foot.



Pantastic
37
Retired Hurt
54
Scored in innings



EXTRA ORDINARY COURAGE

Another Indian Test cricketer to return to field after severe injury was legendary leg-spinner Anil Kumble. In the 2002 Antigua Test against West Indies, Kumble was struck on the face by a Mervyn Dillon bouncer, fracturing his jaw. Despite the severe injury and doctors advising immediate surgery, Kumble returned to the field with his jaw heavily bandaged and bowled 14 consecutive overs, even dismissing the legendary Brian Lara. His courage is still celebrated as a defining moment.

Pant came out to bat after the fall of Shardul Thakur's wicket with India at 314/6 on the overcast day. he scored 54 and tried to hang in with the tail but India were bowled out for 358 in 114.1 overs as England skipper took five wickets (5/72) and Jofra Archer finished with 3/73.

With his ability to change the momentum with aud-

acious stroke-play, Pant is a game-changer for India. After undergoing additional scans, Pant arrived at the stadium wearing a moon boot (a protective orthopaedic boot) to support his injured foot.

"His metatarsal bones (a group of five long bones located between the ankle and toe) seem to be shattered. It doesn't look good at all," a



BCCI source told PTI. The severity of the injury was apparent given the blood that was seen seeping off Pant's right foot on Wednesday. The affected area had considerable swelling as well. On day one, Pant was the only one to take the attack to Jofra Archer and Co. while the other batters struck at three runs per over.

India have already lost all-rounder Nitish Kumar Reddy to a knee problem, while pacers Akash Deep and Arshdeep Singh have a groin niggle and a finger injury respectively.

England 225 for 2
After being bowled out for 358, England raced to 210 for 2 in 42 overs with Ben Duckett

Scoreboard

India First Innings (Overnight: 264/4 in 83 overs): Y Jaiswal c Brook b Dawson 58, KL Rahul c Crawley b Woakes 46, Sai Sudharsan c Carse b Stokes 61, S Gill lbw b Stokes 12, R Pant b Archer 54, R Jadeja c Brook b Archer 20, S Thakur c Duckett b Stokes 41, W Sundar c Woakes b Stokes 27, A Kamboj c Smith b Stokes 0, J Bumrah c Smith b Archer 4, M Siraj not out 5
Extras: (B-4, LB-8, NB-4, W-14) 30
Total: 358 all-out (in 114.1 overs)
FoW: 1-94, 2-120, 3-140, 4-235, 5-266, 6-314, 7-337, 8-337, 9-349
Bowling: C Woakes 23-5-66-1, J Archer 26.1-3-73-3, B Carse 21-1-71-0, B Stokes 24-3-72-5, L Dawson 15-1-45-1, J Root 5-1-19-0
England First Innings: Z Crawley c Rahul b Jadeja 84, B Duckett c sub (DC Jurel) b Kamboj 94, O Pope batting 20, J Root batting 11
Extras: (B 4, LB 6, NB 6) 16
Total: 225-2 (in 46 overs)
FoW: 1-166, 2-197
Bowling: J Bumrah 13-4-37-0, A Kamboj 10-1-48-1, M Siraj 10-0-58-0, S Thakur 5-0-35-0, R Jadeja 8-0-37-1.

'India showed they can bat in English conditions'

PTI
MANCHESTER

India's young batting line-up made a strong statement on the opening day of the fourth Test in typical English conditions, proving they don't just score runs on flat pitches or against depleted attacks, feels former cricketer Sanjay Manjrekar.

Openers Yashasvi Jaiswal (58) and KL Rahul (46) gave India a solid start, before Sai Sudharsan (61) and Rishabh Pant, who retired hurt on 37, stitched together a 72-run stand to take the visitors to 264 for 4 at stumps.

"For those skeptics who believe this young Indian batting line-up only gets runs on flat pitches or against weakened attacks, today was a statement," Manjrekar said on Jio Hotstar.

"These were typical English conditions with a much-improved bowling attack - Stokes bowled more overs, Liam Dawson was an upgrade over Shoab Bashir, and Archer added edge to the line-up.

"For India to finish at 264/4 under those conditions -- that's another solid batting display. Thankfully, Rishabh Pant managed to get some bat on the ball before retiring hurt. Hopefully, he'll return to bat on Day 2," he added.

Sudharsan, playing only his second Test, struck a maiden half-century after returning to the XI, having missed the second and third matches of the series.

"He looked nervous at the start, which is natural after being dropped post the first Test. That kind of omission can affect confidence. But he grew into his innings," Manjrekar said.

"He has an organised game, and the way he scores reflects the fundamentals."

India-Pakistan match likely in Asia Cup

BCCI set to host T20 event in UAE in September, according to ACC sources

PTI

NEW DELHI/DHAKA

The high-intensity cricketing rivalry between India and Pakistan will resume briefly in September as decks have been cleared for the BCCI to host the upcoming Asia Cup T20 tournament in the UAE, sources in the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) said on Thursday.

The decision was taken at an ACC meeting attended by all 25 member nations. BCCI was represented by its vice-president Rajeev Shukla, who attended the meeting to discuss the venue, virtually.

"The BCCI will host the Asia Cup in the UAE. India is likely to play all its matches in Dubai. There are still deliberations on scheduling," an ACC source told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

The tournament is being held in UAE as India and Pakistan have mutually agreed to play all their matches across all multi-nation events till 2027 at neutral venues.

This edition of Asia Cup is being held in T20 format since the next ICC World Cup will be in the shortest format in India and Sri Lanka in



Former India T20I skipper Rohit Sharma (R) and out of favour Pakistan T20I batter Babar Azam in a file pic. AFP

February 2026. The tournament will be held for a little over fortnight in September.

It has to end before the final week of the month as India's Test series against West Indies is also scheduled around the same time. Out of the three international grounds, one at Dubai and other at Abu Dhabi is expected to be used for the tournament.

Keeping the interests of broadcasters as well as sponsors in mind, there is every chance that India and Pakistan will be clubbed in the same group and there will be minimum two games -- group league and Super Six if not the final if both teams happen to qualify.

"Our vice-president Rajeev Shukla attended the ACC

meeting. He will brief the members. I don't believe in speculations so you will get to know officially in a few days time," BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia told PTI.

In Dhaka, ACC chairman and Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) head Mohsin Naqvi also kept cards close to his chest when asked about a possible Indo-Pak match at the continental event.

"We will announce it shortly. We have had discussions with the BCCI and there are a few issues that we will resolve shortly. All 25 members attended the meet either physically or virtually. We are all on same page," Naqvi told reporters.

It is also learnt that due to BCCI's pressure, only two out of 10 items on the agenda, were discussed. The only item in the agenda that was passed relates to grant for the developing nations under ACC's aegis. "We have all decided to work for cricket. None of us wants politics in our organisation and we had very good meeting, hope we will continue working like this."

Naqvi also said that BCCI representative not attending the meeting in person is not an issue.

'Anshul Kamboj's experience will hold him in good stead'

Former Indian pacers Ishant and Bhuvneshwar back the Haryana seamer to do well in Tests for India

PTI

NEW DELHI

Anshul Kamboj's toil in first-class cricket should hold the Haryana seamer in good stead, said senior India pacers Ishant Sharma and Bhuvneshwar Kumar here on Thursday, after the 24-year-old was handed his debut for the fourth Test against England at Manchester.

Kamboj, who was a part of the India A squad before the five-Test series began, was called in after fast bowlers Arshdeep Singh and Akash Deep were sidelined from the Manchester Test due to injuries.

"He will do well since he has done well in First-Class cricket, and anyone who has had a good run in First-Class cricket is bound to do well for the team too," Ishant told PTI Videos on the sidelines of a Pickle Pros event.

"People say it is easy to take wickets in First-Class cricket, but it is really not," he added. Bhuvneshwar warned Kamboj to not get bogged



He will do well since anyone who has had a good run in First-Class cricket is bound to do well for the team too

Ishant Sharma
former India pacer

down under pressure in his maiden game for India.

"I hope he does well because the debut match is always special and there is pressure on you as well, so I hope he doesn't succumb to

the pressure of a debut match," Bhuvneshwar said.

"If he does well, then it will hold him in good stead, but of course, he is a very good bowler, he did well in domestic cricket and the IPL, so I wish him luck," the ace swing bowler added.

Ishant said losing Rishabh Pant for the remainder of the series would be a "big blow" even as the India vice-captain came out to bat in the first session with a fractured foot.

"It is a big blow for India if a player like him is out for (up to) six weeks but (if) you see, sports is something where you are replaceable, because a sport always moves on, your team struggles for a little while but the sport goes on," Ishant said.

He continued, "Earlier it was Sachin Tendulkar, then Virat Kohli, and after that someone else (time) will come so while it is a big setback, injuries are part and parcel of sports. But the silver lining is that it will now give an opportunity to some other player to perform."

AP

ZURICH

Aitana Bonmati began the Women's European Championship recovering from a hospital stay. On Wednesday, she steered Spain to another major final against England.

The two-time Ballon d'Or winner scored the extra-time clincher in a 1-0 semifinal victory over Germany and set up a rematch of the World Cup final in 2023, when Spain beat England 2-1.

Bonmati's preparations for Euro 2025 were seriously disrupted when the Barcelona midfielder was hospitalized with viral meningitis less than a week before the tournament.

"I wanted to get to this game at my best level and that's thanks to all the people next to me, who helped me to reach this game at my top level because on my own it wouldn't have been possible," Bonmati said.

Bonmati's goal created history for Spain.

It was the first win in nine attempts against Germany and secured a place in the European final for the first time.

"I don't believe in destiny. I believe in hard work, my mentality, and all the support I have received," the 27-year-old Bonmati said.

The match was seven minutes from a nerve-wracking penalty shootout when Bonmati gathered a pass and got past Rebecca Knaak with a clever dummy and turn before squeezing home an

audacious attempt from the tightest of angles.

The goal also ended a rare drought for Bonmati, who hadn't scored in her previous six appearances.

"It wasn't easy for her at the beginning of the tournament but she has a special personality to be at the maximum level," Spain coach Montse Tomé said. "She has a huge capacity to create spaces, where she can generate opportunities like today."

"And she managed to overcome the health issues she

had at the beginning of the tournament. Good work was done with her to get her back to the level she's at now, she helps the team a lot."

Spain is aiming to add the European title to its collection after winning the World Cup and Nations League in the past two years.

To do that it has to get beat defending champion England in Basel on Sunday.

"Tomorrow we will think about England," Bonmati said. "Now it is time to celebrate."



Aitana Bonmati (R) celebrates with teammate Patri Guijarro in Spain's semifinal win over Germany. AFP

Briefs

MANAMA (BAHRAIN)

Powell spoils Advani's party



Young Welsh sensation Riley Powell gatecrashed Pankaj Advani's birthday party by denying India's green baize baron a 29th World title with a stunning come-from-behind triumph at the IBSF World 6-Red Snooker Championship here on Thursday. The 16-year-old, who missed out on the two age-group competitions, handed Advani, who turned 40 on the day, a 5-4 defeat in front of a motley crowd. The teenager had the small gathering spellbound with some amazing potting.

MUMBAI

NSCI league from Aug 15 in badminton



The 7th edition of the NSCI Badminton League (NBL) is set to be played from August 15-17 at the NSCI courts in Worli. The league will feature six teams battling for honours. Each team will have 16 players, which mandatorily includes two women's players on each side. The key is to have a well-balanced team, as the ties will be contested on a best-of-five basis. The teams will battle only in doubles, which include Men's doubles and Mixed doubles. This tournament, which is growing in popularity, will see the teams going all out in their bid to settle old scores. Spectators are urged to watch and cheer the teams in action.

CHINA OPEN | Satwik-Chirag advance to quarters, Prannoy exits

UNNATI STUNS SINDHU

PTI

CHANGZHOU (CHINA)

In a defining moment of her fledgling career, young Unnati Hooda stunned two-time Olympic medalist and Indian badminton stalwart PV Sindhu in a gripping three-game contest to storm into the quarterfinals of China Open Super here Thursday.

Facing her decorated compatriot for only the second time, 17-year-old Hooda held her nerves in crunch moments to register a sensational 21-16, 19-21, 21-13 victory in 73 minutes, ensuring her maiden quarterfinal appearance at a Super 1000 event.

This is the first time that Sindhu has lost to a fellow Indian in an international event in seven years, the last being the 2018 Commonwealth Games final loss to Saina Nehwal. She had lost to Saina in the 2019 National Championships final as well.

The teenager from Rohtak, who has won Super 100 titles at the 2022 Odisha Masters and 2023 Abu Dhabi Masters, will next take on Japan's Akane Yamaguchi, the third seed and a two-time world champion.

Hooda said she herself was surprised with the win.

"I didn't expect that I would win today," Hooda said after the match.

"But I came with thinking that I will give my all. Whatever the match result (would be), (it) will be in the last thing so winning against



Unnati Hooda stretches during her match against PV Sindhu. BWF/Badminton

her, it's surprising for me too."

"But I am happy that I was able to win today against her. It was a very tough match for me," she added.

Hooda said she was determined to remain patient through the course of the game.

