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## Dhankhar's sudden exit sets political circles buzzing

**RAKESH SINGH**  
NEW DELHI

Jagdeep Dhankhar's resignation from the post of Vice President has created a storm in political circles. He sent his resignation letter to President Droupadi Murmu citing health reasons for his decision. He stated that he wishes to focus on his health as per his doctors' advice. The President has accepted his resignation and the Ministry of Home Affairs notified the decision.

Dhankhar's term was to last until August 2027, but this mid-term resignation is only the third such instance in India's history. However, this case seems different and has raised several questions.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi praised Dhankhar's service in a post on X and wished him good health. The Opposition, however, suspects there's more to the story than just health. Congress leader Jairam Ramesh commented that there might be a hidden reason



behind the resignation. In Delhi's political circles, speculation is rampant. Some are linking Dhankhar's resignation to his remarks on the judiciary or his statements on farmers' issues, which allegedly did not sit well with the government. In March, Dhankhar had chest pain and underwent angioplasty, but he had remained quite active. He was absent from Parliament the day after his resignation, and

Deputy Chairman Harivansh Narayan Singh presided over the Rajya Sabha. An old video of Dhankhar saying he would remain in office till 2027 "if God wills" is now going viral.

**THE BIG QUESTION: WHO WILL BE THE NEXT V-P?**  
As per Article 68 of the Constitution, elections must be held as soon as possible after a Vice President's res-

## Opposition set to stir the pot, may link it to Jat politics

**AJIT MAINDOLA**  
NEW DELHI

Whatever may have been the reason behind the resignation of former Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar, the opposition has got an issue to attack the government. Rajasthan Congress has started attacking BJP by linking Dhankhar's resignation to farmer politics.

The issue of farmers is directly related to Jat politics. The way former Chief Minister of Rajasthan Ashok Gehlot and State Congress President Govind Singh Dotasara have given statements on Dhankhar's resignation, it looks like the issue gradually assume big proportions.

The Congress and other opposition parties also benefited from Jat politics in the general elections 2024. In Rajasthan, Haryana and West Uttar Pradesh, Congress and the opposition won more seats from Jat dominated areas.

Although farmer politics had cooled down after the general elections, the way Dhankhar has surprised

## Exit quiet and procedural, none saw it coming

**ABHINANDAN MISHRA**  
NEW DELHI

The resignation of Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on 21 July while appearing sudden, was likely the culmination of friction between him and the BJP-led government that had been simmering beneath the surface for some time.

A closer, retrospective analysis of the past few months suggests a pattern that went largely unnoticed by both beat reporters and veteran political journalists—dismissed either as minor procedural anomalies or fleeting episodes rather than signals of a deeper divergence.

On 3 December last year during an event in Mumbai, Dhankhar publicly



questioned the government's stance on farmer issues while sharing the stage with Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan. Turning to the minister, Dhankhar asked, "Agriculture Minister Sir... was any promise made to the farmers, and why has it not been fulfilled?" In a rare instance of a sitting Vice President openly addressing

## PM wishes Dhankhar good health

**TDG NETWORK**  
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday wished Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar good health after the latter resigned from the post on July 21, citing health concerns. In a post on X, PM Modi emphasised that Dhankhar had got many opportunities to serve the country, including the Vice President of India.

"Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar Ji has got many opportunities to serve our country in various capacities, including as the Vice President of India. Wishing him good health," Prime Minister Modi wrote.

The Rajya Sabha also announced the resignation of Jagdeep Dhankhar in the House on Tuesday, shortly before adjourning till 2 pm amid opposition sloganeering. The Chair announced that Ministry of Home Affairs has, wide it's notification, conveyed resignation of Vice President of India Jagdeep Dhankhar under 67A of the Constitution.

## MONSOON SESSION OF PARLIAMENT

# DAY TWO A WASHOUT AS OPPN CREATES RUCKUS

**AGENCIES**  
NEW DELHI

With both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha adjourned for the day in the face of opposition protests, the Congress on Tuesday said the adjournments were due to the Modi government refusing a discussion on the "votebandi being orchestrated in Bihar and other states" by the Election Commission.

The opposition party also said the Narendra Modi government has still not clarified when exactly the discussion on the Pahalgam attack and Operation Sindoor will begin in the



Opposition MPs create ruckus in Rajya Sabha on Tuesday. ANI

Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, and whether the Prime Minister will reply.

The Lok Sabha was adjourned for the day due to protests by the opposition demanding a discussion on the ongoing voter roll revision in Bihar. The government, however, accused the opposition of practis-

ing "double standards" by asking for a debate on one hand and disrupting the House on the other.

The Rajya Sabha was also adjourned for the day without transacting any business after uproar by Opposition members over several issues, including a discussion on Special In-

tensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Bihar.

In a post on X, Congress general secretary in charge of communications Jairam Ramesh said, "Today both Houses of Parliament had to be adjourned because the Modi Govt refused a discussion on votebandi being orchestrated in Bihar and other states by the EC." "In addition, the Modi government has still not clarified when exactly the discussion on Pahalgam-Sindoor will begin in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, and whether the PM will reply," he said.

The House could not func-

## Bihar SIR: Over 52 lakh electors not found, 18 lakh identified as dead

**AGENCIES**  
NEW DELHI

In a blow to Indian National Congress, Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT), Delhi Bench, has upheld a tax demand of Rs 199.15 crore for the assessment year 2018-19, rejecting the party's claim for exemption under Section 13A of the Income Tax Act.

The ITAT found that Congress violated two critical conditions under Section 13A, which governs tax ex-

## Setback to Cong as Rs 199-cr tax demand on party upheld by tribunal

**AGENCIES**  
NEW DELHI

emptions for political parties. The tribunal noted that Congress filed its income tax return on February 2, 2019, missing the mandatory extended deadline of December 31, 2018, as specified under Section 139(4B). Despite Congress's argument that the filing was within the general time limit under Section 139(4), the ITAT emphasised that compliance with the specific deadline is non-negotiable for claiming Section 13A exemption.

The party received cash

contributions totalling Rs 14.49 lakh from various donors, with individual donations exceeding the permissible limit of Rs 2,000 under Section 13A provisions. While Congress provided donor names and PAN details--mostly from its own elected MLAs and MPs--the tribunal ruled that the cash payment method itself violated the law.

The bench, comprising Judicial Member Satbeer Singh Godara and Ac-

an ongoing policy concern, he went on to caution that "a nation that tests the patience of farmers will pay a heavy price."

Observers noted that in recent months, multiple behind-the-scenes developments indicated a growing divergence between Vice President Dhankhar and the government, with both appearing to view key issues through increasingly different lenses.

Dhankhar's resignation is not without precedent in India's constitutional history. It joins a very small list of two prior high-profile episodes in which top constitutional functionaries—Presidents or Vice Presidents—came into



The Election Commission said on Tuesday that 26 lakh electors have shifted to different constituencies, while another seven lakh have enrolled at two places.

Poll officials in the state have shared detailed lists of the 21.36 lakh electors whose enumeration forms have not been received so far and also of the nearly 52.30 lakh who are reportedly deceased or permanently shifted or have enrolled at multiple places.

From August 1 -- when draft electoral rolls will be published -- to September



The British Navy's F-35 fighter aircraft, which made an emergency landing at Thiruvananthapuram International Airport on June 14, takes off from the airport. ANI

## Two Kanwariyas electrocuted

The pickup truck they were travelling touches high-voltage wire in Haryana

**TDG NETWORK**  
CHANDIGARH

Two Kanwariyas died on the spot and others injured critically after a pickup truck carrying 15 devotees came into contact with a high-voltage electric wire early Tuesday morning in Gunthala village of Yamunanagar district of Haryana.

According to the police the deceased have been identi-

fied as Kuldeep Singh (40) and Harish Kumar (42) — both residents of Gunthala village.

The incident occurred around 6 AM, as the group—residents of the same village—was participating in a pre-yatra procession (parikrama) before heading to Haridwar to collect holy Ganga water for the annual Kanwar Yatra.

According to eyewitness accounts, the devotees were traveling in a Mahindra pickup truck, covered with a tarpaulin supported by an iron rod. As the vehicle passed through the village, the metal frame reportedly came into contact with an

overhead high-tension wire, triggering a massive electric surge.

The resulting explosion burst the vehicle's tires and instantly electrocuted two men, identified as Kuldeep and Harish—both fathers of young children. Two more Kanwariyas suffered serious burns and injuries, and were immediately rushed to a nearby hospital, where their condition remains critical.

The remaining 11 passengers managed to jump from the vehicle, escaping with minor injuries.

The accident has plunged the local community into mourning. Grief quickly

## SC refuses to interfere with UP order on eateries on Kanwar Yatra

**SAMBHAV SHARMA**  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday declined to interfere with the Uttar Pradesh Government's order mandating QR codes at eateries along the Kanwar Yatra route, meant to disclose ownership details.

A bench of Justice MM Sundresh and Justice NK Singh passed a limited order directing all eateries to display their license and reg-

## Haryana govt set to roll out Rs 2,100 scheme for women on Raksha Bandhan day

**NEERAJ MOHAN**  
CHANDIGARH

In a major step toward empowering women and fulfilling a key election promise, the Haryana government is poised to roll out the Lado Laxmi Yojana, which will provide a monthly financial aid of Rs 2,100 to eligible women across the state.

As per the information,



the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment has finalised a proposal and submitted it for approval to Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini.

Sources suggest the scheme may be officially launched around Raksha Bandhan—a symbolic occasion celebrating the bond between brothers and sisters—lending emotional and cultural weight to the announcement.

The Lado Laxmi Yojana, a flagship initiative from the ruling BJP, was one of the most prominent promises in the party's 2024 Assem-

bly election manifesto. Designed to support women from Below Poverty Line (BPL) families, the scheme aims to improve financial independence and uplift those most in need.

The officials disclosed that the state government plans to implement the scheme in four phases, initially targeting women from economically weaker households—



WHO SAID WHAT  
IN PARLIAMENTPREPARATION  
FOR CENSUS 2027  
STARTS

New Delhi : The preparation for Census 2027 has started, and a two-day conference of Directors of Census Operations was held in this regard at the beginning of this month, Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) told the Lok Sabha on Tuesday. The two-day conference was held on July 3-4 in New Delhi and it was attended by Directors of Census Operations, senior officers from Directorates of Census Operations and officers from Office of Registrar General and Census Commissioner, India, Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai informed the house in a written reply

SC'S INTERIM  
PROTECTION TO  
INFLUENCER ON  
LOP SPEECH ROW

New Delhi : The Supreme Court granted interim protection from arrest to social media influencer and political commentator Raushan Sinha in connection with a case related to a post referencing an alleged controversial speech by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi. The relief was extended by a division bench of Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice Augustine George Masih during the hearing held on July 17, 2025. The Special Leave Petition (SLP) in the case was filed under Article 136 of the Constitution, challenging the judgment of the Telangana High Court dated April 3, 2025. Earlier, the Telangana High Court had refused to grant anticipatory bail to the petitioner.

'BIG POLITICS ON  
DHANKAR'S EXIT'

New Delhi : Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut on Tuesday raised doubts over Vice President Jagdeep Dhankar's resignation and alleged "behind the scenes" politics. Addressing reporters in the national capital today Raut said that Dhankar's resignation is not an ordinary event. "Big politics is going on behind the scenes, and it will be revealed soon. The resignation of the Vice President is not an ordinary event" he said Vice President Dcited health reasons for his resignation. Raut said that he does not believe it to be true.

MGNREGS FUNDS  
DATA RELEASED

New Delhi : The Centre has released Rs 44,323 crore to states and union territories under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) so far, Rural Development Minister Shriraj Singh Chouhan informed the Lok Sabha on Tuesday. In a written reply, the minister gave the figures of disbursements of wages, material and admin components till July 17, 2025. According to the revelation, the amount disbursed is almost half of the total allocation of Rs 86,000 crore earmarked for the financial year 2025-26.

OPPN DOING 'GUNDAGARDI', INDIA NOT A  
DHARAMSHALA: BJP ON SIR PROTEST ROW

Opposition members forced adjournments in the Lok Sabha by raising slogans and waving placards.

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The BJP on Tuesday slammed opposition parties over their protest against the Bihar voter list revision, accusing them of resorting to "gundagardi (hooliganism)" so that foreigners, including Bangladeshi and Rohingya "infiltrators", can get the right to vote in elections.

Opposition members forced adjournments in the Lok Sabha by raising slogans and waving placards against the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Bihar.

Opposition MPs, including Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, also staged a protest over



Floor leaders of the INDIA alliance at the Parliament House Complex, in New Delhi on Tuesday. ANI

the issue in the Parliament House complex.

The opposition MPs gathered on the steps of the Makar Dwar of Parliament and raised slogans against the SIR exercise, alleging that

it amounts to stealing elections. They also held placards reading "SIR: Stealing Indian Rights" and "SIR: Subverting Indian Republic". Senior BJP leader Ravi Shankar Prasad hit out at

the opposition parties, saying so much hue and cry is being raised over the SIR in Bihar because those who base their politics on Bangladeshis and infiltrators are scared. "According to

the Constitution, only Indian citizens can vote in elections. What is the problem if that is being checked? India is not a dharamshala," the former Union minister told reporters in the Parliament complex.

In Bihar's Araria, Kishanganj and Purnia, more Aadhaar cards than the districts' population have been made, Prasad claimed.

"Shouldn't this matter be looked into? Should it not be checked if someone is listed as a voter in more than one booth?"

Union minister Giriraj Singh also attacked the opposition, saying it is trying to build pressure on a constitutional institution with its tactics so that it can run it their way.

Cong terms V-P's  
resignation as 'dark  
day in Parl history'TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Amid rising speculations over the reasons behind Jagdeep Dhankar's resignation, Congress leader Pramod Tiwari on Tuesday expressed shock while labelling it as a "dark day in parliamentary history".

"This is shocking. I would urge him to reconsider. He was well-versed in parliamentary knowledge and served as a voice for the farmers. This is a dark day in parliamentary history when a Vice President is unable to complete his term," Tiwari told ANI.

Congress MP Shashi Tharoor said, "We are concerned about his health. It is very sad that he had a sudden health issue. Our best wishes for his speedy recovery."

Earlier in the day, Congress MP Jairam Ramesh claimed that there was more to Dhankar's "unexpected"

resignation as Vice President than meets the eye.

"The sudden resignation of the Vice President and Chairman of the Rajya Sabha is as shocking as it is unimaginable. Until around 5 PM this evening, I was with him, along with several other MPs, and at 7:30 PM, I had a phone conversation with him. Undoubtedly, Jagdeep Dhankhar should prioritise his health above all else. However, it is also clear that there is more to his completely unexpected resignation than meets the eye. Nevertheless, this is not the time for speculation," the Congress leader posted on X. This comes after Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP Ghanshyam Tiwari, who was in the Chair, on Tuesday announced that Jagdeep Dhankhar's resignation as Vice President of India has been accepted by the President of India, Draupadi Murmu.

Relation between Govt, Vice Prez  
Dhankhar not like before: GogoiTDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Amid mounting speculations over reasons behind Jagdeep Dhankar's resignation, Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi on Tuesday morning said that the relationship between the Vice President and the centre doesn't seem like before.

Labelling Dhankar's resignation as "sudden and unfortunate", Gogoi said that the Vice President presided over Business Advisory Committee (BAC) meetings on Monday. He expressed that the re-



Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi

also not present in the BAC meeting, which was scheduled for yesterday afternoon.

"The resignation of the Vice President is sudden and unfortunate, because of the way he was presiding in the meetings yesterday.

Today, he also had a meeting of the Business Advisory Committee (BAC) in the Rajya Sabha. From our side, we wish him good health, but it seems that the relationship between the Central Government and the Vice President is not the same as it was before.

## Akhilesh urges govt to discuss Pahalgam terror attack

*He stressed the need for transparency and urged the Centre to clarify the circumstances surrounding the attack, particularly regarding any lapses in intelligence. The SP leader further stressed that the government and the Prime Minister should listen to the Opposition's concerns.*

Samajwadi Party MP Akhilesh Yadav emphasised the need for a discussion on the Pahalgam terror attack, and called for an open discussion in Parliament to address the incident.

He stressed the need for transparency and urged the Centre to clarify the circumstances surrounding the attack, particularly regarding any lapses in intelligence. The SP leader further stressed that the

government and the Prime Minister should listen to the Opposition's concerns.

"The issue of Pahalgam terror attack is very important. All Opposition parties

want there to be a discussion on it.

The government should disclose what had happened and if it was an intelligence failure. The PM and the govt

should hear the opposition and we will hear that the govt will have to say..." Yadav told reporters on Monday. Earlier today, the Opposition reiterated its demand to discuss the Pahalgam attack and Operation Sindoor. Speaking to reporters, Congress MP KC Venugopal said, "We are asking for a discussion in the House in the presence of the Prime Minister.

All INDIA alliance parties' MPs have adjournment motion notices to discuss the Pahalgam terror attack.

Home Ministry notifies resignation of  
VP Dhankhar: Rajya Sabha informedANAND SINGH  
NEW DELHI

A day after Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar resigned from his post citing medical reasons, the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday was informed about the Ministry of Home Affairs' notification regarding his resignation, with immediate effect.

Soon after the House met for the Question Hour at 12 noon following adjournment of one hour, Ghanshyam Tiwari, who was in the Chair, informed members about the notification.

"The Ministry of Home Affairs, vide notification

dated July 22, 2025, has conveyed the resignation of Vice President of India Jagdeep Dhankhar under Article 67 (A) of the Constitution with immediate effect," Tiwari announced.

Even Lok Sabha was informed about then resignation of Dhankhar. The Vice President of India is ex-officio Chairman of the Rajya Sabha. Dhankhar had late on Monday sent his resignation to President Droupadi Murmu. "To prioritise health care and abide by medical advice, I hereby resign as Vice President of India, effective immediately, in accordance with Article

67(a) of the Constitution," he said in his letter to the President. Even President Murmu accepted the resignation of the Vice President.

Dhankhar, 74, assumed office in August 2022. Soon after the House met in the morning, Deputy Chairman Harivansh said that further Constitutional process concerning vacancy in the Office of Vice President of India will be communicated as and when received. Meanwhile, source also said that the MHA has also written to the Election Commission as the post of the Vice President cannot be kept vacant for long.



Lok Sabha LoP Rahul Gandhi, SP MP Akhilesh Yadav, DMK MPs T R Balu, A Raja and other INDIA bloc MPs protest against SIR (Special Intensive Revision) exercise in Bihar, during Monsoon Session of Parliament, at Parliament premises in New Delhi on Tuesday. ANI

## GLIMPSES OF PARLIAMENT



TMC MP Mahua Moitra and BJP MP Sambit Patra at the Parliament House Complex post adjournment of Lok Sabha on Tuesday. ANI



Congress Parliamentary Party Chairperson Sonia Gandhi arrives to attend the Monsoon Session of the Parliament on Tuesday. ANI



Apna Dal (Soneylal) MP Anupriya Patel leaves after the adjournment of the Lok Sabha during Monsoon Session, at the Parliament House Complex. ANI



A Member of Parliament during the rainfall at Parliament House Complex on the second day of the Monsoon Session, in New Delhi on Tuesday. ANI



BJP MPs Rekha Sharma, Sambit Patra and other MPs leave amid rain, after the adjournment of the Lok Sabha during Monsoon Session, at the Parliament House Complex in New Delhi on Tuesday. ANI

RS Business Advisory Council  
meet postponed, to be held todayTDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The meeting of the Rajya Sabha Business Advisory Council (BAC), scheduled for Tuesday, has been postponed and will now take place on Wednesday, sources said.

According to the sources, the BAC meeting will be held at 12:30 pm today.

Meanwhile, both houses of Parliament--Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha--were adjourned till tomorrow after major disruption by the opposition over the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls being undertaken by the Election Commission (EC) in Bihar ahead of the upcoming assembly elections.

Targeting the opposition for creating a ruckus in the House, Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju said that the government is

ready for discussion, but the Opposition is "wasting public money" by indulging in protest.

"They (opposition) are demanding discussion, and we are ready for it. Then why are they not allowing the House to function? This double standard is wrong. If you want discussion, then do not create a ruckus. The government has said that we are ready for discussion. You are wasting public money," Rijiju said.

Bharatiya Janata Party MP Jagdambika Pal, chairing the Lower House, announced the adjournment and asked the Opposition to submit proposals and resolutions instead of raising placards in the Lok Sabha.

Pal said previously while objecting to the use of placards in the house. "Instead of showing placards, you

can submit your proposals and resolutions, and the business advisory committee will consider them. Speakers will give time, and the government will respond. Why are you worried?" he said.

Similarly, in the Rajya Sabha, Opposition MPs raise slogans, demanding a discussion on the revision of the electoral roll in Bihar.

Multiple leaders, including Lok Sabha Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi and Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, stood at the steps of Parliament at Makar Dwar and protested against the Bihar SIR, calling for the exercise to be halted. Notably, BJP MP Ghanshyam Tiwari, who was in the Chair in the Upper House, announced that Jagdeep Dhankhar's resignation as Vice President of India has been accepted by the President of India.



THE DAILY GUARDIAN SURVEY ON RUSSIA-UKRAINE PEACE TALK

57% BELIEVE THAT THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE TALKS IN TURKEY ON JULY 23 WILL LEAD TO PEACE

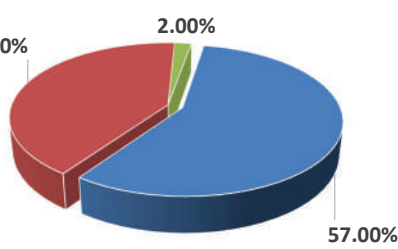
A recent survey on the Russia-Ukraine peace talks shows that 57% believe peace may be achieved, while 41% expect war to continue. Most respondents support

Trump's 50-day ultimatum to Putin. Many think U.S. ceasefire talks stem from economic concerns. Most believe easing U.S. pressure could help end the war.