"Actually, I wasted my two Hawkeye challenges. Then she took control on the shuttle and dominated the second game after that. I also tried my best but couldn't win the second game. But I kept the patience level with myself in the third game," talented Hooda added after the match on Thursday.



I didn't expect that I would win today. But I came with thinking that I will give my all.

Unnati Hooda
Indian shuttler

Sindhu said it was tough to control the shuttle.

"It was a bit hard to control the shuttle is what I felt because the court also made a difference. In the third game

she took a lead and then maintained that," she said.

The men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty also displayed tactical discipline and composure to notch up a 21-19 21-19 victory over the eighth-seeded Indonesian combination of Leo Rolly Carnando and Bagas Maulana and progress to the quarterfinals.

It was however the end of the road for HS Prannoy, who bowed out after a hard-fought 21-18 15-21 8-21 loss to sixth seed Chou Tien Chen of Chinese Taipei in a 65-minute men's singles second-round match.

Azrinaz best for Hughes Trophy

Joe Williams
PUNE

Azrinaz, who has attracted the highest number of appeals in the betting ring, has been drawn in stall four and will be the one to watch in the JE Hughes Trophy — the feature race on the second day of the Pune racing season, scheduled to be held at the iconic Pune Race Course on Friday.

Trained by the seasoned Karthik Ganapathy and to be partnered by champion jockey A. Sandesh, Azrinaz brings both form and pedigree to this six-furlong contest. The filly has shown consistent speed in morning workouts and is expected to mount a serious challenge when the gates open.

Azrinaz is expected to face stiff competition from Emperor Roderic and the gritty Fighton, known for his strong finishes.

Selections

First race: 2.00 pm

1. The Beyond Expectation Plate: 1. (8), 2. (7), 3. (2)

2. The S K Sunderji Salver: 1. (6), 2. (5)

3. The JSK1 Gaming Trophy: 1. (3), 2. (9), 3. (8)

4. The Ismail Khan Plate: 1. (3), 2. (7), 3. (11)

5. The J E Hughes Trophy: 1. Azrinaz (4), 2. Emperor Roderic (3), 3. Fighton (1)

6. The Atomic Prince Plate: 1.)(6), 2.. (10), 3. (12)

7. The Orange Flame Plate: 1. (2), 2. (3), 3. (9)

Anisha, Anouska storm into semis

Banhi digs deep to oust Arpita after a five-set quarterfinal thriller



FPJ News Service

MUMBAI

Anisha Tamhankar from Spinart cruised into the semifinals of the Girls U-19 3rd 4 Star Ranking Table Tennis Tournament-2025 at Willingdon Sports Club on Thursday. Anisha outclassed Shanaya Parikh (GCH) in straight sets 11-3, 11-4, 11-6 in the quarterfinal match on Thursday. Anousha Patil joined Anisha in the semis with easy 11-5, 11-6, 11-7 win over Kokare Maahi Kiran (PROT) in other girls quarter-final match.

Vaidehi Thakare and Banhi Dube also reached the girls U-19 semifinals. Vaidehi (ROYL) defeated Ishana Babu (YMCA) 11-4, 11-7, 11-7. Banhi (BSTR) had to dig deep to oust Arpita Borhade (CTTA) in five sets. Banhi won the first set but lost touch in the next two sets to trail 1-2. However, she came back well nicely to claim the match 11-3, 9-11, 8-11, 12-10, 18-16 after a thriller.

Other Results

Girls U-17 Main Draw Quarterfinals

Arpita Borhade (CTTA) bt Chafekar Aarohee (KMM) 3-0 (11-7, 11-8, 11-9); Gupte Anvi (BSTR) bt Kokare Maahi Kiran (PROT) 3-0 (11-3, 11-4, 11-7); Dube Banhi (BSTR) bt Sara Jamsutkar (Spinart) 3-0 (11-7, 11-9, 11-7); Annisha Patra (RDTTA) bt Vaidehi Thakare (ROYL) 3-1 (7-11, 11-6, 12-10, 11-6)

Masters Men 40+ Gurcharan Singh Gill (PDTTA) bt Saurabh Mohite (PJ Hindu) 3-2 (6-11, 11-7, 11-5, 9-11, 11-9); Sharad Grover (GCH) bt Niraj Dalal (PJ Hindu) 3-0 (11-5, 11-6, 11-5); Kedar Kasbekar (SHTTC) bt Premal Dharod (MLWB) 3-0 (11-6, 11-5, 11-6); Abhay Khandhar (GCH) bt Jai Motishaw (GCH) 3-0 (11-7, 11-4, 11-8)

Sportvot

Advait hat-trick hands Stanislaus big win; Cathedral edge Bosco

FPJ News Service

MUMBAI

St. Stanislaus Bandra outclassed St. Lawrence Kandivali 4-0 in the boys U-16 Division I Group C clash of the Mumbai Schools Sports Association (MSSA) football tournament at Wings Sports Centre Bandra on Thursday. Advait Paran scored a hat-trick while Ayush Ramugade scored the fourth goal. Advait was all over the St. Lawrence defense and scored at will

with his speed and skills.

Cathedral and John Connon edged past Don Bosco Borivali 2-1 in the Boys U-16 Division I Group D clash. Inform striker Anaii D'Souza scored the first goal for the Cathedral team while Saumil Wadgaonkar equalized for the Borivali side. However, skipper Rian Uniyal scored the winner

Gokuldharm HS Goregaon defeated St. Paul Dadar 1-0 in same group match. Malhar Bhavne scored the goal.

Don Bosco A Matunga blanked Smt. RSB AVM Juhu 4-0 in the B Group match. Bhavya Sindesh scored a brace while Avanish Bhagade and Jacob Kshetrimayum scored a goal each. Bhavya scored the first goal. Bhagade doubled the lead and Sindesh made it 3-0 with his second goal. Kshetrimayum scored the last goal.

Cambridge Kandivali defeated Christ Church Byculla 1-0 in other same group match.

FPJ News Service

MUMBAI

Indira National School (INS) delivered a dominant performance against KLE, winning comfortably with a score of 30-6 in the CBSE Cluster IX Basketball Tournament at Indira National School, Pune.

DY Patil School (DYPS) showcased a strong offense in match two, outscoring PISP by 56-31 in a fast-paced game. In the third game, NEHS outclassed PIS, secur-



ing a decisive 34-17 win with solid team coordination.

The fourth match turned into a thrilling battle as INS edged out AVM in a high-scoring contest, eventually claiming victory with a close 50-44 scoreline. DRSK

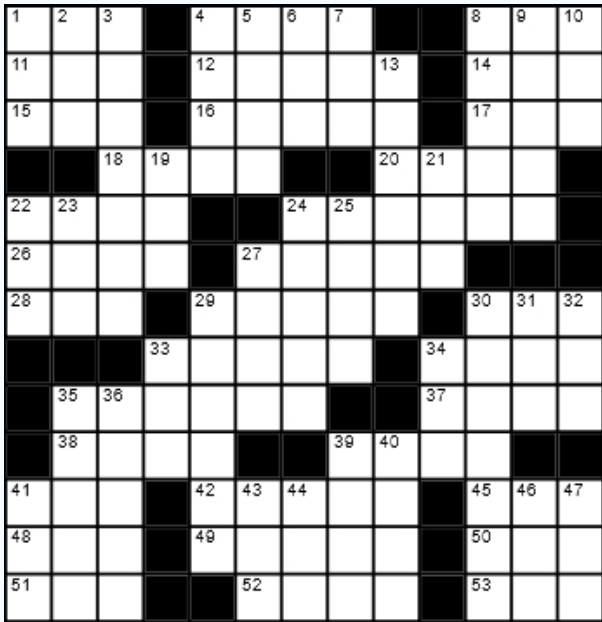
showed control and precision in match five, registering a 43-27 win over WSN, keeping their opponents at bay throughout the match.

The sixth game saw a close fight between AAPS and SHAN, with SHAN narrowly

clinching the win by a single point, 26-25. Wrapping up the day, MNS emerged victorious in match seven with a 28-16 win over APS, capping off another action-packed day at the tournament.

The tournament which started on July 20 features an exciting lineup of schools competing with energy, skill, and sportsmanship, making it a true celebration of school-level basketball. The matches are being streamed live on SportVot in association with FPJ.

Crossword #1573



Across

- 1 Electrical conductance unit
- 4 Is in debt
- 8 Vinyl
- 11 The possessive case of "we"
- 12 Five as a prefix?
- 14 Annoy
- 15 Navigation Mgmnt. Sys.
- 16 Make into law
- 17 Son of Tarzan of the Apes?
- 18 Clock pointer
- 20 Type of gemstone
- 22 One of a pair
- 24 Catwalk
- 26 Minute
- 27 Thin flat circular objects - gramophone records?
- 28 Fr. holy title
- 29 Embankment
- 30 Art degs.
- 33 Simple single-celled organism
- 34 Short note
- 35 French mathematician
- 37 Twelfth of a foot
- 38 Indian music form
- 39 Moon sea
- 41 Large sea fish
- 42 Cabs
- 45 Giant's curse
- 48 Peculiar
- 49 North Pole personnel
- 50 Integer, in short?
- 51 Uganda's Amin
- 52 Helsinki chap
- 53 Terminal Control Area, abbr.

Down

- 1 "My" in French ?
- 2 Sing wordlessly
- 3 Rain : fair weather or foul? (2,5)
- 4 handed : generous?
- 5 Move through
- 6 Spanish queen
- 7 Supplemental Type Certificate
- 8 Tripoli is its capital
- 9 Person authorised to act for another
- 10 Proverbially it's the limit
- 13 Right away (2,4)
- 19 Some - no matter which
- 21 National Weather Serv.
- 22 Teletype setter, in short
- 23 A humorous person?
- 24 Opponent
- 25 Second-hand
- 27 bank: Former public sector bank
- 29 Find position of
- 30 Advantage to be gained
- 31 Annual maintenance contract
- 32 Fifth note of the scale
- 33 Chow mein enhancer
- 34 Russian space station
- 35 Snobbish
- 36 One of the As of AAP
- 39 Bearing
- 40 Org.
- 41 Colour Reversal Intermediate
- 43 Pet name for Alfred
- 44 Sixteen for Caesar
- 46 Ind. Natl. Congress
- 47 Estimated time of arrival, in short

YOUR DAY

By Vinayak Vishwas Karandikar



ARIES: TARIES: You will be more inclined toward spirituality and deep thinking today. Expenditure on religious activities, travel or investments is possible. Growth is indicated for those in research, astrology, finance, and teaching. Family discussions may turn serious. Avoid arguments. Some may suffer from leg pain or acidity. Lucky number: 7; Lucky colour: Yellow



TAURUS: A day of introspection and strong intuition. Expect expenditure on loans, medical treatments or charity. Success is seen for those in the occult sciences, finance, and consultancy. Avoid confrontations with close family members. Family discussions may turn serious. Some may experience anxiety or digestive issues. Lucky number: 9; Lucky colour: Red



GEMINI: A good day to connect with influential people. Sudden gains or unexpected expenses related to businesses are likely. Growth is indicated for people in marketing, media, education, and business fields. You may have deep discussions with your spouse or partner. Take care of your nerves and avoid stress. Lucky number: 5; Lucky colour: Green



CANCER: A day of responsibilities and work pressure. Expenditure is likely on career growth, travel or legal matters. Success is seen for those in medical, law or government jobs. Balance is needed between work and family time. Some may suffer from back pain or stomach-related issues. Lucky number: 8; Lucky colour: Blue



LEO: A day for philosophical and spiritual insights. Expenditure on education, travel or donations is likely. Success is seen for those in teaching, religious activities, and publishing. A good day for deep emotional conversations with your loved ones. Some may suffer from hip pain or dehydration. Lucky number: 3; Lucky colour: Yellow



VIRGO: A day of sudden changes and transformations. Be cautious about unnecessary expenses or financial losses. Growth is seen for those in psychology, research, and auditing. Unexpected changes in family dynamics are possible. Some may suffer from sleep issues or nerve-related problems. Lucky number: 6; Lucky colour: White



LIBRA: A day of social interactions and partnerships. Expenditure on business partnerships, travel or legal matters is possible. Success is seen for those in law, business, and counselling. Strengthening of bonds with your partner or spouse is indicated. Some may experience headaches or eye strain. Lucky number: 2; Lucky colour: Pink



SCORPIO: A day of discipline and hard work. Expenditure on health or work-related matters is likely. Success is seen for those in healthcare, law enforcement, and finance. Your responsibilities towards family will increase. Some may suffer from joint pain or digestive issues. Lucky number: 4; Lucky colour: Brown



SAGITTARIUS: A day of enthusiasm and learning. Expenditure on education, children or creative activities is likely. Success is seen for those in teaching, content writing, and media. A joyful day with your family or children is indicated. Some may suffer from knee pain or stress. Lucky number: 1; Lucky colour: Orange



CAPRICORN: A day of emotional depth and nostalgia. Expenditure on homes, renovations or real estate is possible. Success is seen for those in real estate, construction, and interior designing. A good time for family bonding. Some may suffer from chest congestion or fatigue. Lucky number: 8; Lucky colour: Grey