Q1. ▶

Talks are set to resume between Russia and Ukraine in Turkey on July 23. What do you think will happen?

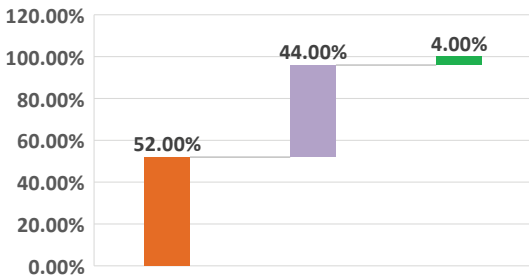
Peace will be achieved  
War will continue  
Can't say



Q2. ◀

Recently, Trump gave Putin a 50-day ultimatum to end the war. Do you consider this valid?

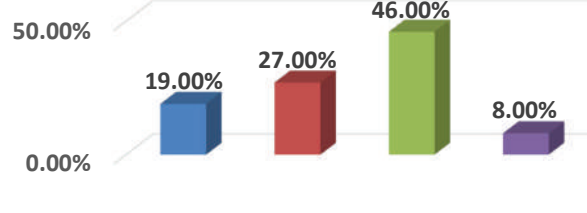
Yes  
No  
Cannot say



Q3. ▶

Why is the U.S. repeatedly discussing ceasefire?

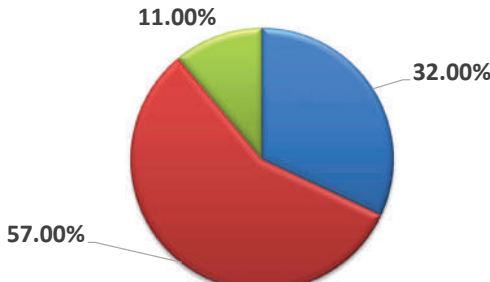
Because Russia has suffered heavy losses  
Because the U.S. does not want NATO to enter war  
Because the war is affecting the U.S. economy  
Can't say



Q4. ◀

How can the Russia-Ukraine war end, in your opinion?

If Russia accepts full U.S. conditions  
If the U.S. eases its ultimatum  
Can't say



Opposition set to stir the pot

CONTINUED FROM P1

everyone by resigning can give a new impetus to farmer politics.

Former Rajasthan Chief Minister Gehlot has also said that Dhankhar always raised the voice of farmers. Whether inside or outside the Parliament, Dhankhar used to raise the problems of farmers.

Recently, Dhankhar also talked to the Agriculture Minister on the issue of farmers. Rajasthan Congress State Datasara said that BJP has neither any attachment with farmers, nor with the sons of farmers. There is no place in their hearts for the sons of farmers who nurtured the BJP organization by struggling throughout their lives.

Jat politics heats up the most during the elections

of states like Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Haryana and Delhi. Jat voters are also considered influential on many seats of these states.

During the 2022 Uttar Pradesh elections, Union Home Minister Amit Shah himself took the initiative to woo the Jats. In the same year, by making Dhankhar the Vice President, BJP tried to woo the Jats in many states. During the 2023 Rajasthan Assembly elections, the then Rajasthan Chief Minister Gehlot had also raised questions about Dhankhar's tours. However, the Jat voter in Rajasthan did not support the BJP either in the Assembly or in the Lok Sabha. BJP suffered a setback in Jat-dominated areas.

After the general elections, BJP definitely succeeded in wooing the Jats

in Haryana and Delhi. At present, farmer and Jat politics is in the backburner. But after Dhankhar's resignation, Congress and the opposition can give it a boost. Uttar Pradesh and Punjab elections are still two years away, where farmer and Jat politics have their own significance.

Rashtriya Lok Dal is a major constituent of the NDA. And its leader Jayant Chaudhary is considered to have a good hold among the Jats of Uttar Pradesh. In the organization, Satish Punia of Rajasthan has been made the in-charge general secretary of Haryana while Bhagirath Chaudhary is a minister of state at the Centre. Now it has to be seen in which direction the opposition takes the issue of Dhankhar in the coming days.

Haryana to roll out Rs 2,100 scheme

CONTINUED FROM P1

specifically those with an annual family income below Rs 1 lakh. Haryana has nearly 46 lakh BPL ration card holders, and around 50 lakh women are expected to be covered in the first phase.

Women who are formally employed or already receiving government pensions, such as widows or divorcees, are unlikely to be included in the initial rollout.

Over time, the scheme aims to benefit up to 75 lakh women between the ages of 18 and 60. Subsequent phases will gradually expand eligibility to include more beneficiaries based on revised criteria.

The Haryana government has earmarked Rs 5000 crore for the Lado Laxmi Yojana in its 2025-26 budget, unveiled by CM Saini on March 17 under the theme

"Mahila Big Gift." This allocation underscores the administration's commitment to strengthening the financial backbone of the state's women.

However, budget constraints may require adjustments. If 50 lakh women receive Rs 2,100 monthly, the annual cost would total Rs 12,600 crore—more than double the current allocation. The government may either expand the budget or cap the number of beneficiaries accordingly.

Eligible women will be able to apply through the Antyodaya Saral Portal, Haryana's centralized digital platform for public services. The portal will streamline applications and verifications, with registration expected to open immediately following the official announcement.

This digital-first approach is intended to ensure conve-

nience, transparency, and wider outreach, allowing women to register from their homes.

The scheme has also emerged as a point of political competition. During the 2024 elections, the Congress party had promised Rs 2,000 per month for women. The BJP responded by pledging Rs 2100—Rs 100 more—seeking to secure the support of Haryana's 78 lakh women voters. The BJP's promise played a significant role in its electoral success, securing a third term in the state.

With anticipation building, the final nod from CM Saini is expected soon—possibly just before or on August 9, the day of Raksha Bandhan. The scheme, once implemented, could redefine the socio-economic fabric of Haryana by strengthening the financial position of millions of women.

Exit quiet and procedural, none saw it coming

CONTINUED FROM P1

public or procedural conflict with the ruling party, resulting in institutional strain or resignation.

Dhankhar formally cited health reasons for stepping down, but the timing—just hours after a meeting of the Rajya Sabha Business Advisory Committee—suggests there was more to the decision. Reports indicate that he had accepted and listed for discussion a resolution moved by the Opposition seeking the removal of a sitting High Court judge. This move, according to sources, had not been cleared by the government and triggered strong objections from senior ministers. Dhankhar is believed to have defended his decision in closed-door exchanges but submitted his resignation later that evening.

This is not the first time a Vice President has found himself at odds

with the party in power. In May 1990, Shankar Dayal Sharma—then Vice President and Chairman of the Rajya Sabha—was presiding over a disorderly and aggressive House session when he was shouted down and heckled, particularly by members of the Congress, the party he had once served. Unable to restore order or command basic respect, Sharma broke down and wept in the House—his emotional appeal, "Shoot me, but don't murder democracy," remains etched in parliamentary memory. The incident was widely seen as a breakdown of decorum and a personal humiliation for a constitutional office-holder unable to assert authority amid legislative indiscipline.

A decade earlier, President Giani Zail Singh's relationship with the Rajiv Gandhi government had turned increasingly bitter by 1986–87. The Bofors scandal, which dominated national headlines, became a major

point of contention. Senior journalists who covered the period recall that Singh—allegedly kept out of the loop—sought information and clarifications from the Prime Minister's Office, but received no response. According to their accounts, Singh eventually sent Rajiv Gandhi a sharply worded letter accusing him of breaching constitutional norms and breaking communication protocol with the President's office.

Tensions escalated when Singh refused assent to the Post Office (Amendment) Bill in 1986, effectively exercising a pocket veto and embarrassing the government. Files were reportedly withheld from Rashtrapati Bhavan, and Singh even explored—though did not act upon—the possibility of dismissing the government under Article 75(2) of the Constitution. The standoff, covered extensively by national and international media, is widely

regarded as one of the most serious confrontations between a sitting President and the Cabinet in post-Independence India.

Dhankhar's resignation, even though presented as a response to medical advice, now enters this rare but significant category. His departure is not the first time a Vice President has left office under strain, nor the first time the ruling party has disagreed with the conduct or decisions of a constitutional authority. What makes it different, however, is that this appears to be the first serious political mishap that the present BJP government has encountered.

The other striking difference is the complete absence of political drama. Unlike in earlier cases—where tensions were either publicly aired or institutionally recorded—Dhankhar's exit has so far remained quiet, procedural, and largely unspoken.

Setback to Congress

CONTINUED FROM P1

countant Member M. Balaganes, stated that Section 13A represents a special exemption that must be applied with strict adherence to all conditions, with any breach rendering the entire exemption invalid.

The tribunal dismissed Congress's attempt to distinguish between "voluntary contributions" and

"donations," noting that the party itself made no such differentiation in its records or Election Commission filings.

Additionally, the ITAT rejected the party's plea that only surplus funds after expenses should be taxed, instead ruling that once Section 13A exemption is denied, all voluntary contributions become taxable income.

Kanwariyas electrocuted

CONTINUED FROM P1

turned to anger, with residents blaming the power authorities for negligence, citing the low-hanging high-voltage wires as a long-standing hazard. "The wires are dangerously low. We've complained before, but no action was taken," said a villager, speaking amid a gathering of outraged residents and fellow pilgrims.

Local police have seized the vehicle and registered a case. An officials associated with the investigation said that the formal investigation is now underway to determine whether infrastructure lapses, driver oversight, or other factors contributed to the incident. Authorities have also not ruled out action against officials of the electricity department, depending on the outcome of the probe. Such incidents have become common during the Kanwar Yatra as last year. Nine kanwariyas were electrocuted and six others were injured after they came in contact with a high-voltage overhead wire in Bihar's Vaishali district.

Dhankhar's sudden exit sets political circles buzzing

CONTINUED FROM P1

ignation. The election is conducted by the members of both Houses of Parliament—788 voters in total. The Election Commission will soon announce the date, likely within a few weeks. The NDA holds a clear majority—293 seats in the Lok Sabha and around 120 in the Rajya Sabha—so its candidate is likely to win.

Until then, Deputy Chairman Harivansh will run the Rajya Sabha. The Opposition, under the I.N.D.I.A alliance, may field a symbolic candidate—similar to Margaret Alva in the

last election—but with just 234 seats in the Lok Sabha and 87 in the Rajya Sabha, a victory seems unlikely.

CONTENDERS FOR THE POST

The list of potential candidates is growing. The NDA is holding internal meetings. Names under consideration include Health Minister J P Nadda, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Manoj Sinha, Arjun Ram Meghwal, and Harivansh Narayan Singh.

Singh, a JD(U) member from Bihar, has been Deputy Chairman since 2020. The government report-

edly favours him, and with the Bihar Assembly elections approaching, his candidacy could offer strategic benefits. Some BJP MLAs are suggesting Nitish Kumar for the Vice President's post. Leaders like Sanjay Thakur say Nitish's experience would strengthen the NDA. However, the RJD has dismissed the speculation, saying Nitish won't resign.

Kiren Rijiju, Union Minister from the Northeast, is also being considered as a candidate who can offer regional balance. Senior BJP leader and Environment Minister Bhupender

Yadav is another contender, known for his strong hold within the party's organizational structure. While the NDA holds a strong advantage, the decision is being closely tied to electoral strategy, particularly in Bihar.

This resignation is not just about one office—it has triggered a political churn. The NDA must move quickly as the Rajya Sabha cannot function without the Chairman. All eyes are now on the Election Commission and the political leadership to see who will rise to the role of India's next Vice President.

Day two a washout as Oppn creates ruckus

CONTINUED FROM P1

tion on the first day of the session on Monday due to repeated adjournments following opposition protests over the demand for discussion on Operation Sindoor.

Under Operation Sindoor, armed forces attacked Pakistani terror sites and defence installations for three days beginning May 7, following the Pahalgam terror attack on April 22 in which 26 people were killed.

In the Lok Sabha, Opposition members trooped to the Well of the Lok Sabha when the House reconvened at 2 pm after two earlier adjournments on the second day of the Monsoon session of Parliament demanding a discussion and roll back of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exer-

cise initiated by the Election Commission in Bihar ahead of assembly polls scheduled for later this year.

Dilip Saikia, who was on the chair, made repeated requests to opposition MPs to

*As the protests continued, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju got up and condemned the opposition behaviour.*

go back to their places and allow the House to function.

As the protests continued, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju got up and condemned the opposition behaviour.

He said it was agreed at the Business Advisory Committee meeting on Monday that first Operation Sindoor will be taken up for discussion and the time for it had also been fixed.

"Only the rule under which discussion will take place will be decided. They come here carrying placards and violate the rules, I condemn this," Rijiju said.

"They are asking for a debate and we are ready for a debate but they are not allowing the House to function," he said, slamming the opposition. These "double standards are wrong, on one hand they ask for debate and then create a ruckus like this," he said.

Rijiju said the government is ready but the opposition was wasting the time of Parliament. He condemned the

behaviour of the Congress and other parties.

The Upper House earlier saw two adjournments during the pre-lunch period, before it was finally adjourned within minutes of meeting at 2 PM.

Soon after the House met, Deputy Chairman Harivansh announced the name of Shipping Minister Sarbananda Sonowal to move a motion for consideration of The Carriage of Goods by Sea Bill, 2025.

As Opposition members were on their feet, raising slogans in support of their demands, the Chair urged them to go back to their seats.

As unrelenting members continued to create ruckus, Harivansh adjourned the House for the day. The Rajya Sabha will now meet at 11 AM on Wednesday.

Ball in ECI's court now

CONTINUED FROM P1

Dhankhar resigned has given rise to many discussions. But the surprising thing is that Dhankhar's office had fixed all his programme till 5 pm. The program to go to Jaipur on 23 July was released. Dhankhar's dinner was also fixed at Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia's place. That dinner was postponed around 6 pm. It

means whatever decision Dhankhar took, he took it in the evening.

According to former Lok Sabha Secretary General PDT Acharya, the Election Commission will soon announce the date. When the term of the Vice President is about to end, the process will started 60 days in advance. But this case is different. It is written in the Constitution that in these

circumstances, the Election Commission will have to start the process as soon as possible.

If the Election Commission wants, it can announce the election schedule within a week. It is said that 32-34 days are required to complete the election process. Most experts believe that the commission can announce the election schedule in early August.

Bihar SIR: Over 52 lakh electors not found

CONTINUED FROM P1

1, a full one-month will be available to any member of the public to file objections to any additions, deletions and rectification in the draft poll rolls.

Functionaries said the 12 political parties which have been given a list of electors who have shifted, not found or have died will know why such names will not be included in the draft rolls.



# Owaisi Urges PM Modi Not to Align India With Nations Backing Israel Over Gaza

Owaisi urges PM Modi to oppose Israel’s Gaza actions, warning against India aligning with nations complicit in alleged genocide.

TDG NETWORK  
HYDERABAD

AIMIM chief and Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi on Tuesday strongly condemned Israel's ongoing military actions in Gaza, calling them a “genocide” against Palestinians. In a direct appeal to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Owaisi urged the Indian government to ensure that India does not align itself with countries that he claims are complicit in what he described as crimes committed by Israel.

Taking to social media platform ‘X’ (formerly Twitter), Owaisi reiterated India's historical support for the Palestinian cause and criticized what he views as growing global complicity in Israel's actions. He

FOREIGN POLICY

- He urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to ensure India does not align with countries complicit in Israel's actions.
- Owaisi emphasized India's historical support for Palestine and opposition to Israeli apartheid.
- He stated that the Gaza conflict is a widely known humanitarian crisis, unlike the Holocaust where ignorance was claimed.
- The Hyderabad MP called for moral leadership and decisive global action against the alleged genocide.



posted: “Israel is committing genocide against Palestinians in Gaza. Unlike the Holocaust, where many claimed ignorance, this genocide is widely known. @narendramodi must ensure India does not join countries complicit in Israel's crimes. India has

always supported Palestine and opposed Israeli apartheid.”

The AIMIM leader emphasized the need for clear moral leadership, noting that this is not a time for silence or neutrality. He said that the humanitarian crisis unfolding in Gaza has

already resulted in thousands of civilian deaths, displacement of families, and large-scale destruction. According to Owaisi, the situation demands a strong stance in favor of justice and international law.

Owaisi also highlighted what he called a double

## Congress stages protest to demanding immediate restoration of statehood to J&K

ANAND SINGH  
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Tuesday once again reiterated its demand for statehood for Jammu and Kashmir and for including Ladakh in the Sixth Schedule, stating that both issues will be raised in both Houses of Parliament during the Monsoon Session.

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge and Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi extended their full support to the J&K Congress leaders and workers who had come to the national capital.

The Jammu & Kashmir Congress leaders staged a protest at Jantar Mantar in central Delhi, led by UT unit chief Tariq Hameed Karra, CLP Leader Ghulam Ahmed Mir, and AICC General Secretary in-charge of J&K and



Ladakh Syed Naseer Hussain.

The protest called for the immediate restoration of full statehood to Jammu & Kashmir and strongly condemned the BJP's undemocratic, authoritarian, and unconstitutional suppression of democratic rights in the region.

Over 500 Congress workers and leaders from across Jammu & Kashmir travelled to Delhi by buses, raising slogans such as 'Delhi Chalo' and 'Hamari Riyasat Hamara Haq.' Congress workers and leaders carried placards that read 'Loktantra Bahal Karo', 'State-

hood Wapas Karo', and 'Jammu Kashmir Ke Saath Nyaay Karo'. Addressing the protest at Jantar Mantar, AICC General Secretary (Organisation) K. C. Venugopal said, “When the Lt. Governor himself admits to grave security lapses in the Pahalgam terror attack, it vindicates our stand. Unelected, unaccountable administrators cannot replace a democratically elected government. Jammu & Kashmir deserves its dignity, its Assembly, and its voice. The Congress Party will not rest until democracy is fully restored.”

On Sunday, the Jammu & Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JK-PCC) organised a major protest at the city centre in Jammu, where Karra and Mir were detained by police while peacefully demanding statehood, democratic elections, and restoration of constitutional rights.

## 7/11 blasts SC to hear Maha’s appeal against acquittal

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court will hear the Maharashtra government's plea against the Bombay High Court verdict acquitting all 12 accused in the 2006 Mumbai train bomb blasts case on July 24.

A bench of Chief Justice B R Gavai and Justices K Vinod Chandran and N V Anjaria on Tuesday took note of the urgent mentioning of the state's appeal against the High Court's July 21 verdict by Solicitor General Tushar Mehta and said it will be listed for Thursday.

“It is a serious matter. The SLP (special leave petition) is ready. Please list it tomorrow. There is urgency... Still there are some important issues to be looked at,” the law officer said.

The CJJ referred to newspaper reports of eight per-

sons being released from prison following the high court judgment.

On Monday, a special high court bench of Justices Anil Kilor and Shyam Chandak acquitted all the 12 accused, saying the prosecution utterly failed to prove the case and it was “hard to believe the accused committed the crime”.

Of the 12, five had been sentenced to death and seven to life imprisonment by the special court. One of the death row convicts died in 2021.

More than 180 people were killed when seven blasts ripped through Mumbai local trains at various locations on the western line on July 11, 2006.

The high court allowed the appeals filed by the accused challenging their conviction and sentences imposed on them by a special court in 2015.

## Centre approves MIS for Totapuri mango in AP

RAJ KIRAN BATHULA  
HYDERABAD

In a significant relief to thousands of Totapuri mango farmers across Andhra Pradesh, the Central Government has approved the implementation of the Market Intervention Scheme (MIS) to stabilize prices and support farmers affected by falling market rates.

The decision comes in response to a formal appeal by Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, who urged the Union Government to step in and rescue the mango farming community that has been facing severe distress due to plummeting prices and a lack of adequate procurement mechanisms. As per the communication received from the Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, a total of 1.62 lakh metric tonnes of Totapuri mangoes will now be procured under the MIS framework.

## CM Yogi leads river revival, new ear of greenery in UP

NIKITA SAREEN  
LUCKNOW

Under the leadership of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, forgotten rivers are being revived in Uttar Pradesh. Rivers that were dry, filled with silt and victims of encroachment for years are now flowing full again. This change is not limited to rivers only, but it has started a new era of greenery, environment and prosperity of villagers. So far, more than two crore 14 lakh plants have been planted along the banks of 82 rivers of the state. This is being considered a historic initiative towards environment, cleanliness and water conservation.

Jalaun district is at the first place in plantation along the river banks, where more than 31 lakh plants were planted. Jhansi district is at the second place by planting more than 24 lakh plants along the river



banks, while Hamirpur is at the third place in plantation along the river banks, where more than 16 lakh plants were planted. This great campaign of plantation is going on continuously at a rapid pace.

Under the clear instructions of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the rejuvenation of small rivers is being done on a war footing in every district. This work has been made possible by the activeness of the State Clean Ganga Mission, Namami Gange and Rural Water Supply Department. Under the MNREGA scheme,

## Y+ security for Surjewala under review by Centre

VIPIN PARMAR  
NEW DELHI

The Union Home Ministry has proposed to withdraw the Y+ category security provided to Congress Rajya Sabha MP Randeep Singh Surjewala after a new security review by the central security agency. While considering the Centre's plea, Justice Kuldeep Tiwari of the Punjab and Haryana High Court allowed Surjewala to appear before the authority concerned to present his case.

The Bench has directed that the petitioner be given a reasonable opportunity to submit all the evidence required to prove the constant threat posed to him.

Justice Tiwari ordered that the petitioner shall submit all the documents before the concerned authority within one month from the date of the passage of this order and thereafter, after providing the petitioner with a reasonable opportunity of being heard, the concerned authority shall take a decision expeditiously.

The court also directed that

a copy of the decision taken by the authority be submitted to the court on September 30 as the next date of hearing.

Surjewala had filed a writ petition in 2016 seeking Centre Industrial Security Force (CISF) security due to threats. After the Centre decided to provide Y+ security cover across India, the matter was settled by a coordination bench of the High Court in 2017.

Considering the petitioner's apprehension that the government may withdraw security without any reason and without ascertaining the real threat perception, the court directed that it is necessary to seek prior permission from the court if the category of security is sought to be changed.

The case was heard again after the central government, through senior panel counsel Arun Gosain and advocates Swati Arora and Sourav Rao, sought permission to withdraw the security provided to Surjewala. Justice Tiwari said, “The senior panel advo-

cate of the Union of India has argued that as per the new threat assessment made by the central security agency, there is no indication of any particular threat to the petitioner.

The Ministry of Home Affairs has proposed to withdraw the security provided to the petitioner, and hence a petition seeking withdrawal of the security has been filed.

Advocates JS Toor, R Kartikeya and Adhiraj Toor, appearing for Surjewala, argued that the petitioner still remains under threat. Therefore, he would like to appear before the authorities concerned and submit all evidence to substantiate his claim. Justice Tiwari further said, In view of the arguments submitted by the lawyers of the parties concerned, this Court considers it appropriate to allow the petitioner to appear before the authorities concerned. Further, the petitioner has the liberty to submit all relevant materials necessary to substantiate his threat apprehension.

## CM Fadnavis unveils multiple projects in Maharashtra

ANAND SINGH  
GADCHIROLI

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Tuesday asserted that Gadchiroli, which was once dubbed as most backward district and in power corridors being called the place for “punishment postings”, is now all set to become the country's next green steel powerhouse as he unveiled multiple projects.

Fadnavis made the remarks while unveiling the foundation stone of 4.5 MTPA mega integrated steel plant of Lloyds Metals and Energy (LMEL) at Konsari,



including the inauguration of a 5 million tonne per annum (MTPA) iron ore grinding plant at Hedri, an 85-kilometre-long, 10 MTPA slurry pipeline between Hedri and Konsari.

While speaking at the function, the Chief Minister said: “A massive socioeconomic transformation is

taking place in Gadchiroli since Lloyds Metals started industrialisation in the district.

The rapid pace at which positive changes are taking place, will help Gadchiroli emerge among the Top-10 districts in Maharashtra in next five years.”

He said that the foun-

dation stone laying of 4.5 MTPA Integrated Steel Plant is a major step in that direction.

Fadnavis said that “it was the dream come true for him as well as the people of Gadchiroli to lead the industrial revolution in this part of Maharashtra”.

“With rich deposits of iron ore in the district, and the upcoming integrated steel plant in the next 30 months, India will soon be able to compete with China. I am happy that LMEL and the people of Gadchiroli have been growing together. So far, 14,000 people have got jobs.

## Assam CM begins four-day visit to Dibrugarh & Tinsukia

TDG NETWORK  
NIBIR DEKA

Assam Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma will undertake a four-day official visit to Dibrugarh and Tinsukia districts from July 22 to 25, 2025, to review developmental progress and lay foundation stones for key infrastructure projects across the region.

The Chief Minister is scheduled to arrive at Mohanbari Airport in Dibrugarh at 1:30 PM today. Following his arrival, he will proceed to Burha Burhi Than at Chapakhowa in Tinsukia district to attend the Bhumi Puja and inaugurate a water supply project.

On July 23, Dr. Sarma will chair a series of review meetings for the following Legislative Assembly Constituencies at the Chief Minister's Secretariat in Dibrugarh: Sonari LAC at 10 AM,

Nowboicha LAC at 1PM, and Tingkhong LAC at 6 PM.

On July 24, the Chief Minister will lay foundation stones for major infrastructure upgrades at Dibrugarh University under the PM-USHA scheme and the Chief Minister's Special Grant.

At 12 noon, he will attend a function at Assam Medical College and Hospital (AMCH) for the proposed construction of teachers' quarters and a new hostel for students.

Later in the afternoon, at 3 PM, Dr. Sarma will visit Naharkatia for multiple foundation stone laying ceremonies, including: Co-District Office, Naharkatia Hockey Stadium, Tata Strive Centre of Excellence, ITI handover to SEED, Road Over Bridge, and two model schools.

He will also inaugurate the newly constructed Naharkatia Mandal BJP Office during the visit.

## Amid ‘rummy’ video row, minister calls govt ‘beggar’, Fadnavis says comments inappropriate

TDG NETWORK  
NASHIK

Maharashtra minister Manikrao Kokate, already under fire for allegedly playing rummy on his phone inside the state legislature, found himself at the center of yet another controversy on Tuesday after he referred to the government as a “beggar” while addressing a public event.

Kokate made the comment while attempting to clarify his previous statement regarding farmers' demands. “The government is like a beggar. It does not have a treasure trove. It depends on revenue and taxes,” Kokate said. While he intended to explain the state's financial constraints, the choice of words drew swift backlash from opposition leaders and even

members within the ruling alliance.

Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis distanced the government from Kokate's remarks, calling them “inappropriate and unacceptable.” Speaking to reporters, Fadnavis said, “No one should speak in such a manner about the government. Being a part of the government, using such terminology is not

*The fresh controversy comes just days after Kokate was caught on camera allegedly playing a rummy game on his phone during a legislative session.*

justified.”

The fresh controversy comes just days after Kokate was caught on camera allegedly playing a rummy game on his phone during

a legislative session. The video quickly went viral, drawing criticism over the minister's conduct during serious assembly discussions.

While Kokate initially denied the allegations, he later admitted to using the phone during the session but maintained that he was not playing any game.

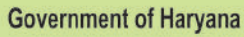
Facing mounting criticism, Kokate claimed his comments about the government being like a “beggar” were misinterpreted. “I meant that the government works within its financial limits. There is no

magic wand to fulfill every demand instantly,” he said.

However, the damage seems to have been done, with political opponents seizing the opportunity to attack the government over both issues. Opposition parties accused Kokate of disrespecting the state's institutions and failing to maintain the dignity of his office.

The dual controversies have created a political stir in Maharashtra, with calls from opposition benches demanding disciplinary action against Kokate. As the state government continues to manage fallout from both the rummy video and the controversial statement, questions remain over whether further steps will be taken to hold the minister accountable.





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# DELHI GOVT HIKES CASH AWARDS FOR OLYMPIC WINNERS FROM CITY

Sood also announced the approval of the Mukhyamantri Digital Scheme to provide free laptops to meritorious students.

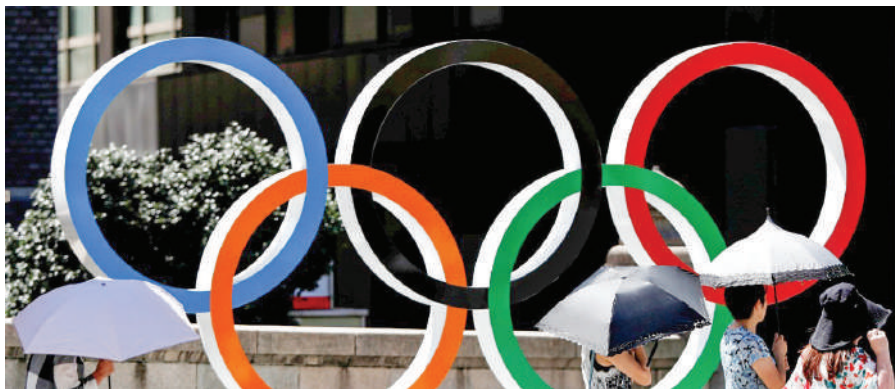
TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi government has hiked the cash awards for Olympic and Paralympic medallists from the national capital, minister Ashish Sood said on Tuesday.

Sood also announced the approval of the Mukhyamantri Digital Scheme to provide free laptops to meritorious students. The decisions were taken during a Cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Rekha Gupta at the Delhi Secretariat here.

"Today, under the leadership of CM Rekha Gupta, a Cabinet meeting was held. Various important decisions were taken for Delhi's development, students and youth," Sood told a press conference.

"There were historic de-



*The decisions were taken during a Cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Rekha Gupta at the Delhi Secretariat here.*

cisions taken under the Mukhyamantri Khel Proth-sahan Yojana. Olympic and Paralympic medal winners were awarded Rs 3 crore, Rs 2 crore and Rs 1 crore earlier for gold, silver and bronze medallists respectively. To encourage the sports eco-

system here, Olympic gold medallists will now be given Rs 7 crore, silver medallists Rs 5 crore and bronze medallists Rs 3 crore," he said.

Sood announced that the Olympic gold and silver medallists will be given Group A jobs while the

bronze medallists will be given Group B jobs in the Delhi government.

The Cabinet has also decided that young sportspersons participating in state and national level events will be provided Rs 5 lakh each for coaching and training purposes, he said. The honorarium will be given to students from classes 6 to 12.

So far, National Games winners were provided Rs 3

lakh, Rs 2 lakh and Rs 1 lakh for winning gold, silver and bronze medals, he said. The government has now decided to provide Rs 11 lakh for winning any medal in national-level sports events, Sood said.

The government will provide Rs 20 lakh per year to "elite sportspersons" who participate in national and international games and sports events, Sood said.

The minister also announced that under the Mukhyamantri Digital Scheme, free laptops would be provided to students to ensure the holistic development of the youth.

"As many as 1,200 meritorious students who have passed Class 10 with good marks will be given 17 laptops. This will benefit students from underprivileged backgrounds," he said.

## Delhi Govt extends current EV policy till March 2026

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Delhi government has extended the current Electric Vehicle (EV) Policy until March 31, 2026, as the draft of the new policy will undergo public consultation, which is expected to take time, Transport Minister Pankaj Singh said on Tuesday.

Singh said the policy extension was among the matters listed for Tuesday's Cabinet meeting, and it has been decided to extend the same.

"The current Electric Vehicle (EV) Policy has been extended until March 31, 2026, or until a new policy is approved, whichever is earlier," Singh told PTI.

The minister said the move aims to facilitate comprehensive consultations with all the relevant stakeholders, including citizens, industry experts, private organisations, and environmental groups.

Singh added that during this extended period, key



provisions of the policy will be discussed, including strengthening the EV charging infrastructure, reviewing subsidies and waivers to boost EV adoption, developing robust systems for safe e-waste and battery disposal, and clearly defining the role of the public and private sectors in advancing the electric mobility ecosystem.

Given Delhi's air pollution crisis, this participatory approach is seen as a crucial step towards framing a more effective, inclusive, and forward-looking EV policy that promotes clean and sustainable urban transport, Singh said, adding that the government has also urged active

public participation in the consultation process to collectively shape the future of electric mobility in the capital.

The current EV policy -- first introduced in 2020 during the previous Aam Aadmi Party rule -- lapsed in August 2023. It has since been extended multiple times.

The Cabinet had discussed the draft policy on April 15 but deferred the approval of key proposals, including the phasing out of CNG auto-rickshaws and fossil fuel-based two-wheelers within two years.

The draft policy envisions 100 per cent electric vehicle adoption in the capital over the next three years.

## Delhi HC gives Lakshmi Puri time to consider Gokhale's apology

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday granted time to former diplomat Lakshmi Murdeshwar Puri to peruse an affidavit filed by TMC MP Saket Gokhale tendering apology for his alleged defamatory utterances against her.

A bench of Justices Anil Kshetarpal and Harish Vaidyanathan Shankar passed the order after Puri's counsel said he had not received the copy of the fresh affidavit filed by Gokhale in the matter.

The court on July 8 refused to accept the written apology of Gokhale in the case, while asking him to file a fresh affidavit in the matter.

Senior advocate Amit



Sibal, appearing for Gokhale, on Tuesday said a fresh affidavit had been filed. Senior advocate Maninder Singh, representing Puri, then said he needed time to examine the document as he received a copy in the court itself before the hearing.

The bench considered the submissions and posted the hearing on July 24. The court is dealing with Gokhale's appeal against a single judge's July 1, 2024 verdict restraining the TMC leader from publishing further on social media or any online platform against Puri.

## AAP demands explanation on Dhankhar's sudden resignation

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The AAP on Tuesday demanded a "clear explanation" from the government for the sudden resignation of former vice president Jagdeep Dhankhar, calling it a matter of "serious concern".

Addressing a press conference, Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Singh questioned the government's "silence" and the "delayed response" from Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"We saw that the prime minister posted on X long after the resignation. This delay indicates there was no effort to persuade the vice president to reconsider," Singh said.

In a sudden move, Dhankhar on Monday



*Singh said the abrupt departure from such a high constitutional post raises "many unanswered questions".*

evening resigned from his post, citing medical reasons, triggering speculation in political circles. Singh said the abrupt departure from such a high constitutional post raises "many unanswered questions".

"We believe the nation

deserves transparency. The government must explain what led to such a sudden move," he added. In his resignation letter to President Droupadi Murmu, Dhankhar said he was stepping down with immediate effect to "prioritise health care".

## 4 held for drugging, robbing outstation passengers in Delhi

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Police have arrested four men for allegedly offering spiked drinks to outstation passengers traveling in auto-rickshaws and robbing them of their valuables, officials said on Tuesday.

The accused were identified as Raju, an auto-rickshaw driver; Sahjada alias Golta; Md Azad; and Md Ataullah alias Guddu, police said.

They targeted outstation passengers, particularly those traveling to states like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

"They would offer spiked drinks to their victims in the auto-rickshaw. Once the victims lost consciousness, the accused would steal phones and valuables and leave them on the road while the



victims were unconscious," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Southwest) Amit Goel said.

Most of the victims, being in transit, avoided lodging formal complaints, which allowed the gang to operate with relative impunity, he added.

The matter came to light when, on July 13, the gang drugged a passenger near Dhaula Kuan and stole his mobile phone, police said.

The accused were arrested while roaming in the same auto used in their previous crimes. They were searching for potential buyers for the stolen items and scouting for further theft opportunities. Seven stolen mobile phones, ten strips of sleeping pills, and the auto-rickshaw used in the crimes have been recovered from the accused, the DCP said. Further investigation is underway.

## SC nod to CBI for 22 cases of 'fraud' against homebuyers

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday allowed the CBI to register 22 cases into the "unholy nexus" between the banks and developers to dupe homebuyers in NCR. A bench of Justices Surya Kant and N Kotiswar Singh allowed the CBI to convert the six preliminary enquiries it conducted against various builders and banks into 22 regular cases equivalent to FIRs in which cognisable offences are made for further investigation.

Those under scanner include builders in NCR and development authorities in Uttar Pradesh and Haryana. Under the subvention scheme, banks disburse the sanctioned amount directly to the accounts of builders, who are then required to pay EMIs on the sanctioned loan amount until flats are handed over to homebuyers.

After builders started defaulting on EMIs to banks, in line with the tripartite agreement, banks demanded the EMIs from homebuyers. The bench appreciated the efforts of the central probe agency in taking up the matter by understanding the gravity and magnitude of the issue and examining over 1,000 persons, vis-

iting 58 project sites and asked it to expeditiously conclude the investigation and take the matter to its logical conclusion.

The top court noted that the investigation in the seventh preliminary enquiry registered by the CBI, which is over projects of the various builders except Supertech Ltd, falling outside NCR region in Mumbai, Bangalore, Kolkata, Mohali and Allahabad, was still underway. It was hearing a batch of petitions filed by over 1,200 homebuyers, who booked flats under the subvention plans in various housing projects in NCR region especially Noida, Greater Noida and Gurugram, alleging they were being forced by banks to pay EMIs despite no possession of flats. On March 29, the top court has allowed the CBI to register five preliminary enquiries into affairs of builders and projects in the NCR region that is Noida, Greater Noida, Gurugram, Yamuna Expressway and Ghaziabad.

It allowed one preliminary enquiry to be registered against reality major Supertech Ltd against whom 799 homebuyers have moved the top court by way of 84 appeals involving projects in eight different cities.



A vehicular jam seen near Millennium Park as rain lashes several parts of the national capital, in New Delhi on Tuesday. (ANI Photo)

## 125-kg overweight man undergoes hip replacement surgery successfully

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

In a landmark surgery at Fortis Escorts Okhla Road, New Delhi a 58-year-old male weighing 125 kgs underwent a successful Total Hip Replacement surgery after suffering from severe pain in the right hip since last three years. The pain was owing to a rare ailment - Avascular Necrosis - a serious medical condition in

which bone tissue dies due to a lack of blood supply, the team of doctors led by Dr Kaushal Kant Mishra, Director - Orthopaedics and Joint Replacement, Fortis Escorts, Okhla Road, New Delhi conducted the surgery, which lasted for about 50 minutes. The man's condition gradually improved and he was discharged in a stable condition in just 4 days. Such reported cases are rare owing to the clinical

challenges involved in hip replacement procedures performed on a significantly overweight patients involving the surgical complexities and the post-operative success.

The patient had been experiencing pain in his right hip since 2022. He was diagnosed with Avascular Necrosis at a city-based hospital in July 2022 where he underwent core decompression surgery.

## 23-year-old pillion rider killed after truck hits two-wheeler

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

A 23-year-old man was killed after a scooter was hit by a truck in outer Delhi's Sultanpuri area. The victim was riding pillion on the scooter and fell under the wheels of the truck due to the impact of the collision, a senior police officer said on Tuesday.

The incident that occurred around 11:30 am on Monday near Machchi Market Road led to the death of Kalam (23), who worked at a shoe factory, he said, adding that Mussabir Hussain (40), a resident of Aman Vihar and who was riding the two-wheeler, was discharged after treatment. Police received



information about a road accident involving a truck and a scooter, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Outer) Sachin Sharma said. A police team reached the spot and shifted two injured men to the Sanjay Gandhi Memorial Hospital (SGMH) in Mangolpuri, where doctors declared Kalam dead.



# PUBLIC SECTOR BANKS FLAG 1,629 WILFUL DEFAULTERS OWING RS 1.62 LAKH CR: FIN MIN

Nine fugitives have been declared offenders under FEOA; assets worth Rs 16,048 cr have been seized.

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI

India's public sector banks have identified 1,629 corporate borrowers as wilful defaulters, with outstanding dues totalling Rs 1.62 lakh crore as of March 31, 2025, the Ministry of Finance informed the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday (July 22).

In a written reply, Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary cited data from the Central Repository of Information on Large Credits (CRILC) and stated that the list of wilful defaulters—excluding overseas borrowers—is updated monthly and is publicly accessible through the websites of registered credit information companies such as CIBIL, Experian, Equifax, and CRIF High Mark.

Chaudhary also noted that, as per data dated July 30, 2024, cases of wilful defaults at overseas branches of Indian banks must be reported to Indian credit information companies, provided local laws do not prohibit such disclosures. He further informed that, according to the Director-



ate of Enforcement, nine individuals who fled the country have been declared Fugitive Economic Offenders under the Fugitive Economic Offenders Act (FEOA), 2018.

"In these cases, assets worth approximately Rs15,298.27 crore have been confiscated under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), and assets worth Rs 749.87 crore have been confiscated under FEOA. Additionally, nine accused individuals have been convicted under PMLA provisions," Chaudhary added.

To tackle wilful defaults and recover non-performing assets (NPAs), the government has adopted a range of stringent measures. These include a ban

on additional credit to wilful defaulters and their associated entities for one year even after their names are removed from the defaulter list. Such entities are also barred from floating new ventures for five years and are ineligible to access capital markets during that period.

Further, companies with wilful defaulters as promoters or directors are similarly restricted from raising funds via public markets. Ineligible defaulters are also denied loan restructuring unless they meet specific regulatory conditions. Criminal proceedings may also be initiated against them, subject to RBI guidelines.

Under the FEOA, authorities are empowered to attach

## 'GOVT DOES NOT FORESEE REVENUE SHORTFALL, AIMS TO ACHIEVE DEFICIT TARGET'

New Delhi: The Central government does not foresee any revenue shortfall at this stage and aims to achieve the targets fixed in the Budget Estimates for 2025-26, Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary informed Parliament on Tuesday.

As per the Budget, the Centre has estimated the fiscal deficit for 2025-26 at 4.4 per cent of GDP, amounting to Rs 15.69 lakh crore.

In a written reply in the Rajya Sabha, the minister said the Central government supports state finances through Finance Commission grants, Centrally Sponsored Schemes, and Special Assistance as loans to states

for capital expenditure.

Total resources being transferred to the states, including the devolution of state's share in taxes, grants/loans and releases under Centrally Sponsored Schemes, etc., in Budget Estimates for 2025-26 is about Rs 25.01 lakh crore, he said.

In reply to another question, Chaudhary said, as per inputs received from Public Sector Banks (PSBs), as on March 31, 2025, 96 per cent staff are in position against their business requirement.

The small proportion of gap is attributable to attrition on account of superannuation and other usual factors, including unplanned exits, he said.

and confiscate properties of fugitives and prevent them from contesting civil claims in Indian courts. So far, total recovered assets in bank fraud cases have amounted to Rs25,806 crore, which have been restituted to

victim banks and rightful claimants.

The Finance Ministry reaffirmed its commitment to ensuring accountability in lending and strengthening recovery mechanisms across the banking sector.

# TRAI convenes regulators' meet on spam, cyber fraud

AGENCIES  
ARZU SETH

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) on Tuesday convened a high-level meeting of the Joint Committee of Regulators (JCoR) in New Delhi. The objective of the meeting was to curb the surge in spam calls, telecom-based fraud, and misuse of communication platforms—especially those targeting digital financial transactions.