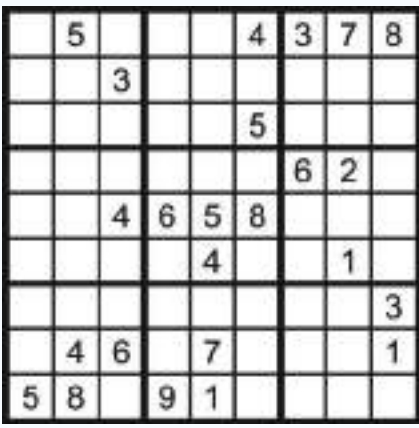


AQUARIUS: A day for networking and communication. Expenditure on travel, gadgets or learning new skills is possible. Success is seen for those in journalism, IT, and social media. Communication gaps may arise with your siblings. Lucky number: 5; Lucky colour: Sky Blue



PISCES: A day for financial planning and decision-making. Expenditure on luxury, comfort or family needs is possible. Success is seen for those in banking, finance, and the art field. A peaceful time with family is indicated. Family discussions may turn serious. Some may suffer from weight gain or sleep issues. Lucky number: 2; Lucky colour: White

FPJ - SUDOKU - 464



Solution

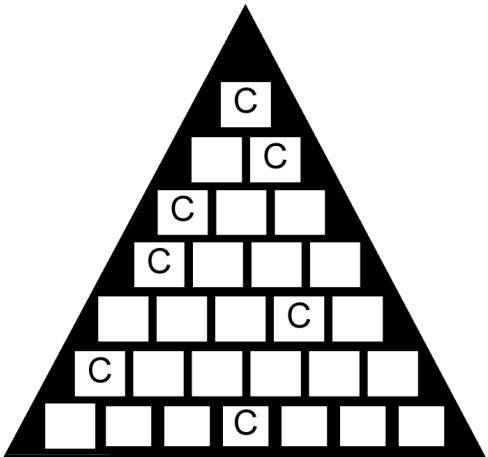
Across: 1 Mho, 4 Owe's, 8 LPS, 11 Out, 12 Penta, 14 Klt, 15 NMS, 16 Enck, 17 Boy, 18 Hund, 20 Ont, 21 Twp, 22 Twp, 23 Twp, 24 Rmwy, 25 Wf, 26 Twp, 27 Prcs, 28 Sls, 29 Lvee, 30 Bds, 33 Mond, 34 Mem, 35 Padel, 37 Tm, 38 Raga, 39 Mare, 41 Cod, 42 Taxis, 45 He, 46 Assn, 47 CRI, 48 Assn, 49 Elvs, 50 Int, 51 Idl, 52 Hm, 53 TCA, 54 Rm, 55 Elvs, 56 Int, 57 Prcs, 58 Raga, 59 Mare, 61 Cod, 62 Taxis, 65 He, 66 Assn, 67 CRI, 68 Assn, 69 Elvs, 70 Int, 71 Idl, 72 Hm, 73 TCA, 74 Rm, 75 Elvs, 76 Int, 77 Prcs, 78 Sls, 79 Lvee, 80 Bds, 83 Mond, 84 Mem, 85 Padel, 87 Tm, 88 Raga, 89 Mare, 91 Cod, 92 Taxis, 95 He, 96 Assn, 97 CRI, 98 Assn, 99 Elvs, 100 Int, 101 Idl, 102 Hm, 103 TCA, 104 Rm, 105 Elvs, 106 Int, 107 Prcs, 108 Raga, 109 Mare, 111 Cod, 112 Penta, 114 Klt, 115 NMS, 116 Enck, 117 Boy, 118 Hund, 120 Ont, 121 Twp, 122 Twp, 123 Twp, 124 Rmwy, 125 Wf, 126 Twp, 127 Prcs, 128 Sls, 129 Lvee, 130 Bds, 133 Mond, 134 Mem, 135 Padel, 137 Tm, 138 Raga, 139 Mare, 141 Cod, 142 Taxis, 145 He, 146 Assn, 147 CRI, 148 Assn, 149 Elvs, 150 Int, 151 Idl, 152 Hm, 153 TCA, 154 Rm, 155 Elvs, 156 Int, 157 Prcs, 158 Raga, 159 Mare, 161 Cod, 162 Taxis, 165 He, 166 Assn, 167 CRI, 168 Assn, 169 Elvs, 170 Int, 171 Idl, 172 Hm, 173 TCA, 174 Rm, 175 Elvs, 176 Int, 177 Prcs, 178 Sls, 179 Lvee, 180 Bds, 183 Mond, 184 Mem, 185 Padel, 187 Tm, 188 Raga, 189 Mare, 191 Cod, 192 Taxis, 195 He, 196 Assn, 197 CRI, 198 Assn, 199 Elvs, 200 Int, 201 Idl, 202 Hm, 203 TCA, 204 Rm, 205 Elvs, 206 Int, 207 Prcs, 208 Raga, 209 Mare, 211 Cod, 212 Penta, 214 Klt, 215 NMS, 216 Enck, 217 Boy, 218 Hund, 220 Ont, 221 Twp, 222 Twp, 223 Twp, 224 Rmwy, 225 Wf, 226 Twp, 227 Prcs, 228 Sls, 229 Lvee, 230 Bds, 233 Mond, 234 Mem, 235 Padel, 237 Tm, 238 Raga, 239 Mare, 241 Cod, 242 Taxis, 245 He, 246 Assn, 247 CRI, 248 Assn, 249 Elvs, 250 Int, 251 Idl, 252 Hm, 253 TCA, 254 Rm, 255 Elvs, 256 Int, 257 Prcs, 258 Raga, 259 Mare, 261 Cod, 262 Taxis, 265 He, 266 Assn, 267 CRI, 268 Assn, 269 Elvs, 270 Int, 271 Idl, 272 Hm, 273 TCA, 274 Rm, 275 Elvs, 276 Int, 277 Prcs, 278 Sls, 279 Lvee, 280 Bds, 283 Mond, 284 Mem, 285 Padel, 287 Tm, 288 Raga, 289 Mare, 291 Cod, 292 Taxis, 295 He, 296 Assn, 297 CRI, 298 Assn, 299 Elvs, 300 Int, 301 Idl, 302 Hm, 303 TCA, 304 Rm, 305 Elvs, 306 Int, 307 Prcs, 308 Raga, 309 Mare, 311 Cod, 312 Penta, 314 Klt, 315 NMS, 316 Enck, 317 Boy, 318 Hund, 320 Ont, 321 Twp, 322 Twp, 323 Twp, 324 Rmwy, 325 Wf, 326 Twp, 327 Prcs, 328 Sls, 329 Lvee, 330 Bds, 333 Mond, 334 Mem, 335 Padel, 337 Tm, 338 Raga, 339 Mare, 341 Cod, 342 Taxis, 345 He, 346 Assn, 347 CRI, 348 Assn, 349 Elvs, 350 Int, 351 Idl, 352 Hm, 353 TCA, 354 Rm, 355 Elvs, 356 Int, 357 Prcs, 358 Raga, 359 Mare, 361 Cod, 362 Taxis, 365 He, 366 Assn, 367 CRI, 368 Assn, 369 Elvs, 370 Int, 371 Idl, 372 Hm, 373 TCA, 374 Rm, 375 Elvs, 376 Int, 377 Prcs, 378 Sls, 379 Lvee, 380 Bds, 383 Mond, 384 Mem, 385 Padel, 387 Tm, 388 Raga, 389 Mare, 391 Cod, 392 Taxis, 395 He, 396 Assn, 397 CRI, 398 Assn, 399 Elvs, 400 Int, 401 Idl, 402 Hm, 403 TCA, 404 Rm, 405 Elvs, 406 Int, 407 Prcs, 408 Raga, 409 Mare, 411 Cod, 412 Penta, 414 Klt, 415 NMS, 416 Enck, 417 Boy, 418 Hund, 420 Ont, 421 Twp, 422 Twp, 423 Twp, 424 Rmwy, 425 Wf, 426 Twp, 427 Prcs, 428 Sls, 429 Lvee, 430 Bds, 433 Mond, 434 Mem, 435 Padel, 437 Tm, 438 Raga, 439 Mare, 441 Cod, 442 Taxis, 445 He, 446 Assn, 447 CRI, 448 Assn, 449 Elvs, 450 Int, 451 Idl, 452 Hm, 453 TCA, 454 Rm, 455 Elvs, 456 Int, 457 Prcs, 458 Raga, 459 Mare, 461 Cod, 462 Taxis, 465 He, 466 Assn, 467 CRI, 468 Assn, 469 Elvs, 470 Int, 471 Idl, 472 Hm, 473 TCA, 474 Rm, 475 Elvs, 476 Int, 477 Prcs, 478 Sls, 479 Lvee, 480 Bds, 483 Mond, 484 Mem, 485 Padel, 487 Tm, 488 Raga, 489 Mare, 491 Cod, 492 Taxis, 495 He, 496 Assn, 497 CRI, 498 Assn, 499 Elvs, 500 Int, 501 Idl, 502 Hm, 503 TCA, 504 Rm, 505 Elvs, 506 Int, 507 Prcs, 508 Raga, 509 Mare, 511 Cod, 512 Penta, 514 Klt, 515 NMS, 516 Enck, 517 Boy, 518 Hund, 520 Ont, 521 Twp, 522 Twp, 523 Twp, 524 Rmwy, 525 Wf, 526 Twp, 527 Prcs, 528 Sls, 529 Lvee, 530 Bds, 533 Mond, 534 Mem, 535 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667 CRI, 668 Assn, 669 Elvs, 670 Int, 671 Idl, 672 Hm, 673 TCA, 674 Rm, 675 Elvs, 676 Int, 677 Prcs, 678 Sls, 679 Lvee, 680 Bds, 683 Mond, 684 Mem, 685 Padel, 687 Tm, 688 Raga, 689 Mare, 691 Cod, 692 Taxis, 695 He, 696 Assn, 697 CRI, 698 Assn, 699 Elvs, 700 Int, 701 Idl, 702 Hm, 703 TCA, 704 Rm, 705 Elvs, 706 Int, 707 Prcs, 708 Raga, 709 Mare, 711 Cod, 712 Penta, 714 Klt, 715 NMS, 716 Enck, 717 Boy, 718 Hund, 720 Ont, 721 Twp, 722 Twp, 723 Twp, 724 Rmwy, 725 Wf, 726 Twp, 727 Prcs, 728 Sls, 729 Lvee, 730 Bds, 733 Mond, 734 Mem, 735 Padel, 737 Tm, 738 Raga, 739 Mare, 741 Cod, 742 Taxis, 745 He, 746 Assn, 747 CRI, 748 Assn, 749 Elvs, 750 Int, 751 Idl, 752 Hm, 753 TCA, 754 Rm, 755



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 Computer language
- 2 University College, abbr.
- 3 Young bear
- 4 Raise to third power
- 5 Die Hard star Willis
- 6 Little angel
- 7 Seller of meat



C, UC, Cub, Cube, Bruce, Cherub, Butcher

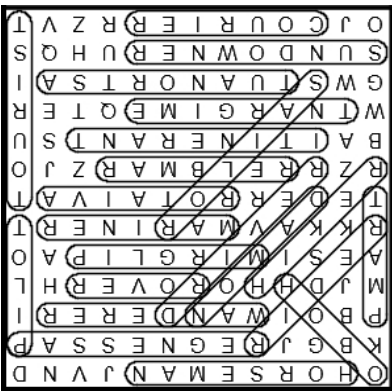
Solution to Alpha Triangle

O H O R S E M A N J V N D
K B G J R E G N E S S A P
P B O I W A N D E R E R I
M J D H H O R O V E R H L
A E S I M I R G L I P A O
R K K A V M A R I N E R T
T E D E R R O T A I V A T
R Z R R E L B M A R Z J O
B A I T I N E R A N T S U
W T N A R G I M E Q T E R
G W S T U A N O R T S A I
S U N D O W N E R U H Q S
O J C O U R I E R R Z V T

Travellers

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.

- Astronaut
- Aviator
- Courier
- Driver
- Emigrant
- Hiker
- Hobo
- Horseman
- Itinerant
- Mariner
- Nomad
- Passenger
- Pilgrim
- Pilot
- Rambler
- Rider
- Rover
- Sailor
- Sundowner
- Tourist
- Tramp
- Wanderer



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

= 16

1 2 4 9

Medium

= 8

1 3 5 7

Hard

= 7

4 5 6 8

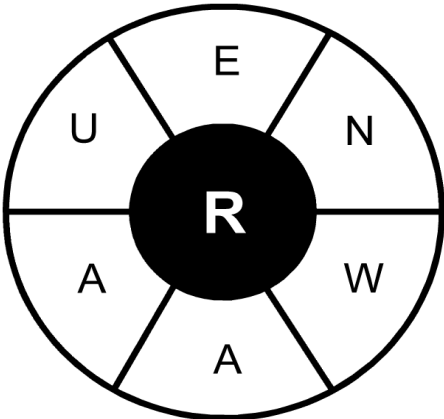
Our Solutions:
Easy - 4 + 2 + 9 + 1 = 16
Medium - 7 + 5 - 1 - 3 = 8
Hard - 4 + 8 / 6 + 5 = 7

Riddler

This is a test to gauge your mental flexibility, creativity and cunning. Good Luck!
(Example: 16 O in a P. Answer: 16 Ounces in a Pound) 26 J on the I S C

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.