In a High level meeting top officials from key regulatory bodies and government departments, including financial regulators RBI, SEBI, IRDAI, and PFRDA, alongside government agencies MeitY, DoT, and MHA, and industry leader NPCI were present.

TRAI is pushing for all banks and insurance companies to use phone numbers starting with 1600 for official service and transaction calls. This will help people easily recognize genuine calls and avoid falling into fraud traps.

The move will be done in phases, and companies will be given time to switch, based on their size and needs.

In a first-of-its-kind initiative, TRAI and RBI have started a pilot project to make sure people have full control over promotional



*Four dedicated working groups have been formed to manage the operational, technical and awareness-building pillars of the project.*

calls and messages.

Right now, most people don't know when or how they gave permission for marketing calls. This new system will let users digitally give, check, and cancel their permission through a secure platform.

The pilot includes 7 major banks — SBI, PNB, ICICI, HDFC, Axis Bank, Canara Bank, and Kotak Mahindra Bank — and 8 telecom companies. Four working groups will manage different parts of the project like technical support, operations, and public awareness.

The pilot aims to empower

users to digitally register, view, and revoke consents for commercial messages through a single, tamper-proof platform.

Four dedicated working groups have been formed to manage the operational, technical and awareness-building pillars of the project.

A day-long workshop was conducted on 21st July, 2025, jointly by the TRAI and RBI, on the DCA pilot in which 8 telecom service providers and 7 banks viz SBI, PNB, ICICI, HDFC, Axis Bank, Canara Bank, and Kotak Mahindra Bank participated.

## Centre released Rs 9578.40 crore to 22 states this fiscal as share under SDRF: Govt

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The government has released Rs 9578.40 crore to 22 states in the current financial year till July 15 as central share under SDRF to support those affected by natural disasters, Lok Sabha was informed Tuesday.

In a written reply, Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai said the financial assistance under State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF)/ National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) in the wake of natural disasters is by way of relief and not for compensation of loss as suffered and claimed.

"An Inter-Ministerial Central Team (IMCT) has been constituted for Himachal Pradesh, without waiting for the memorandum, to visit the affected areas of

the state for assessment of damages caused by the flash flood/floods, cloud-burst and landslides," the minister said.

He said according to the National Policy on Disaster Management (NPDM), the primary responsibility for disaster management, including disbursement of relief assistance on ground level, rests with the state governments concerned.

"However, financial assistance to notified calamity, including landslides and floods, is provided from SDRF/ NDRF as per established procedure. The state government concerned is required to undertake necessary relief measures in the landslides affected areas out of the SDRF, already placed with the state government, as per government of India norms," Rai said.

## Paytm posts first-ever profit of Rs 122.5 crore in Q1 FY26

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI



Fintech firm One97 Communications, which owns the Paytm brand, reported its first-ever consolidated net profit at Rs 122.5 crore in the quarter ended June 2025, mainly on account of cost optimisation and an increase in payment revenue.

Paytm had posted a net loss of Rs 840 crore in the year-ago period.

"EBITDA and PAT turned profitable at Rs 72 crore and Rs 123 crore respectively, demonstrating AI-led operating leverage, disciplined cost structure and higher other income," Paytm said in a statement.

The company slashed

marketing and promotional expenses by more than half to Rs 99.8 crore during the reported quarter from Rs 221.4 crore a year ago and Rs 142.7 crore in the March 2025 quarter.

Paytm reduced employee benefits by about Rs 300 crore or one-third to about Rs 643 crore from Rs 952.5

crore on a year-over-year basis.

While the company increased sales employee cost by 19 per cent on a YoY basis to Rs 266 crore, it recorded a reduction in non-sales employee cost by 28 per cent YoY to Rs 346 crore due to the use of artificial intelligence in various processes

## Stock markets close flat in volatile trade; Eternal jumps nearly 11%

AGENCIES  
MUMBAI



Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty closed almost unchanged in a volatile trade on Tuesday as gains in quick commerce and private banking shares were offset by losses in oil & gas and IT shares.

The 30-share BSE Sensex ended 13.53 points or 0.02 per cent down at 82,186.81. During the morning trade, it climbed 337.83 points or 0.41 per cent to 82,538.17 but lost momentum later.

The 50-share NSE Nifty dipped 29.80 points or 0.12 per cent to settle at 25,060.90.

Lack of clarity over the US-

India trade deal ahead of the August 1 deadline and profit booking by FIIs hit the market sentiment, experts said.

Among Sensex firms, Eternal jumped the most by 10.56 per cent in a post-result rally. Food delivery and quick commerce firm

Eternal, which owns the Zomato and Blinkit brands, on Monday reported a consolidated net profit of Rs 25 crore for the June quarter, as continuing investments in quick commerce and going-out businesses weighed on its bottom line.

Titan rose by over 1 per cent while HDFC Bank and ICICI Bank extended gains after their quarterly results. Hindustan Unilever, Bharat Electronics, Maruti, ICICI Bank and Mahindra & Mahindra were also among the gainers.

However, Tata Motors, Adani Ports, State Bank of India and Reliance Industries were among the laggards.

"The market's attention is on quarterly earnings, which slowed lately after some traction from banking stocks. Positivity noticed on Friday and Monday tapered ahead of the critical August 1st deadline of US trade agreement.

## Indian-American economist Gita Gopinath to leave IMF for Harvard faculty role

AGENCIES  
NEW YORK



Indian-American economist Gita Gopinath who is serving as the first deputy managing director at the International Monetary Fund (IMF), said she is rejoining Harvard University as an economics professor.

"After nearly 7 amazing years at the IMF, I have decided to return to my academic roots," Gopinath, the first female chief economist in IMF history, said in a post on X.

Gopinath will rejoin the Harvard Economics Department on September 1 as the inaugural Gregory and Ania Coffey Professor of Economics.

She said she is "truly grateful" for her time at IMF, where she was first chief economist and then served as first deputy managing director, describing her time there as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to serve the IMF's membership during a period of unprecedented

challenges.

"I now return to my roots in academia, where I look forward to continuing to push the research frontier in international finance and macroeconomics to address global challenges, and to training the next generation of economists," she said.

Gopinath joined the IMF in January 2019 as chief economist and was promoted to the post of first deputy managing director in January 2022.

## Cyber threats, market volatility may challenge rising investor trend: SEBI official

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI

pose significant challenges to this growing investor trend.

Over the years, the number of unique investors in India's capital markets has risen sharply from 4.2 crore in March 2020 to 13 crore to date. Despite this remarkable growth, there remains considerable room for further expansion.

While acknowledging the rise of domestic investors, Narayan stressed the importance of addressing the challenges to sustain the momentum.

Among these challenges, he noted that risks such as cyber risk and digital frauds are a serious concern. Fraudsters-- often sophisticated and organized-- prey

on unsuspecting investors, making cybersecurity a key area of focus.

Alongside this, investors need to be fully aware of market volatility, he said, emphasising that market movements are a given, and urged investors to align their portfolios with their individual risk appetites.

## IKEA India names Patrik Antoni as new CEO

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI

Swedish home furnishings company IKEA India has appointed Patrik Antoni as its new Chief Executive Officer (CEO), effective August 2025, the company announced on Tuesday, July 22.

Along with his role as CEO, Antoni will also serve as Country Retail Manager and Chief Sustainability Officer (CSO), overseeing retail operations across India and coordinating efforts within the Ingka Group companies.

Expressing enthusiasm about his return, Antoni

said, "I am honoured and excited to return to India, a market that holds a special place in my heart and career. I look forward to building on the strong foundation laid by the team and exploring the many growth opportunities ahead. India is a unique market with immense potential."

Antoni's appointment follows the departure of Susanne Pulverer, the outgoing Country Retail Manager and CSO, who served IKEA for 28 years. Pulverer said, "While I'm handing over to new leadership, I'm excited to begin a new chapter in my life."





# HEALING INDIA, POWERING THE WORLD: AI AND VR ARE RESHAPING HEALTHCARE UNDER PM MODI’S VISION

## OPINION

DR ANIL AGRAWAL &  
SABARISH CHANDRASEKARAN



India stands today at the cusp of a technological renaissance in health-care. With visionary leadership, bold investments, and policy reforms driving innovation, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Virtual Reality (VR) are no longer futuristic concepts — they are active forces transforming how India diagnoses, treats, and teaches medicine. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the government has placed technology at the core of India’s development journey, ensuring that AI becomes a public good — inclusive, impactful, and indigenous. The Union Budget 2025’s allocation for AI-driven digital health, the accelerated roll-out of BharatNet to boost rural digital access, and the continued emphasis on National Digital Health Mission (NDHM) are just a few examples of how the Modi government is laying down

the building blocks for a tech-enabled, people-first healthcare system. But what does this mean in practice? **REIMAGINING MEDICAL EDUCATION WITH VR** India produces over 1.5 million healthcare professionals every year, yet there remains a gap in clinical readiness — especially in high-pressure, real-world situations. This is where Virtual Reality (VR) steps in as a game changer. With VR-driven learning platforms, future doctors and nurses can train in hyper-realistic simulations — from performing emergency procedures to managing trauma cases — without putting a single patient at risk. These AI-powered systems offer standardized, scalable, and immersive training that bridges the urban-rural skill divide and levels the playing field for learners across geographies.

At a time when India faces a shortage of skilled health-care workers, particularly in underserved regions, VR medical education is not just innovation — it is necessity. **AI: FROM PREDICTION TO PRECISION** AI’s growing relevance in Indian healthcare is undeniable. During the pandemic, AI tools were deployed to forecast outbreaks. Today, they are being used for diagnostics, radiology, oncology, drug discovery, remote consultations, and even surgery planning. Globally, AI systems have demonstrated their ability to reduce diagnostic errors, enable faster clinical decisions, and enhance resource optimization — exactly what a country like India needs, where every second saved can be a life saved. What’s more, with NDHM creating linked digital health records, India is generating massive, structured datasets. These form the perfect ecosystem for training AI models suited to India’s unique disease burden, language diversity, and patient behaviour. **INDIA AS THE GLOBAL HUB FOR MEDETECH AND VR INNOVATION** India is no longer just adopting technology — we are building it, scaling it, and exporting it. The global demand for affordable, high-quality VR simulation and AI-based medical education tools is rising fast. As countries face growing shortages of healthcare workers, India can become the world’s training lab, supplying both



*With government support for digital skilling, R&D incubation, regulatory ease, and innovation sandboxes, the foundation is already in place.*

the hardware and software for immersive, tech-led medical education. Thanks to initiatives like “Make in India”, “Digital India”, and “Startup India”, Indian companies are now well-positioned to create globally competitive products—affordable, accessible, and designed for emerging economy challenges. With government support for digital skilling, R&D incubation, regulatory ease, and innovation sandboxes, the foundation is already in place. **THE ROAD AHEAD: SYNERGY, POLICY & SCALE** India’s AI transformation in healthcare will not be led by one sector alone. It will

require government policy, private innovation, academic partnerships, and public awareness to move in sync. The ICMR’s guidelines on AI in healthcare and the National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence (NSAI) are important policy steps — but implementation must accelerate. ● Ethical use, data protection, and patient safety must go hand-in-hand with speed. ● More pilot programs must be tested in public medical institutions. ● Curriculum reform for AI literacy in medical colleges is critical. We must also create a narrative of trust — educating patients, doctors, and regulators like that AI is not

replacing healthcare professionals — it’s empowering them. **CONCLUSION: HEALING INDIA, LEADING THE WORLD** The Modi government’s vision for a Viksit Bharat by 2047 is incomplete without a resilient, inclusive, and tech-driven healthcare ecosystem. AI and VR are not futuristic add-ons — they are the essential operating systems of tomorrow’s healthcare. India has the talent. We have the tech. We have political will. Now, we must bring them together — with speed, scale, and purpose. If we do this right, India won’t just heal its own — it will train, supply, and lead the world. *Dr Anil Agrawal, Chancellor of HRIT University, and former Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha*  
*Sabarish Chandrasekaran, CEO and Co-Founder, Medi-Sim VR*

## PERSPECTIVE

### THE MESSAGE FROM DHANKAR’S RESIGNATION

The sudden resignation of Jagdeep Dhankhar as Vice President has caught everyone by surprise. More so, the resignation letter was sent to the Rashtrapati Bhavan on the very first day of the monsoon session of Parliament. Although health reasons were cited, no one has bought this explanation since the (former) Vice President showed little signs of ill health when he presided over the Upper House earlier on Monday. There is speculation of a fallout. If true, it must be at the highest level. There is no parallel power centre as there was one during the UPA regime. And this is what makes the resignation so interesting. For until now, whatever differences, if any, have been muted and rarely made headlines. PM’s word is final, so much so that we are told that even the RSS is happy to let the PM take the lead since it is his mass appeal and the USP that is keeping the BJP in power. But there have been some aberrations lately that have cast a doubt over this all-is-well narrative. Such as the delay in announcing the next party chief. If there really was no contradiction between the PM and the RSS and the latter had decided to let the former make the decision, then why this delay. There is also this little matter of age limit of 75 years. That is more for the TV debates. No one seriously expects either the PM or even Mohan Bhagwat, the RSS supremo (both turn 75 this September), to adhere to that rule and step down. But it does make for some interesting talking points and lends itself to a RSS vs BJP narrative. With that in the backdrop, let’s take a look at the 74-year-old Dhankhar’s resignation. What could have prompted this step? He has two and a half years left in office and only recently had announced at a function that he expects to continue till his term ends in August 2027, barring some “divine intervention”. What could be this “divine intervention”? While that mystery may be solved sooner than later, the key takeaway remains that while Dhankhar is not the first Vice President to resign mid-way through his tenure. The other two who resigned before him -- VV Giri and R Venkataraman-- both stepped down midterm to contest the Presidential elections. This is not the case with Dhankhar who is now staring at political oblivion unless rehabilitation by one of the Opposition parties. It must also be pointed out that Dhankhar has a background of being from the Janata Dal and the Congress. However he is also the first public controversy within Modi’s BJP. Although former J&K Governor, the disgruntled Satpal Malik, comes to mind, he went public with his grievances only after he was being shifted out from his perch as Governor J&K. Here Dhankhar has resigned way before his term was over - and that in itself is a major breach in the optics of discipline that the Modi government wants to portray. As to what next, watch this space because BJP’s politics has suddenly got rather more interesting. **PRIYA SAHGAL**

# Iran’s mass deportation of Afghans: Is a regional meltdown next?

## OPINION

DR. ANCHITA BORTHAKUR



In July 2025, Taliban spokesperson for Migrants Issue Ahmadullah Wasiq announced that more than 600,000 Afghan nationals had returned from Iran to Afghanistan in just one month. This staggering figure underscores the Iranian government’s increasingly hardline stance on the so-called undocumented migrants—particularly Afghans, who for years have made up the largest refugee population in the country. Iran’s long-standing role as a refuge for Afghan migrants is undergoing a stark and historic reversal in recent years. Once seen as a sanctuary rooted in religious solidarity and re-

gional brotherhood, Tehran is now expelling Afghan refugees on a scale not seen in decades. This dramatic shift is driven by a mix of economic hardship, growing anti-immigration sentiment within Iranian society, national security concerns, and evolving geopolitical priorities. However, at present, the crisis reaches far beyond the borders of Iran and Afghanistan. This piece aims to highlight how the refugee situation is no longer just a matter of migration, but can rapidly evolve into a regional security challenge in the course of time. **FROM SAFE HAVEN TO FORCED EXODUS** The current deportation surge follows a March 2025 directive ordering all undocumented Afghan nationals to leave or face forced removal. That policy builds on a September 2024 plan that aimed to deport as many as two million Afghans within six months. Though recent regional developments, involving the Iran-Israel conflict, have intensified the

pace, this shift has been underway for years, with migration restrictions tightening since 2023. However, the turning point came with the outbreak of armed conflict between Iran and Israel in June 2025, which triggered a new wave of domestic security measures, many of them targeting Afghan communities. As deportations escalated, Taliban officials in Herat confirmed that more than 30,000 Afghans crossed the border from Iran on a single day in late June. Since mid-June, the daily average has reached over 30,000 people—fifteen times the pre-war level. Official Iranian data, supported by UNHCR figures, indicates that the country hosts approximately 762,000 registered refugees, of whom 750,000 are Afghan. Another 586,000 Afghans hold valid visas, but millions remain undocumented. These individuals are particularly vulnerable to arrest and expulsion. Many have reported that their phones are confiscated, homes raided, and their movements surveilled by the government. Iranian authorities justify these measures by citing national security concerns, which were exacerbated by economic strain with renewed U.S. sanctions on Iran and a lack of resources to support migrant populations.



At the same time, anti-migrant rhetoric has intensified across state-affiliated media, which increasingly portrays Afghans as contributors to crime, social conservatism, and cultural tension in Iranian society. Iran’s current policy contrasts sharply with its earlier position as a welcoming haven for Afghan refugees. Afghan migration to Iran stretches back to the 19th century, but the 1979 Soviet intervention in Afghanistan marked the beginning of mass displacement. At that time, the Islamic Republic of Iran, under the leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini, opened its borders, especially to Shia Hazaras of Afghanistan, offering education, health-care, employment, and in some cases military recruitment into units such as the Fatemioun Division while considering them as ideological allies of the Tehran government. However, beginning in the 1990s, this policy of refuge gradually gave way to realpolitik. The 1992 and 2002 tripartite repatriation agreements with the Afghan government and the UNHCR laid the groundwork for mass returns. Along with the new influx, deportations also increased further after the Taliban regained power in 2021, and have since then intensified. Unfortunately, the humanitarian consequences of this catastrophe are severe. Rights groups have condemned the deportations as arbitrary and abusive, particularly against minorities. Richard Bennett, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, has voiced concern about Afghan detainees being accused without evidence of espionage for Israel. World Vision International reports that

thousands of Afghans are fleeing Iran each day to escape escalating crackdowns. Iranian health authorities confirmed that three Afghan nationals were also killed in recent Israeli airstrikes, highlighting the vulnerability of this already at-risk population. In Afghanistan, border crossings such as Islam Qala in Herat are overwhelmed, with over 300,000 returnees recorded in just 12 days. The Taliban-led government, isolated under international sanctions and facing a broken economy, lacks the resources to support this huge influx. No doubt, few initiatives have been undertaken by the Taliban government to resettle this vulnerable population. However, many deportees have spent years, even decades, in Iran and return to a homeland with which they have little or no connection—often carrying invalid identification and no support network. **A HUMANITARIAN CRISIS TURNING INTO A REGIONAL FLASHPOINT** However, the broader crisis extends beyond Iran and Afghanistan. This is no longer simply a migration issue, as it can become a regional security threat in the foreseeable future. Afghanistan’s humanitarian crisis, with increasing poverty,

food insecurity, and underdeveloped infrastructure, creates ideal conditions for radicalization, organized crime, and mass migration. The UN estimates that one in five Afghans faces hunger, 3.5 million children are acutely malnourished, and more than 3.7 million children—2.2 million of them girls—are out of school. These vulnerabilities are only worsened by the sudden return of hundreds of thousands of displaced people. Meanwhile, neighboring states are also responding with alarm. Pakistan and Tajikistan have ramped up deportation campaigns, and other Central Asian countries are also closing their borders for the Afghans. Therefore, the displaced Afghans now find themselves trapped in a tightening vise of regional exclusion. The risk is that what began as a national policy decision by Tehran and a few other neighbouring countries could become a regional catastrophe. If Afghanistan continues to destabilize, surrounding countries won’t just see more refugees—they may also face the resurgence of militant networks, drug trafficking, and violent extremism. These issues could provoke military responses and border crackdowns that are reactive, costly, and ultimately ineffective. What is

urgently needed is a coordinated regional response. A migration compact—bringing together all the regional stakeholders, including India—is overdue (It is reported that New Delhi had already extended material support for the rehabilitation of Afghan returnees this year). This pact should focus on three pillars: humanitarian coordination through safe transit corridors and access for aid agencies; financial burden sharing among wealthier regional actors; and pragmatic engagement with the Taliban to ensure safe, dignified reintegration for returnees. Iran’s expulsion campaign represents the collapse of a long-standing regional refuge and the emergence of a serious humanitarian emergency. With over 600,000 Afghans forced out in just one month, the question is no longer whether Afghanistan can absorb the returnees—it clearly cannot—but whether the region can afford to ignore a crisis that could escalate into something far larger. Without urgent, collective action, the humanitarian fallout will evolve into a wider political disaster. The time to act is now. *\* Dr. Anchita Borthakur is a Research Consultant at the Chintan Research Foundation (CRF), New Delhi*





Vice-President of India Jagdeep Dhankhar speaks during the closing ceremony of 150th Advent Commemoration of Gaudiya Mission's founder Acharya Srila Prabhupad.(File photo)



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with the Vice-President designate Jagdeep Dhankhar during a meeting, in New Delhi. (PTI)



Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha Harivansh Narayan Singh conducts the proceedings of the house during the Monsoon Session of the Parliament, after Dhankhar's resignation, in New Delhi on Tuesday. (ANI)

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

## TDG EXPLAINER

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar shocked the political establishment by announcing his resignation on July 21, 2025. In a letter addressed to the President of India, he cited health concerns and said he was stepping down with immediate effect. The announcement came late in the evening and was shared through the official Vice President's social media account. The resignation was accepted by President Droupadi Murmu the next day. The Ministry of Home Affairs issued a notification formalizing the acceptance and creating an immediate vacancy. This marks only the third resignation by a Vice President in India's history. Prime Minister Narendra Modi acknowledged Dhankhar's service and wished him good health, but Opposition leaders expressed skepticism. Congress's Jairam Ramesh called the resignation "as shocking as it is inexplicable," noting that Dhankhar had shown no visible signs of illness during parliamentary meetings held just hours earlier.

Several Opposition leaders praised Dhankhar's tenure, with some urging him to reconsider. Many expressed doubt that health alone was the reason for stepping down. Speculation swirled that political pressure or internal rifts might have influenced the decision.

Just before his resignation, Dhankhar had accepted a motion targeting a controversial judge—sparking friction with sections of the ruling party. Some political insiders hinted

that the move was a preemptive exit to avoid being sidelined.

Despite the dramatic nature of the resignation, constitutional protocol was followed smoothly. Deputy Chairman Harivansh Narayan Singh presided over the Rajya Sabha the next day and informed the House of the vacancy.

### CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS AND PROCESS

According to the Indian Constitution, a Vice President may resign by submitting a letter to the President. Once accepted, the office becomes vacant immediately.

1. The Vice President of India serves as:

2. The ex-officio Chairman of the Rajya Sabha.

The constitutional second-in-command to the President, acting in that capacity if the President's office becomes vacant.

However, there is no provision for an acting Vice President. In the interim, the Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha assumes the role of presiding officer in the Upper House. Other ceremonial duties of the Vice President can be deferred or handled by alternative officials as needed.

There is no fixed timeline for holding a Vice Presidential election after a resignation, unlike the six-month limit specified for the Presidency. However, the Constitution

mandates that such an election be conducted "as soon as possible." In practice, the Election Commission of India typically acts within four to six weeks of a vacancy.

The election will be conducted by secret ballot and supervised by the Election Commission. Members of Parliament from both Houses—elected and nominated—will vote to elect the next Vice President. Until then, the Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha continues to preside over proceedings.

The newly elected Vice President will begin a fresh five-year term from the date they assume office, regardless of when the vacancy occurred.

### WHAT TO EXPECT POLITICALLY

The resignation has opened the door for political maneuvering. The Vice Presidency, while largely ceremonial, plays a crucial role in legislative management and has high symbolic value. Given that the Vice President is also the Chairperson of the Rajya Sabha, the position carries procedural influence dur-

ing debates and law-making.

The ruling NDA has a majority in both Houses of Parliament, virtually guaranteeing that their nominee will be elected. A front-runner for the NDA's nomination is Harivansh Narayan Singh, the current Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha. He is seen as a steady, non-confrontational figure with cross-party appeal.

Other potential candidates from within the BJP or allied parties may include senior leaders nearing the end of their political careers, or Governors seen as politically aligned with the ruling party. The choice may also be influenced by upcoming state elections—particularly in Bihar and Maharashtra.

The Opposition, while numerically weak in the Electoral College, is expected to put up a joint candidate to demonstrate unity. The 2022 Vice Presidential election saw a similar symbolic contest.

Though unlikely to win, the Opposition may use the campaign to critique the government and highlight democratic values.

Some Opposition fig-

ures have speculated that Dhankhar's resignation is linked to internal tensions within the BJP. Others suggested it may have been triggered by a desire to install a more pliant Vice President ahead of contentious legislative sessions.

Overall, while the government's numerical strength assures it of victory in the election, the political messaging around the choice of candidate could impact broader alliances and future contests.

### HOW THE VICE PRESIDENT IS ELECTED IN INDIA

The Vice President is elected by an Electoral College consisting of:

- All members (elected and nominated) of the Lok Sabha.
- All members (elected and nominated) of the Rajya Sabha.

This differs from the Presidential election, which also includes members of State Legislative Assemblies. In the Vice Presidential election, every MP has one vote, and the value of each vote is the same.

The election is conducted using a proportional representation system through a single transferable vote (STV). MPs mark their preferences on the ballot paper (1, 2, 3, etc.).

To win, a candidate must secure more than half of the valid votes cast. If no candidate reaches this quota in the first count, the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated, and their votes are transferred according to second preferences. This continues until one candidate achieves the required quota.

Candidates must:

- Be a citizen of India.
- Be at least 35 years old.
- Be qualified to be a Rajya Sabha member.

- Not hold any office of profit under the government.

Nominations require 20

MPs as proposers and another 20 as seconders. A Rs 15,000 security deposit must be submitted. The Election Commission appoints a Returning Officer (usually the Secretary-General of either House) to oversee the process.

Voting is conducted by secret ballot. No party whip is permitted. MPs are free to vote as they choose, leading to occasional cross-voting.

The entire election process—from notification to result—is typically completed within 30 to 40 days.

### CHOOSING VICE PRESIDENTS IN OTHER COUNTRIES

**United States:** The U.S. Vice President is elected as part of the presidential ticket. Voters elect the President and Vice President together through the Electoral College.

The U.S. VP is both an executive officer and the President of the Senate. They can cast tie-breaking votes in the Senate and are often involved in policymaking, diplomacy, and cabinet-level decisions.

If the U.S. President resigns or dies, the Vice President automatically assumes the presidency for the remainder of the term.

In contrast, the Indian Vice President only becomes acting President if the Presidency falls vacant, and a new Presidential election must follow within six months. The Indian VP has no executive role and does not sit in Cabinet.

**United Kingdom:** The UK has no Vice President. It is a constitutional monarchy. The monarch is the ceremonial head of state, and the Prime Minister is the head of government.

If the monarch is incapacitated, a Regent or Counsellors of State temporarily assume royal functions. These roles are hereditary or designated, not elected.

The UK may have a Deputy Prime Minister, but this position is optional and has no constitutional standing. In the absence of a PM, the ruling party quickly selects a new leader.

The absence of a vice-presidential office reflects the UK's reliance on hereditary succession and parliamentary conventions.

**Germany:** Germany also does not have a Vice President. The President is the ceremonial head of state, and the Chancellor is the head of government.

If the Presidency falls vacant, the President of

the Bundesrat (the federal council of states) temporarily assumes the role. This is a rotating position, not a separately elected office.

Germany has a Vice Chancellor, who is often the leader of the junior coalition party. However, this is a political designation without automatic succession rights.

Like India, Germany uses federal representation but avoids maintaining a full-time deputy to the head of state.

**Canada:** Canada, a parliamentary monarchy, does not have a Vice President. The head of state is the monarch, represented by the Governor General.

If the Governor General is unable to perform their duties, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court serves as the Administrator of the Government until a new appointment is made.

Canada may also have a Deputy Prime Minister, but this is a political appointment without formal succession powers.

There is no elected deputy to the head of state in Canada. The system relies on legal appointments and constitutional continuity rather than electoral succession.

### SEEING AHEAD

Jagdeep Dhankhar's resignation as Vice President has created a temporary constitutional gap but is being managed smoothly through established mechanisms. Politically, it has opened a window of opportunity for both the ruling and opposition parties to signal strategic priorities through their Vice Presidential candidates.

The Indian Vice President's role—part ceremonial, part legislative—is unique among global systems.

While modeled partially on the U.S. in structure, it functions differently in terms of power, process, and succession. In contrast, many parliamentary democracies like the UK, Germany, and Canada rely on temporary arrangements or appointments to ensure continuity.

India's decision to institutionalize a Vice Presidency with an independent electoral mandate reflects its hybrid system—drawing from both Westminster and presidential traditions. This structure ensures that one of the top constitutional positions is always democratically filled, lending stability and credibility to the parliamentary process.



6. LoP Rahul Gandhi, SP MP Akhilesh Yadav, RJD MP Misa Bharti, DMK MP Kanimozhi Karunanidhi and other parliamentarians of the INDIA bloc stage a protest against revision of electoral rolls in poll-bound Bihar, during the Monsoon Session of Parliament, in New Delhi, on Tuesday. (PTI)



Dhankhar, 74, assumed office as the 14th Vice President in August 2022. (PTI)



# MONSOON DELIGHTS: COMFORT FOOD, TRADITION, AND THE JOY OF RAIN

TDG NETWORK  
JAIPUR

As the first raindrops touch the parched earth, the air fills with the scent of petrichor and nostalgia. Monsoon in India is more than a season—it's a comforting emotional shift. It brings not only respite from the heat but also a longing for warm, soulful food. Across regions, the rains revive some cherished culinary culture rich in tradition, spice, and simplicity, offering comfort in every hot, steaming bite.

## STREET FOOD AND THE JOY OF SHARED BITES

One of the most iconic images of Indian monsoon is of people gathered around a roadside tea stall or chaat counter, umbrellas folded, munching on spicy pakoras, samosas, or vada pav. These snacks are quick, hot, and immensely satisfying.

Pakoras, made with onions, potatoes, spinach, or chillies dipped in gram flour batter and deep fried, are perhaps the most beloved monsoon snack.

Bhutta (roasted corn), served with lemon and masala, is a seasonal classic, especially enjoyed near lakes, hill stations, or city parks.

Vada Pav in Maharashtra, Mirchi Bajji in Andhra Pradesh, Kanda Bhajia in Gujarat, or Momos in the northeast—all showcase the diversity of monsoon street

food culture across regions. These foods do more than just satisfy hunger; they serve as anchors to community life. Sharing a plate of hot pakoras with friends or eating roadside chaat while watching the drizzle feels timeless.

## CHAI: THE ULTIMATE MONSOON ELIXIR

If monsoon had a drink, it would undoubtedly be chai. There's nothing more satisfying than a hot cup of masala tea as the rain pours outside. Spiced with ginger, cardamom, cinnamon, and cloves, chai warms the body and soothes the senses. Every home has its own recipe, and every region offers a variation—from cutting chai in Mumbai to noon chai in Kashmir.

Chai is more than a beverage—it's an experience. The act of sipping hot tea while rain lashes against the windows is both calming and invigorating, often serving as the backdrop to conversations, introspection, or simply watching nature.

## REGIONAL DELIGHTS OF THE RAINY SEASON

Each part of India has its own monsoon-specific dishes, tailored to both the climate and cultural palate.

Kanda Poha in Maharashtra: Light, nutritious, and perfect for a rainy breakfast.

Khichdi in Gujarat and North India: A simple yet



*If monsoon had a drink, it would undoubtedly be chai. There's nothing more satisfying than a hot cup of masala tea as the rain pours outside. Spiced with ginger, cardamom, cinnamon, and cloves, chai warms the body and soothes the senses. Every home has its own recipe, and every region offers a variation—from cutting chai in Mumbai to noon chai in Kashmir.*

comforting rice-lentil dish often paired with pickles and papad.

Undhiyu and Handvo: Seasonal Gujarati delicacies made with seasonal vegetables and lentils.

Pakhala Bhata in Odisha: Fermented rice soaked in water, sometimes with curd and green chillies—a cooling and gut-friendly

dish.

Sabudana Khichdi and Dalia in Madhya Pradesh: Soft, easy-to-digest meals favored during damp weather.

The use of ginger, garlic, turmeric, and asafoetida is more prominent in monsoon cooking due to their immunity-boosting and digestion-friendly properties.



## SWEETS FOR THE SOUL

Monsoon isn't only about savoury dishes. It brings a rise in the consumption of hot, syrupy desserts that provide warmth and comfort.

Jalebi, fried and soaked in saffron syrup, is a monsoon favorite in North India.

Moong Dal Halwa, Gajar ka Halwa, or Kesari Bath

are common in homes where people seek both sweetness and heat in a bowl.

In Bengal, Pithe made of rice flour, jaggery, and coconut, though more of a winter sweet, sometimes makes an early appearance with the first harvest rains.

## MONSOON FOOD AND EMOTIONS

More than taste, monsoon food evokes memories.

The smell of pakoras in the kitchen, a bowl of steaming khichdi on a drizzly afternoon, or the sound of tea bubbling on the stove becomes etched in our minds.

It is the season of slow living—of pausing, savoring, and reconnecting. However, While the monsoon

season brings food cravings, it also comes with its health risks. High humidity can impact digestion, and street food—if not prepared hygienically—may lead to infections.

That's why many homes prepare monsoon-friendly food using fresh, seasonal ingredients and spices that keep infections at bay.

# Sawan flavours come alive at Monsoon food festival

TDG NETWORK  
JAIPUR

As the lush rains of Sawan drench the Pink City, Clarks Amer is celebrating the spirit of the monsoon with a culinary experience that promises nostalgia, indulgence, and festivity. This celebration is an ode to the traditional and contemporary — a festival that brings together savory, sweets, and fusion dishes that resonate with the mood of the season.

A Tribute to Sawan and the Season's Traditions

In Rajasthan, Sawan is more than a month of rain—it's a time of spiritual renewal, celebration, and indulgence. Known for its religious significance, family gatherings, and festive fervour, Sawan also marks a change in taste and cravings. The arrival of rains shifts the culinary focus from dry and robust to warm, spicy, and soulful.

Chef Prem Singh, who leads the culinary team at Clarks Amer, shares his excitement: "This festival is about bringing those childhood memories and seasonal cravings to life. We've combined traditional Rajasthani comfort food with monsoon-inspired dishes from across India. The idea is to present food that's close to the heart but with a touch of innovation."

## A RICH SPREAD OF MONSOON COMFORT

The Monsoon Food Festival at Dhola Maru features a rotating menu that highlights regional monsoon specialties and innovative fusion creations. Guests can expect an indulgent mix of savoury snacks, as well as flavorful mains. The Monsoon Food Festival at Dhola Maru also brings an eclectic mix of traditional and global snacks, featuring a special focus on chutney varieties made using the age-old sil batta,

enhancing both flavour and nostalgia.

Guests can sample the rustic charm of ka kabab served innovatively, alongside a continental twist with nachos baked with three types of cheese. For meat lovers, the juicy chicken tikka coated in crispy bread crumbs offers a satisfying crunch, while the Japanese big bao—a soft, steamed bread bun—is paired with spicy fillings. Adding to the

fusion flair is the pao with melted cheese, creating the ultimate monsoon indulgence that blends Indian street soul with international comfort.

Whether you're craving the classic savory delights of Rajasthan, indulgent sweets, or adventurous fusion flavours, head to Dhola Maru at Clarks Amer between 18th to 27th July to experience the culinary soul of Sawan.

For those with a sweet tooth, the sweets section offers a divine variety of monsoon favourites including malpua, ghevar, moong dal halwa, and saffron-infused kheer. These dishes not only satiate the palate but also reflect the richness of Rajasthani festive traditions during Sawan.

## AMBIENCE THAT MATCHES THE MOOD

Complementing the curat-



ed menu is Dhola Maru's elegant yet cosy décor, which will be enhanced with traditional Sawan elements—green drapes, floral décor, and soft monsoon tunes that add to the immersive experience. Guests will dine to the rhythm of rain-themed Rajasthani folk music, creating a perfect escape from the hustle of the city into a world of flavour and festivity.

Chef Prem Singh says, "The monsoon is special because it brings people closer. Food becomes a medium of connection, and through this festival, we want every guest to feel the magic of the season—not just on their plate, but in their hearts."

So all those who want to celebrate and see the colors of food can go on a different culinary journey and explore the flavors of the food this rainy season.

# SAVORING MONSOON: A JOURNEY THROUGH AWADHI FLAVOURS

TDG NETWORK  
JAIPUR

A medley of heritage, nostalgia, and rich culinary craftsmanship marked the latest experience at Hyatt Regency Jaipur Mansarovar, as the hotel hosted a three-day celebration titled SHROT X Noshe Jaan, showcasing the soulful flavours of Awadhi cuisine in the heart of Jaipur. The pop-up, invited guests on a flavourful journey steeped in tradition, patience, and time-honoured technique.

Held at SHROT, the hotel's in-house signature restaurant, the collaboration brought together Jaipur's taste for refinement and the depth of Awadhi's home-style culinary treasures. The idea behind the event was not only to serve food but to tell stories — of family kitchens, age-old recipes, and the love and labour that define Awadhi cooking.

Curated in collaboration with Noshe Jaan, the Mumbai-based culinary venture known for reviving heirloom Awadhi dishes, the experience highlighted some of the cuisine's most iconic offerings. The menu, deeply rooted in tradition, featured dishes such as Kathal ki Shammi, Mutton Galouti, Boti Kebab Pasanda, Murgh Malai Korra, and slow-cooked Awadhi biryanis prepared with hand-pounded spices and an abundance of warmth. The dessert spread was equally indulgent, with delicate favourites like Kimami Sewai and Zafrani Mawa Phirni that transported diners to the royal kitchens of Lucknow.

Calling the collaboration an embodiment of what the restaurant strives for, Naveen Yadav, General Manager of Hyatt Regency Jaipur Mansarovar, said, "This collaboration is an extension of what SHROT stands for—bringing soulful food experiences rooted in authenticity. We're



thrilled to present Noshe Jaan to Jaipur's discerning diners and offer a taste of home-style Awadhi cuisine that is as rare as it is timeless."

For the founder of Noshe Jaan, Neerusha Nikhat, this pop-up was a deeply personal affair. Reflecting on the dishes served, she

shared, "Every kebab, every biryani is a reflection of childhood memories and the timeless traditions of home-style Awadhi cuisine. This pop-up lets guests dine like Nawabs, with the comfort and warmth of today's hospitality."

By offering a meticulously crafted menu and an im-

mersive ambience, SHROT X Noshe Jaan brought to Jaipur a one-of-a-kind dining event — one that blended the culinary elegance of Awadhi with the Pink City's contemporary hospitality spirit. The event left guests not only satisfied, but emotionally stirred by the flavours of history, heritage, and home.



# 21 CHILDREN IN GAZA DIE OF MALNUTRITION IN 72 HOURS

AGENCIES  
GAZA CITY

The head of Al-Shifa hospital in Gaza City said on Tuesday (July 22, 2025) that 21 children had died across the Palestinian territory in the past three days “due to malnutrition and starvation”.

“These deaths were recorded at hospitals in Gaza, including Al-Shifa in Gaza City, Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir el-Balah and Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis... over the past 72 hours,” Mohammed Abu Salmiya told reporters.

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres warned on Monday evening that “the last lifelines keeping people alive are collapsing” in Gaza, and that there were growing reports of children and adults with malnutrition.

Mr. Abu Salmiya told reporters that new cases of malnutrition and starvation were arriving at Gaza’s remaining functioning hospitals “every moment”.

“We are heading towards alarming numbers of deaths



Living in a tent in Gaza City, where basic supplies are lacking, 18-month-old Muhammad Zakariya Ayyoub al-Matouq’s weight dropped from 9kg to 6kg. Malnutrition is widespread in the territory. Agencies

due to the starvation inflicted on the people of Gaza,” he added.

After talks to extend a six-week ceasefire broke down, Israel imposed a full blockade on Gaza on March 2 this year, allowing nothing in until trucks were again permitted at a trickle in late May. The head of Al-Shifa hospital in Gaza City said on Tuesday (July 22, 2025) that 21 children had died

across the Palestinian territory in the past three days “due to malnutrition and starvation”. “These deaths were recorded at hospitals in Gaza, including Al-Shifa in Gaza City, Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir el-Balah and Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis... over the past 72 hours,” Mohammed Abu Salmiya told reporters.

Israeli strikes kill at least 20 in Gaza, health officials say. UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres warned on Monday evening that “the last lifelines keeping people alive are collapsing” in Gaza, and that there were growing reports of children and adults with malnutrition. Mr. Abu Salmiya told reporters that new cases of malnutrition and starvation were arriving at Gaza’s remaining functioning hospitals “every moment”.

## Israeli strikes kill at least 20 in Gaza

AGENCIES  
DEIR AL-BALAH (GAZA STRIP)

Israeli strikes killed at least 20 people in Gaza, Palestinian health officials said Tuesday (July 22, 2025), as Israel pushed on with a new incursion in an area that had largely been spared heavy fighting during the 21-month war.

The expansion of Israel’s ground invasion comes as Israel and Hamas have been considering terms for a ceasefire for Gaza that would pause the fighting and free at least some hostages.

The latest round of talks has dragged on for weeks with no signs of breakthrough, though negotiators have expressed optimism. With Israel expanding its control over large chunks of Gaza, an expected pullback of troops is a major point of contention in the talks.

The Trump administration has been pushing Israel to wrap up the war and has shown signs of impatience. On Monday, President Donald Trump’s press secretary Karoline Leavitt said Mr. Trump was “caught off guard” by a recent Israeli strike on a Catholic church in Gaza.

Top Christian clergy visited that church last week and in a



## Israeli forces push into parts of a Central Gaza city

**DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip :** Israeli troops for the first time Monday pushed into areas of a central Gaza city where several aid groups are based, in what appeared to be the latest effort to carve up the Palestinian territory with military corridors.

Deir al-Balah is the only Gaza city that has not seen major ground operations or suffered widespread devastation in 21 months of war, leading to specu-

lation that the Hamas militant group holds large numbers of hostages there.

The main group representing hostages’ families said it was “shocked and alarmed” by the incursion and demanded answers from Israeli leaders. Israel says the seizure of territory in Gaza is aimed at pressuring Hamas to release hostages, but it is a major point of contention in ongoing ceasefire talks.

received the casualties. The Israeli military said it was not aware of such a strike by its for

The dead included three women and three children, Dr Mohamed Abu Selmiyah, director of the hospital told The Associated Press. Thirty-eight other Palestinians were wounded, he said.

The strike tore apart tents, and left some of the dead laying on the ground, according to footage shared by the Health Ministry’s ambulance and emergency service. An overnight strike that hit crowds of Palestinians waiting for aid trucks in Gaza City killed eight, hospitals said. At least 118 were wounded, according to the Palestinian Red Crescent.

Ahmed Mhana, who said he was waiting on a coastal road for aid trucks, said the crowd was struck twice by Israeli aircraft. The Israeli military had no immediate comment on the Gaza City strike. Israel blames the deaths of Palestinian civilians on Hamas because the militants operate in densely populated areas. It accuses the group of prolonging the war because Hamas has not accepted Israel’s terms for a ceasefire — including calls to give up power and disarm.