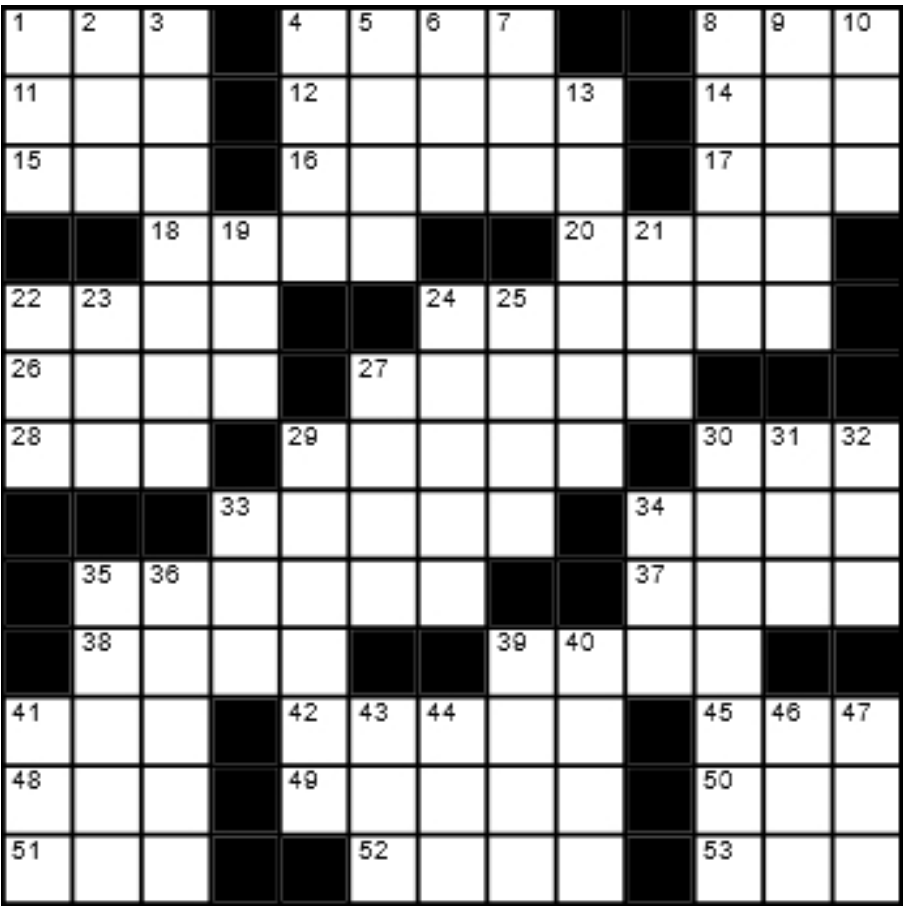
Ratings:

10 average; 11 good; 13 outstanding.

area, arena, aura, aware, earn, near, rune, UNWARE, urea, ware, warn, wear, wren

SOLUTION :

Crossword #1573



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- 1 Electrical conductance unit
- 4 Is in debt
- 8 Vinyl
- 11 The possessive case of "we"
- 12 Five as a prefix?
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- 15 Navigation Mgmt. Sys.
- 16 Make into law
- 17 Son of Tarzan of the Apes?
- 18 Clock pointer
- 20 Type of gemstone
- 22 One of a pair
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- 27 Thin flat circular objects - gramophone records?

Down

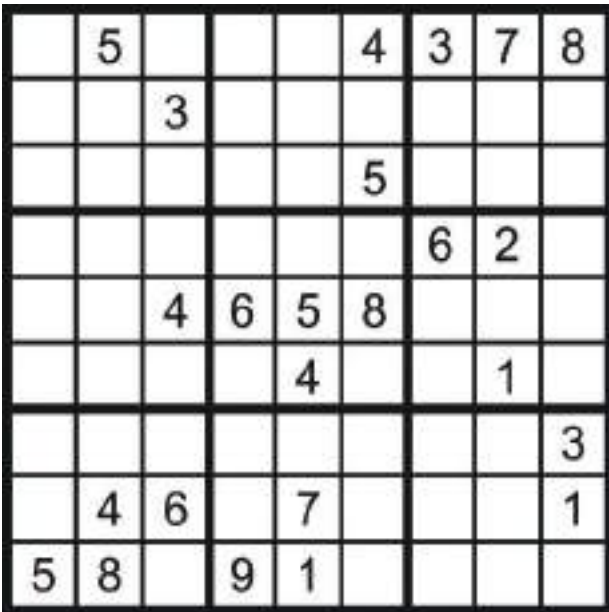
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- 39 Bearing
- 40 Org.
- 41 Colour Reversal Intermediate
- 43 Pet name for Alfred
- 44 Sixteen for Caesar
- 46 Ind. Natl. Congress
- 47 Estimated time of arrival, in short

SUDOKU



Across: 1 Mho, 4 Owe, 8 Lps.
11 Out, 12 Penta, 14 Ink, 15 NMS.
16 Enact, 17 Boy, 18 Hand.
20 Onyx, 22 Twin, 24 Runway.
26 Tiny, 27 Discs, 28 Ste.
29 Levee, 30 Bas, 33 Monad.
34 Memo, 35 Pascal, 37 Inch.
38 Raga, 39 Mare, 41 Cod.
42 Taxis, 45 Pie, 48 Rum.
49 Elves, 50 Int, 51 Idi, 52 Finn.
53 TCA. Down: 1 Mon, 2 Hum.
3 Or shine, 4 Open, 5 Wend.
6 Ena, 7 STC, 8 Libya, 9 Proxy.
10 Sky, 13 At once, 19 Any.
21 NWS, 22 TTS, 23 Wit, 24 Rival.
25 Used, 27 Den, 29 Locate.
30 Benefit, 31 AMC, 32 Soh.
33 Mng, 34 Mtr, 35 Proud.
36 Admtr, 39 Mlen, 40 Assn.
41 CRT, 43 Alt, 44 XVI, 46 INC.
47 ETA.



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.

Reasons why you should use cinnamon in the garden

Shatavisha Chakravorty

The role of cinnamon in increasing your beauty is something that is not hidden from us. Indeed, there are tonnes of ways in which cinnamon can be made into a face pack or a face scrub in order to reap the maximum benefits. However, one aspect of cinnamon that is often ignored is the fact that the cinnamon stick does not become beneficial only after it has been plucked and brought to us in our homes. The benefits of cinnamon start way before that and can be seen in the garden itself. This article talks to us about how cinnamon is good for your garden. Take a moment to read this for this might motivate you to introduce a new member in your garden.

• Deters ants
Ants are a major source of nuisance in the garden as they are known to eat into the leaves. These not just damage the leaves and make them look ugly, they are also bad for the overall health of the plant. In such a situation, one of the most efficient ways of stopping the ant from causing damage would be by stopping one ant from communicating with the other. The aroma of cinnamon does precisely that. It is so strong that the ants get confused and lose their way. Thus, they are unable to cause much damage.



• Fights fungus
Fungus is another factor that disrupts the normal growth of plants. In the Indian subcontinent, the growth of wild mushrooms is another common cause of concern. In such a situation, one of the easiest ways to deal with that would be by using cinnamon for this purpose. All you have to do is ground the cinnamon into a powder and sprinkle some of it in the areas where fungi are present. This will ensure speedy death and your lovely flowers will be able to bloom in full glory.



• Revives sick plants
Just like any other living beings, plants may also get wounded. Though plants recover very fast and with a little bit of love, care and attention on our part, it is very easy for us to revive them to their earlier form. One of the easiest hacks would be sprinkling a pinch of cinnamon powder over this every day. This should be done after watering the plant in order to ensure the maximum amount of retention. Repeat this action for 4 to 5 days.

• Keeps mosquitoes away
This point is not just beneficial for the plants in your garden but also for you as well. Mosquitoes and other pesky creatures do not like the smell of cinnamon. Hence, if you sprinkle a good amount of cinnamon powder in your garden, you will be happy to realize that mosquitoes are keeping away from it. This will, in turn, enable you to keep away from conditions like dengue and malaria.

• Protects seedlings

Cinnamon safeguards seedlings by shielding them from harsh weather, fungus, and various plant diseases with its antifungal and antibacterial properties. This nurturing environment fosters healthy growth until the seedling matures into a self-sufficient plant, eliminating the need for further cinnamon treatment.

• Helps in grafting

Anyone who is into gardening is well aware of the role of grafting and cutting in the process of plant reproduction. Now, it is obvious that when a part of a plant is being detached from its original body and taken elsewhere, it will be weaker. In such a situation, what you can do is dip it in cinnamon powder before replanting it. This will ensure that your plants grow out to be stronger.

1 Treats breakouts

Sea salt is an excellent remedy that can help to treat breakouts on the skin. Breakouts can generally lead to acne and pimples, thus leading to embarrassing situations. However, in order to keep your skin clear, you should use some sea salt. Take ½ a spoon of sea salt, mix it with honey and apply this on your face. Wait for 10 minutes and wash off with lukewarm water. Using sea salt can help to prevent breakouts on the face.

Rima Chowdhury

Sea water is known to contain minerals and nutrients that are essential to our body. We can find similar minerals in our body as that found in sea water and hence sea salt can be used as a perfect ally to protect our skin and also supply these nutrients. Sea salt with its rich calcium, magnesium, sodium and potassium content is known to benefit the skin in several ways thereby keeping skin concerns like dryness, dullness, irritation, etc., at bay. So, we have presented to you different benefits of using sea salt and the different ways to use it to better the skin.



Ways to include salt in your skin care routine



2 Face exfoliator

Sea salt is a natural exfoliator that helps to deep cleanse your skin, thus getting rid of the dust and dirt from the face. Take some sea salt and mix it with facial oil. Now massage your face with this and wash off with water. Using this mixture can help to exfoliate your skin deeply, thus getting rid of the dead skin cells effectively.

3 Treats puffy eyes

Did you know that using sea salt can work as an excellent remedy to treat puffy eyes? Well, yes this is true that sea salt is one of the agents that can help to treat puffiness. Mix some sea salt with water and soak a cotton pad in it. Now place this cotton pad on the eye, covering the under-eye area. Wait for some time and wash off with cold water. Repeat this remedy twice in a day to get rid of the puffy eyes completely.

4 Treats dry skin

If you have dull and dry skin, you should make use of sea salt, as it helps to get rid of the dead skin cells, thus giving you healthy and supple skin. Take 2 spoons of sea salt, mix it with two spoons of brown sugar, one spoon of coconut oil and two spoons of raw sugar. Mix all the ingredients together and apply this on the skin. Wait for some time and wash off with cold water.

5 Excellent toner

Sea salt works as an excellent toner that helps to exfoliate and cleanse your skin deeply. Take some salt, mix it with water and spray the solution on the face. This will help to work as a natural toner, thus giving you a healthy and glowing skin. Sea salt can help to remove the dead skin cells without over drying the skin.

6 Promotes hair health

Sea salt is not just beneficial for the skin; it can also promote healthy hair growth and scalp health. The minerals found in sea salt, such as magnesium, calcium, and potassium, can nourish the scalp and hair follicles, promoting stronger, shinier hair and preventing issues like dandruff and scalp irritation. To incorporate sea salt into your hair care routine, mix a small amount of sea salt with your regular shampoo or conditioner and massage it into your scalp. This gentle exfoliation removes buildup and boosts scalp circulation, promoting healthy hair growth.

9 Foot soak

Sea salt can work as an excellent mouthwash. Using salt can help to kill the dirt and germs from the mouth, thus giving you a fresh breath. Also, using sea salt in a mouthwash can help to strengthen the gums, thus preventing bleeding of the gums. If not baking soda, you can add some sea salt in warm water and gargle with this. Sea salt can also whiten your teeth naturally.



Understanding IBS: Symptoms and solutions

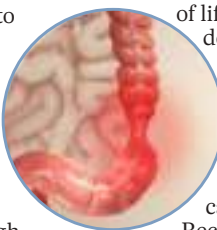
Dr. Meghraj Ingle

Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) is a multifaceted digestive disorder that takes a toll on millions of people. Abdominal pain or discomfort accompanied by bloating, gas, and changes in bowel habits such as diarrhea, and constipation. Many people experience fatigue and a feeling of incomplete emptying after using the bathroom. Many people with IBS tend to get anxious or stressed due to their condition and have poor self-esteem. It's important for those struggling with IBS to deal with both the physical and emotional aspects of their condition to successfully control their symptoms and improve their quality of life.



Triggers of this condition:

Stress is known to trigger IBS. The gut-brain connection in IBS matters as emotional distress can cause flare-ups of symptoms. Certain food triggers such as gluten, dairy, and high fermentable oligosaccharides, disaccharides, monosaccharides, and polyols (FODMAP) foods cause IBS. Considering these triggers can help in managing symptoms and improving overall quality



of life. Did you know? The delicate balance of bacteria in the gut can be disrupted by factors like antibiotic use, diet changes, or infection, leading to gastrointestinal distress. Moreover, low activity and poor sleep can worsen IBS symptoms. Recognizing and controlling triggers for IBS is crucial for those living with this chronic condition. By identifying triggers and making appropriate lifestyle modifications or dietary changes, people with IBS can cope with their symptoms and improve their overall well-being.