## 27 inmates missing after Israeli strike on Iran’s Evin prison

AGENCIES  
TEHRAN

Iran said Tuesday 27 inmates were still at large after an Israeli airstrike last month targeted Evin prison in the north of the capital, Tehran, local media reported.

The airstrikes were part of Israel’s 12-day bombardment of the Islamic Republic that killed about 1,100 people, while 28 were left dead in Israel in Iranian retaliatory strikes.

Judiciary’s news website, Mizanonline, quoted spokesman Asghar Jahangir as saying 75 prisoners had escaped following the strike, of which 48 were either recaptured or voluntarily returned. He said authorities will detain the others if they don’t hand themselves over. Jahangir said the escapees were pris-

oners doing time for minor offenses. Iranian officials said the Israeli strike killed 71 people, but local media reported earlier in July that 80 were left dead at the time, including prison staff, soldiers, inmates and visiting family members. Authorities also said five inmates died. It’s unclear why Israel targeted the prison. The Israeli Defence Ministry had said that 50 aircraft dropped 100 munitions on military targets “based on high-quality and accurate intelligence from the Intelligence Branch.” The New York-based Centre for Human Rights had criticized Israel for striking the prison, seen as a symbol of repression of any opposition, saying it violated the principle of distinction between civilian and military targets.

## Students protest as B’desh school jet crash toll rises to 31

AGENCIES  
DHAKA

Hundreds of students protested Tuesday near the site of the crash of a Bangladesh air force training jet into a school in the nation’s capital, demanding accountability, compensation for victims’ families and the halt of training flights.

The ongoing unrest over Monday’s crash shut down traffic in parts of Dhaka, a city still recovering from last year’s student uprising that ousted the prime minister as the interim government seeks to restore order and organize elections next year. Some students entered the country’s administrative headquarters and were dispersed with tear gas and stun grenades.

The death toll from the crash rose to 31, including at least 25 students, a teacher who died from burns she sustained while helping others escape the two-story



building, and the pilot on his first solo flight. Officials said 171 people, mostly students at Milestone School and College and many with burns, were rescued.

As Bangladesh declared Tuesday a day of national mourning, the military launched an investigation into the crash in Dhaka’s densely populated Uttara

neighborhood. The civil aviation authority was not directly involved.

High Court judges asked the government to form a technical committee to investigate as well.

The protesting students demanded “accurate” publication of identities of the dead and injured, compensation for families and an

immediate halt to the use of “outdated and unsafe” training aircraft by the Bangladesh air force.

They accused security officials of beating them and manhandling teachers on Monday.

“The exact number of people killed and injured must be made public,” an ex-student of the school,

who refused to provide his name, told The Associated Press at the scene.

The military and the office of Bangladesh’s interim leader Muhammad Yunus said there was nothing to hide regarding casualties and they were coordinating with all concerned. There was no response to the other allegations.

The students became furious after two senior government officials — Law Adviser Asif Nazrul and Education Adviser C.R. Abrar — arrived at the scene, forcing them to take cover for several hours inside the campus before security forces escorted them out.

Other groups of students forced them to go back. In the evening, after nine hours, most students and the confined advisers left campus amid heavy security.

Elsewhere in Dhaka, stu-

dents broke through security barricades and entered the Bangladesh Secretariat complex, the country’s administrative headquarters. Security officials used stun grenades and tear gas to disperse them.

Jamuna TV said about 80 students were injured after security officials charged them with batons.

The students demanded the resignation of Abrar, who they said delayed announcing that public exams were being canceled during Tuesday’s mourning. Abrar didn’t publicly address the allegation.

The chaos spread in nearby areas. “Yesterday, when the plane was approaching, the sound was so loud you can’t even imagine — it felt like eardrums were about to burst. Within five seconds, the plane crashed right in front of me here,” said Smriti, a student who only gave one name.

## ‘PoK migrants using fake docs to get UK visa’

AGENCIES  
LONDON

Migrants from the Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) region have been using fake documents to gain an entry visa into the UK, and then many going on to file for asylum in the country, a UK media investigation has claimed.

The newspaper said an undercover probe revealed that migrants are paying up to 50,000 pounds for visa applications packed with false information, identifying one such consultant based in Mirpur who facilitates the process.

One application to the UK Home Office obtained by the newspaper included a job



reference from a ‘fake hospital’ in PoK.

Pakistanis top the chart of nationalities claiming asylum in the UK, followed by Afghanistan, Iran and Bangladesh. However, they are not among the top nationalities arriving in the UK illegally via small boats.

“They don’t need to come on small boats because they come on visas. They are one of the biggest groups that come on visas, and don’t go back,” immigration lawyer Harjap Bhangal was quoted

as saying.

As part of the newspaper’s undercover investigation, someone posing as an applicant used a fake CV and letter attesting to employment history to be submitted in a UK work visa application that was ‘ultimately successful’. The UK Home Office reacted to the revelations to say that it is investigating the claims thrown up by the investigation as it continues to revoke licences from those who abuse the Skilled Worker visa route.

“Illegal activity will not be tolerated and we will stop at nothing to ensure our immigration rules are respected and enforced. That is why we are investigating these

claims and already taking firm action to disrupt illegal activity when it is found, including suspending licences, pursuing enforcement, and strengthening safeguards to protect the integrity of the immigration system,” a Home Office spokesperson said. “Over the last year, there have been 40 per cent fewer visa applications, we have removed nearly 30,000 people with no right to be here and arrests from illegal working raids are up 51 per cent. We are also introducing new powers to immediately suspend registered advisers and organisations suspected of carrying out the most flagrant abuse of the system,” the spokesperson said.

AGENCIES  
TEHRAN

Iran, France, Germany and the United Kingdom will hold nuclear talks in Istanbul following warnings by the three European countries that failure to resume negotiations would lead to international sanctions being reimposed on Tehran.

The talks scheduled for Friday come after foreign ministers of the E3 nations, as those European countries are known, as well as the European Union’s foreign policy chief, held their first call on Thursday with Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs Abbas Araghchi since Israel and the United States attacked Iranian nuclear facilities a month ago.

The three European coun-



tries, along with China and Russia, are the remaining parties to a 2015 nuclear deal reached with Iran, from which the US withdrew in 2018, that had lifted sanctions on the Middle Eastern country in return for restrictions on its nuclear programme. “The meeting between Iran, Britain, France and Germany will take

place at the deputy foreign minister level,” Iran’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesman, Esmail Baghaei, was quoted by Iranian state media as saying.

The E3 have said they would restore United Nations sanctions on Tehran by the end of August if nuclear talks that were ongoing between Iran and the US, before Israel launched a surprise attack, do not resume or fail to produce concrete results.

Iran has accused the US of complicity in the Israeli attack, which killed top Iranian military officials, nuclear scientists and hundreds of civilians. The US also launched strikes on three major Iranian nuclear sites, claiming to have

“obliterated” them. A ceasefire took effect on June 24.

“If EU/E3 want to have a role, they should act responsibly, and put aside the worn-out policies of threat and pressure, including the ‘snap-back’ for which they lack absolutely moral and legal ground,” Araghchi said last week.

Before the Israel-Iran war, Tehran and Washington held five rounds of nuclear talks mediated by Oman but faced major stumbling blocks such as uranium enrichment in Iran, which Western powers want to bring down to zero to minimise any risk of weaponisation.

Tehran maintains that its nuclear programme is solely meant for civilian purposes.

## Philippines braces for heavy rain after six people killed

AGENCIES  
MANILA

Philippine authorities on Tuesday (July 22) warned of continued strong rains this week that have killed six people, cut power in some areas and forced thousands to evacuate in the capital and nearby provinces.

Monsoon rains and a tropical storm have com-

bined to pour the equivalent of a month’s worth of rain in just four days, Manila’s weather bureau said, submerging many cities and displacing more than 17,000 individuals.

The southwest monsoon “will bring moderate to intense rains” in the next few days in northern and central Philippines, the interior ministry said in a statement.

“Flooding is expected in areas that are urbanised, low-lying and near rivers. Landslides may also occur in moderate to highly susceptible areas,” it said, adding that forced evacuation has started in some areas.

The weather bureau said it expects “widespread incidents of severe flooding” with landslides through Friday, with three low



pressure areas east of the country likely to become tropical cyclones this week.

The adverse weather had caused about 1.2 billion pesos (US\$21 million) in damage to both agriculture and infrastructure, according to the government.

Government offices and schools were shut for a second day on Tuesday amid the heavy downpour.

Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr, who’s in Washington to meet with US President Donald Trump, ordered government agencies to focus on flood response and relief operations, his office said in a statement.

Some 118,000 households were without power, Joe Zaldarriaga, head of corporate communications at Manila Electric

Co., told DZMM radio. Over a dozen flights were cancelled, affecting 2,160 passengers, authorities said.

The South-East Asian nation is one of the most natural disaster-prone countries in the world, where about 20 cyclones pass through each year. In 2013, Super Typhoon Haiyan killed more than 6,000 in the Philippines.



# ZELENSKY Y OFFERS TO MEET PUTIN, BUT RUSSIA UNLIKELY TO ACCEPT IT

AGENCIES  
KYIV

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Tuesday renewed his offer to meet with Russia's Vladimir Putin and negotiate an end to the war in Ukraine, but hopes of progress were low as delegations prepared to hold another round of talks.

Russian forces, meanwhile, pounded four Ukrainian cities in nighttime attacks that officials said killed a child.

Putin has spurned Zelenskyy's previous offers of a face-to-face meeting to end Europe's biggest conflict since World War II. But the Ukrainian leader insists that lower-level delegations like the ones expected for talks in Istanbul on Wednesday don't have the political heft to stop the fighting. The sides remain far apart on how to end the war begun by Russia's full-scale invasion on Feb. 24, 2022.

"Ukraine never wanted this war, and it is Russia that must end the war that it itself started," Zelenskyy said in a Telegram post.

The Kremlin dampens



Volodymyr Zelenskyy, President of Ukraine

hopes for Istanbul talks

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Tuesday that "a lot of work needs to be done before having a detailed discussion on a possibility of high-level meetings," effectively scrapping hopes of a summit any time soon. He didn't provide a date for the Istanbul talks.

Ukrainian and Western officials have accused the Kremlin of stalling in talks in order for its bigger army to capture more Ukrainian land. Russia currently holds about 20% of Ukraine.

Zelenskyy's announcement late Monday that the negotiations would take place generated little hope of progress. That is despite the Trump administration's efforts to push forward peace efforts, which

have moved slowly because Putin is reluctant to budge from his demands.

Peskov said that "we have no reason to expect any magical breakthroughs, it's hardly possible in the current situation."

The previous two rounds were held in Istanbul, and Russian media reports said that the Turkish city likely would also host the meeting this time. The talks in May and June led to a series of exchanges of prisoners of war and the bodies of fallen soldiers, but produced no other agreements.

Russia, meanwhile, is driving hard to break through at eastern and northeastern points on the 1,000-kilometer (620-mile) front line. It is also firing upwards of 700 drones a night at Ukrainian cities.

Zelenskyy said that at the next Istanbul talks, Ukraine wants to secure the release of more prisoners from Russian captivity and the return of children Ukraine says were abducted.

The Ukrainian delegation will be headed by former Defense Minister Rustem Umerov, who is now the secretary of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine. It will include representatives of Ukrainian intelligence, the Foreign Affairs Ministry and the president's office, Zelenskyy said.

Peskov said that "the issue of a Ukrainian settlement is so complex that even reaching agreements on prisoner exchanges or the return of bodies is already a success."

Russian forces struck four Ukrainian cities in three regions in overnight attacks, killing a child and wounding at least 41 other people, officials said. From dusk on Monday evening, Russia struck the Ukrainian regions of Sumy in the north-east, Odesa in the south and eastern Kramatorsk.

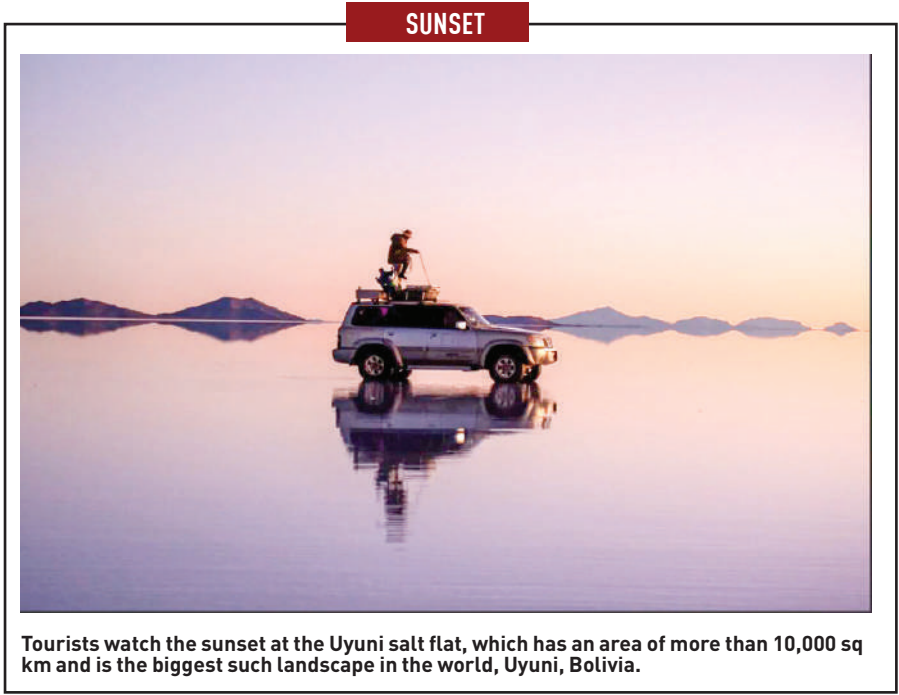
In Kramatorsk, a glide bomb hit an apartment building, starting a fire, according to the head of the

city's military administration, Oleksandr Honcharenko. A boy born in 2015 was killed, local officials said, without giving his exact age. Five other people were reported wounded.

The Sumy region came under multiple waves of attacks, the regional military administration reported. A drone hit a gas station in the town of Putyvl, wounding four people, including a 5-year-old boy, it said. A second drone strike hit the same location less than two hours later, wounding seven other people.

After dark, two powerful Russian glide bombs were dropped on Sumy city, wounding 13 people, including a 6-year-old boy. According to regional authorities, five apartment buildings, two private homes and a shopping mall were damaged in the attack. The blasts shattered windows and destroyed balconies in residential buildings, acting Mayor Artem Kobzar said.

Russia's Defense Ministry, meanwhile, said Tuesday that air defenses downed 35 Ukrainian long-range drones over several regions overnight, including three over the Moscow region.



Tourists watch the sunset at the Uyuni salt flat, which has an area of more than 10,000 sq km and is the biggest such landscape in the world, Uyuni, Bolivia.

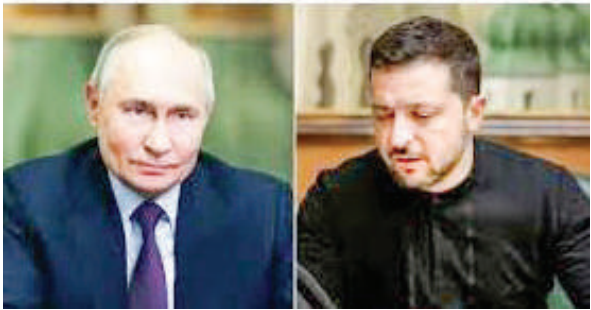
## Ukraine talks: Moscow not expecting 'breakthroughs'

AGENCIES  
MOSCOW

That came after the Kremlin on Monday said that the two sides were far apart in their visions on how to end the more than three-year-old conflict, and as they continued to pummel each other with drones and missiles.

"We don't have any reason to hope for some miraculous breakthroughs," Russian President Vladimir Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov said at a regular briefing in answer to AFP's question about the Kremlin's expectations from the talks.

Outlining potential topics



for discussion, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that Kyiv was ready to "secure the release of our people from captivity and return abducted children, to stop the killings, and to prepare a leaders' meeting."

Moscow said that "a lot of work lies ahead" before

even discussions could take place about possible talks between Putin and Zelenskyy, who last met in 2019.

Ukraine said its ex-defence minister and current secretary of the security council, Rustem Umerov, will head Kyiv's delegation on the talks on Wednesday.

## Trump's Golden Dome looks for alternatives to Musk's SpaceX

AGENCIES  
WASHINGTON

The Trump administration is expanding its search for partners to build the Golden Dome missile defense system, courting Amazon. com's Project Kuiper and big defense contractors as tensions with Elon Musk threaten SpaceX's dominance in the program, according to three sources familiar with the matter.

The shift marks a strategic pivot away from reliance on Musk's SpaceX, whose Starlink and Starshield satellite networks have become central to U.S. military communications.

It comes amid a deteriorating relationship between Trump and Musk, which culminated in a public falling-out on June 5. Even before the spat, officials at the Pentagon and White House had begun exploring alternatives to SpaceX, wary of over-reliance on a single partner for huge portions of

the ambitious, \$175 billion space-based defense shield, two of the sources said.

Musk and SpaceX did not respond to requests for comment. After Reuters reported initially that SpaceX was a frontrunner to build parts of Golden Dome, Musk said on X that the company had

government procurement, SpaceX still has the inside track to assist with major portions of the Golden Dome, especially launch contracts, sources say.

Project Kuiper, which has launched just 78 of a planned constellation of 3,000 low-earth orbit satel-



"not tried to bid for any contract in this regard. Our strong preference would be to stay focused on taking humanity to Mars."

Due to its size, track record of launching more than 9,000 of its own Starlink satellites, and experience in

lites, has been approached by the Pentagon to join the effort, signaling the administration's openness to integrating commercial tech firms into national defense infrastructure and going beyond traditional defense players.

## US to leave UN cultural agency Unesco again, hints diplomats

AGENCIES  
PARIS

The US will leave the United Nations' culture and education agency Unesco as President Donald Trump continues to pull his country out of international institutions he has long criticized, two European diplomats said.

The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment outside regular business hours.

The move is a blow to the Paris-based agency, founded after World War Two to promote peace through international cooperation in education, science, and culture. The New York Post also reported on the US withdrawal, citing a White House official.

Trump took similar steps during his first term, quitting the World Health Organization, the UN Human Rights Council, a global climate change accord and the Iran nuclear deal. Joe Biden reversed those decisions after taking office in 2021, returning the US to Unesco, the WHO and the climate agreement.

With Trump now back in the White House, the US is once again pulling out of these global bodies. He has already decided to withdraw the US from the WHO and halt funding to the Palestinian relief agency UNRWA as part of a review of the

US' participation in UN agencies, due to be concluded in August.

Unesco is best known for designating World Heritage Sites, including the Grand Canyon in the US and the ancient city of Palmyra in Syria.

The US initially joined Unesco at its founding in 1945 but withdrew for the first time in 1984 in protest against alleged financial mismanagement and perceived anti-US bias, returning almost 20 years later in 2003 under President George W Bush, who then said the agency had undertaken needed reforms.



Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

The US provides about 8 per cent of Unesco's total budget, down from about 20 per cent at the time Trump first pulled the US out of the agency.

## European court throws out UK case on alleged Russia vote meddling

AGENCIES  
LONDON

The European Court of Human Rights on Tuesday rejected a case brought by three MPs who had accused the British government of failing to fight Russian electoral interference.

The ECHR's ruling follows a claim lodged by a cross-party group of three MPs after the High Court in London rejected the case in 2021.

They claim the failure of the government to investigate "credible allegations" of interference in the electoral system had breached its obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights that protects the right to free and fair elections.

The trio -- Ben Bradshaw, of the Labour party, Caroline Lucas, of the Green



Party and Alyn Smith of the Scottish National Party (SNP) -- were part of a group of six who lost a bid to bring a High Court challenge in June 2021 against former prime minister Boris Johnson over his alleged "failure" to probe possible Russian interference in UK elections.

The complaint focused on the 2014 referendum on Scottish independence, the 2016 Brexit referendum and the 2019 general election.

The UK parliament's Intelligence and Security Committee (ISC) in 2020 said it could not come to firm conclusions about any Russian meddling.

But its report said Johnson's government "took its eye off the ball", and critics pointed to his Conservative party's links to wealthy Russian donors as one explanation for official inaction against Moscow.

In its ruling, the ECHR said it sided with the British government that had argued that applicants could not be considered "victims" of any alleged government law violation.

They had failed to produce evidence that they had been "personally and directly" affected by any state failings, or that "the very essence" of the electoral process had been impaired.

## Trump administration releases Martin Luther King Jr assassination files

AGENCIES  
NEW YORK

The Trump administration has released records of the FBI's surveillance of Martin Luther King Jr, despite opposition from the slain Nobel laureate's family and the civil rights group that he led until his 1968 assassination.

The release involves more than 240,000 pages of records that had been under a court-imposed seal since 1977, when the FBI first gathered the records and turned them over to the National Archives and Records Administration. King's family, including his two living children, Martin III and Bernice, were given advance notice of the release and had their own teams reviewing the records ahead of the public disclosure.

In a lengthy statement released on Monday (July 21, 2025), the two living King children called their father's case a "captivating public cur-



Martin Luther King, Jr. walks across the balcony of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, April 3, 1968.

iosity for decades." But the pair emphasized the personal nature of the matter and urged that "these files must be viewed within their full historical context." "As the children of Dr. King and Mrs. Coretta Scott King, his tragic death has been an intensely personal grief -- a devastating loss for his wife, children, and the granddaughter he never met -- an absence our family has endured for over 57

years," they wrote. "We ask those who engage with the release of these files to do so with empathy, restraint, and respect for our family's continuing grief." Bernice King was five years old when her father was killed. Martin III was 10.

President Donald Trump promised as a candidate to release files related to President John F. Kennedy's 1963 assassination.