The management:

Tackle IBS through a low FODMAP diet, which limits foods high in fermentable carbohydrates that can aggravate the symptoms. This approach reduces bloating, gas, and abdominal pain in many individuals with IBS. It is important to work with an expert or dietitian when implementing this diet to ensure appropriate nutrient intake. Exercising and stress management techniques such as mindfulness meditation, yoga, or deep breathing exercises can also be beneficial for controlling IBS symptoms. By addressing dietary triggers and stress levels, individuals with IBS may experience better control over their condition and improved quality of life. Stay in touch with your expert and notify him/her about any changes in the bowel movements.

The role of gut health and probiotics:

Emerging research highlights the importance of maintaining a healthy gut microbiome in managing IBS. Probiotics—beneficial bacteria found in certain fermented foods and supplements—can help restore microbial balance in the gut, potentially easing symptoms like bloating and irregular bowel movements. While the effects may vary from person to person, incorporating probiotic-rich foods such as yogurt, kefir, kimchi, or taking a suitable supplement under medical guidance can support digestive health. Keeping a symptom journal can also help track which probiotic strains or foods yield positive results. Over time, enhancing gut health may lead to better symptom control and overall digestive comfort.

Can turmeric treat spinal injury better than drugs?

Chandana Rao

When we hear of serious injuries or ailments, we never think of natural remedies first, instead, we usually head to the doctors and have medicines prescribed, right? Well, while medical care may be necessary to treat certain injuries, in the initial stages, it is also a fact that natural remedies can be used for their long-term treatments and these natural remedies have proven to be very effective! Now, we know that the spinal cord is one of the most important structures that lie in the back, starting from the brain. The spinal cord is a long, thin bundle of complex nervous tissues and support cells, which is responsible for carrying out certain important functions of the human body.



One of the main functions of the spinal cord is to transmit neural signals from the brain, to the rest of the body parts to enable them to carry out their functions. Spinal cord injury can be extremely dangerous, in which the vertebral bones shatter and may harm the spinal cord, causing paralysis and even death! So, there is one natural ingredient that can help treat spinal cord injury, read along to know what it is!

Exploring natural aids for recovery

While advanced medical treatments are essential in managing spinal cord injuries, many researchers and health experts are now exploring the potential of natural remedies to support healing and improve recovery outcomes. Among the various herbs and spices known for their therapeutic properties, one ingredient has gained significant attention for its powerful anti-inflammatory and cell-regenerating effects.

Turmeric to treat spinal cord injury

Turmeric is an ancient Indian spice, which is extremely rich in nutrient content and also comes with numerous medicinal properties that can treat certain ailments. In fact turmeric is used, even to this day, in many effective natural remedies and Ayurvedic medicines. A new research article published in Neurology research International, says that turmeric has the capacity to treat spinal cord injury, even better than drugs! The research study also said that turmeric contains a powerful ingredient known as curcumin, which comes with anti-inflammatory properties that can heal most kinds of injuries quickly! Even when it comes to spinal cord injuries, caused by trauma to the spine, curcumin can reduce the inflammation and heal the injury naturally.

In addition, the curcumin compound present in turmeric can also aid the rejuvenation of the cells in the spinal cord, making the healing process quicker! So, after the initial medical procedure done to treat the injuries, turmeric can be consumed or added to your diet, based on the instructions given by your doctor to treat the condition effectively!

Reduce gastritis and six other health benefits of parsley

Chandana Rao

Do you feel a burning sensation in your stomach after every meal? Do you feel bloated very often? If yes, then you could be suffering from gastritis and this is a common digestive ailment which can make a person feel extremely uneasy all the time! Gastritis is a condition in which there is an inflammation of the intestines and stomach lining due to the production of excess digestive acids triggered due to a number of reasons. Stomach bloating, excess gas accumulation in the stomach, constant burping and flatulence, acid reflux, nausea, stomach pain, loss of appetite, vomiting, etc., are some of the common symptoms of gastritis. When a person does not consume healthy, balanced meals at the right intervals, it could lead to gastritis. Other causes for this condition could be stress, obesity, side-effects of certain medications, etc. If gastritis is left untreated for a long time, it could even cause stomach cancer. So, here is a kitchen ingredient, which can reduce gastritis permanently.

Kitchen ingredients which can treat gastritis

A recent research study conducted at the University Of Edinburg has found that parsley leaves, which are commonly used in our kitchen, have the ability to treat gastritis and reduce its symptoms permanently.

This is how parsley treats gastritis

Parsley is rich in potassium and vitamin K. These nutrients have the ability to reduce the production of excess acids in your stomach and also soothe the lining of your stomach and intestines, thus reducing gastritis symptoms.



How permanent is this remedy?

When you consume this parsley leaf remedy on a regular basis, its positive effects can help you permanently, by treating gastritis and keeping its symptoms under control.

Method of preparation

Boil a handful of washed parsley leaves in water. Now, leave the leaves in the water for about 2 hours, with a lid on. Then, strain the water and collect it into a glass. Consume this water every morning, before breakfast.

• This parsley remedy can only work if you start consuming healthy foods, which are not oily and spicy. Skipping meals can also make this remedy ineffective. Smoking and alcohol must also be avoided, as they worsen gastritis.

• If you are experiencing chronic gastritis symptoms, you must seek professional help immediately! In chronic cases, this remedy may not be very effective. Pregnant women must speak to their doctors before consuming this remedy.



Other benefits of parsley

■ Treats diabetes

Parsley is rich in flavonoids and antioxidants, which can reduce the blood sugar levels in a diabetic patient and also balance out the insulin hormone production, thus keeping some of the diabetes symptoms under control.

■ Treats arthritis

Arthritis is a condition in which the joints in the body stiffen and start to ache with movement. Since parsley is rich in antioxidants, it can promote the healthy flow of blood to the joints and cartilages, thus treating arthritis naturally.

■ Boosts immunity

Parsley is rich in antioxidants and potassium, both of which can strengthen every cell of your body and enable them to fight diseases, thus boosting your immunity and keeping you healthy.

■ Treats kidney stones

Kidney stones are hardened deposits of minerals and waste collected in the kidneys, causing pain and other symptoms. Parsley is a natural diuretic which can flush out the deposits in the kidney and help reduce the number of kidney stones, naturally.

■ Prevents cancer

A number of research studies have found that the antioxidants and flavonoids found in parsley can help prevent certain common types of cancers by curbing the growth and multiplication of cancerous cells in the body.

■ Promotes heart health

Rich in potassium and folate, parsley supports cardiovascular health. Potassium helps control blood pressure, while folate lowers homocysteine levels, reducing the risk of heart disease and stroke. Including parsley in your diet can support a healthier heart.

■ Improves bone health

Parsley contains significant amounts of vitamin K, which is essential for maintaining bone health. Adequate vitamin K intake helps improve bone density and reduces the risk of fractures, making parsley a valuable addition to a bone-healthy diet.

■ Supports digestive health

The high fiber in parsley supports digestion by encouraging regular bowel movements and preventing constipation. Its natural diuretic effect also helps reduce bloating and water retention, enhancing digestive comfort.

■ Skin health

Parsley's powerful antioxidants help protect the skin from damage caused by free radicals, UV rays, and pollutants. Regular intake may promote clearer, healthier skin by reducing inflammation and boosting collagen production.

Running into the Saiyaara jodi

What's the lead pair like in real life, though?



Kabir Singh Bhandari

It was a rainy evening in Bandra, and I had just hopped out of a cafe on Carter's Road near the *Khao Gali*. As I was going to turn a corner for some Kolkata-style *jhalmuri*, I thought I spotted the newest *jodi* in Bollywood right behind me, entering another adjacent cafe. Was it actually lead actor Ahaan Panday and director Mohit Suri (you all were expecting Anheet Padda, right?), or was it the cappuccino taking effect?

Mohit was in a green hoodie and shorts, and Ahaan was also casually dressed, passing off as a tall, slim, college-going boy, with that raw, rugged bag full of hair he sports on screen. So I walked in, said a quick hi, congratulated Mohit on the film's suc-

cess, and Ahaan too. None of them had any airs themselves. Ahaan, just a few days into the success of his big debut, came across as completely down-to-earth and distinctly soft-spoken. And let's just say that the way they were dressed, and the way they carried themselves, you wouldn't have been able to make out that the film had just released two days back and it is doing so well. A welcome change from watching certain actors who are only seen in oh-so-perfect made-up airport looks and carry an entourage around with them wherever they go. This also gelled with the promotional strategy YRF had adopted for the film, where we were lucky enough not to have newbies indulging in circus-monkey-like behaviour on loop before the film had released. Hopefully, decision-makers from other houses take note, and we judge a film by the script and acting, and not by overzealous promotional stunts that have become the flavour of the day.

On that note, I also jokingly asked Ahaan whether he plans to have any bouncers surrounding him now. "No, man, not at all," he said. Well, here's wishing you all the best for the future, Krish Kapoor.

JLo spills bedroom secrets

CJ Desk

American pop star Jennifer Lopez did not mince words during her performance at the Lucca Summer Festival in Italy on Monday, as she spoke openly about her sex life and appeared to take a dig at ex-husband Ben Affleck.

While performing her new song, *Up All Night*, Lopez sang lyrics that many believe allude to her recent split from Affleck: "I'm up all night, dancing on somebody, living my best life. I bet you wish that you were by my side. I got tired of you breaking me down."

She followed up the performance by sharing intimate details with the crowd. "I have to be honest with you," she said, "sometimes I get in different moods at night. I don't know about you, but I do — and sometimes I like it hard."

She continued, "Other days, I'm feeling a little ro-

mantic. You put on candles and soft music — on those days, I like it real slow. But there's other days... maybe because it's a new kind of time for me, maybe because it's summertime and it's hot outside — I feel a little more naughty."

With the crowd cheering, JLo added, "You ever get that feeling? Where you feel like being naughty? On those days, I like it real fast."

Later in the show, Lopez joked that she had decided to stop singing her "love songs" on her European tour, and would now perform her "anti-love songs" instead.

Reports had earlier stated that JLo's new album is inspired by everything that she went through when she was with Ben. "Wreckage Of You was so specifically about Ben, and *Up All Night* points to where Jennifer is at in her life right now. This is a whole new era for Jennifer and she isn't going to be holding back," a report in *The Sun* stated.



Anjuum Faakih's harsh reality of rejections

'I started doubting myself': Actress opens up about being out of work for 2 years and facing rejections

Rashita Sahni

Anjuum Faakih, best known for her memorable roles on television, has never shied away from speaking her truth. In a candid chat with *The Free Press Journal*, the actress got real about her emotional highs and lows in recent years, her love for the medium of television, and why she believes in staying positive despite professional setbacks.

Despite her passion towards acting, the past couple of years haven't been easy as she faced

many rejections. Anjuum confessed, "I know staying relevant is a little hard in today's time, but God has been kind. I've been wanting to do something good, but I haven't had work for the past two years. I did audition for projects - some I rejected, and some people rejected me. My height and personality are such that I don't end up fitting into a lot of roles. But I've never given up. I've always had a positive attitude towards my life and career. I've only learnt to keep moving ahead and never stop and that's exactly what I'm doing."

Anjuum also touched upon the emotional toll rejection can take on an actor. "Look, it's our first time being human - every one of us. So to say I don't care anymore would be a lie. I do care. When I get rejected in auditions, I start doubting myself, wondering if I'm not good enough. Maybe I've played a character for so long that I can't break out of it. Maybe I'm doing the same thing again, or trying something new but not pulling it off. And then there's the stress, the anxiety of not working for all these years. Of course, it bothers you. But I choose to keep a positive attitude because I believe in fate, I believe in destiny, I believe in hard work. I believe in all good things. That said, I don't want to act cool and say, 'Oh, I don't care.' Of course I care. I get disheartened. But I don't have any other option except to stay positive. That's what I've been doing, and honestly, that's what's brought me this far. I'm sustaining it. I'm thankful to God and my stars for not letting me down. It's a journey, a process—sometimes good, sometimes bad. I'm learning to accept and embrace it all as it comes."

Anjuum also expressed unwavering loyalty towards the medium that made her a household name - television. "I'm very proud of whatever I do. Since the beginning, I've wanted to excel in one medium. So if I'm doing TV, I want to excel in television. I may transition into web shows or films later in life, but TV is my bread and butter. It has given me everything—name, fame, money. I run my household because of television, and I'm very loyal to it. I would never say I got bored doing TV or that I didn't vibe with it - never. I am a TV personality, and even if you see me on the big screen someday, you'll still see me on TV. People tend to put artists into categories, and I feel we shouldn't do that. It makes me feel bad. I would really request people not to categorise us."



Scan QR code to watch the full interview on FPJ's YouTube channel

Filmy Shots

MJ biopic now scheduled to release in April 2026



The biopic based on the life of the King of Pop Michael Jackson titled *Michael* will now release worldwide on April 24, 2026. The film was earlier scheduled to release in October 2025. Antoine Fuqua directs, with John Logan as screenwriter and Jaafar Jackson starring as his late uncle. Graham King, an Oscar winner for *The Departed*,

produces, reports variety.com. "Michael explores the global superstar's journey to become known to the world as the King of Pop, presenting an intimate look at the life and enduring legacy of one of the most influential, trailblazing artists the world has ever known," the synopsis reads.

Kevin Hart to perform live in India for the first time



District by Zomato, the going-out platform, has announced that Emmy and Grammy-nominated comedian Kevin Hart will perform live in India for the very first time. The much-anticipated show is scheduled for September 21, 2025, at the NSCI Dome SVP Stadium in Mumbai. As part of his globally acclaimed 'Acting My Age' tour,

Hart will take the stage with his signature mix of sharp observations, personal stories, and humor exploring societal norms and the realities of aging. The Mumbai performance promises an evening of non-stop laughter and world-class entertainment.

Hombale, Kleem announce Mahavatar Cinematic Universe with Narsimha



Hombale Films and Kleem Productions have announced the ambitious Mahavatar Cinematic Universe, an animated franchise chronicling

the ten divine avatars of Lord Vishnu. Spanning 2025 to 2037, it begins with *Mahavatar Narsimha* and concludes with *Mahavatar Kalki Part 2*.

Actors Adivi Sesh and Mrunal Thakur sustain minor injuries during high-octane action scene while filming their upcoming movie, *Dacoit*, in Hyderabad



Actors injured on shoot

CJ Desk

Actors Adivi Sesh and Mrunal Thakur, who are currently shooting for their upcoming film, *Dacoit*, reportedly got injured on the sets of the film. While the two have not issued official statements on the incident, if reports are to be believed, both sustained minor injuries and were given immediate medical attention.

According to a report in Telugu 360, the incident happened when Adivi and Mrunal were shooting for some high-octane scenes for the actioner. The shooting of the film has been taking place in Hyderabad, and the two hurt themselves while performing a fast-paced scene.

After immediate first-aid, the two continued the shoot, and Adivi later visited a physician to get himself checked. Mrunal too, reportedly, prioritised the shoot and wrapped up the day's schedule to avoid further delays.

Adivi and Mrunal's accident comes days after stuntman SM Raju died on the sets of Pa Ranjith's upcoming film, while performing a high-octane stunt. His car incorrectly landed on a ramp and flipped multiple times mid-air before landing with a thud. The incident left the veteran stuntman dead on the spot.



Deepika picks Atlee film

Deepika Padukone left the film *Spirit* due to work and pay issues. She chose to work in Atlee's movie instead



Atlee

CJ Desk

Deepika Padukone and Sandeep Reddy Vanga's *Spirit* have been in the news for the past many weeks. Reportedly, the actress was offered the film, but she opted out of it as the makers didn't agree to her demands like higher remuneration, an eight-hour working shift, and more. However, now, according to a report in Bollywood Hungama, the actress made an exit from the Prabhas starrer because of Atlee's film with Allu Arjun.

A source told the portal, "Deepika loved the script and role in Sandeep Vanga's film. The contract was being drawn up, when a week later she was offered Atlee's film with Allu Arjun, which she liked even more than Sandeep Vanga's film. Since she couldn't do both the projects, she decided to opt out of *Spirit*."



Allu Arjun

citing differences of opinion on fee, work hours, etc."

Deepika was replaced by Triptii Dimri in the movie. While announcing Triptii's casting in *Spirit*, Vanga had shared on social media, "The female lead for my film is now official."

Till now, neither Deepika nor Vanga has spoken about the whole controversy. But these reports of the actress asking for an eight-hour shift because she is a new mother have started a discussion in the industry.

A lot of celebrities like Ajay Devgn, Vidya Balan, Siddharth P. Malhotra, Sonakshi Sinha, Neha Dhupia, Vikrant Massey, Anurag Basu, and others have spoken about an eight-hour shift for actresses who are new mothers, and most of them have supported it.

Last month, it was officially announced that Deepika will be seen in Atlee's film which stars

Allu Arjun as the male lead. The movie is a sci-fi action thriller, and the announcement video of the actress had gone viral on social media.

'Fire in my belly to do the next'

CJ Desk

Bollywood actor Randeep Hooda wishes to do films that can spark a "fire" in himself, something to drive his urge for more work.

The *Jaat* star recently opened up about his upcoming projects, giving subtle hints about the films in the pipeline.

"I am currently in the stage where I have to choose. And that is what gives me the fire in my belly to do the next," he told ANI, in reference to his next releases.

Randeep Hooda has been on a busy slate lately, including *Operation Khukri*, which is based on the real-life events of 2000, when 233 Indian Army soldiers were taken hostage by rebel forces in

Bollywood actor Randeep Hooda seeks roles that ignite passion, with upcoming films including *Operation Khukri*

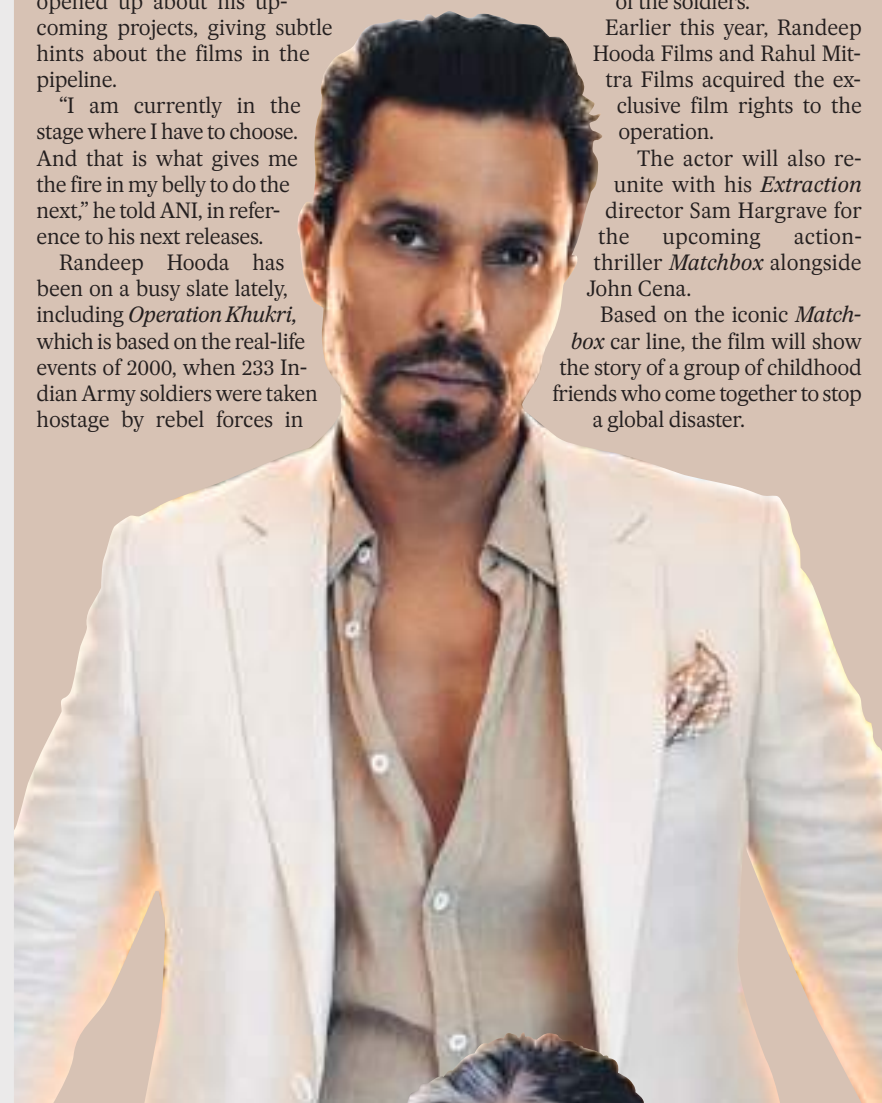
Sierra Leone, West Africa. It was followed by a subsequent high-risk mission.

Hooda will be seen in the role of Major General Pal Punia, then Company Commander of the 14th Mechanised Infantry, who played a key role in navigating the tense standoff and the rescue operation of the soldiers.

Earlier this year, Randeep Hooda Films and Rahul Mitra Films acquired the exclusive film rights to the operation.

The actor will also reunite with his *Extraction* director Sam Hargrave for the upcoming action-thriller *Matchbox* alongside John Cena.

Based on the iconic *Matchbox* car line, the film will show the story of a group of childhood friends who come together to stop a global disaster.



New film heads to Venice



Richa Chadha, Ali Fazal's *Pushing Buttons* Studios boards *Secrets of a Mountain Serpent*

CJ Desk

Bollywood actors Richa Chadha and Ali Fazal have joined *Secrets of a Mountain Serpent*, an upcoming feature by filmmaker Nidhi Saxena, as producers through their Pushing Buttons Studios.

Starring Trimala Adhikari and Adil Hussain, the movie is set to have its world premiere at the Venice Film Festival 2025.

Set in a remote Himalayan town during the 1990s, the film tells the intimate story of Barkha (Adhikari), a schoolteacher whose husband is posted at the border.

"In a place where most men are gone and days echo with silence, Barkha finds herself drawn to Manik Guho (Hussain), a mysterious outsider who disrupts the fragile balance of waiting, restraint, and myth," read the official logline.

Fazal and Chadda, who launched Pushing Buttons Studios in 2023 and produced acclaimed drama *Girls Will Be Girls*, said they were immediately drawn to the story of *Secrets of a Mountain Serpent*.

"This is a story rooted in myth and yet is startlingly relevant today. At PBS, we believe in backing storytellers who take creative risks and Nidhi has crafted something singular, poetic, and soulful," they added.

Saxena, who also wrote the film, said the movie is about women who choose to risk everything and follow their desires, shedding the burden of moralities imposed upon them by the world.

"I was looking for kindred collaborators and this feels like a meeting of minds and hearts. It also feels like we no longer need to borrow men's voices to tell our stories. We have our own voice, which is strong, with femininity," she added.



Stills from *Dil Bechara*

Sanjana celebrates *Dil Bechara*

CJ Desk

Sanjana Sanghi is celebrating a special milestone on Thursday — the five-year anniversary of her poignant debut as a lead in *Dil Bechara*. Released on July 24, 2020, the film starred the late Sushant Singh Rajput and was directed by Mukesh Chhabra. An adaptation of the bestselling novel *The Fault in Our Stars*, the film struck an emotional chord with audiences across the country and turned Sanghi into an overnight sensation.

Reflecting on her journey, Sanghi said, "It was the scene where Kizie walks in and declares to her mum, 'I hate Sandesh.' I'd spent

a year prepping, immersing myself in Kizie's Bengali dialect, her chronic illness, and her Jamshedpur roots. But I guess nothing truly prepares you for being a lead actor."

She added, "Though I'd been on sets since *Rockstar* at 13 — doing cameos and ads — this was a whole new level of responsibility. The entire story rested on my shoulders, demanding 200% effort every moment. Mukesh and Sushant guided me through it all."

Speaking about her dynamic with director Mukesh Chhabra, she called *Dil Bechara* a "unique double debut." "Mukesh literally sparked my acting career, spotting me in school in 2010 and casting me in *Rockstar*. For him to then entrust me with the lead in his directorial debut meant the world. Navigating our firsts together created a truly special dynamic on set." Sanghi's performance as Kizie was lauded for its authenticity and grace. Her chemistry with Rajput added depth to the bittersweet love story, making it one of the most emotionally resonant films of 2020.

Aamir Khan to hoist the Indian national flag at IFFM 2025

CJ Desk

Bollywood superstar Aamir Khan will hoist the Indian national flag at the Indian Film Festival of Melbourne (IFFM) 2025 in August.

The ceremony will take place as part of the festival's annual Independence Day celebrations.

"The flag hoisting ceremony at IFFM is more than just a formal tradition; it's a deeply emotional and unifying experience. Seeing the Tir-

anga unfurl on foreign soil, surrounded by artists, filmmakers, and members of the Indian and Australian communities, fills our hearts with pride," said festival director Mitu Bhowmick Lange.

The festival director added: "Having Aamir Khan, whose voice vision and cinema has had a profound impact on generations of film lovers not just in India but globally, lead this moment is truly a rare honour."

Bhowmick added that Aamir's presence represents the strength and integrity of Indian storytelling and "the values we stand for at IFFM, equality and unity in diversity.

We look forward to welcoming audiences from all walks of life to witness this inspiring moment."

IFFM, backed by the Government of Victoria, stands as the largest Indian film festival held outside of India. With a legacy of showcasing powerful and diverse Indian stories, the festival continues to be a beacon of inclusivity and cinematic excellence. In other news, the restored version of filmmaker Prem Kapoor's 1971 *Badnaam Basti*, which is described as India's first gay film, will be showcased at the The Indian Film Festival of Melbourne (IFFM) for its pride celebratory night.