"This is another win for Los Angeles but this is also a win for those serving this country in uniform," Bass said in a statement. "Los Angeles stands with our troops, which is why we are glad they are leaving."

California Gov. Gavin Newsom sued the federal government in June over the deployment of the National Guard, arguing that Trump violated the law when he activated the troops without notifying him. Newsom also asked the judge for an emergency stop to troops helping carry out immigration raids.

While a lower court ordered Trump to return control of the Guard to California, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals last month temporarily blocked the judge's order.

Newsom originally included the Marines in the lawsuit, but the case has primarily focused on the Guard since.

In response to the Pentagon's announcement pulling back the Marines, Newsom reiterated his call for the remaining Guard troops to be sent home as well.

"The women and men of the California National Guard deserve more than to continue serving as puppets in Trump and Stephen Miller's performative political theater," Newsom said in a statement. "There was never a need for the military to deploy against civilians in Los Angeles."

In one of the most raucous days of protest, thousands of people took to the streets June 8 in response to Trump's deployment of the Guard, blocking off a major freeway as law enforcement used less lethal methods to control the crowd. Photos captured several Waymo robotaxis set on fire.



## 'SON OF SARDAAR 2' SECOND TRAILER OUT

TDG NETWORK  
MUMBAI

Building more anticipation ahead of the release, the makers of Ajay Devgn's starrer 'Son Of Sardaar 2', unveiled the second trailer on Tuesday.

The trailer begins with Ajay Devgn's character, Jassi, getting married to Neeru Bajwa. Later, he reveals four troubles in his life. That starts with Bajwa asking for a divorce from him, and Jassi saying, "Sardaar ko paagal kar diya." Jassi is shown getting trapped in problems repeatedly. As he says, "Jo harbaar fase vo hai sardaar Jassi". From getting trapped in fake love to being caught up in a Mafia family and being held to his 'bebe's' promise, the trailer reveals Jassi's life, which is



full of chaos and comedy.

The caption along with the trailer reads, "Latest update hai...Jassi ab officially har tarah se phas chuka hai..Duja Trailer out now..#SonOfSardaar2 in cinemas from August 1st!#SardaarIsBack #SOS2"

Directed by Vijay Kumar Arora, the 'Son of Sardaar 2' also stars Ravi Kishan, Sanjay Mishra, Mrunal Thakur, Neeru Bajwa, Chunky Panday, Kubbra Sait, Deepak Dobriyal, Vinu Dara Singh, Roshni Walia, Sharat

Saxena, Sahil Mehta and the late Mukul Dev.

Recently, the makers updated about the new release date of the film.

The release date of Ajay Devgn's highly anticipated film 'Son Of Sardaar 2' has been postponed after it was earlier scheduled to release in theatres on July 25.

The makers dropped a new poster, which said, "The laughter riot just got a new date. Son of Sardaar 2 will now release in cinemas on 1st August 2025 world-

wide."

Check out.

The first trailer of the film, which was two-minute and fifty-second long started with some popular scenes from its prequels, showcasing the troubles Ajay Devgn went through in a Punjabi village due to bad relations between his ancestors.

This time, Ajay Devgn has gone to Scotland and lands in another trouble when he, along with his love partner Mrunal Thakur, decides to help Roshni Walia by becoming her Sikh parents to tie her wedding knot with the love of her life.

However, the problems arose after Ajay-Mrunal met the boy's father, who is a Sardaar with uncountable guns at his disposal, accompanied by dozens of bodyguards, as per the trailer.

## 'Two Much..': Kajol, Twinkle all set to host new talk show

TDG NETWORK  
MUMBAI

Bollywood stars Kajol and Twinkle Khanna are all set to host a new talk show titled 'Two Much with Kajol and Twinkle'.

Taking to Instagram handle on Tuesday, Prime Video shared the update about the show with the caption, "they've got the tea..and it's two much to miss.. #TwoMuchOnPrime, Coming Soon"

After the post, many shared their excitement. Film director Siddharth P Malhotra wrote, "Love the title and the hosts - this is gonna be super fun"



"OMG yeeesss!!!! My two favorite personalities in one show! It's gonna be raw, crazy, funny and I'm here for it!", wrote a social media user, while another commented, "Cook akki & devgn in first episode"

Produced and conceptualised by Banijay Asia,

the show is described as a "bold, fiery, and candid" entry into the talk show space, with a guest list featuring the "biggest names" in Bollywood and the industry's Who's Who.

The show is hosted and helmed by two "enigmatic and powerhouse per-

sonalities". While Kajol is known for delivering hits like Baazigar (1993), Yeh Dillagi (1994), Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge (1995), and Kuch Kuch Hota Hai (1998), as well as the 2025 mythological horror film, 'Maa', directed by Vishal Furia.

Twinkle Khanna, on the other hand, is an author, columnist and actress who made her acting debut with a leading role in the film Barsaat (1995). She also worked in films such as Jaan (1996), Jab Pyaar Kisise Hota Hai (1998), Baadshah (1999), and Love Ke Liye Kuch Bhi Karega (2001).

## 'Bandar' selected for Toronto International Film Festival

TDG NETWORK  
MUMBAI

The Bobby Deol-starrer 'Bandar' (Monkey in a Cage) will be screened at the prestigious 2025 Toronto International Film Festival.

Sharing the update, Deol wrote on his Instagram handle, "The Story that should not have been told... But is the Official Selection at the 50th Toronto International Film Festival 2025. Our Film inspired by True Events is Premiering at #tiff50#bNdr #Bandar #MonkeyinaCage"

After his post, Sunny Deol congratulated him with heart emojis, while actor Vikrant Massey wrote, "Many congratulations, Sir"

Huma Qureshi commented, "Congratulations"

Anurag Kashyap's film, inspired by true events, will premiere at the film festival, taking place from September 4 to September 14.

Deol was last seen in Ek Badnaam Aashram Season 3 - Part 2. The show premiered on Amazon MX Player on February 27. Directed by Prakash Jha, the series featured Bobby Deol, Aaditi Pohankar, Darshan



*Anurag Kashyap's film, inspired by true events, will premiere at the film festival, taking place from September 4 to September 14.*

Kumaar, Chandan Roy Sanyal, Vikram Kochhar, Tridha Choudhury, Anupriya Goenka, Rajeev Siddhartha, and Esha Gupta in crucial roles.

Apart from this, the actor made his Telugu debut in Daaku Maharaj, where he acted alongside Nandamuri Balakrishna, Urvashi Rautela, and Pragya Jaiswal. The film was directed by Bobby Kolli.

'Homebound', starring Ishaan Khatter, Janhvi Kapoor, and Vishal Jethwa, will also be screened at the 2025 Toronto International Film Festival.

Karan Johar took to Instagram earlier and wrote, "Homebound has been officially selected for the Toronto International Film Festival 2025 (@tiff\_net) in the Gala Presentations category.

## Rakesh Roshan shares his routine health check up

TDG NETWORK  
MUMBAI

Veteran filmmaker Rakesh Roshan on Tuesday shared his health update, revealing how during a routine full-body health checkup, doctors discovered that both his carotid arteries to the brain were over 75 per cent blocked.

He immediately admitted himself to the hospital and underwent preventive procedures.

"This week has been truly eye opening, during a routine full body health check



up the doctor conducting the sonography for the heart suggested I also do one for the neck. By chance we found out that although asymptomatic, both my ca-

rotid arteries to the brain were above 75% blocked. Which if ignored could be potentially dangerous. I immediately admitted myself into the hospital and got

the preventive procedures done," Rakesh Roshan opened up.

Roshan, who is the father of Bollywood superstar Hrithik Roshan, said he is currently recovering and will soon be back to his workout regime. He also urged people who are above the age of 45 to get regular scans such as a heart CT and a carotid brain artery sonography

"I am back home now fully recovered and hope to get back to my workouts very soon. I hope this inspires others to stay on top



Vidya Balan poses for a magazine. (Instagram)

### BRAIN PICKING



Don't try to squeeze into a glass slipper. Instead, shatter the glass ceiling.

—PRIYANKA CHOPRA  
(Indian Actress)

## Deepika's way of taking advice from Ranveer

TDG NETWORK  
MUMBAI

Deepika Padukone has offered a glimpse into her adorable equation with her husband, actor Ranveer Singh.

Taking to her Instagram story, Deepika shared a hilarious meme post about a husband-and-wife duo that has everyone's attention.

"Me phoning my husband to ask his opinion about something I've already decided, but I want him to be involved in the decision in case something goes wrong," the meme read.

The 'Piku' star tagged her husband in the story, adding smiling face emojis.

The post joins the list of many memes that the actress often shares on Insta-

gram. In a previous story, she revealed Ranveer Singh's phone habits with a hilarious picture that featured a pigeon walking erratically in the same place.

The 'Dhurandhar' actor also makes sure to drop special mentions for his wife. He recently expressed pride, offering an emotional tribute to Deepika after she received her own star on the



Hollywood Walk of Fame.

The star couple recently entered a new phase of their lives as parents after welcoming their daughter, Dua, in September last year. "She is the Answer to our Prayers. Our hearts are filled with Love & Gratitude. Deepika & Ranveer," the couple wrote on Instagram.

On the work front, Deepika Padukone recently joined Atlee's upcoming film with Allu Arjun in the lead. Backed by Sun Pictures, the film has been tentatively titled "AA22xA6."

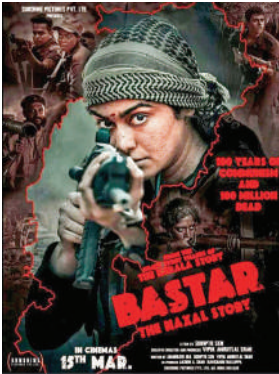
This marks the actress's first project with Allu Arjun, while it is her second with Atlee, as she previously worked with the director on 'Jawan,' which featured Shah Rukh Khan in the lead.

## 'Maati' love story features surrendered Naxals of Bastar

TDG NETWORK  
BASTAR

The cinema halls across Chhattisgarh are set to witness a unique love story, born from the dark world of naxalism. Framed around the existential issue of naxals, 'Maati' aims to highlight the issues faced by the local people in Bastar.

Directed by Avinash



Prasad, the film's motion poster was released on Monday in the state capital, Raipur.

The poster shows the lead actors against the backdrop of the tense surroundings in Bastar.

While the film's storyline has itself created a buzz, another interesting fact comes with the addition of surrendered naxals to 'Maati's'

cast.

Prasad explained how the people of Bastar have suffered due to the ongoing violence and the way development has come to a halt due to the naxal activities.

"The problems prevailing in Bastar due to naxalism are being frequently covered by the media but we bid to showcase this serious

issue on the silver screen. The team members of this film are from Bastar. Surrendered naxals have also acted in Maati," he added.

The director revealed that the film focuses on a love story of a naxal couple of Bastar.

He added that Maati will show the problems that the locals have been facing over the past few decades.

## First look of 'Avatar: Fire and Ash' antagonist unveiled

AGENCIES  
WASHINGTON DC

The makers of 'Avatar: Fire and Ash' unveiled the first look of Varang, the new antagonist from the 'Ash clan' in 'Avatar 3', reported Variety.

The first look of the clan's leader, Varang, played by Oona Chaplin, was revealed by the team. She is expected to lock horns with Jake (Sam Worthington).

In a post on the official 'Avatar' X account, it was revealed that the first trailer



for James Cameron's 'Avatar' sequel will screen exclusively in theatres before showings of Marvel's 'Fantastic Four',

reported Variety.

"Meet Varang in Avatar: Fire and Ash. Be among the first to watch the trailer, exclusively in theatres this weekend with The Fantastic Four: First Steps," the caption reads, along with the first look of Varang.

"Avatar: Fire and Ash" is set to hit theatres on December 19. Meanwhile, the fourth and fifth "Avatar" films are scheduled for release on December 21, 2029, and December 19, 2031, respectively, reported Variety.



# PUNJAB DA SWAG' AT PUNJAB GRILL: A FLAVOURFUL JOURNEY THROUGH THE HEART OF PUNJAB

TDG NETWORK

If you're someone who finds comfort in the smoky aromas of tandoor, the rich gravies of North India, and the unapologetic indulgence of desi desserts, then 'Punjab Da Swag' at Punjab Grill is your culinary calling this season. The celebrated fine-dining destination has rolled out this food festival across all its outlets, and what awaits you is nothing short of a heartfelt tribute to Punjab's vibrant food heritage—with a stylish twist.

From the moment you're handed the special festival menu, you know you're in for a treat. The names of the dishes themselves evoke curiosity and appetite. The experience kicks off with *Mithe Te Tikhe Kule*, a playful reinterpretation of the chaat-salad hybrid. It's sweet, tangy, spicy and utterly fresh—an exciting curtain-raiser for what's to come.

No Punjabi celebration is complete without tikkas, and here, they take centre stage. The *Prince of Tikkas*, true to its royal title, is luxuriously creamy with a citrus zing that keeps it light on the palate. But it's the *Angithi Mutton Chop Tikka* that steals the show—slow-roasted, deeply marinated, with that unmistakable rustic flavour of food cooked over coal and fire.

Moving on to mains, the *Channay Murgh/Mutton* is a standout. Smoky tandoori chicken (or mutton) is paired with robustly spiced chickpeas, offering a dish that's both nourishing and layered. Equally satisfying is the *Palak Chicken Curry*, a slow-cooked classic with home-



style notes that resonate with warmth and nostalgia. The *Dal Kunne Wali* is soul food at its finest—earthy, thick, and perfect with a side of soft naan. For vegetarians, *Baingan da Swaad* brings the humble brinjal to life with punchy masalas and smokiness, while the *Keema Parothe* packs rich flavour and indulgence in every bite.

To beat the summer heat, the *Ambi Panna* is a re-

freshing companion. Made from raw mango, mint and spices, it balances tang and sweetness while adding a traditional touch to the meal. It's an ideal refresher between the heavier courses.

No Punjabi meal can end without dessert, and here, *Sada Kulfi Falooda* brings the nostalgia in full swing. Creamy kulfi resting on a bed of vermicelli and rich rabdi is a celebration in

itself—one that leaves you with a happy sigh.

What elevates 'Punjab Da Swag' beyond a seasonal menu is the narrative it builds—one of Punjab's bold culinary identity, its comforting textures, and festive soul. Rohit Aggarwal, Co-founder and MD of Lite Bite Foods, rightly calls it "an experience of Punjabi culture on a plate." And that's exactly what it is—a joyous, well-execut-

ed food festival that celebrates tradition with flair.

For loyalists of Punjabi cuisine, this is a familiar yet refreshing feast. For newcomers, it's a delicious education in what makes Punjab such a beloved food region. Either way, 'Punjab Da Swag' delivers on its promise and leaves you wanting more. Don't miss it—it's available at all Punjab Grill outlets across India.

## Monsoon diet alert: Foods to Avoid for a Healthy Rainy Season

TDG NETWORK

The monsoon season brings much-needed relief from the scorching summer, but it also brings along high humidity, waterborne diseases, and weakened digestive systems. While we all crave crispy pakoras and roadside chaat during rainy days, our food choices during this time can significantly impact our health. To enjoy the season without falling sick, it's important to know which foods to avoid during the monsoon.

### 1. LEAFY VEGETABLES

While green leafy vegetables like spinach, cabbage, and lettuce are typically healthy, they are best avoided during monsoon. These vegetables tend to attract dirt, worms, and bacteria due to the increased moisture in the air. The risk of contamination is high even after thorough washing. If you must consume them, make sure to wash with salt water and cook them well.

### 2. STREET FOOD AND CUT FRUITS

Monsoon and street food might feel like a match made in heaven, but unfortunately, this is one of the riskiest food choices during the rains. Items like golgappa, bhel puri, and samosas are often prepared or served in unhygienic conditions. The use of contaminated water and improperly stored ingredients can lead to stomach infections. Similarly, avoid cut fruits sold in the open, as they attract flies and are often exposed to dirty water. Always opt for freshly cut fruits at home.

### 3. SEAFOOD AND MUSHROOMS

Seafood is best avoided during monsoon as it's the breeding season for fish and shellfish. Consuming them during this time in-



Monsoon and street food might feel like a match made in heaven, but unfortunately, this is one of the riskiest food choices during the rains. Items like golgappa, bhel puri, and samosas are often prepared or served in unhygienic conditions.

creases the chances of food poisoning and other infections. Mushrooms, though nutritious, grow in damp environments and can easily carry toxic microbes or become spoiled. It's safer to stick to farm-raised poultry or vegetarian options.

### 4. FRIED AND OILY FOODS

The temptation of hot pakoras with tea is strong, but deep-fried and oily foods are difficult to digest during monsoon. Our metabolism slows down in this season, making it hard for the body to process heavy, greasy foods. This can result in indigestion, acidity, and bloating. If you do indulge occasionally, accompany it with digestive drinks like ginger tea or ajwain water.

### 5. FERMENTED FOODS

Fermented foods like idli, dosa batter, and dhokla can quickly spoil in humid weather. The high moisture levels accelerate fermentation, which can lead to sourness or even spoilage, pos-

ing a risk of food poisoning. If you're making fermented dishes, use the batter fresh and store it properly in the refrigerator.

### 6. CARBONATED BEVERAGES AND MILK PRODUCTS

Soft drinks may offer temporary refreshment but can reduce enzyme activity in the stomach, hindering digestion. Instead, opt for herbal teas or fresh lemon water. Also, be cautious with milk and dairy products like paneer and cream, which spoil faster in monsoon. Always boil milk and store dairy in cool, hygienic conditions.

The monsoon diet should be light, fresh, and immunity-boosting. Focus on warm, home-cooked meals, boiled water, and spices like turmeric and ginger to strengthen your digestive system. By avoiding the above-mentioned foods, you can safeguard your health and enjoy the rains without falling prey to seasonal illnesses.

## Ghevar: The sweet essence of Rajasthan's festive tradition

TDG NETWORK

Rajasthan, the land of royal heritage and vibrant culture, is equally known for its rich and delectable cuisine. Among its many culinary treasures, Ghevar holds a special place—especially during the monsoon months and the festival of Teej. This honeycomb-like sweet delicacy is not just a dessert; it's a symbol of celebration, tradition, and familial love deeply rooted in Rajasthani culture.

### A SWEET WITH A STORY

Ghevar is believed to have originated in the royal kitchens of Rajasthan centuries ago. Traditionally prepared during the Shravan month (July–August), Ghevar is closely associated with the festival of Teej, which celebrates the reunion of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati. On this day, married women fast for the well-being of their husbands and receive gifts—often including a beautifully packed Ghevar—from their parental homes.

This practice has turned Ghevar into more than just a food item; it is a cherished part of the emotional and cultural exchange between daughters and their maternal families. The arrival of a box of Ghevar from home

during Teej is a moment of joy for many married women, especially those living away from their parents.

### WHAT MAKES GHEVAR SPECIAL

Ghevar is made with a batter of refined flour (maida), ghee, and chilled water. What sets it apart is the technique of deep-frying the batter in a special mould, where it forms delicate, lacy patterns. The porous disc is then soaked in sugar syrup and topped with saffron, cardamom, dry fruits, and sometimes a layer of rabri (thickened sweetened milk).

There are several varieties of Ghevar, including Plain Ghevar, Mawa Ghevar (with sweetened khoya), and Malai Ghevar (topped with creamy rabri). Each version has its own charm, but all offer the signature crispness and sweetness that make Ghevar unforgettable.

### A SEASONAL DELICACY

Interestingly, Ghevar is mostly prepared and enjoyed during the monsoon season. The higher humidity levels help in forming the unique texture that Ghevar is known for. It is not typically available year-round, which makes it a much-awaited treat every year during Teej, Raksha Band-



han, and even Janmashtami.

### MODERN TWISTS, TIMELESS TRADITION

Today, many sweet shops experiment with fusion Ghevar, offering flavours like chocolate, mango, rose, and even pista. However, the traditional version continues to be the most loved, especially during religious and cultural festivities. In cities like Jaipur, Udaipur, and Jodhpur, Ghevar is an essential item in every household and sweet shop as soon as the Teej season begins.

Ghevar is not just a des-

There are several varieties of Ghevar, including Plain Ghevar, Mawa Ghevar (with sweetened khoya), and Malai Ghevar (topped with creamy rabri). Each version has its own charm, but all offer the signature crispness and sweetness that make Ghevar unforgettable.

sert—it's a reflection of Rajasthan's rich culinary artistry, seasonal wisdom, and deeply emotional traditions. Whether it's the joy of receiving it from your family, the excitement of the first bite, or the spiritual signifi-

cance of the season it represents, Ghevar connects hearts and generations. As Rajasthan's golden monsoon delicacy, Ghevar continues to sweeten both taste buds and memories year after year.