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(Please scan the QR code to view the RHP)



SHANTI GOLD INTERNATIONAL LIMITED

Our Company was originally formed as a partnership firm in the name and style of "M/s Shanti Gold" pursuant to partnership deed dated August 05, 2003 with Pankajkumar H Jagawat and Manojkumar N Jain as its partners. Subsequently, by way of a restated partnership deed dated July 13, 2013, Mukesh Shantilal Jain, Rakesh Shantilal Jagawat, Shashank Bhawarlal Jagawat, Lialet Gulab Jagasia and Vikramsingh Prakash Verma joined as partners and the name of the firm was changed to "M/s. Shanti Gold International". In accordance with the provisions of Part IX of the Companies Act, 1956, the partnership firm was converted to a public limited company under the name and style of "Shanti Gold International Limited", and a fresh certificate of incorporation dated November 01, 2013 was issued by the RoC. Our Company was granted the certificate of commencement of business on November 22, 2013 by the RoC. For details of incorporation, changes in the name and registered office address of our Company, see "History and Certain Corporate Matters" on page 204 of the Red Herring Prospectus dated July 17, 2025 ("RHP") filed with the RoC.

Corporate Identity Number: U74999MH2013PLC249748

Registered and Corporate Office: Plot No A-51, 2nd Floor to 7th Floor, MIDC, Marol Industrial Area, Road No.-1, Near Tunga International Hotel, Andheri (E), Chakala MIDC, Mumbai - 400093, Maharashtra, India.
Tel: + 91 22 4824 9647 (413); Contact Person: Vrushli Parag Shah, Company Secretary and Compliance Officer; E-mail: cs@shantigold.in; Website: www.shantigold.in

OUR PROMOTERS: PANKAJKUMAR H JAGAWAT, MANOJKUMAR N JAIN AND SHASHANK BHAWARLAL JAGAWAT

INITIAL PUBLIC OFFERING OF UP TO 18,096,000 EQUITY SHARES OF FACE VALUE OF ₹10 EACH ("EQUITY SHARES") OF SHANTI GOLD INTERNATIONAL LIMITED ("COMPANY" OR "ISSUER") FOR CASH AT A PRICE OF ₹ [●] PER EQUITY SHARE (INCLUDING A SHARE PREMIUM OF ₹[●] PER EQUITY SHARE) ("ISSUE PRICE") AGGREGATING UP TO [●] MILLION ("ISSUE") COMPRISING A FRESH ISSUE OF UP TO 18,096,000 EQUITY SHARES BY OUR COMPANY AGGREGATING UP TO ₹ [●] MILLION ("FRESH ISSUE"). THE ISSUE SHALL CONSTITUTE [●] % OF THE POST-ISSUE PAID-UP EQUITY SHARE CAPITAL OF OUR COMPANY.

PRICE BAND: ₹189 TO ₹199 PER EQUITY SHARE OF FACE VALUE OF ₹10 EACH.

THE FLOOR PRICE IS 18.9 TIMES THE FACE VALUE OF THE EQUITY SHARES AND THE CAP PRICE IS 19.9 TIMES THE FACE VALUE OF THE EQUITY SHARES.

THE PRICE TO EARNINGS RATIO BASED ON DILUTED EPS FOR FISCAL 2025 AT THE LOWER END OF THE PRICE BAND IS 18.28 TIMES AND AT THE UPPER END OF THE PRICE BAND IS 19.25 TIMES

AS COMPARED TO THE AVERAGE INDUSTRY PEER GROUP P/E RATIO OF 24.48 TIMES FOR FISCAL 2025

BIDS CAN BE MADE FOR A MINIMUM OF 75 EQUITY SHARES AND IN MULTIPLES OF 75 EQUITY SHARES THEREAFTER.

WEIGHTED AVERAGE RETURN ON NET WORTH FOR LAST THREE FINANCIAL YEARS IS 38.70%.

BID/ ISSUE PERIOD	BID/ ISSUE OPENS TODAY
	BID/ ISSUE CLOSES ON*: TUESDAY, JULY 29, 2025

* IPI mandate end time and date shall be at 5:00 pm on the Bid/Issue Closing Date.

We are manufacturers of high-quality 22kt CZ casting gold jewellery, specializing in the design and production of all types of gold jewellery. Our Company offers a wide range of high-quality, intricately designed pieces, including bangles, rings, necklaces, and complete jewellery sets across various price points ranging from jewellery for special occasions, such as weddings to festive and daily-wear jewellery.

THE ISSUE IS BEING MADE THROUGH THE BOOK BUILDING PROCESS IN ACCORDANCE WITH REGULATION 6(1) OF THE SEBI ICDR REGULATIONS.
THE EQUITY SHARES OF OUR COMPANY WILL GET LISTED ON THE MAIN BOARD OF BSE AND NSE.

NSE SHALL BE THE DESIGNATED STOCK EXCHANGE.

• QIB Portion: Not more than 50% of the Issue • Non-Institutional Portion: Not less than 15% of the Issue • Retail Portion: Not less than 35% of the Issue

IN MAKING AN INVESTMENT DECISION AND PURCHASE IN THE ISSUE, POTENTIAL INVESTORS MUST ONLY RELY ON THE INFORMATION INCLUDED IN THE RHP AND THE TERMS OF THE ISSUE, INCLUDING THE RISKS INVOLVED AND NOT RELY ON ANY OTHER EXTERNAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT THE ISSUE AVAILABLE IN ANY MANNER.

IN RELATION TO PRICE BAND, POTENTIAL INVESTORS SHOULD ONLY REFER TO THIS PRICE BAND ADVERTISEMENT FOR THE ISSUE AND SHOULD NOT RELY ON ANY MEDIA ARTICLES/REPORTS IN RELATION TO THE VALUATION OF THE COMPANY AS THESE ARE NOT ENDORSED, PUBLISHED OR CONFIRMED EITHER BY THE COMPANY OR BY THE BRLM.

In accordance with the recommendation of Independent Directors of our Company, pursuant to their resolution dated July 17, 2025, the above provided price band is justified based on quantitative factors/ KPIs disclosed in the "Basis for Issue Price" section on page 117 of RHP vis-a-vis the weighted average cost of acquisition ("WACA") of primary and secondary transactions, as applicable, disclosed in the "Basis for Issue Price" section on page 117 of RHP and provided below in this advertisement.

RISK TO INVESTORS:

For details refer to section titled "Risk Factors" on page 29 of the RHP

- Customer concentration risk:** Our top 10 customers contributed to 34.49%, 36.43% and 33.17% amounting to ₹ 3,816.52 million, ₹ 2,591.41 million and ₹ 2,253.33 million in the Fiscals 2025, 2024 and 2023, respectively. A significant portion of our revenue from operations is derived from a limited number of clients, including our Corporate Clients. Any loss of one or more of our top customers, or the deterioration of their financial condition or prospects, or a reduction in their demand for our products, could adversely affect our business, results of operations, financial condition and cash flows.
- Geographical concentration of customers risk:** A significant portion of our business operations and revenue generation is concentrated in the Southern India, which contributed to 72.76% amounting to ₹ 8,050.62 million of our total revenue from operations in Fiscal 2025. This regional concentration could expose our Company to economic, cultural, geopolitical and local market risks. This regional preference for gold jewellery in Southern India has significantly influenced our Company's business strategy, market presence, and financial performance. However, our heavy reliance on these regions exposes our Company to a variety of risks, including economic vulnerability of these regions, shifts in consumer behaviour, geopolitical, regulatory and local market risks such as natural disasters, infrastructure issues, or political instability, which could disrupt supply chains, operations, and sales in these regions.
- Product profile concentration risk:** Our major reliance on a single product category, i.e., 22kt CZ gold jewellery made from casting gold, exposes us to risks that could impact our revenue and profitability. Our Company's focus on 22kt CZ casting gold jewellery, limits our ability to cater to a wide range of customer needs. If consumer demand shifts towards more varied options, including other variants of gold jewellery, silver, platinum, and fashion jewellery, our Company's reliance on 22kt CZ casting gold jewellery may make it difficult to adapt to new market demands and trends, and this may impact our business, results of operations, cash flows and financial condition.
- Dependence on availability and Prices of gold:** Our business is significantly dependent on timely procurement, quality and price of gold, which forms a substantial part of our raw material for jewellery production. As a result, we are exposed to fluctuations in the price and availability of gold, both of which are influenced by regulatory factors such as import duties, global economic conditions, geopolitical factors, and fluctuations in demand and supply in the international markets. Additionally, if are unable to procure quality gold or the supply of gold is disrupted due to factors such as changes in government policies or import duties, trade restrictions, or other unforeseen circumstances, it may lead to difficulties in sourcing gold or result in higher procurement costs.
- Risk of Seasonal fluctuations in demand:** Our business is subject to significant seasonal fluctuations, which can affect our sales, income, and overall financial performance. Historically, the demand for gold jewellery is driven by cultural events, festivals, and wedding seasons, which vary throughout the year. Demand for jewellery rises in the months of the wedding season such as May-June, September-December, and January. During the months of November and December, rural households invest their crop money in gold jewellery. Moreover, gold demand in Tier II and Tier III towns is influenced by agricultural output and monsoon (Source: CARE Report). We generate the highest amount of revenue in the month of August followed by the month of January since the exhibition for the India International Jewellery Show is held in the months of August and January and January also marks the beginning of the wedding season in India. Seasonal fluctuations can also create cash flow volatility. While we may generate significant revenue during peak periods, the off-season may lead to lower sales, affecting our working capital. If we are unable to manage our cash flow effectively during slower months, it may strain our ability to meet operational expenses and fulfill obligations.
- Negative Cash Flows:** Our Company had negative net cash flow from operating activities of ₹ 153.03 million, ₹ 130.26 million, ₹ 48.38 million in the last Fiscals 2025, 2024 & 2023 respectively. The negative cash flow from operating activities since April 1, 2022, is primarily due to the working capital-intensive nature of the Company's business, where cash flow is significantly impacted by changes in working capital. There is no assurance that we may have positive operating cash flows in some or any of the future years, which could materially adversely affect our business, prospects, financial condition, cash flows, and results of operations.
- Dependency on single manufacturing facility:** Our business is dependent on our manufacturing capabilities at our Andheri Manufacturing Facility. Unplanned slowdowns, unscheduled shutdowns or prolonged disruptions in our manufacturing operations and an inability to effectively utilize our production capacity could have an adverse effect on our business, results of operations, cash flows and financial condition.
- No long term agreements with Suppliers of raw materials:** Our jewellery production primarily relies on raw materials, including gold bar, stones (pearls, beads, gemstones, CZ stones), alloy metals of copper. To maintain the standards of quality, we source raw materials from established suppliers. Although we repeatedly procure raw materials from such suppliers, we do not have firm commitments or long-term supply agreements with them and have no exclusivity arrangement with any of them. The procurement of raw materials from our suppliers is undertaken through orally communicated orders or orders placed by our Company during physical meetings with them, which are then fulfilled by our suppliers.
- Working Capital intensive business:** Our business requires a substantial amount of working capital. The working capital is primarily required to finance the purchase of raw materials to keep optimum level of finished products and to support trade receivables. Our ability to meet our working capital requirements on commercially acceptable terms is critical to our business operations. We rely on external financing, primarily in the form of working capital lines of credit, to meet our short-term funding needs. In the absence of sufficient working capital, we may face cash flow gaps that could affect our ability to make timely payments or meet production deadlines.
- Significant exposure to indebtedness:** As of May 31, 2025, we had total outstanding borrowings of ₹ 2,419.84 million (excluding the non-fund based facility of ₹ 101.68 million). Our financing agreements may contain restrictive covenants that limit our ability to undertake certain types of transactions

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Our debt to equity ratio and our debt to revenue from operations as a percentage for the last three Fiscals is set out below:

Particulars	Fiscal 2025	Fiscal 2024	Fiscal 2023
Debt to Equity ratio	1.60	2.18	2.37
Debt to revenue from operations (%)	22.00	29.61	24.34

Any failure to comply with a covenant under our financing agreements may also trigger cross default and cross acceleration provisions under certain of our other financing agreements and may adversely affect our ability to conduct our business.

Average cost of acquisition of Equity Shares by our Promoters

The average cost of acquisition of Equity Shares by our Promoters as on the date of the Red Herring Prospectus is:

Name of Promoters	Number of Equity Shares held	Average cost of acquisition per Equity Share (₹)
Pankajkumar H Jagawat	26,986,500	1.66
Manojkumar N Jain	26,986,500	1.66
Shashank Bhawarial Jagawat	5,400	1.66

Weighted average price at which Equity Shares were acquired by the Promoters in the last one year preceding the date of the Red Herring Prospectus:

Name of Promoters	Number of Equity Shares acquired in the one year preceding the date of the Red Herring Prospectus	Weighted average price per Equity Share (in ₹)
Pankajkumar H Jagawat	NIL	NIL
Manojkumar N Jain	NIL	NIL
Shashank Bhawarial Jagawat	NIL	NIL

Note: As certified by J. Kala & Associates, Chartered Accountants, our Statutory Auditors, pursuant to their certificate dated July 17, 2025.

Weighted average cost of all Equity Shares transacted in the three years, 18 months and one year preceding the date of the Red Herring Prospectus

Period	Weighted average cost of acquisition per Equity Share (in ₹)^	Cap Price is 'x' times the weighted average cost of acquisition^	Range of acquisition price per Equity Share: lowest price – highest price (in ₹)^
Last one year preceding the date of the Red Herring Prospectus.	0.01^	19900	Nil-172
Last 18 months preceding the date of the Red Herring Prospectus	0.01^	19900	Nil-172
Last three years preceding the date of the Red Herring Prospectus.	0.01^	19900	Nil-172

^ Includes Equity Shares acquired pursuant to bonus issue where cost of acquisition is Nil.

Note: As certified by J. Kala & Associates, Chartered Accountants, our Statutory Auditors, pursuant to their certificate dated July 17, 2025.


Weighted average cost of acquisition, floor price and cap price in the last 18 months

Past Transactions	Weighted average cost of acquisition (in ₹)	Floor Price (i.e. ₹ 189)	Cap Price (i.e. ₹ 199)
WACA of equity shares that were issued by our Company	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
WACA of equity shares that were acquired or sold by way of secondary transactions	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

ASBA*

Simple, Safe, Smart way of Application!!!

*Applications Supported by Blocked Amount ("ASBA") is a better way of applying to offers by simply blocking the fund in the bank account. For further details, check section on ASBA. **Mandatory in public issues. No cheque will be accepted.**



UPI-Now available in ASBA for Retail Individual Investors and Non Institutional Investor applying in public issues where the application amount is up to ₹ 500,000, applying through Registered Brokers, Syndicate, CDPs & RTAs. Retail Individual Investors and Non-Institutional Investors also have the option to submit the application directly to the ASBA Bank (SCSBs) or to use the facility of linked online trading, demat and bank account. Investors are required to ensure that the bank account used for bidding is linked to their PAN. Bidders must ensure that their PAN is linked with Aadhaar and are in compliance with CBDT notification dated February 13, 2020 and press release dated June 25, 2021 read with press release dated September 17, 2021, CBDT Circular No. 3 of 2023 dated March 28, 2023.

ASBA has to be availed by all the investors except Anchor Investors. UPI may be availed by (i) Retail Individual Investors in the Retail Category; (ii) Non-Institutional Investors with an application size of up to ₹ 500,000 in the Non-Institutional Portion. For details on the ASBA and UPI process, please refer to the details given in the Bid Cum Application Form and abridged prospectus and also please refer to the section "Issue Procedure" on page 340 of the RHP. The process is also available on the website of Association of Investment Bankers of India ("AIBI") and Stock Exchanges and in the General Information Document. The Bid Cum Application Form and the Abridged Prospectus can be downloaded from the websites of BSE Limited ("BSE") and National Stock Exchange of India Limited ("NSE"), and together with BSE, the "Stock Exchanges") and can be obtained from the list of banks that is displayed on the website of SEBI at www.sebi.gov.in/sebiweb/other/OtherAction.do?doRecognisedFp=yes&intmid=35 and <https://www.sebi.gov.in/sebiweb/other/OtherAction.do?doRecognisedFp=yes&intmid=43>, respectively as updated from time to time. For the list of UPI apps and banks live on IPO, please refer to the link: www.sebi.gov.in. UPI Bidders Bidding using the UPI Mechanism may apply through the SCSBs and mobile applications whose names appear on the website of SEBI, as updated from time to time. Axis Bank Ltd have been appointed as the Sponsor Banks for the Issue, in accordance with the requirements of SEBI circular dated November 1, 2018 as amended. For issue related queries, please contact the BRLM on their respective email IDs as mentioned below. For UPI related queries, investors can contact NPCI at the toll free number: 18001201740 and mail id: ipo.upi@npci.org.in.

In case of any revision in the Price Band, the Bid/Issue Period will be extended by at least three additional Working Days after such revision in the Price Band, subject to the Bid/ Issue Period not exceeding 10 Working Days. In cases of force majeure, banking strike or similar circumstances, our Company may in consultation with the BRLM, for reasons to be recorded in writing, extend the Bid/Issue Period for a minimum of one Working Day, subject to the Bid/ Issue Period not exceeding 10 Working Days. Any revision in the Price Band and the revised Bid/ Issue Period, if applicable, shall be widely disseminated by notification to the Stock Exchanges, by issuing a press release, and also by indicating the change on the website of the BRLM and at the terminals of the Syndicate Members and by intimation to Designated Intermediaries and the Sponsor Bank(s), as applicable.

The Issue is being made through the Book Building Process, in terms of Rule 19(2)(b) of the Securities Contracts (Regulation) Rules, 1957, as amended ("SCRR") read with Regulation 31 of the SEBI ICDR Regulations and in compliance with Regulation 6(1) of the SEBI ICDR Regulations, wherein not more than 50% of the Issue shall be allocated on a proportionate basis to Qualified Institutional Buyers ("QIBs" and such portion, the "QIB Portion"), provided that our Company may, in consultation with the Book Running Lead ASBA Manager, allocate up to 60% of the QIB Portion to Anchor Investors on a discretionary basis in accordance with the SEBI ICDR Regulations ("Anchor Investor Portion"), of which one-third shall be reserved for domestic Mutual Funds, subject to valid Bids being received from domestic Mutual Funds at or above the price at which allocation is made to Anchor Investors (the "Anchor Investor Allocation Price"). In the event of under-subscription, or non-allocation in the Anchor Investor Portion, the balance Equity Shares shall be added to the Net QIB Portion. Further, 5% of the Net QIB Portion shall be available for allocation on a proportionate basis only to Mutual Funds, subject to valid Bids being received at or above the Issue Price, and the remainder of the Net QIB Portion shall be available for allocation on a proportionate basis to all QIBs, including Mutual Funds. Further, not less than 15% of the Issue shall be available for allocation to Non-Institutional Bidders and not less than 35% of the Issue shall be available for allocation to Retail Individual Bidders in accordance with the SEBI ICDR Regulations, subject to valid Bids being received at or above the Issue Price. One-third of the Non-Institutional Portion shall be available for allocation to Non-Institutional Bidders with a Bid size of more than ₹ 0.20 million and up to ₹ 1.00 million and two-thirds of the Non-Institutional Portion shall be available for allocation to Non-Institutional Bidders with a Bid size of more than ₹ 1.00 million provided that under-subscription in either of these two sub-categories of the Non-Institutional Portion may be allocated to Non-Institutional Bidders in the other sub-category of Non-Institutional Portion in accordance with the SEBI ICDR Regulations, subject to valid Bids being received at or above the Issue Price. All potential Bidders (except Anchor Investors) are mandatorily required to participate in the Issue through the Application Supported by Blocked Amount ("ASBA") process by providing details of their respective ASBA accounts and UPI ID in case of UPI Bidders, as applicable, pursuant to which their corresponding Bid Amount will be blocked by the Self Certified Syndicate Banks ("SCSBs") or by the Sponsor Bank(s) under the UPI Mechanism, as the case may be, to the extent of the respective Bid Amounts. Anchor Investors are not permitted to participate in the Issue through the ASBA process. For details, see "Issue Procedure" on page 340 of the RHP.

Bidders/Applicants should ensure that DP ID, PAN and the Client ID and UPI ID (for UPI Bidders bidding through UPI Mechanism) are correctly filled in the Bid cum Application Form. The DP ID, PAN and Client ID provided in the Bid cum Application Form should match with the DP ID, PAN, Client ID and UPI ID available (for UPI Bidders bidding through the UPI Mechanism) in the Depository database, otherwise, the Bid cum Application Form is liable to be rejected. Bidders/Applicants should ensure that the beneficiary account provided in the Bid cum Application Form is active. Bidders/Applicants should note that on the basis of the PAN, DP ID, Client ID and UPI ID (for UPI Bidders bidding through the UPI Mechanism) as provided in the Bid cum Application Form, the Bidder/Applicant may be deemed to have authorized the Depositories to provide to the Registrar to the Issue, any requested Demographic Details of the Bidder/Applicant as available on the records of the depositories. These Demographic Details may be used, among other things, for giving Allotment Advice or unblocking of ASBA Account or for other correspondence(s) related to the Issue. Bidders/Applicants are advised to update any changes to their Demographic Details as available in the records of the Depository Participant to ensure accuracy of records. Any delay resulting from failure to update the Demographic Details would be at the Bidders/Applicants' sole risk.

BOOK RUNNING LEAD MANAGER		REGISTRAR TO THE OFFER	COMPANY SECRETARY AND COMPLIANCE OFFICER
<div><div><div><div>Choice</div><div>The Joy of Earning</div></div><div><p>Choice Capital Advisors Private Limited Sunil Patodia Tower, Plot No. 156-158, J.B. Nagar, Andheri (East), Mumbai City, Mumbai, Maharashtra – 400099 Tel: +91 22 6706 9999 (7919); E-mail: sgil ipo@choiceindia.com Investor Grievance E-mail: investorgrievances_advisors@choiceindia.com Website: www.choiceindia.com/merchant-investment-banking Contact person: Nimisha Joshi/Anuj Killa; SEBI Registration No.: INM00011872</p></div></div></div>		<div><div><div><div></div><div><p>Bigshare Services Private Limited S62, 6th Pinnacle Business Park, Mahakali Caves Road, Next to Ahura Centre, Andheri East, Mumbai – 400093, Maharashtra, India. Tel: +91 22 6263 8200 E-mail: ipo@bigshareonline.com; Investor grievance E-mail: investor@bigshareonline.com Website: www.bigshareonline.com; Contact person: Babu Raphael C. SEBI Registration No: INR00001385</p></div></div></div></div>	<div><p>Vrushti Parag Shah Plot No A-51, 2nd Floor to 7th Floor, MIDC, Marol Industrial Area, Road no.-1, Near Tunga International Hotel, Andheri (East), Chakala MIDC, Mumbai – 400093, Maharashtra, India Tel No.: + 91 22 4824 9647 (413); Email: cs@shantigold.in</p><p>Bidders can contact our Company Secretary and Compliance Officer, or the Registrar to the Offer in case of any pre-issue or post-issue related problems, such as non-receipt of letters of Allotment, non-credit of Allotted Equity Shares in the respective beneficiary account, non-receipt of refund orders or non-receipt of funds by electronic mode, etc. For all issue related queries and for redressal of complaints, investors may also write to the Book Running Lead Manager.</p></div>

AVAILABILITY OF THE RHP: Investors are advised to refer to the RHP and the "Risk Factors" beginning on page 29 of the RHP before applying in the Issue. A copy of the RHP will be made available on the website of SEBI at www.sebi.gov.in and is available on the websites of the BRLM, Choice Capital Advisors Private Limited at www.choiceindia.com/merchant-investment-banking and at the website of the Company, Shanti Gold International Limited at www.shantigold.in and the websites of the Stock Exchanges, for BSE Limited at www.bseindia.com and for NSE India Limited at www.nseindia.com.

AVAILABILITY OF THE ABRIDGED PROSPECTUS: A copy of the Abridged Prospectus shall be available on the website of the Company at www.shantigold.in, the BRLM at: www.choiceindia.com/merchant-investment-banking and the Registrar to the Offer at www.bigshareonline.com.

AVAILABILITY OF BID CUM APPLICATION FORM: Bid cum Application Form can be obtained from the Registered and Corporate Office of our Company, **SHANTI GOLD INTERNATIONAL LIMITED:** Tel: + 91 22 4824 9647 (413); **BRLM:** Choice Capital Advisors Private Limited, Tel: +91 22 6706 9999 (7919) and **Syndicate Member:** Choice Equity Broking Private Limited, +91 22 6707 9999 / 867 (ext.), Registered Brokers, SCSBs, Designated RTA Locations and Designated CDP Locations for participating in the Issue. Bid cum Application Forms will also be available on the websites of the Stock Exchanges at www.bseindia.com and www.nseindia.com and at all the Designated Branches of SCSBs, the list of which is available on the websites of the Stock Exchanges and SEBI.

SHANTI GOLD INTERNATIONAL LIMITED is proposing, subject to receipt of requisite approvals, market conditions and other considerations, to make an initial public offer of its Equity Shares and has filed a red herring prospectus dated July 17, 2025 with the RoC. The RHP is made available on the website of the SEBI at www.sebi.gov.in as well as on the website of the BRLM i.e., Choice Capital Advisors Private Limited at www.choiceindia.com/merchant-investment-banking, the website of the NSE at www.nseindia.com and the website of the BSE at www.bseindia.com and the website of the Company at www.shantigold.in. Any potential investor should note that investment in equity shares involves a high degree of risk and for details relating to such risks, please see the section "Risk Factors" beginning on page 29 of the RHP. Potential investors should not rely on the DRHP for making any investment decision but should only rely on the information included in the RHP filed by the Company with the RoC.

This announcement is not an offer of securities for sale in the United States or elsewhere. This announcement has been prepared for publication in India only and is not for publication or distribution, directly or indirectly, in or into the United States. The Equity Shares have not been, and will not be, registered under the United States Securities Act of 1933, as amended (the "U.S. Securities Act") or any state law of the United States and may not be offered or sold within the United States, except pursuant to an exemption from, or in a transaction not subject to, the registration requirements of the U.S. Securities Act or any state law of the United States. There will be no public offering of the Equity Shares in the United States.