# AI IN STUDENT ASSESSMENT: EMPOWERING TEACHERS, ENHANCING OUTCOMES

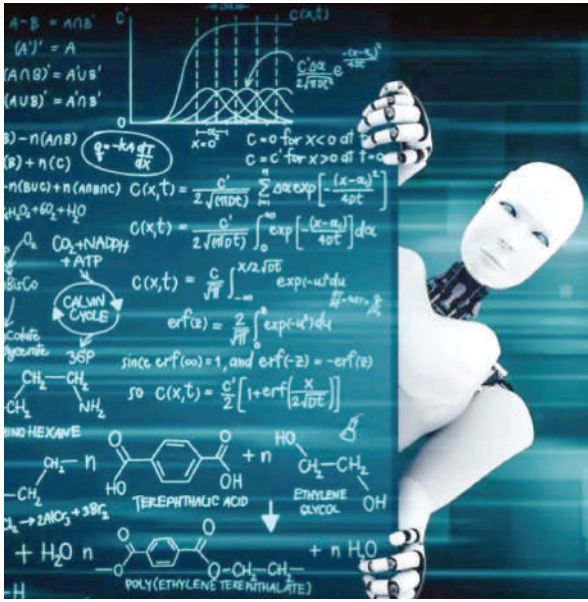
RITVIK KULSHRESTHA

Assessments have always been an integral part of the education system — a way to gauge understanding, reinforce learning, and prepare students for what lies ahead. But traditional assessments come with their own set of challenges. For teachers, even selecting the right set of questions is a complex task — ensuring they align with curriculum guidelines, cover all cognitive levels, and maintain appropriate weightage across topics. Moreover, cheating remains a persistent issue. Teachers often spend hours creating question papers, sometimes even in multiple sets, only to find that this doesn't eliminate the risk of cheating. What follows is an even more time-consuming process: manually evaluating those answer sheets, leaving little room for reflection or reinforcement. This is where Artificial Intelligence in Education step in — not to replace teachers, but to empower them. Today's AI-enabled assessment tools allow teachers to cre-

ate tests in just a few clicks. Even better, they can generate unique versions of the same test for each student, preserving the structure and difficulty while eliminating the possibility of cheating. Once the tests are completed, the system can automatically evaluate the responses with remarkable accuracy and speed, regardless of the scale. More importantly, the value of technology and AI extends far beyond test creation and grading. These systems generate detailed performance reports that give teachers 100% accurate insights into student learning. They help pinpoint individual strengths and weaknesses for each student, as well as highlight learning gaps across the entire class. Teachers can identify which concepts students have mastered, where they are struggling, and whether the difficulties stem from conceptual gaps, lack of practice, or application challenges. With AI, Edtech tools can even highlight students with high potential for advanced academic pursuits or indicate those in need of consistent support.



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organize targeted remedial sessions by identifying exactly which students need support in specific areas, and adapt their classroom instruction to better align with individual learning needs — moving decisively beyond the limitations of a one-size-fits-all approach. In all this, it is important to note that in all these cases, AI doesn't replace the teachers. Instead, it augments their capabilities. Teachers retain full control over the process — from curating questions to modifying scores and

adjusting personalized recommendations. AI serves as a co-pilot, handling the repetitive workload while empowering educators to focus on what truly matters: teaching and mentoring. The true promise of AI in education lies in enablement. By automating routine tasks and delivering intelligent insights, it allows teachers to do what they do best — engage, inspire, and elevate every learner. The author is Chief Executive Officer & Managing Director of Extramarks Education

## How Indian universities can pave the way for the Artificial Intelligence revolution



PROF. SUPRIYA PATTANAYAK

As the Fourth Industrial Revolution restructures economies and societies around the world, artificial intelligence (AI) is becoming an agent of transformation that can remake our lives, work, and learning. Indian universities thus have a crucial chance—and mandate—to put India at the forefront of the AI revolution. But to do this, universities have to go beyond traditional education models and undergo systemic change based on innovation, inclusiveness, and industry linkage. At the core of such a change is the necessity for experiential, skills-oriented education. AI, being fundamentally applied science, needs a foundation not just in mathematics, computer science, and data processing but also in practical experience in domain-relevant issues—be it in agriculture, health, finance, or manufacturing. Universities need to move away from memorization and theory-oriented curricula towards hands-on learning environments. This involves creating AI-themed labs, interdepartmental research centers, and action-oriented learning environments where students can tinker, construct, and refine. The most exciting method is to integrate AI into production environments themselves—what institutions are referring to as 'living labs.' These are systems that ensure that the students are actively engaged in solving real-world problems, whether by producing computer-vision-optimized agricultural machinery or streamlining logistics using predictive algorithms. Ex-

ly captured only if students from all walks of life—rural and economically weaker sections as well—are incorporated. Programs such as lateral entry, bridge courses, and digital platforms with multiple languages can facilitate greater access, making the AI revolution not confined to privileged sections but a mass movement. The adoption of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 offers an enabling environment for this transformation. With its emphasis on multidisciplinary education, flexible curricula, and vocational skills, NEP seems naturally aligned with the needs of AI learning. Colleges need to now step up their implementation by incorporating modules of AI into non-STEM streams, providing micro-credentials, and encouraging cross-disciplinary partnerships that replicate real-world complexity. Besides that, industry and startup partnerships are a must. With AI constantly evolving at such a rapid speed, universities must be on the same page as the newest innovations, uses, and technological applications that are being leveraged in the private sector. The co-development of curricula, joint certifications, and AI-enabled startup incubation support will foster a dynamic environment where the industry and academia collaborate to create value. Lastly, training of faculty cannot be ignored. Educating teachers on rising AI tools and teaching approaches guarantees the whole learning experience from classroom to lab is current, responsive, and future-oriented.

In summary, the AI revolution will not wait. If India wants to stake a claim of leadership in this space, universities will have to take the lead boldly, shatter silos, and innovate at all levels—from policy to pedagogy to practice. The path calls for vision and agility—but with the correct approach, Indian higher education can be the crucible where the next generation of AI leaders is shaped. The author is Vice Chancellor, Centurion University of Technology and Management, Odisha

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## 7 Top nations for Indian students to study and settle down in 2025



RITIKA GUPTA

Selecting the proper overseas education destination isn't solely about acquiring a degree—it's about creating a future. For Indian students, settling in a foreign country post-studies is a consideration that's gaining prominence while choosing a destination. Below is a list of 7 nations that provide world-class education, sufficient career opportunities, and an easier route to permanent residency (PR), with some less conventional insights.

- 1. CANADA—THE FIRST CHOICE FOR LONG-TERM SETTLEMENT**  
Canada continues to be the favourite destination among Indian students in 2025, not only due to its top-class education but also because of its friendly and transparent immigration policies. With the Post-Graduation Work Permit (PGWP) and Express Entry system, several Indian students become PR within 2-3 years of graduation. Provincial towns like Saskatchewan and Manitoba have more rapid PR processing and fewer competitors than Toronto or Vancouver.
- 2. GERMANY - FREE EDUCATION, HIGH JOB DEMAND**  
Germany is the best-kept secret of Europe for Indian students, particularly in STEM programs.
- 3. AUSTRALIA - SAFE AND SKILLED MIGRATION-**
- 4. IRELAND—THE NEW TECH AND PHARMA HOTSPOT**  
Ireland is gaining popularity with Indian students in areas such as data analytics, biotechnology, and pharma. Students can remain for
- 5. NEW ZEALAND—FRIENDLY, BUT SELECT YOUR PATH CAREFULLY**  
Being highly focused on work-life balance, New Zealand has an excellent standard of living. New
- 6. FRANCE—LOW COST, CULTURAL, AND SMARTLY STRATEGIC**  
France has lavish scholarships, cheap tuition (even for English-medium programs), and a developing international student ecosystem. On finishing a master's, the students can remain for 2 years and apply for permanent residence subsequently through work. French proficiency greatly en-
- 7. PORTUGAL—EU-ROPE'S UNDERRATED PR GATEWAY**  
Portugal is the less-typical yet intelligent option. Low-cost education, breathtaking quality of life, and a considerably more straightforward PR process (after 5 years of legal residence) make it an appealing option

Tuition-free education in most public universities, even for foreign students, is a welcome relief. The 18-month post-graduation job search visa and a seamless route to the EU Blue Card make it compelling for long-term residence. Gaining basic German enormously increases employability and chances of permanent settlement, particularly outside Berlin.

a maximum of 2 years after their master's studies to work and switch to a job-led visa. Ireland hosts 9 of the world's largest 10 pharmaceutical firms and a host of tech giants. Job-to-residence routes are quicker than in a lot of EU countries.

hances career opportunities and facilitates residency sooner, particularly in industries such as luxury management, hospitality, and AI.



Zealand offers a 3-year post-study work visa to master's students, with PR options for higher-skilled roles. Take courses in health, engineering, and teaching—these are on New Zealand's Long-Term Skill Shortage List, enhancing PR prospects.

for long-term vision. Indian students are opting for Portugal's D7 and job seeker visas in addition to English-friendly programs as they seek to settle in the EU without exorbitant tuition fees. In 2025, foreign study is not just about education—it's about designing your future life. Places like Portugal and Ireland are not necessarily on everybody's radar, but they're fast-emerging destinations for Indian students looking not only for education but also for permanent residence. Pick wisely depending on your career aspirations, lifestyle choices, and PR prospects. The author is CEO & Counsellor, Aera consultants



# PANT TO KEEP WICKETS, PITCH TO FAVOR BOWLERS, SAYS GILL

India-England 4th Test starts today at Old Trafford stadium

AGENCIES  
MANCHESTER

Ahead of the fourth Test match against England at Manchester starting tomorrow, Indian skipper updated on wicketkeeper-batter Rishabh Pant's injury and said he will be wicketkeeping in the match to be played at Old Trafford Stadium.

In the 34th over bowled by Jasprit Bumrah on Day 1 of the third Test, Pant made a dive to pick up the ball, but could not get it cleanly in his hands, allowing England to pick up two runs off byes. Following that, he was seen in a lot of pain and had to leave the field for medical attention.

Young Dhruv Jurel took the field as Pant's replacement in the second session of the first day of the Test match. Despite a finger in-



jury, Pant batted in both innings.

Answering a query if Pant will be wicket-keeping, Gill said, "Yes".

Gill also spoke about the Old Trafford Cricket Ground pitch and said there

is not much chance for the wicket to dry.

"Honestly, when yesterday I went to see the wicket, the wicket didn't look that damp. But obviously, now

having to look at the weather, I don't think there is

much chance for the wicket to dry that much throughout. So I think there would be a little bit more for the bowlers," Gill said.

"And generally on this venue, it's a little bit quicker than the other venues

we have seen. There's a bit more pace and bounce. So we'll have to see how the test match pans out," he added.

The third Test at Lord's was a close contest and India could have won with a little more support from the top order. With England now leading the five-match series 2-1, the upcoming Test in Manchester becomes all the more crucial.

India's updated squad for fourth Test: Shubman Gill (C), Rishabh Pant (VC & WK), Yashasvi Jaiswal, KL Rahul, Sai Sudharsan, Abhimanyu Easwaran, Karun Nair, Ravindra Jadeja, Dhruv Jurel (WK), Washington Sundar, Shardul Thakur, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohd. Siraj, Prasidh Krishna, Akash Deep, Kuldeep Yadav, Anshul Kamboj

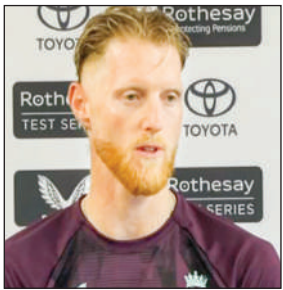


## Stokes urges flexible over-rate rules for different continents

AGENCIES  
MANCHESTER

Ahead of fourth Test against India at Manchester, England captain Ben Stokes spoke on his team's World Test Championship (WTC) points getting docked due to slow-over-rate at Lord's and said that same slow-over-rate rules cannot apply to Asia, where spin bowling dominates and England, New Zealand, Australia and South Africa, where pacers have to do the heavy duty, which causes delay in the game due to resting and tactical reasons.

While England is heading into Old Trafford having 2-1 lead in the series, the win at Lord's was not too sweet as



they had to face a slow over rate sanction in the form of WTC points reduction. They are ranked third in the WTC table despite being the second-best side statistically, with two wins and a loss during this cycle as compared to Australia's three wins in a row against West Indies.

"I can understand it from an external point of view around the overs, I really do. But it is a very tough

thing to do when I feel there is more to it than just getting rounds, getting to a large, just quicken up, get through your overs," Stokes said at pre-match presser.

"There is a lot that actually goes out on the field. You have got fast bowlers bending their back consistently. Throughout the course of a game, the time of overs is going to come down because you have just got tired bodies," he added.

Stokes said that on their 15th day at the field overall, during the final day at Lord's, they could not get much quicker and easier overs of spin due to Bashir's injury, so it was mostly pacers who bowled for most of the day, and it caused things to slow down.

## Chennai Grand Masters returns for third edition

AGENCIES  
CHENNAI

With its largest field and prize pool yet, the Chennai Grand Masters, India's most prestigious classical chess tournament, returns for its third edition from August 6 to 15 at the Hyatt Regency Chennai.

Featuring 20 players across the Masters and Challengers categories, the 2025 edition marks a new high for the tournament with a Rs 1 crore prize pool as competitors chase FIDE Circuit points vital for qualifying for the 2026 Candidates Tournament.

The tournament will be split into two categories: Masters and Challengers. The Masters field boasts global stars and Olympiad champions, including Anish Giri, Arjun Erigaisi, Vidit Gujrathi, Nihal Sarin, Jorden Van Foreest, Liang Awonder, Vincent Keymer,

Ray Robson, Vladimir Fedoseev, and Pranav V, who steps up after winning the Challengers in 2024.

"The Quantbox Chennai Grand Masters has quickly established itself as one of the world's most significant classical tournaments. It brings together a field of extraordinary depth, where India's brightest talents battle established global stars. With FIDE Circuit points and Candidates qualification on the line, this year's edition is not just a test of skill, but it's a pivotal event in the world chess calendar. Our goal is to make Chennai a permanent fixture for elite chess and a place where future champions are forged," said GM Srinath Narayanan, VP of MGD1, as quoted from a press release.

The Challengers category, introduced last year, returns as a proving ground for India's brightest emerging players.

## India, England players enjoy moves in ICC Women's Players rankings

AGENCIES  
DUBAI

India all-rounder Deepti Sharma was one of the biggest movers in the latest women's players rankings issued by the International Cricket Council (ICC) on Tuesday.

With the ongoing three-match ODI series between India and England currently tied at 1-1, players from both teams have enjoyed success in the rankings charts. Deepti notched an unbeaten 62 in the first ODI, which helped India gun down England's 259-run target.

She topped it up with an unbeaten 30 in the second ODI, which came at a losing cause, which helped her climb 10 spots to No.23 in the ICC Women's ODI Batting Rankings. England's Sophia Dunkley, who slammed 83 off 92 balls in the series opener, jumped 24 places to number 52 in the batting rankings.



Alice Davidson-Richards, who produced a solid 53, moved 40 spots up to 118. India's stylish opener Smriti Mandhana maintained her position at the summit after returning with scores of 28 and 42 in the first two matches and maintaining her rating of 727.

In the Women's ODI Bowling rankings, Sophie Ecclestone solidified her position at the top. She scalped four wickets in the series, including a Player of the Match figure of 3/27 in the second ODI.

Ecclestone's rating jumped from 747 to 776, further extending her lead over the Australian duo of Ashleigh Gardner (724) and Megan Schutt (696).

As of now, finger spinners have dominated the series so far, with England's Charlie Dean and India's Sneha Rana picking up three wickets each. Dean stormed into the top 10, jumping two places to No.9 with a career-best rating of 625, while Rana jumped 12 spots to settle for No.21, also registering a personal best rating of 515.

## 94-year-old broke 5 records in 94 minutes

HARMANDER SINGH  
NEW DELHI

As part of their contribution to the Back the Bid campaign, the Sikh Community hosted a record-breaking event at Mile End Park Stadium, East London, on July 2. Star performer was the indefatigable 94-year-old Fauja Singh. His aim was to run 100m, 200m, 400m, the mile and 1500m, and a 3000m continuing on to finish the 5000m. Six races covering eight distances in a time limit of 94 minutes.

Impossible? – nothing is impossible for the ex-farmer from the Punjab! Together with his enthusiastic coach, Harmander Singh, who himself had just missed out on the qualifying time for 10000m at the 1980 Moscow Olympics, and a group of training partners, Fauja clocked 19:97 (hand timed) for the 100, missing the UK record by 7/100th of a second. In the 200m he obliterated the UK M90 age group 200m clocking an amazing 45.13sec. The 400m he covered in 1:49.28sec, to become the first in Britain ever to contest this distance.

The UK 800m time he beat by 18.02 sec, running 4:20.97sec. The magic mile he ran in 9:40.13, timed at



9:03.37 for 1500m in the process. The last event, the 5000m, 1 1/2 times round the track, seemed a daunting target. Cheered on by the Mayor, local Press and supporters, he reeled off consistent laps, setting a new UK M90 3000m in 18:38.48 and continuing to complete 5000m in 31:31.12, just 5.67sec off the current UK record. With five records, or six, if you allow for the fact that all races plus recovery time were completed within the 94 minutes, Fauja still had enough puff to conduct media interviews! Fauja also covered 7km in Lisbon in 54 minutes when with the SIE team in 2006 and amazingly did 8Km in 50 minutes in 2007.

Fauja ran in the inaugural Sahibzade Marathon in Punjab at the invite of Capt Amarinder Singh who was the Chief Minister at the time in December 2004 followed by the inaugural Lahore Marathon in January 2005 at the invite of President Musharraf.

He has also ran in Kenya (Kericho) just days after being invited for Christmas dinner at Buckingham Palace at the invite of Her Majesty the Queen who also awarded him the runner-up award of Living Legend at Windsor Castle in 2006.

Fauja Singh was one of the Torchbearer's for the Athens Olympics in 2004, 2010 Commonwealth Games Baton Relay runner,

Torchbearer for the London 2012 Olympic Games and in 2005 the Official Starter of the second biggest marathon in the UK (Edinburgh Marathon), where together with Amrik Singh, Ajit Singh, Ajit Singh (2) and Karnail Singh they ran the relay race in 4 hours 16 minutes with a combined age of 387 –

A year later with a revamped team (Sikhs In the City) the total age was 400 years and they were 3 minutes faster. On 2 July 2012, Fauja Singh was awarded the Paul Harris Fellowship by the Rotary Club of Gants Hill. The motto of Rotary International is "Service Above Self". While the club provides a venue for both business and social networking, the primary focus is on local and international service projects. Awarded the British Empire Medal (New Year's Honours list 2015).

Fauja Singh already holds the 10,000m record (64 minutes – Lahore Marathon January 2005), 1/2 Marathon (2 hours 29 minutes and 59 seconds) and the Marathon record (5 hours 40 minutes and 1 second) both at the Toronto Waterfront Marathon in September 2004 and September 2003 respectively.

### Sequence of Fauja Singh's 10km, half and full marathon times is as below:

London Flora Marathon 2000: 6 Hours 54 minutes  
London Flora Marathon 2001: 6 Hours 54 minutes  
London Flora Marathon 2002: 6 Hours 45 minutes  
Bupa Great North Run (Half Marathon) 2002: 2 hours 39 mins  
London Flora Marathon 2003: 6 Hours 2 minutes  
Toronto Waterfront Marathon 2003: 5 Hours 40 minutes  
New York City Marathon 2003: 7 Hours 35 minutes  
London Flora Marathon 2004: 6 Hours 7 minutes  
Glasgow City Half Marathon 2004: 2 Hours 33 minutes  
Capital Radio Help a London Child 10,000m 2004: 68 minutes  
Toronto Waterfront Half Marathon 2004: 2 Hours 29 minutes 59 seconds  
Lahore Marathon (10,000m) 2005: 64 minutes.  
Newham Classic 10km – 10 April 2011: 83 minutes – fastest ever for a 100 year old runner.  
Toronto Birchfield Stadium – October 2011 – 8 track records for 100 year old in 5 hours.  
Toronto Waterfront Marathon – October 2011: 8 hours 11 minutes 6 seconds as a 100 year old.  
Hong Kong Marathon: 10km in 94 minutes raising \$25,800 for charity  
Newham Classic 10km: 15 April 2012, 77 minutes 32 seconds – as a 101 year old.  
Virgin London Marathon April 2012: 7 hours 49 minutes and 21 seconds.  
Numerous other 10km and 5km races in Mauritius, Surrey (Canada), California, Kericho (Kenya), Toronto etc.  
**8 records as a 100- year- old**  
100 metres -- 23.40 seconds [previous 29.83]; 200 metres -- 52.23 seconds [previous 77.59 seconds]  
400 metres -- 2:13.48 [previous 3:41.00]; 800 metres -- 5:32.18 [no previous record];  
1,500 metres -- 11:27.00 [previous 16:46.00]; mile 11:53.45 [no previous record]; 3,000 metres -- 24:52.47 [no previous record]; 5,000 metres 49:57.39 [no previous record].

## China Open: Prannoy crawls his way to victory, Lakshya crashes out

AGENCIES  
CHANGZHOU

India's Lakshya Sen struggled against home favourite Li Shi Feng and was defeated in the Round of 32 of the China Open, while HS Prannoy barely managed to conjure a way and crawled to the next fixture on Tuesday.

Lakshya, ranked 19th in the world, went down fighting 21-14, 22-24, 11-21 against world number five Feng of China in a contest that lasted 1 hour and 7 minutes. Following Feng's win, he now trails 6-7 in head-to-head contests.

The 23-year-old Indian suffered yet another premature exit in the tournament. Last week he lost 21-19, 21-11 to local favourite and world No. 8 Kodai Naraoka in the Japan Open. The Indian shuttler pushed Naraoka to his limits in the opening game but failed to put up much resistance in the second as the contest lasted just under an hour.

In China Open, Lakshya came all guns blazing and hardly gave anything away to Feng. He reigned supreme and closed the opening game with a 21-14 win. In the second game, Feng upped the ante and raced



to an early lead. Lakshya responded with grit to chop down the deficit and force his way to win.

However, the 25-year-old China shuttler held his nerves and kept the game alive with a hard-fought 22-24 win in the second game. In the final, Lakshya never appeared in the game as Feng, soared to a comprehensive lead and kept it intact to confirm his place in the next round.

Before Lakshya endured yet another early heartbreak, Prannoy narrowly escaped the same fate that the 23-year-old encountered. Prannoy, ranked 38 in the world, scripted a memorable 8-21, 21-16, 23-21 against Japan's Koki Watanabe to keep his campaign alive.